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Rainer M. Holm-Hadulla



The Creative Transformation of Despair, Hate and Violence

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from Madonna, Mick
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 Springer

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Preface

The war just unleashed in the Ukraine and the seemingly endless wars in other regions of the world give this book a disturbing topicality. Wars, climate change and other human catastrophes associated with them make it particularly clear that it is vital to deal with despair, hate, and violence. We encounter this task again and again; it is part of our personal and political lives, whether we like it or not. The creative transformation of human destructiveness is our only chance to cope with the destructive potential of human beings.

In the first part of this book, I describe the general principles of human creativity and illustrate them with examples from cultural history and different domains. The “Big Five of Creativity” – talent, skills, motivation, resilience, favorable environments – serve as a guide. I have theoretically researched and tested their interplay practically during three decades of work. Corresponding references can be found in the appendix. In the second part, I use the lives and works of five highly influential pop stars to show how creative coping with crises can succeed, but also fail. In the third part, I draw consequences for a creative lifestyle.

Rainer Matthias Holm-Hadulla

*Everything hurts...
Thus while hate cannot be terminated
It can be transformed
Into a love that lets us live.*

Amanda Gorman, The New York Times, May 27, 2022

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Creativity: An Elixir of Life



Everyday and Extraordinary Creativity

Creativity is an elixir of life, which unfortunately is not always easy to elicit. Although a huge number of guidebooks promise easy ways to achieve creativity, a creative lifestyle is mostly associated with painful struggle. This begins with birth and accompanies us until the end of life. Based on the biographies and works of extraordinary personalities and influential pop stars, this book shows how creative efforts can draw energy from individual and social tensions. In this process, we will encounter a fundamental interplay of constructive and destructive forces at work in nature and culture. Traditional myths and modern scientific findings reveal the pitfalls of the creative. They show how creative activities are threatened by displeasure and despair, which can turn into hatred and violence. Cultural experiences and scientific insights, however, also reveal perspectives on how it is possible to creatively shape the destructive potential of human beings and guide them into constructive paths.

It has become commonplace to define creativity as the creation of new and useful forms. On closer examination, this makes it an essential property of all living things. Like intelligence, it can be attributed to simple organisms. Human creativity, on the other hand, is a complex natural and cultural phenomenon that can only be explained in fragments by specific individual sciences. Although it is bound to certain biological and psychological conditions, it emancipates itself from these conditions by creating forms that cannot be derived from these conditions. Thus, the effect of a piece of music, a painting, a scientific discovery, a product for everyday use, or a poetic encounter cannot be derived from its biological or psychological foundations. Creativity can only be understood through the interdisciplinary connection of perspectives from the natural, social, and cultural sciences with live-world experiences. In doing so, one repeatedly encounters a fundamental interplay of order and chaos, construction and deconstruction, structural solidification, and dynamic liquefaction.

The difference between everyday and extraordinary creativity is important. It is no metaphorical exaggeration to say that even infants “compose” their world. They actively, mostly unconsciously, process stimuli from the inside of the body and from the environment. In doing so, they create a new and unique inner and outer world. This primary creativity remains, if no very serious illnesses occur, until the end of life. Even old people have to lead their lives, i.e., shape them creatively.

In contrast to primary or everyday creativity, extraordinary creativity leads to insights and products that are also of special significance for others. The fact that something is exceptionally significant, useful, and new or even characterized as “genius” is often only recognized after a long time, sometimes only posthumously.

Five Basic Principles of Creativity Illustrated by the Examples of Extraordinarily Creative Personalities from Different Domains

Following the creativity research summarized by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996) and Mark Runco (2014), the following basic principles of creativity can be defined: gifts and talent (1), knowledge and skills (2), motivation and interest (3), personality traits like flexibility and resilience (4), and nurturing and challenging environmental conditions (5). These “Big Five of Creativity” are closely intertwined. Gifts and talents become fruitful only when they can be realized in suitable environmental conditions. Knowledge and skills only lead to new and useful works if they are applied with motivation and discipline. To discover the unknown and to create new forms, certain personality traits are necessary, like open-mindedness and resilience.

Biographical studies are indispensable for understanding the foundations and manifestations of creativity. Empirical-statistical studies only make individual aspects of creativity comprehensible, such as the interplay of convergent and divergent thinking. Neuroscientific and psychological research already reach their limits when it comes to evaluating creative products. They cannot grasp the originality and usefulness of a mathematical proof, a scientific discovery, a poem, or a song. They have to rely on the evaluation criteria of the individual fields of science and life. A phenomenon as complex as creativity cannot be studied without biographical knowledge and practical life experience.

Gifts and Talents

As a starting point for understanding the significance of gifts and talents for creative processes, the theory of multiple intelligences by Howard Gardner (1983) is suitable. Following Gardner, we can distinguish at least eight dimensions: logical-mathematical; scientific; linguistic; musical; psychomotor; spatial-constructive; intrapersonal, e.g., emotional empathy; and interpersonal, e.g., social resonance. In

recent years, empirical psychology has also paid attention to a more complex form of intelligence as a ninth dimension, which can be summarized under the term “wisdom” (see Holm-Hadulla, 2021). The aforementioned talents rarely if ever occur in isolation but are each intertwined in highly individual ways. Nevertheless, there are focal points of gifts and talents, knowledge of which can be important for the promotion of creativity.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) still stands out as the most impressive example of a highly talented musician. At the age of 5, he already composed his first minuet (KV1) and performed as a pianist. At the age of 6, he was presented to the Empress Maria Theresa in Vienna and impressed the court with his solo playing on the harpsichord. Between the ages of 7 and 10, coming from Salzburg, he traveled with his mother, father, and sister through Germany, Holland, England, and France and later with his father alone several times through Italy, in order to earn in one year, as a musical prodigy at various courts, 50 times as much as his father, who was active as a court musician in Salzburg (see Melograni, 2021).

But Mozart, too, was only able to flourish because other factors of the “Big Five” were added: knowledge and skill, motivation and energy, openness to stimuli and resilience, and nurturing and challenging environmental conditions. Thanks to his father’s devoted instruction, Mozart acquired exceptional musical knowledge and skill at an early age. Added to this was a broad cultural education. In his highly musical milieu, the motivation to make music also developed in early childhood, which was accompanied by constant practice and work. It is often overlooked that Mozart, like all other creative artists, was only able to receive the “kiss of the muses” because his talents were trained in a highly disciplined manner. Seemingly contradictory personality traits such as spontaneity and rigor, openness, and persistence helped him to achieve his artistic goals. Just as important as these factors were supportive and demanding environmental conditions: a mother who gave him attention and love, an equally devoted but also ambitious father, who meticulously encouraged his son to practice, and an inspiring sister.

But his life was not all sunshine. Mozart’s childhood was overshadowed by the death of five siblings, whom his mother and father lost before his birth. Illness and death threatened him and his family again and again. His great works of art, above all the operas *Don Giovanni* and *The Magic Flute* as well as his “Requiem,” are dramatic confrontations with fear, despair, and death. Mozart succeeded in a unique way in transforming the dark sides of life into beauty and joie de vivre.

As an example of Mozart’s creative transformation of despair, hatred, and violence, I would like to take a closer look at *The Magic Flute* (Mozart & Schikaneder, 1791). In it, the hateful and vengeful Queen of the Night urges her daughter Pamina to murder her adversary Sarastro. Otherwise, she will disown her daughter:

Hell’s vengeance boils in my heart,
 Death and despair flame about me!
 If Sarastro does not through you feel
 The pain of death,
 Then you will be my daughter nevermore!
 Disowned may you be forever,
 Abandoned may you be forever,

Destroyed be forever
 All the bonds of nature,
 If not through you
 Sarastro becomes pale!
 (*The Magic Flute*, Act 2, Aria of the Queen of the Night)

Through text and music, anger and rage are banished into a cultural form that leads to a humanistic global ethics. Sarastro answers the Queen of the Night's hateful despair with loving cultural duty:

In these holy halls
 revenge is not known
 And when a man has fallen,
 love leads him to duty
 Then he walks by his friend's hand
 Pleased and glad into the better land ...
 (*The Magic Flute*, Act 2, Aria of Sarastro)

As a second example of the importance of creative talents and its interplay with the other dimensions of "The Big Five of Creativity," I choose a personality from a completely different domain and era: Marie Curie (1867–1934). Her talent for mathematics and science was already evident during her early school years. She graduated at the top of her class at the age of 15. But as is usual in the field of science, it took decades for her to achieve something new and extraordinary. As we will see in the chapter on the creative process, in most scientific domains, unlike art, it takes a long time for new ideas to materialize into a theory, a discovery, or an invention after many years of knowledge acquisition and repetitive laboratory work.

Marie Curie also had a long way to go before she was able to realize her talents. She was helped in this by a passionate interest in physics already in her childhood and youth. As a schoolgirl and later as a tutor, she found in research and knowledge a goal in itself, which is called "intrinsic" and "autotelic" interest in modern creativity research. All her aptitude and motivation would have remained unfruitful, however, if she had not also found encouraging and challenging environmental conditions. Starting with her parents, throughout her life, she was always surrounded by people who supported her talents, her knowledge and skills, her interests, and her personality (see Curie, 1983).

However, her life was also overshadowed by sad events and severe deprivations. Tuberculosis manifested itself in Marie's mother during her early childhood, forcing her to maintain a distant relationship with her daughter. Nevertheless, Marie shared a deep love with her mother, who worked for a time as a teacher in a girls' school. She eagerly absorbed her mother's intellectual stimulation and instruction. She was even more bound by an intimate spiritual communion with her father, partly because her mother died when Marie was 10 years old. Her father was a successful teacher who, like most of the Polish population, suffered greatly from Russian rule and the accompanying oppression and devaluation. He supported Marie and her four siblings to the best of his ability despite difficult living conditions. However, he could not finance her studies abroad, and women could not study in Poland at that time.

So Marie had to earn her living as a home teacher and also acquire money so that her sister Bronia could study in Paris. After the latter had completed her studies in Paris and moved in with a colleague, Marie was also able to enroll for physics in 1891 at the then already leading Sorbonne University in Paris. Here, she found teachers who inspired her and, on the strength of her achievements, was awarded a scholarship which enabled her to continue her studies. In 1894, she met Pierre Curie, who was teaching and running a laboratory. They developed a productive collaboration and eventually a love affair. They married in 1895 and formed an extraordinarily successful researcher couple who were honored with the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1903, along with Henri Becquerel.

Even after this honor and strokes of fate such as the death of her husband, Marie Curie remained a devoted researcher and used her discipline and resilience to prove her ideas experimentally. In addition, she also showed remarkable social commitment – e.g., in the treatment of war casualties during the First World War and as a long-serving council member of the League of Nations.

As is usual in the sciences, she was dependent on financial and idealistic support throughout her career. She showed sufficient frustration tolerance and resilience to repeatedly raise funds to continue her experiments, especially with very expensive radium. With an extraordinary combination of talent, knowledge, motivation, resilience, and suitable environmental conditions, she was the first person to win a second Nobel Prize, the 1911 Nobel Prize in Chemistry.

Knowledge and Skills

The significance of the “Big Five of Creativity” in the different domains also depends on age. In no domain can new works be created without knowledge and skills. Mathematical feats, for example, which require less knowledge than cultural masterpieces, are already possible in youth. Similarly, for poems and pop songs, the vocabulary and musical skills acquired in childhood and adolescence are sufficient to write original lyrics and catchy songs at an early age. Accordingly, the pop icons described in the second part of this book for the most part created their most powerful songs toward the end of their adolescence and in early adulthood.

More complex cultural works, on the other hand, require a great deal of knowledge and experience. Even the millennial genius Mozart, described above, needed 30 years of tireless musical learning, practice, and development to create such important works as *Don Giovanni* and *The Magic Flute*, as well as his *Requiem*. The late works of Bach, Wagner, and Verdi, Goethe, and Michelangelo are further impressive examples of artistic innovations that come about at an advanced age. Goethe finished the magnificent mountain gorge scene at the end of *Faust II* in his 80th year, after having worked on his “inner fairy tale” for nearly 60 years. Here, poetic, scientific, philosophical, theological, and existential experiences flow together in a complexity that is nearly impossible for younger people to shape. And yet these great works of old age like *Faust II* emerge from a seemingly timeless

overcoming of despair already experienced in youth, which made the young Goethe contemplate the abyss of suicide. When the aging Goethe writes that “the eternal feminine/ draws us on high”, he expresses the hope that we can ultimately overcome despair, hate, and violence creatively (see Holm-Hadulla, 2019a).

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), who became famous at an early age, is another example of extraordinary creative development in old age. Picasso, like Mozart, was considered a natural talent from an early age. With his original drawings, he soon surpassed his father Ruiz, who was trained as a painter. By early adulthood, Pablo Picasso was already earning a reputation as a revolutionary in early twentieth-century painting. It was only after the shocked astonishment his artwork caused that it became clear how much artistic education and painterly skill was contained in his works. It became known that for years he had been copying old masters. In his early original works, when he impressed the public with original paintings of his “Blue Period,” he made detailed use of traditional color and form, especially that of El Greco. Later, he would repeatedly depict mythical themes and current political events using conventional painting techniques, creatively developing them.

He tirelessly devoted himself to the most diverse forms of expression, from ancient Iberian sculptures to surrealist representations of Parisian modernism. He deconstructed traditional forms in order to let them live on in a new form. In doing so, Picasso showed himself to be just as open to the new as he was careful to preserve the traditional. His spontaneous joy of design alternated with a disciplined frenzy of work. He appeared, sometimes in rapid alternation, extroverted and introverted, open to stimuli and withdrawn, communicative and stubborn, exuberant, and disciplined. Until old age, he managed conflicting feelings and moods through his artistic work. In doing so, he grappled with the great themes of our existence. Despair was a major theme of his “Blue Period,” beginning with the painting *The Burial of Casagemas* (1901). Later, the artistic overcoming of hatred and violence came to the fore and finally the confrontation with death.

Picasso often confronted destructive world events, for example, in *Guernica* (1937), in paintings with which he destroyed traditional forms in order to revive them in new guises. An impressive examination of hatred and violence, and probably also of his own sexualized tendency to aggression, can be found in his Minotaur paintings, especially impressive in *Dora and the Minotaur* (1936). A little later, in *Still Life with Candle, Palette, and Red Minotaur Head* (1938), he impales the red aroused Minotaur head on a steel stake. Questioningly, the tamed Minotaur gazes at the viewer of the painting, as if seeking peaceful soothing recognition. All this in view of the existential design task – the palette and the empty picture frame – and the finiteness of all endeavor, symbolized by the burning candle, the classical symbol of vanity.

Picasso worked on his artistic means of expression until his old age, in order, as Goethe would say, to “increase.” Around the age of 90, he painted impressive and harrowing self-portraits marked by fears of death. Nevertheless, he remained

creatively connected to his childhood and youth, for example, with *The Young Painter*, created the year before his death (see Gohr, 2006). We will see later how Mick Jagger and the Rolling Stones deal with despair, hatred, and violence in their melancholic blues ballads and aggressive rock songs over a period of 60 years.

Motivation and Interest

Creative enthusiasm is also called “intrinsic interest” in modern research. It is often quieter and more lasting than one would expect from the kiss of the muses. As an example, the statesman, scientist and poet J. W. v. Goethe will be considered in more detail. His laborious acquisition of knowledge and his lengthy studies, often wrested from depressive moods, are frequently obscured by the illusion of the easy-going genius. Yet, from his first poems and his early novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and the first part of the *Faust I* to his later works, such as the *Marienbad Elegies* with their longing for death and the last act of *Faust II*, it is evident, that they were for the most part born out of suffering and pain. His motivation to achieve extraordinary things and his interest in acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to do so were fed by his courage in creatively confronting the dark sides of human existence – despair, hate, and violence.

Even his birth was difficult. Little Johann Wolfgang was thought to be dead and only after attempts to revive him by the midwife and grandfather is he said to have begun to breathe. We know today from psychological and neurobiological studies that such events leave traces. Details of Goethe’s biography in the light of cultural studies, psychology, and biology can be found in my book *Passion – Goethe’s Path to Creativity* (2019a). Here, I would only like to draw attention to the fact that Goethe’s childhood was further overshadowed by death after his difficult birth. After his sister Cornelia, 15 month younger, his mother Katharina Elisabeth gave birth to another five children, who did not survive their childhood. The oldest was Hermann Jakob, who died in his seventh year.

The 10-year-old Johann Wolfgang did not shed a tear at Hermann Jakob’s funeral: “...when the mother asked the defiant one whether he had not loved his brother, he ran into his chamber, brought out from under the bed a quantity of papers written with lessons and little stories, he told her that he had done all this to teach it to the brother” (v. Arnim 1835, p. 379). This is an early example of how Goethe did not despair of grief and suffering, but tried to cope with painful events through learning and creative activity. His numerous childhood illnesses, including a severe smallpox infection with smallpox, also increased his penchant for reflection and his exercises in perseverance, as he retrospectively notes in his autobiography *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, “to remove the embarrassment of impatience from me” (Goethe, HA 9, p. 37).

Goethe’s entire life is characterized by his efforts to overcome melancholic moods and painful events through political, scientific, and poetic work. To this end,

he acquired extensive cultural and scientific knowledge. Goethe's encouragement to creatively transform suffering and passion into art is beautifully summarized in his poem *Reconciliation*. He wrote it at the age of 74 immediately after being disappointed in love by Ulrike v. Levetzow:

Passion brings suffering! – Uneasy heart,
 who can soothe you, you that have lost too much?
 Where are the hours, vanished too quickly?
 The most beautiful thing was chosen for you in vain!
 Sad is our mind, confused are our endeavors;
 how the lofty world fades away from our senses!
 And then music hovers on its angel's wings,
 interweaving one tone into millions,
 In order to penetrate man's being through and through,
 to fill him overabundantly with eternal beauty:
 his eyes grow moist in a higher yearning
 they feel the divine worth of music and of tears.
 And so the relieved heart quickly notices
 that it still lives and beats and wishes to go on beating,
 so it can offer itself willingly in return,
 in sincerest thanks for that more than generous gift.
 Then came the sensation – may it remain forever! –
 of double happiness of music and of love.
 (Appelbaum, 1999, p. 207.)

From Goethe, we can learn that motivated and dedicated work serves not only to overcome suffering and the hardships of life but also to achieve a “higher health” and an “increased joy of life.” But this also requires, according to Goethe, discipline and perseverance, as well as confrontation with despair, hate, and violence.

Bipolar Personality Traits

In creative personalities, biographical analyses repeatedly reveal a mixture of sensitivity and resilience, unstable emotions and stable work ability, social relatedness, and stubborn withdrawal. Personality psychology divides those polar opposites of attitudes and behavioral patterns into the “Big Five Personality Traits” (e.g., Widinger, 2017): instability vs. stability, extraversion vs. introversion, openness vs. stubbornness, agreeableness vs. antagonism, and impulsiveness vs. resilience. These characteristics often appear in rapid alternation. If they are extreme and situationally inadequate, they can indicate mental disorders. In creative personalities, we often find a special ability to tolerate the “bipolarity” of personality traits and to use them as required.

Mozart is again a prime example of the creative use of different personality traits. He was at times emotionally instable and vulnerable as well as stable and resilient. Thus, he could transform emotional, cognitive, and social turbulences

into artistic work. Even as a child, he showed an astonishing stability that enabled him to learn and work with discipline and perseverance. His great late works such as *Don Giovanni*, *The Magic Flute*, and the *Requiem* are documents of how, in states of emotional and mental instability, a creative personality can find a dynamic creative stability, a kind of “higher health”, as Nietzsche would say.

It is similar with other personality traits. Mozart could be both extroverted and introverted, open to new things and stubborn in implementing his inspirations. He often behaved in a friendly and approachable manner yet he was occasionally unruly and stubborn. Uninhibited expressions of emotion and spontaneous cheerfulness alternated with a disciplined frenzy for work.

In Goethe, too, we find a remarkable interplay of the personality traits described. In his learning and later in his political and scientific work, he proved to be unusually patient and stable. In times before and during poetic creativity, however, he seemed emotionally unstable, even at times desperate. The 18-year-old wrote his first important poems, such as the *Odes to Behrisch*, after he had been rejected by his beloved Käthchen Schönkopf and was preoccupied in his pain with thoughts of suicide. *The Sorrows of Young Werther* was written after he had suffered another serious disappointment in love and retreated to his parental home for almost a year and a half. In a rollercoaster of emotions, he dealt with the dark and existential sides of being human and, after this long creative incubation period, wrote the epistolary novel that was to make him world-famous. He himself believed that he had escaped the “claws of death” by writing *Werther*.

By contrast, he was largely stable in his first Weimar years from the age of 26 to 36 and after his trip to Italy. His political and administrative activities contributed significantly to this. He thought that the “pressure of everyday business” was quite good for the soul, which then “plays more freely.” However, he also displayed an emotional instability with Charlotte von Stein that was significant for his poetic aspirations. Beyond the age of 40, he managed an unusual workload in a disciplined and orderly manner until old age. He also benefited from balancing other traits of the “Big Five” of personality psychology: a good balance between extroversion and introversion, openness and stubbornness, adaptability and unruliness, impulsiveness, and discipline.

It is interesting and instructive to see how Goethe was able to bring the different aspects of his personality creatively into play depending on the activity. When, at the age of 73, his poetic creativity seemed to have vanished for a long time in view of his emotionally stable and socially well-ordered lifestyle, he plunged into a love adventure that seemed to literally turn his life upside down. In my view, his infatuation with Ulrike von Levetzow is a semi-conscious staging of an emotional upheaval that brought him closer to his poetic roots again. He wrote the wonderful poem *An Werther*, in which he recalls his alter-ego Werther, who had “gone on ahead” by killing himself and had “not lost much” as a result. In the *Elegy*, he virtually throws himself into the chaos of emotions:

“I have lost the universe, I am even lost to myself,/ I who recently was still the favorite of the gods...” (Appelbaum, 1999, p. 215).

However, emotional shock, irritability, and impulsiveness can only become art if they are implemented by their counterparts stability, concentration, and discipline. Shakespeare summed this up wonderfully:

Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
more than cool reason ever comprehends...

And as imagination bodies forth
the forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
turns them to shapes, and gives the airy nothing
a local habitation and a name.

- (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act 5, Scene 1)

I will come back to the delicate interplay of personality traits in describing the different phases of the creative process below. Personality traits come into play differently in various phases of the creative process: preparation, incubation, inspiration, elaboration, and realization.

Clara Schumann can serve as another example of how stability and instability, extraversion and introversion, openness and stubbornness, agreeableness and antagonism, impulsiveness, and resilience interact.

From her earliest childhood, Clara Schumann (1819–1896) was literally drilled by her father. Friedrich Wieck directed all his personal, business, and artistic ambition at his first-born daughter. The other three children born to his first wife Mariane Wieck, all boys, were of little interest to him. He thought girls were more malleable and also recognized his daughter's exceptional talent. Mariane Wieck separated from her husband shortly after the birth of her fourth child, moved back to her home town, and had to leave the 5-year-old Clara entirely in the care of Friedrich Wieck (see Knechtges-Obrecht 2019).

Clara's difficult childhood – she certainly had to put up with many arguments between her parents and finally the separation from her mother – did not prevent her from developing her musical talent with extraordinary discipline and acquiring an extensive education. Talent, knowledge and ability, motivation, and discipline as well as a successful mixture of openness to stimulus and stubbornness, willingness to adapt, and resistance allowed her to develop into probably the most influential female musician of her century. She wrote over ten thousand letters, from which her artistic life can be traced (see Litzmann, 2019). The most striking personality traits are to be found here and in the accounts of contemporaries. They describe an extraordinary mixture of loving sensitivity, openness, and sensibility, combined with strict discipline, goal orientation, and resilience.

Thus, the child prodigy drilled by her father became an independent musician who inspired all of Europe. As a mother of eight children, she additionally cared for her grandchildren in old age. Her great love for her husband Robert was characterized by extraordinary poetry, sensitivity, and sensibility. At the same time, she proved to be unusually purposeful and practical in life. Of course, there were

downsides, especially after her husband Robert became mentally ill and she barely cared for him (see Holm-Hadulla, 2017). Her interactions with her children were also seen by some as too self-involved and headstrong (see Knechtges-Obrecht, 2019). However this is assessed, it remains admirable how devotedly Clara Schumann cared for her large family in extremely difficult times and with what poetic energy she simultaneously shaped her artistic career. She herself summed up her life: “It was difficult, but art was always my most faithful companion.” And art ultimately enabled her to overcome difficult situations in which she was threatened by despair.

Pablo Picasso is also an excellent example of the interplay of seemingly opposite personality traits and behaviors. Depending on the stage of the artistic process, Picasso displayed an interesting alternation between extraversion and introversion. He could be entertaining and social to the point of being dependent on displays of affection. During his working phases, he was able to turn in on himself and could react most gruffly to disturbances caused by personal contacts. He behaved similarly with regard to openness and stubbornness. Unusual and new things did not seem to irritate him. On the other hand, he stubbornly implemented suggestions and inspirations. Thus, on the one hand, he behaved in a friendly and charming manner, and on the other hand, he was resistant. In everyday life, he sometimes showed considerable impulsiveness, which could also hurt. In his work, on the other hand, he was usually disciplined and resilient.

In the field of science, Marie Curie is probably the most significant example of the productive use of different personality traits. Her unusual stability and tolerance of frustration have often been described, e.g., by one of her daughters (Curie, 1983). However, she could also endure psychological, economic, and social instability and combat them with focused scientific work. At the same time, she appeared decidedly introverted. But there were also phases in which she could be extraverted and turned toward others. Thus, she was also open to new and unusual things, and with remarkable stubbornness, she was able to put her ideas into practice in patient work. In doing so, she was both adaptable and resistant in equal measure. Impulsiveness and emotional excitement play a lesser role in science than in art. In this respect, for Marie Curie, as for most scientists, discipline and resilience were paramount.

Nurturing and Challenging Environments

In all the examples mentioned so far, both nurturing and challenging environmental conditions stand out. Mozart had an affectionate and supportive mother and a musically highly educated and demanding father. His sister was also important for his early development into a child prodigy. However, adversity also occurred. Mozart’s mother lost four children and died at an early age. His father sometimes exaggerated strictness and discipline, resulting in serious discord with his son and others (see

Melograni, 2005). However, adverse conditions hardly inhibited Wolfgang Amadeus's artistic drive. Even illnesses and hardship-filled journeys could do little to impair the development of his musical talent, his diligent acquisition of knowledge and skills, his motivation, and his interest. He immersed himself in the music of predecessors such as that of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach and found here a resonant space for his joys and sufferings. We see similar constellations in other personalities mentioned.

As with Mozart, Goethe's father focused all his efforts on the education of Johann Wolfgang and his sister Cornelia. He regarded himself as a private scholar and tutor who taught his children music, art, and foreign languages at an early age with the help of other teachers. Goethe was not a child prodigy. Even his early works, such as the first poems and *The Sorrows of Werther*, were written on the basis of extensive cultural knowledge and skills. The both loving and demanding attention of his mother also played a major role (see Holm-Hadulla, 2019a). Goethe's development into an important politician, meticulous scientist, and admired poet was overshadowed by privations and failures. However, he was able to cope with the demands and downsides of everyday and creative life through his artistic and practical work.

In Goethe's case, one might even think that he virtually staged disappointments in order to place himself in borderline situations ranging from despair to near suicide. Examples of this are his hopeless infatuation with Charlotte Buff as a 22-year-old, which led to *The Sufferings of Young Werther*; and the "amour fou" as a 73-year-old with Ulrike v. Levetzow, which finds its painful expression in the wonderful *Marienbad Elegy*. Both works owe their existence to the creative transformation of despair, which without creative coping can lead to suicide. But this does not mean that one has to long for suffering in order to be creative. Even the happiest life begins with pain and ends with suffering.

In Clara Schumann's case, the demanding environmental conditions seem to far outweigh the encouraging ones. Her overly strict, pedantic, and selfish father curtailed all her freedoms, and when she began to go her own way in adolescence and turn to her teacher, artist friend, and finally lover Robert Schumann, her father's pedantic control led to open hostility. He did not shy away from insults and slurs as well as damage to his daughter's artistic career. For years he tried to fight the budding love affair with Robert. In the process, this enabled both partners to develop in ways that would not have been possible otherwise. Robert Schumann's famous "Lieder," which he composed in 1840 in the year of their first marital bliss, is a testimony to their mutual enhancement.

Even in good family times, Clara was confronted with difficult tasks. She wanted and had to give concerts, sometimes heavily pregnant. The journeys were exhausting, and dangerous. Imagine traveling to St. Petersburg in winter through ice and snow in a carriage without springs. After somewhat over 10 years of marriage, her husband began to show symptoms of the illness that eventually led to his admission to a mental institution. Subsequently, Clara had to support her eight children alone and maintain them financially through deprivation-filled concert tours. An in-depth analysis of Robert Schumann's illness can be found in an article entitled "Bipolar

Disorder and/or Creative Bipolarity” (Holm-Hadulla & Koutsoukou-Argyragi, 2017). With the resilience already described, Clara faced these adverse environmental conditions and found in art an elixir of life that helped her overcome pain and suffering.

Marie Curie’s parents were both teachers and encouraged their daughter’s intellectual development to the best of their ability. However, the opportunities for scientific activity were extremely limited for women at this time, and Marie had to overcome a variety of obstacles in order to make her talent, knowledge and interest, motivation, and personality traits bear fruit. As already described, she showed remarkable resilience and perseverance, as did the other personalities mentioned.

Another favorable circumstance contributed to the creative development of these personalities. They found appreciative companions, in Mozart’s case again in a quite extraordinary way. He was admired early on and showered with gifts, prizes, and personal acknowledgements. It took longer with Goethe, but after he had left his parental home, the 17-year-old found in his friend Behrisch in Leipzig a companion who encouraged him to write. He was later to be joined by many artist friends and work colleagues, who paid tribute to Goethe and supported his striving for “heightening.” Picasso, too, in his artistic awakening as a 19-year-old in Paris, found a community of artists who respected him but also confronted him with suffering and despair. His friend Casagemas took his own life at an early age, prompting Picasso to express his mourning in art, an essential motif of his “Blue Period.”

Marie Curie found appreciative environmental conditions in her studies at the Sorbonne in Paris and then in the laboratory of her future husband, which made her scientific endeavors fruitful. Clara Schumann, during the onset of her husband’s illness, met the young Johannes Brahms, who gave her piano playing the recognition it needed to cope with its many demands. Also, violinist Joseph Joachim and many other friends supported Clara’s artistic life struggle appreciatively.

The quest for recognition, which originates in early childhood and persists into old age, is elementary. This does not mean the search for superficial praise, but the existential desire for emotional and intellectual resonance. We will look at this in more detail later in the examples of our pop idols.

The Creative Process

The creative process can be divided into five phases: preparation, incubation, illumination, realization, and verification. The preparation phase involves the acquisition of the knowledge and skills necessary for creative renewal. It differs significantly in different creative domains. One can write a poem or a pop song at the age of 18 or earlier; linguistic and also musical ability is often sufficient to give creative expression to one’s emotions. To work out a scientific discovery, one must study for a long time and work patiently for years in a suitable research laboratory, for example. Artists can express themselves sooner, but they also run more of a risk of burning in the fire of spontaneous creativity.

We have already seen that even Mozart needed a long preparatory phase to create his late masterpieces. This is equally true for Goethe and Picasso. Clara Schumann, too, had to acquire more than 10 years of musical knowledge and skill before her extraordinary art could become visible. Similarly, Picasso practiced drawing and painting from an early age in order to create his first independent works at the age of 20. In the field of science, the preparatory phase is much longer. Marie Curie was only able to produce her first original results after the age of 30.

In the incubation phase, what has been learned is left to unconscious processing. It is often associated with painful tensions, and it is tempting to be distracted from these tensions by senseless media consumption, etc.. Since the creative incubation phase depends on an undisturbed neuronal resting mode, media abstinence and resilience are especially important here (see Holm-Hadulla, 2013).

The incubation phases of Mozart's early works were unusually short. His greatest works, however, matured subliminally over decades. It was the same with Goethe. His first poems were written quite spontaneously and as early as his 17th year. But the most productive poetic incubation period, which led to the creation of *The Sorrows of Werther* at the age of 24, lasted almost a year and a half after he was rejected by Charlotte Buff and returned to his childhood home in Frankfurt, seemingly heartbroken. Clara Schumann was meticulously trained musically, and only after years of learning did she allow herself her own creative inspirations. Pablo Picasso's talent also lay dormant until the emotional upheaval caused by the detachment from parents and familiar surroundings, as well as the death of his friend, led to an artistic breakthrough. The incubation phase lasts even longer in the field of science, as we can see in Marie Curie. Goethe's scientific works are not juvenile works either, although they were already prepared during his student days.

The third, the illumination phase, which is mostly associated with the "kiss of the muses" or the "Eureka experience," takes very different forms in art, science, and practical life. While illumination in the realm of art can indeed occur spontaneously and suddenly, in the realm of science, politics, and practical life, it is a more or less continuous process. It includes both conscious generation of ideas and unconscious recombination of concepts and knowledge.

The elaboration of new ideas takes place in the fourth, the realization phase. It is usually the most difficult. We know that it takes considerable resilience to get into a state of work flow. In this tension, it is tempting to get distracted by media. Studies show that the decline in creative output over the last 20 years correlates with dysfunctional media use. Exceptional creative figures, unlike their public image, are generally hardworking and disciplined. We have already seen this in figures as diverse as Mozart, Goethe, Picasso, Clara Schumann, and Marie Curie. We will also pay special attention to this aspect in Madonna, Amy Winehouse, John Lennon, Jim Morrison, and Mick Jagger in the second part of this book.

The fifth phase of the creative process, verification, refers to the evaluation and publication of the product. It too can be crisis-ridden if we do not find the resonance and recognition we need. Mozart seemed to have no trouble showing off his talent and skill even as a child. Goethe already needed the friendly support of his sister and friend Behrisch to show off his first poems. Picasso, too, only had to overcome

resistance at first to show his art. In contrast, Clara Schumann questioned herself throughout her life. Even in the days when she was considered the greatest pianist in Europe, she felt intense discomfort, anxiety, and self-doubt before nearly all performances and was often dissatisfied with herself even after extraordinary success. It is different with scientists. Of course, they too can feel stage fright during presentations, but their scientific qualification and verification are confirmed within the framework of publications and evaluation procedures, which can be very unpleasant due to long waiting times, for example, but are comparatively less spontaneous and emotional.

Neurobiologically, we now know the following about the creative process: Embryos and infants constantly receive impressions from their inner and outer worlds. These stimuli are not only passively stored, but the developing personality already develops on the organismic level in a dynamic interaction with the environment. It is known from infant research how important being looked at and physically responded to is for the development of the brain. These early processes of recognition continue to be more or less satisfying. Frustrations, if not too pronounced, can lead to creative activities. Without neural coherence and connectivity, survival is not possible. However, even the coherent interconnected neural networks are subject to dynamic processes of building up and breaking down. In the creative process, neuronal structures are destabilized and recombined with others. The dialectic of order and chaos, construction and deconstruction leading to new and usable forms can also be found at the neuronal level (see Holm-Hadulla, 2013).

Creative ideas that occur in the preparation, incubation, and illumination phases only become fruitful when they are put into action through disciplined work. On this point, too, the creative domains differ in fundamental ways. We have seen that a poem or a song can be put on paper in a short time, carried by the grace of the moment. Here, the emotional-subjective experience dominates in the creative activity. An outstanding scientific achievement usually requires decades of training and preparatory work before new ideas emerge, which in turn must be confirmed in years of painstaking work. Cognitive, objectifying concentration on the work dominates over enthusiasm – or disappointment. The advantage of this often frustratingly detailed work is the greater psychological stability of scientific writers compared to poets (see Ludwig, 2011).

Creative Coping with Despair, Hate, and Violence

There are existential challenges that creatives of any domain face, and we too, in our everyday lives: the threats of despair, hate, and violence. Mozart repeatedly deals with these dangers, for example, in his masses, which musically “celebrate” the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Here and in his *Requiem*, he transforms despair in the face of hate and violence into wonderful music. It accompanies, comforts, and inspires us to this day. In his opera *Don Giovanni*, Mozart portrays a character who takes everything he thinks he needs by force and does not shy away from rape and

murder. In the seemingly serene and cheerful *The Magic Flute*, we participate in the eternal struggle between good and evil, light and dark, and its cultural transformation.

Goethe deals with states of upset and despair from his early poems and the novel *Werther*, which he wrote at the age of 24, to the final act of *Faust II*, which he completed at the age of 80. The creative portrayal of hate and violence is also a recurring theme in Goethe's work, perhaps most clearly in *Faust*. In the first part, scholar Faust seduces a girl, has her mother and brother killed, and becomes guilty of her ignominious death. In the second part, his lust for greatness and power leads to ecologically ruthless land grabbing and, as "collateral damage," the murder of Philemon and Baucis, embodiments of peaceable traditional values. To this day, we grapple with the Faust figure, whom Goethe described as an "odious and repulsive" character. Behind his facade as a scholar and seeker of truth, Faust proves to be ruthless, desperate, hateful, and violent.

Clara Schumann may once again serve as an example for artistic coping with depressive moods and states of despair. Early in her life, she had to suppress her anger and despair in the face of early separation from her mother and submission to a rigid father. She transformed her vexations into music through disciplined work and found fulfillment in this. Together with her husband Robert Schumann, she shaped her significant artistic life until she separated from him due to his psychological problems (Holm-Hadulla & Argyraki, 2017). But she also reacted to this and other strokes of fate with artistic work, which helped her to cope with depressive moods and aggressive impulses.

Pablo Picasso, as a 20-year-old still an unsuccessful painter, fell into a crisis after the suicide of his close friend Casagemas, and out of his despair, he painted the first important paintings of his Blue Period. He dealt with the destruction of Guernica by the Nazis in a series of impressive paintings, and the violence of death became the central theme of his late work.

Unlike artists, scientists such as Marie Curie do not explicitly depict despair, hatred, and violence in their work. But they too have to cope with these phenomena. Marie Curie had a difficult childhood with a sick and at times remote mother. A sister died early; financial hardships and submission to the Russian domination of Poland at the time made life difficult. A first disappointment in love intensified her underlying despair (Goldsmith, 2005), but this could not affect her talent and meticulous diligence. After making her initial discoveries, she devoted herself to medical applications, including alleviating the suffering of soldiers wounded by the violence of war. She also participated, as did Albert Einstein, in the initiatives of the League of Nations to combat hatred and violence.

In a broader cultural perspective, one could also consider the contributions of philosophers of the "Axis Period" (Assmann, 2019; Jaspers, 1949) from the point of view of coping with despair, hatred, and violence. In different cultural areas, models of world explanation and rules of life emerged around 500 BC to contain chaotic violence and individual despair. These include the writings of the prophets of the Old Testament, philosophers Confucius and Lao-tzu in Ancient China, Gautama Buddha in India, and the pre-Socratic philosophers in Ancient Greece. Their ideas

and suggestions continue to have an effect today and are also taken up again and again in pop culture. In Western cultures, the themes of the Old Testament dominate, for example, in the works of Leonard Cohen and Jim Morrison. The transformation rituals of Christianity are prominent in Madonna's work. African traditions of creative coping with despair, hatred, and violence play a major role in blues and jazz.

We will see that the creative transformation of depression and aggression is a central theme in pop culture. This will now be shown by contrasting Madonna Ciccone and Amy Winehouse, John Lennon, Jim Morrison, and Mick Jagger. It is worth taking a closer look at their biographies and works in order to better understand the success and failure of creative work.

Overcoming Depression and Aggression in Pop Culture



Creatively overcoming despair, hate, and violence is the most important task of culture. However, creativity is also often associated with the myth of “creative destruction.” We have already seen that the Greek creator god Kronos, called Saturn in the Latin world, rises to power through an act of violence. From the bleeding body parts of his father Uranos comes Aphrodite, Roman Venus, the goddess of beauty, love, and fertility. Kronos remarkably becomes both the god of the culturally creative and the melancholically destructive (Klinbansky et al., 1964). Following the Kronos myth, hate and violence are culturally restaged again and again, most impressively in Goya’s painting “Saturn Devouring His Son.” Another extremely powerful artistic elaboration of melancholy and destructiveness, depression, and aggression is Richard Wagner’s Wotan figure in the *Ring of the Nibelung*. There is a view that some of what Wagner expressed artistically, e.g., the destructive linking of the cult of the hero with the death cult and the apocalypse, was staged in reality by Adolf Hitler (Fest, 1973). Hitler saw himself as an artist and unfolded a perverse cult of genius.

Fortunately, art serves more frequently as a way to overcome despair, hate, and violence. The lives and work of pop icons such as Madonna Ciccone and Amy Winehouse, John Lennon, Jim Morrison, and Mick Jagger are particularly well suited to describing the ups and downs of creative transformation. Their biographies and creative strivings are thoroughly documented, and their music, lyrics, and performances reveal their creative achievements, as well as their limitations and failures.

We begin with Madonna Ciccone who “dances to live.” It’s impressive how Madonna can turn grief, despair, and anger into artistry and stunning success. By contrast, Amy Winehouse appears as a fallen angel. Like Madonna, she is very talented. But she does not sufficiently succeed in overcoming vexations through creative work. Madonna had a difficult childhood and has suffered many failures and disappointments. However, she is able to express her ideas musically, in literary forms,

and also politically. Amy Winehouse, on the other hand, fails at this. Like Jim Morrison, she was highly motivated and possessed an artistic will to express herself. Unfortunately, both lacked the resilience to creatively process vexations, crises, and disappointments. Their longing for transgression and liberation from social bonds bring them to despair and ultimately lead to self-destruction. By contrast, Mick Jagger is able to stage his upsets and aggressive impulses artistically and creatively shape his life until old age.

Using the pop icons mentioned before as examples, I will now describe the significance of the “Big Five of Creativity” and their function in overcoming depression and aggression. From this, practical advice can be derived on how to foster creativity from early childhood until old age.

Madonna: Dancing to Live

Madonna lost her mother when she was 5 years old. The family was poor, and the father brought his six children through only with difficulty and excessive severity. How did the little girl cope with her grief in the face of these adverse circumstances? Her severely ill mother refused chemotherapy for her breast cancer because she was pregnant with her sixth child. Little Madonna Louise did not despair, however, but began to work on herself. She felt she needed to be strong, took up dancing, and found comfort in music. At school, she became very diligent, and in her adolescence, when her schoolmates started with alcohol and drugs, she remained disciplined. She intensified her dance training, read a lot, and acquired self-taught musical knowledge (see O’Brien, 2018).

Inwardly, Madonna remained connected to her mother. In *Like a Prayer*, one of her first songs that made her famous, she poignantly and wistfully describes her intimate connection with her mother. The song begins with the existential experience of loneliness: “Everybody has to stand alone.” In this situation, it helps the singer to remember her mother. This gives her strength and she feels safe. She talks to her inner mother and hears her voice, which is “like an angel sighing.” The singer feels comforted by the closeness to her mother and encouraged to become active, e.g., to dance. The music underpins the dreamlike connection with the mother and mysteriously transforms despair into beauty. Like the ancient muses, the inner mother leads to art and consolation.

Madonna’s path to becoming a pop icon was rocky. The early death of her mother was of course the most drastic event, but also the harsh upbringing of her father made her life very difficult. In her impressive song *Oh Father*, she laments that her father didn’t notice and understand her tears and sufferings. But Madonna emancipated herself and turned her despair into artistic activity. In the song, she complains about being treated coldly by her father and having to separate from him. She struggles to find her freedom and fights back against feelings of guilt that have set in despite his hurtful and sometimes cruel behavior. The singer reinforces her liveliness by working through her difficult relationship with her father. In the song *Papa*

don't preach, I'm in trouble, the singer courts her father's understanding of her own motherhood. She virtually pleads for him to accept her expectant child so that she must not abort it. The corresponding video shows sad childhood scenes with the father, which are replaced by youthful infatuation with a handsome boyfriend, which led to pregnancy.

Madonna's wistful attachment to her parents is surprising at first glance, given her often provocative appearance. But this is her way of coming to terms with painful experiences. Thus, her sexual enactments on stage and in many video clips are also to be understood as creative attempts to cope. She herself reports a sexual traumatization in her youth (see O'Brien, 2008).

A significant topic in her life is also the confrontation with her Christian upbringing. Madonna experienced a strict Catholic education at home and at school. At times, she attended a convent school. She experienced her Catholic upbringing as confining but also educational. At school, she found much recognition and self-affirmation. She learned to be disciplined and focused. Her performance was outstanding, and she was in the top 2% of her class with an IQ of 140. She enjoyed attending dance classes and took piano lessons on the side. Especially in dance training, she acquired a discipline that enabled her to maintain an exceptional workload later on.

Madonna's dance teacher recognized her talent and supported her will to achieve something special. He provided her with favorable environmental conditions for her creative pursuits. He visited museums and theaters with her and later introduced her to gay discos, where she met artistically productive people such as her future producer Stephen Bray. She soon dropped out of the dance training she had begun after high school, however, and her adventurous spirit and career aspirations drew her to New York. Odd jobs included nude photos in *Playboy* and *Penthouse*, which later brought her dubious fame. Meanwhile, she pursued her dancing and musical ambitions. She learned to play the guitar and drums and began writing songs with her artist friends. Her first lyrics seem naive but also touching.

After various engagements as a dancer, singer, and drummer and a short-lived record deal, the now 22-year-old met singer Patrick Hernandez, who wanted to bring her out in a big way. After a brief interlude as a dancer in Paris, she was drawn back to New York, where she danced to demos of her first songs and achieved some notoriety. She met a disc jockey who produced her first single, *Everybody* – an inviting disco song to dance to, peppy and nice; there's no hint of Madonna's painful path to her first respectable success. It strikes a chord with a dance-loving disco community, and she will continue on that path for some time. Her songs and enactments constitute an invitation to unabashed joy in one's own body and its movements. Dance and music pave the way to erotic joy. It is contagious and liberating. As in ancient times, dance instigates an erotically uplifted communal experience that liberates from the cares of everyday life: "Let the music take control ... your body understands the message."

At the age of 24, Madonna releases her debut album *Madonna* and reaches a place in the top ten of the international charts with the single *Holiday*. This song is also light and invites to dance. Cheerful music, exuberant dancing, and carefree

eroticism liberate from the worries and burdens of everyday life: “Put your troubles down/ It’s time to celebrate/ Let love shine” – a beautiful message.

Later, Madonna’s lyrics become more complex and also more provocative. *Like a Virgin* arouses indignation because Madonna includes religious symbols in her lascivious performances and combines them with sexual enactments. However, this went down well with the public. *Like a Virgin* is still one of the 100 best-selling music albums. The album *True Blue*, released after her marriage to Sean Penn, is also a great success. At 27, she unleashes almost unbelievable productivity. Shortly before, she had more than a respectable success as an actress in the film *Desperately Seeking Susan*, and with her world tour *Who’s that Girl*, she becomes the most successful pop singer of the 1980s. Her erotic productions make her a world-famous sex symbol. She encourages many, mostly young women, to stand by their bodies and their sexuality and to show themselves with self-confidence. This puts her in line with pop icons like Tina Turner and Beyoncé, who encourage an audience of millions to dance, listen to music, and experience lively eroticism.

However, Madonna also suffered defeats. Her new films were negatively received by the audience and the critics, and her marriage went into crisis. This could not affect her drive, however, and she showed up on Broadway as a theater actress. In various videos, she tackled social issues, such as the racism rampant in the USA. In the process, she continued to use religious symbols, which triggered fierce protests all the way to the Vatican. Even large companies, which she used very successfully for her career plans, withdrew. Madonna, however, unwaveringly pursued the path of sexual provocation. These became her trademark. She appeared in corsets, suspenders, and outfitted bras and simulated masturbation on stage. For this, she was threatened with imprisonment in Canada, and the Vatican called on people to boycott her concerts.

Madonna freed herself from her inhibitions through her lyrics, music, dance, and sexual provocation. The video *Justify my Love* is a confession of her passionate and unconventional transgression of the boundaries of sexuality. Despite her flaunted independence, however, she remained tied to her past relationships and was able to act out this attachment in constructive activities. Thus she began to nurture new talent. But the time of sexual provocations was not over: she publicly played with her bisexuality and displayed sado-masochistic and fetishistic practices on stage. The album *Erotica*, with its accompanying illustrated book, led to fierce attacks because of her self-portrayal, which was perceived as pornographic.

But this again did not appear to affect her drive in any way. She shot another rather unsuccessful film and went on a world tour. Here, she insinuated group sex scenes and appeared as a dominatrix. *Justify my Love* is a climax of her erotic self-expression. Madonna publicly enacts a sexual relationship and also caters to many erotic desires of her viewers. The song, video, and performances tell a passionate love story that thrills an audience of millions. Viewers and listeners are taken on a journey into their own dreams and desires. The lyrics are relatively simple, but the music is rhythmically infectious and melodically more developed than the early disco songs.

Madonna also seemed to become more mature in her films. She staged herself not only as an erotic vamp but as a serious actress. Her embodiment of Evita Perón in Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical and film of the same name was widely acclaimed. Here, she showed herself to be a serious singer and actress, thrilling millions with her song *Don't Cry for Me Argentina*. In the figure of Evita Perón, Madonna also expressed her own longing for recognition and affection.

In this song, as in the entire film, Madonna shows not only her glamorous but also her quiet and sensitive sides. So it is not surprising that she longed for deeper bonds and family happiness beyond her sexual provocations. In October 1996, at the age of 38, she gave birth to her first daughter. After the birth, she remained physically active and kept fit through disciplined training. She also continued to develop artistically and received four Grammys for her album *Ray of Light* in March 1998. Thematically, she processed her personal life situations, for example, her current motherhood. The title song expresses a deep-rooted longing for security.

In interviews, Madonna appeared as a happy mother and gave educational advice. She began to occupy herself with Far Eastern religions and to study Kabbalistic writings. She soon separated from the father of her first child, the fitness trainer Carlo Leon, and in September 1998, she connected with British director Guy Ritchie. She married him after the birth of their son, Rocco, and started a new world tour a year and a half after Rocco's birth. Another year later, Madonna was back on stage as an actress and received an audience award. She wrote the theme song to a James Bond film in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center. Madonna also played a small supporting role in the film, which was released in October 2002. The song *Die Another Day* mentions Sigmund Freud and expresses a desire for self-transformation.

Madonna increasingly spoke out publicly on political issues since 2003, taking a stand against the war in Iraq. In addition to collaborating with other musicians such as Ricky Martin, Prince, and Britney Spears, she wrote children's books. *English Roses* became very successful, and Madonna donated the profits to various children's charities. Her *2004 Re-Invention Tour* thrilled a large fan base, and she performed in benefit concerts for the Tsunami victims in 2005. Her skillful self-promotion benefited greatly from these engagements.

Even accidents could not paralyze her drive. A fall from a horse, which led to several broken bones, did not prevent her from working on the new dance video *Hung Up* and producing it two months later. The title song, backed by an elaborate advertising campaign, became a runaway success. The *Confessions Tour* a few months later also led to sold-out performances worldwide. Their religiously offensive provocations continued to ignite fierce protests and legal action.

In contrast to her collaboration with exclusive fashion designers and the corresponding appearances, Madonna was interested in poverty-stricken children, especially in Malawi. She campaigned for climate protection, supported AIDS aid projects, and in 2007 was voted the third most influential personality in the world by Forbes magazine. She was received by Israeli President Shimon Peres, participated in the stirring *Songs of Mass Destruction* and made *Filth of Wisdom*, a socially

critical film. The documentary film she produced about Malawi was presented at the Cannes Film Festival. Numerous concerts and advertising campaigns for luxury goods accompanied these activities.

Madonna, at 50, continued her sexual provocations despite her incredible workload and family life with two of her own and an adopted child. She freely publicized her affair with a Brazilian model 18 years her junior. Almost simultaneously, she adopted another child from Malawi, taking on high bureaucratic and legal hurdles as well as public criticism. She also continued to plead the case for disadvantaged children in Malawi and donated to earthquake victims in Haiti. She wrote a screenplay and directed another film. In 2012, her twelfth album *MDNA* was released, and she produced a sexually provocative video to accompany it. Depictions of violence on the corresponding tour also led to outrage. She became the highest paid performer in show business, according to *Forbes*.

Madonna continued to attract international attention with sexual and aggressive provocations as she aged. Lewd photos of the 56-year-old appeared, and her tour *Rebel Heart* tied in with earlier aggressive-erotic stagings. At the same time, she advocated women's rights and gave a speech against sexism after Donald Trump's inauguration as American president. She stayed true to her motto, *Express Yourself*. In this song, the still youthful Madonna advocated once again for erotic self-realization.

These messages of a self-confident woman still inspire an audience of millions today. Some may find the lyrics simple, the music conventional, the productions irreverent, and the marketing unrestrained. But you can't deny Madonna's drive for artistic self-realization and her ability to overcome despair and to stand up for philanthropy and peace.

Madonna's road to success

Madonna's life and work are highly instructive for a deeper understanding of creativity. If we take the "Big Five of Creativity" as a guide, the following picture emerges: It is obvious that Madonna was a gifted child. Physically, she was among the smallest but made strength out of it with her great vitality. She had dancing and musical talents and was a very good student, but not a prodigy.

Essential foundations of her success were her energy and diligence. These led to her acquiring a great deal of musical knowledge and dancing skills. Madonna liked to learn from others and at the same time taught herself a lot. Early in life, she developed the motivation to make something of herself. Her discipline was essential to achieving her goals. She never let herself be sidetracked and avoided letting alcohol and drugs interfere with her talents and drive.

Madonna, like Mick Jagger, is a good example of a personality that is simultaneously flexible and open to stimuli as well as goal-oriented and resistant. We find this mixture, as already described in the first chapter, in many highly creative

personalities. However, she grew up in a difficult environment. The early death of her mother was particularly traumatic. However, she always found benevolent companions and supportive environmental conditions to steer her self-doubt and angry feelings into constructive channels. Thus, she became cheerful and life-oriented, unusually resilient, and purposefully active.

From a developmental and depth-psychological perspective, it can be assumed that in early childhood, she experienced her mother as safe, affectionate, and loving. This, together with her talents, enabled her to build up a protected inner world. This enabled her to cope with difficult situations. Ultimately, she was able to process painful life events artistically. This also included the difficult relationship with her strict father, which, in addition to all the hardships, also gave her support. Later in life, she repeatedly found friends who helped her grow personally and artistically. She cultivated supportive relationships and separated when they did not help her any longer.

Eroticism and sexuality play a prominent role in Madonna's songs and stage performances. Her early songs are relatively harmless invitations to dance and relish erotic advances. They are rhythmically stimulating, catchy, and quite conventional. Later, she tackles comparatively controversial subjects. She deals with her strict Catholic upbringing through provocative lyrics and even more provocative staging. One can morally condemn this. But we should not overlook the fact that Madonna is also seriously fighting for her survival in a world that is difficult for her. She is not only striving for self-expression but also wrestling with ties that bind and drag her down. At the same time, she seems to sense how important these ties are and distances herself from them all the more startlely because of it.

Through it all, Madonna remains true to life and hits the sore and also yearning points of her audience like few others. In the unwritten book about the accompanying music that many listen to during sex, her songs are likely to play a major role. They are stimulating and cheerful but also advocate pushing back boundaries. These are experienced as pleasurable by many who can take this as artistic erotic play. One could object critically that a part of her audience is shocked and hence playful distance is lost. This is particularly problematic where she links sex with violence and sexualizes violence.

Madonna continues to be one of the most courageous enemies of drugs and alcohol. In circles where drugs are touted as chic and part of the lifestyle, she has shown artists that drugs and excessive amounts of alcohol do not promote creative development, but usually prevent it. By contrast, dance, song, and various other musical productions have been a lifeblood for Madonna. People have always processed their longings and hopes, disappointments, and despairs in dance and song. So the enigmatic songs and dance performances were also vital for Madonna to find herself and to free herself from unpleasant moods. She was able to cope with her despair artistically and creatively to deal with hatred and violence, from the crucifixion of Jesus Christ to modern wars. This also enabled her to become creative and socially committed. In 2023 she started a new tour and the New York Times comments on February 8 that her "new face" is again a "brilliant provocation".

John Lennon: The Dreamer

Less happy in dealing with despair, hatred, and violence was John Lennon. Yet he too was talented, acquired musical skill and knowledge, and was intrinsically motivated. In terms of personality traits, he also displayed an interesting mix of extroversion and introversion, openness and withdrawal. In comparison with Madonna, John Lennon was less resilient in transforming his despair into art in the long term. Starting with his mother, he lacked supportive bonds in his childhood, and his artist friends and romantic relationships could not provide him with the support he needed to creatively cope with the wounds of his childhood and the sufferings of a violent environment.

Imagine, a longingly touching and hopeful song to this day, beautifully condenses John Lennon's confrontation with despair, hatred, and violence. The lyrics express the longing for a world without aggressive religions, state borders, greed, hunger, and personal exclusion. As promising as it seems, it seems naïve in the face of the collective and individual conflicts that pervade our history. The song is almost a counter-model to the Rolling Stones' song *Sympathy for the Devil*, written a short time before, which describes the destructive violence in our history and demands that we deal with it.

John Lennon composed *Imagine*, an anthem of the "Love and Peace" movement, at a time when he himself separated from the Beatles after serious disagreements. In his last stage appearances, he seemed sad, thoughtful, and introverted. This was preceded by a unique rise. His first songs, composed with Paul McCartney, convey a carefree joie de vivre. Their themes revolve unselfconsciously around youthful longings for love. Later, the duo wrote more thoughtful lyrics that also dealt with despair and violence.

At the time of John Lennon's birth, the Second World War was raging. His parents gave him "Winston" as his middle name, referring to the wartime prime minister Winston Churchill. John grew up with his mother Julia and her family in Liverpool. He rarely saw his father, who went to sea as a sailor. Five years after his birth, Julia conceived another child by another man, and his parents separated. John was entrusted to his aunt and her husband and had little contact with his mother thereafter.

According to Philip Norman's biography (2009), John Lennon's musical interest and talent became apparent at an early age. He began to play the harmonica as a child and also occupied himself with other musical instruments. In school, he liked to draw and wrote little nonsense lyrics. After John became close to his mother again in his 17th year, a tragedy occurred. Following a meeting with her son, Julia Lennon was hit by a car and died from her injuries. Years later, John expressed his despair in his heartbreaking song *Mother*. At the same time, he lamented how much he missed his father. Incidentally, the early death of his mother connected him with his friend and colleague Paul McCartney, whose mother died of cancer when he was 14 years old.

Musically, John was enthusiastic about rock 'n' roll. Elvis Presley is said to have had a decisive influence on his desire to become a rock 'n' roll musician. John founded his first band in 1956, met Paul McCartney in July 1957, and immediately hired him for his band. In the same year, he began to study at the Liverpool School of Art. However, he devoted most of his time to music, usually accompanied by Paul McCartney. Together, they composed their first songs. In February 1958, George Harrison joined the duo and after they had found a suitable drummer in Pete Best, the four boys from Liverpool went on tour. Between 1960 and 1962, they received some good engagements in Hamburg. John Lennon acted for the most part as the leader of the band and later found he had really grown up during this time. The group also became increasingly popular in Liverpool. Brian Epstein, who became the Beatles' manager in December 1961, contributed significantly to their rise. He arranged a contact with music producer George Martin, who facilitated their first record deal. He also urged the Beatles to replace their drummer Pete Best with Ringo Starr. Now, the first songs were written that made the Beatles world famous.

Almost all the songs of the early period are beautiful and harmless love songs. The film *A Hard Day's Night* best conveys the attitude to life of the Beatles and their fans to today's viewers. Released in 1964, the film condenses the band's breathtaking rise. The title song sings of the return of a hardworking man who finds peace and relaxation in the arms of his wife: "And when I get home to you/I find the things that you do/Will make me feel all right...!". Bourgeois rules are cheerfully ironized, and a harmless artistic counter-world is created. The songs remain consistently in the haze of conventional love longings: "I want to hold your hand ..." and "I wanna be your lover, I wanna be your man" are typical song lines. Like the song *She Loves You*, most of the songs are cheerful and optimistic in mood. The nice boys from Liverpool came across as fun-loving and carefree. Soon they were followed by screaming teenagers, and a hysterical cult of stardom unfolded. In the film, the exuberant hustle and bustle is repeatedly interrupted by the manager, who represents the reality principle and demands disciplined artistic work. Even the brushes with the police seem quite harmless from today's perspective. Songs like *I Should Have Known Better*, *Can't Buy Me Love*, and *And I Love Her* tell of the unconcerned aspects of youthful love.

Other examples of cheerful upbeat love songs are songs like *Love Me Do*. The time seemed ripe for the Beatles' boyish eroticism. In the 1960s, England, like most countries in Western Europe, was recovering from postwar stagnation. Young people increasingly had the time and means to consume culture. Music and the visual arts became popular in wide circles. Academies opened their doors, and pirate radio stations made the new songs easily accessible. A worldwide youth movement searched for idols that embodied anti-authoritarianism and sexual liberation. The Beatles met the need for carefree joie de vivre with their appearance and songs, while other groups, such as the Rolling Stones, also stressed the darker side of the blues from the beginning. Beyond these differences, a youthful mass audience was ready to cross bourgeois boundaries and gave the beat and rock groups breathtaking popularity.

After the great success of *A Hard Day's Night*, the Beatles' songs became more reflective, and the 1964 LP *Beatles for Sale* contained songs like *Tell Me Why*, *I'm a Loser*, and *No Reply*. Melancholic lyrics now pushed their way to the fore: "Look what you're doin'/I'm feeling blue and lonely" is a line in the song *What You're Doing*. In *A World without Love*, the Beatles sing, "Please lock me away/and don't allow the day/here inside where I hide/with my loneliness." Are these the first effects of drug use or expressions of coping with melancholic moods so often associated with creative pursuits? The Beatles increasingly sing about sad everyday experiences and disappointments in love in *You Can't Do That*, for example, and their seemingly carefree early phase seems to have ended. In the song *Help*, they call for support.

John Lennon's life had indeed changed a lot, and he was not the only one whose success had literally gone to his head. But perhaps his cry for help was partly due to his conflicts with his first wife. He had married Cynthia Powell, a friend from art school, in August 1962. Their relationship became difficult and was soon marred by heated arguments. In April 1963, their son Julian was born, but even after his birth the relationship of the couple did not get better. Artistically, however, John Lennon continued to develop with the Beatles and found his own musical language. *Norwegian Wood*, *Nowhere Man*, *Girl*, and *I'm down* are more complex than the early songs but also sadder and more thoughtful. They deal with disappointment and isolation. The song *In My Life*, released in 1965, appears like a balance sheet of his life.

Songs like *Yesterday*, released in 1965, also sing about transience in sadly beautiful words and melodies; they still resonate today. However, Lennon's drug use seemed to increase during this time, and it is still controversial as to whether LSD increased John Lennon's creativity or severely damaged it and, together with other drugs, led to an emotional drain. The 1966 LP *Revolver* seems to contain songs with psychedelic motifs like *Tomorrow Never Knows*, but they could also be influenced by Buddhist spirituality.

In contrast to these spiritual lyrics, songs remain in the foreground that are taken from everyday life and, like *Eleanor Rigby*, sing about the loneliness of people in an exemplary way. The great fulfillment of love, which finds a climax in the hymn *All You Need Is Love*, only appears momentarily. It is grounded in loneliness and despair.

The release of *All You Need Is Love* was preceded by public criticism of John Lennon as a person. In an interview, he had said that Christianity would shrink and disappear and that the Beatles were already more popular than Jesus Christ. This interview may have been a slip, perhaps also a sign of hubris. In general, the youthful fire seemed to have gone out of John Lennon, and the group decided not to go on tour anymore. This was possibly due to the fact that John Lennon no longer felt safe in public. Alongside this, however, his energy and the enjoyment of performing on stage seemed to have gone. He took a different route than his antipode Mick Jagger, who felt more and more comfortable on stage and performed better and better concerts with increasing age. Obviously, Mick Jagger vitalized himself through his performances, while John Lennon now preferred to retreat into the exclusive, yet publicly staged, relationship with Yoko Ono.

Before that, however, there was a musical climax. After the Beatles had finished touring, they retreated to a studio in August 1966 and developed songs that represent a significant advancement both literarily and musically. During five months of concentrated work, the album *Stgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* was created. The prereleased songs *Penny Lane* and *Strawberry Fields Forever* already broke new musical ground. The themes and instrumentation take musical forms from the Baroque era and ancient India and combine these influences in highly original ways. The masterpieces created are considered a unique artistic advancement in pop music.

The LP, released in June 1967, became a highlight of the "Summer of Love." The stories told in the songs, however, are only the slightest bit psychedelic and an expression of "hippie hedonism." Like the earlier lyrics, they take up everyday experiences and transform them musically and literarily into novel works of art: *Getting Better*, for example, is prompted by Paul McCartney's father's birthday. A central theme is childhood. In *Strawberry Fields Forever*, John recalls Salvation Army celebrations outside his home and goes on a musical journey back to Victorian times. A circus poster from 1843 inspires *Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite* and *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds* is inspired by drawings by John Lennon's son.

Often, the songs contain childlike, dream-lost views of our world. Diverse modulations with frequent changes of key enable a kaleidoscopic change of perspectives, as in classical music. The line "The girl with kaleidoscope eyes" does not necessarily have to be understood as a psychedelic experience, but rather as an expression of childlike play that also deals with sad experiences. *She's leaving home*, while inspired by a recent newspaper article, also condenses the separation conflicts between parents and children in a universally applicable way. The postwar stress of the 1950s and the hopes and aspirations of a new generation resonate. A neutral observer describes how an adolescent girl secretly leaves her parental home. The longings and disappointments of a small family are expressed polyphonically and in counterpoint. The instrumentation with harps and strings differs significantly from usual rock songs.

The second side of the LP is also highly original. The Beatles not only use Indian instruments such as the sitar but also with the constant change of rhythm apply essential principles of Indian music, for example, in *Within You Without You* and *We were talking*. The song *A Day in the Life* is another highlight of the album. It begins with the description of the death of a young man who had just graduated, mentioned in the daily press: "Although the news was rather sad, I had to laugh" A sense of alienation spreads, ending in a desire to "turn on" a fictional you. On the one hand, the song is classically orchestrated and at the same time contains many experimental innovations. The drums are not only used as in blues and rock but also like the percussion instruments of classical music. Paul McCartney appears influenced by the aleatoric compositional techniques of John Cage and Karl-Heinz Stockhausen. A 40-piece orchestra accompanies the song, and seven pianos play a final chord that resonates for an unusually long time.

After John Lennon wrote the "anthem of the summer of love" with *All You Need Is Love* in 1967, he increasingly went his own way despite the great successes of the Beatles. The sudden death of his friend and manager Brian Epstein in August 1967

may have contributed to this. The painful loss brought back memories of the death of his mother. Initially, however, he remained with the Beatles and found spiritual support from guru Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

In May 1968, he connected with the Japanese avant-garde artist Yoko Ono, whom he had met at an exhibition in 1966. He held joint exhibitions with her, but they were nowhere near as successful as his musical performances. In his appearance, he appeared to have matured, but the youthful verve seemed to have vanished. John Lennon appeared spiritualized, emotionally distant, and less energetic than in earlier days. In the meantime, he had also withdrawn from his wife Cynthia and his son. His album *Unfinished Music No.1: Two Virgins*, released with Yoko Ono, was disappointing. Their avant-garde sound collages were much less respected and praised than the Beatles' compositions.

John Lennon continued to seek contact with the rock 'n' roll scene after the separation from the Beatles. In 1968, he performed together with Eric Clapton, Keith Richards, and Mitch Mitchell. However, the influence of Yoko Ono was greater, and the so-called happenings determined their artistic activities. They increasingly took a stand on political events such as the "Paris May" riots. Both enacted their lives as a political work of art and, for example, staged a legendary "Bed-In" for a week. They gave interviews from their beds in which they spread their political messages.

In the meantime, John Lennon had become addicted to heroin, and his musical assets threatened to dry up completely. For five long years, he fought against his addiction (see Dogett 2009). In *Cold Turkey*, he describes the pain and agony during heroin withdrawal. His compositions were no longer well received, and he shifted to poster and billboard campaigns promoting worldwide peace.

Inwardly, however, he was at war with many people, especially with his old friends from the Beatles and here again especially with Paul McCartney. Insulting and mutually embarrassing public statements were made. The project of a documentary film about the Beatles was marked by conflicts within the group. The last joint album *Abbey Road*, released in September 1969, was criticized by Lennon in several interviews despite its success. In September 1969, Lennon expressed his final desire to separate from the Beatles, and in April 1970, Paul McCartney officially announced the breakup of the band.

To alleviate his psychological suffering, Lennon underwent primal scream therapy from the beginning of 1970. This form of treatment, developed by Arthur Janov, was widely used at the time, especially in California. Like many experimental psychotherapy procedures, it did not catch on as a treatment for mental disorders. It was able to help some people in their personal development and at least did no harm to others. But for many, especially psychologically vulnerable patients, it was dangerous. Especially in connection with drugs, primal scream therapy could lead to psychotic disorders and increase suicidal tendencies.

Therapy encouraged Lennon's increased self-reflection and led to lyrics that deal with his personal problems. They flow into his first solo album, which was released in December 1970 and was not very well received. He had more success with his song *Power to the People*, which was released in March 1971. Political themes also expressed his inner conflicts and helped him to transform them into an artistic form.

The song *Working Class Hero* is a particular example of this. In this song, John Lennon expresses his search for himself and for self-assurance about his position in the world. Among other things, the song describes his personal despair and the political protest of an entire generation. The title song of his second own album *Imagine*, released in May 1971, now became the most famous manifesto of his philosophical and political convictions.

Imagine expresses the attitude to life and the hopes of a worldwide pacifist movement. Lennon evokes the vision of a global, peaceful, nonreligious and propertyless world without greed and hunger, where all people are united as brothers: “You may say I’m a dreamer, but I’m not the only one. I hope one day you’ll join us ...” The song also became commercially very successful, consistently reaching top positions in the charts for over two decades. At the summer Olympics in London, it was played at the closing ceremony. However, the song and its message of peace did not prevent Lennon and Paul McCartney from waging a fierce feud. In several songs, both insult each other, and Lennon publicly opined that McCartney had overadjusted and that his music was inferior.

Yoko Ono and John Lennon address a variety of social and political problems in their songs. The political conditions in the USA, which they both rejected, led to the protest songs on the album *Some Time in New York City* in 1972. They were under surveillance by the CIA and FBI and ended up in a defensive position. The album was badly received; it became John Lennon’s most unsuccessful studio album. On 30 August 1972, the last concert of John Lennon with Yoko Ono took place. Musically it seems quite simple, at least in comparison with *Stgt. Pepper’s* flight of fancy. Many were bothered by Yoko Ono’s unmelodic and thin vocals. John seemed peculiarly motionless, powerless, and hopeless. One might wonder whether he was missing the inspirational Beatles. Or was he lost in the pathos of Yoko Ono? Was he scarred by drugs? But his interpretation of *Mother* is heartbreaking.

In April 1973, Lennon and Ono proclaimed the fictitious state of “Nutopia,” a peaceful country without borders. But his personal relationship with Yoko Ono was increasingly poisoned by conflicts, and they agreed on a temporary separation. Yoko asked her secretary and press agent May Pang to take care of John. Both moved to Los Angeles and began an affair. After years of drug use, self-destructive alcohol excesses now dominated John Lennon’s life, as they did before that of Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison, and later Amy Winehouse. John Lennon had already sung about the downside of outward glamor on his album *Imagine* with the song *Crippled Inside*. Here, he describes in harsh self-criticism that he feels deeply disturbed. He continues the description of his states of despair in *It’s So Hard*, another song from the album *Imagine*.

As always, we must not interpret this text only as a self-testimony. It also gives expression to general moods. But John Lennon’s struggle with himself is unmistakable. His artistic (self-)revival attempts, e.g., with the album *Rock ‘N’ Roll*, had only moderate success. He tried hard to come back to himself through musical work and got in touch with Paul McCartney again. After a joint jam session, however, there was no further musical collaboration. John Lennon tried his luck without his old friends and produced the album *Walls and Bridges* in mid-1974 with the help of

Elton John. The album and the single *Whatever Gets You Thru the Night* topped the US Billboard charts. The song, accompanied by Elton John, is musically bright and upbeat. And the lyrics are also reminiscent of the everyday joys of life. But it also sounds like a self-exhortation: “Whatever gets you through the night/it’s all right, it’s all right.”

In early 1975, John Lennon and Yoko Ono moved back together, and in October they had a son. John Lennon took care of his son and seemed to enjoy the role as a “househusband,” while Yoko Ono took care of the family’s business affairs. Both publicly stated that they wanted to retire to family life until their son was five years old. Renouncing the rock ‘n’ roll circus and supported by some therapies, John Lennon managed to free himself from his heroin addiction. In August 1980, he began his last album *Double Fantasy* with Yoko Ono, and both planned tours to Japan, Europe, and the USA. On the evening of 8 December 1980, John Lennon was shot dead by a mentally disturbed assassin outside his home. His murder caused great horror and his songs reached top positions in the charts again. John Lennon remains unforgotten to this day as a musician, songwriter, and peace activist and remains an inspiring companion for many who are searching for existential and artistic self-realization.

What made John Lennon creative and what hindered him?

John Lennon was a talented child who took an early interest in music and art. In self-study, he acquired the necessary skills in singing and playing the guitar. He was interested in many genres of music besides rock ‘n’ roll. In later life, he was attracted by spiritual, philosophical, and political subjects. He had a strong motivation for artistic self-expression. However, his drive for artistic work was temporarily inhibited by drugs, especially heroin. In his last concerts, in stark contrast to Madonna or Mick Jagger, for example, he seemed strangely lacking in energy. On the one hand, his personality traits favored his creativity. He was open to stimuli, curious, and flexible. His tendency to withdraw, to become introverted, probably also promoted his creativity, but on the other hand it led to antagonistic distancing from friends and colleagues that inhibited his creativity. His environmental conditions were simultaneously both conducive and detrimental to his creativity. On the one hand, he was able to process artistically his difficult childhood and traumatic experiences of loss. On the other hand, he was drawn into a quagmire of loneliness, self-doubt, personal disappointment, and states of despair from which he was not always able to free himself by artistic, spiritual, and political means. Again, in contrast to Madonna and Mick Jagger, he could not sufficiently use professional and erotic relationships to free himself from his despair and self-destructive tendencies. He fought hate and violence artistically and politically but was also sometimes at the mercy of these destructive forces himself.

Amy Winehouse: The Fallen Angel

Amy Winehouse died at the age of 27. She was found lifeless in her room; the autopsy revealed a blood-alcohol content of over 4.16‰ (see Newkey-Burden, 2011). A wonderful artist had fallen silent. How could this happen?

Rehab, one of Amy Winehouse's most successful songs, tells how she became addicted to alcohol and why she resisted treatment. In 2008, she won a Grammy with this song. In this work, Amy Winehouse condenses her tragedy. The mesmerizing rhythm and blues, soul, pop, and jazz singer mentions her idols Ray Charles and Donny Hathaway. She talks about how her father and friends tried to get her to go to rehab. She sings that she denies these proposals because she fears losing her lover. Her desperation is also a reason why she drinks: "I'm going to lose my baby/ So I always keep a bottle near /He said, 'I think you're depressed'/This me yeah baby, and the rest/I don't ever want to drink again/I just, oh, I just need a friend .../ It's just 'til these tears have dried ..."

The poetic verses of the song correspond to Amy Winehouse's life situation. She had a drug-addicted lover with whom she could experience passionate closeness. However, there were also many violent arguments and desperate separations. A few years earlier, after years of regular cannabis use, she became depressed and listless. Consequently, she switched to drive-enhancing drugs like cocaine and amphetamines, which of course dragged her down even deeper. She was unable to free herself from depressive moods and the hatred of herself with all her wonderful musicality and poetic power. With her drug-addicted lover she lapsed into a desperate vicious circle and finally took her own life with suicidal amounts of alcohol.

The documentary film *Amy*, released in 2015, impressively depicts this tragic development of the artist, who was born on September 14, 1983. At the beginning, we see Amy Winehouse singing a jazz and blues version of *Happy Birthday* in a circle of friends. One of her friends is celebrating her 14th birthday, and everyone is sucking lollipops. Amy appears as an attractive young woman. Then *Moon River* plays, accompanied by the National Youth Jazz Orchestra. Amy is now 16 years old and talks about her idols Sarah Vaughan, Tony Bennett, and others. She likes jazz, blues, soul, and rock, "a whole lot of everything" as she says. Singing is her elixir of life; she feels happy when she can sing. You can hear rhythmic songs sustained by Amy's comfortable melodies and her fiercely rough voice.

In doing so, she arouses such deep feelings in the president of the Sony company that he offers her a first record contract. The film then flashes back to her early youth, where the 13-year-old moves in with a friend so that she can smoke marijuana undisturbed by her mother. She deals with her first major disappointment in love in her song *Stronger Than Me*. The singer describes her search for a man she can lean on and who can help to accept herself. Instead, he himself seems in need of help and comfort and can't make her feel complete: "You should be stronger than me... You should be the man... where I feel I am..."

In the film, Amy tells the audience that she is looking for her own musical expression. She wants to create something new and very personal with her songs. They

should show how she really feels. In another song, she freely confesses that she could not resist another man: "His eyes were like yours ... I went to bed with him ... No, that's not disloyalty ... I thought of you ... he looked like you ... I thought that love is blind." Amy sings the song to her friends in an apartment. Here, she succeeds in expressing her own feelings and experiences very directly.

On her tours, she found this more difficult, and it caused her great trouble to defend herself against intrusive photographers. This became particularly clear during her promotional tour for the album *Frank* in October 2003. She was followed by reporters at every opportunity, and it seemed as if no intimacy was allowed. Marijuana continued to play a major role, Amy gleefully showing off a packet of "weed." Possibly this helped her to retreat befuddled from the assaults of sensationalist reporters and fans.

In the film, Amy sings her lyrics with a wonderful soul and blues voice and also improvises as a jazz singer. On the guitar, she accompanies herself with interesting rhythms and blues and jazz chords. Her musical and literary talents and skills and her high artistic motivation are unmistakable. But what about her resilience and environmental support? A scene change shows Amy, about 5 years old, first crying and then defiantly escaping a woman's hand. Her mother comments that as a child Amy told her, "Oh Mama, you're so soft with me, I could get away with murder." Her mother had not been strong enough to just say "stop." It would probably have been important to set boundaries for the very active but also insecurely attached child. The father could not fulfill this role either; he was seldom present, as Amy emphasizes several times. She sings, "Understand, he was never a family man ... all the shit my mother hates ... I can't help but point out my Freudian fate ... an animal aggression is my downfall ... my destructive side has grown huge now ..." (Amy, 2015).

Amy often felt left alone. In her adolescence, she managed to cope artistically with sadness and disappointments, worries, and hardships. However, her talent and motivation were weakened by early and regular marijuana use. After a few years, she became depressed and also developed an eating disorder. She expressed her family tragedy briefly in her songs. The verses were surrounded by enchanting jazz rhythms and harmonies, and Amy's pianist praised her pure and emotional relationship with music. She would die for her music, he said.

At the age of 20, Amy had become an internationally renowned jazz, soul, blues, and rock singer, winning many awards and thrilling an audience of millions. However, in addition to marijuana, she was now increasingly turning to alcohol. One of her accompanying musicians said during a concert in 2004 that she was quite a fascinating person and could drink anyone under the table. Her performances, however, are still rousing and enchanting to this day. She was not very interested in external success. Real success for her meant the freedom to forget everything else and go into the recording studio with good musicians. She wanted to be left alone by the media and make her music. But the public trash scene gave a different picture of her. Here, she was stylized more and more into a sex and drug icon. As a present-day viewer, one gets the impression that she was losing herself in this role.

Her personal relationships were also exploited by the media. She became close with a musician friend, and he sold the story of their affair under the title “Bondage Crazy Amy Just Can’t Beehive in Bed.” This story appeared while she was dating her off-and-on lover Blake Fielder-Civil. She had a wild time with this partner, who was 5 years her senior. Passionate closeness alternated with heated arguments. In an interview, Amy Winehouse admitted that she beat her lover when she was drunk. Fielder-Civil celebrated his addiction to various substances and dragged Amy into a self-damaging drug quagmire.

Her parents publicly expressed concern that both of them would self-destruct and eventually take their own lives. Fielder-Civil told a British newspaper that he introduced Amy to crack and heroin. Both would inflict cuts on themselves to ease the pain of withdrawal. Fielder-Civil was also violent toward others and faced over 6 months in jail for it in July 2008. He had fallen into a spiral of drugs, self-destruction, and violence from which he was unable to extricate himself.

In January 2009, Amy told a music magazine that she had returned to a love relationship and now no longer needed drugs. Her now-ended marriage with Fielder-Civil had been based on drugs. Two months later, she told a newspaper that she still loved Blake Fielder-Civil, though. He was, she said, the male version of herself. In the movie *Amy*, Fielder-Civil says that they are both like twins who sabotage themselves. In a mix of love and hate, they became dependent on each other like Pamela Courson and Jim Morrison. Fielder-Civil confirmed what Amy described in one of her songs. She mentioned that her promiscuity was caused by her father’s infidelity to her mother.

Amy tried to come to terms with her constantly crisis-ridden relationship with Fielder-Civil in her songs, e.g., *Unholy War*: “I refuse to let him go ... At his side and drunk on pride ... And I’ll fight ‘till the bitter final...” Here, Amy combines the deep passion she shares with Fielder-Civil with the destructive aspects of their relationship. In doing so, she gives new expression to a long cultural history of love and death. But it didn’t stop at artistic expression; the couple also destroyed each other in reality.

In her song *Back to Black*, she gives moving expression to her desperate disappointment, black melancholy, and self-destruction: “He left no time to regret /Kept his dick wet/With his same old bet/Me and my head high/And my tears dry/...And I tread a troubled track/... I go back to black/We only said goodbye with words/I died a hundred times.../I love you much/It’s not enough/... And I’m a tiny penny... /And I go back to the black...”

Amy Winehouse sings with deep expression her despair similarly impressive to the Doors in *Strange Days* and the Rolling Stones in *Paint it Black*. Black, however, stands not only for her depression but certainly for the black hole into which vast quantities of alcohol dragged her, and probably heroin, which damaged Amy Winehouse most severely. She had psychiatric examinations and also took medication for withdrawal symptoms. However, she refused psychotherapy and resembled Jim Morrison in this respect as well. As in his last concerts, a desperate, media-exploited sacrificial ritual took place with Amy on stage.

The film *Amy* shows how her downfall was staged by the media. We see her lying huddled on the floor, semiconscious, with a whisky glass in front of her. The manager comments on her problems. Her father says she's fine and doesn't need treatment. Meanwhile, photos are shown where she appears heavily intoxicated by drugs and/or alcohol. Paparazzi constantly besiege her, contributing to the destruction of her privacy. Many want to own a piece of her. And she sings about her addiction over and over again. Her verses reveal how hard she tries to manage her vulnerability, desperation, and anger. Even her sometimes rough demeanor can barely mask how threatened and alone she feels inside. Through alcohol and drugs, she is able to escape tormenting feelings, but only for a short time. Afterwards her inner demons haunt her all the more cruelly.

Amy Winehouse also suffered physically. Probably due to her constant smoking, she contracted breathing problems as a symptom of a chronic lung disease. Possibly this disease was also caused by the combination of cannabis with alcohol, a combination that can lead to pulmonary fibrosis. A few days before her death, she appeared intoxicated to her body guard, but on 23 July 2011 he found her still laughing, listening to music, and watching television until 2 a.m.. At 3 a.m., he checked on her again and found Amy unconscious. Emergency medical services were called at 3:54, and her death was announced a short time later.

The wonderful voice of a great artist had faded away, and a passionate person was gone.

The media was abuzz with coverage, renowned musicians grieved for her and Patty Smith wrote the song *This is the Girl* as a tribute to Amy Winehouse. Her father said goodbye with a "Goodnight, my angel, sleep tight. Mummy and Daddy love you ever so much" (time, 26 July 2011). He later wrote a biography called *Amy: My Daughter* (2012), and her mother also published a book, *Loving Amy: A Mother's Story* (2014). It became more widely known how generously Amy Winehouse had given to charity. Like Madonna, children were particularly close to her heart.

Amy Winehouse: creativity between creation and destruction

If we ask ourselves, as we did with Madonna and John Lennon, what made Amy Winehouse so successful and what she failed at, the five fundamentals of creativity will help us again. There is no doubt that she was gifted and talented. The colors of her wonderful jazz, soul, and blues voice fascinate us to this day. She was also exceptionally musical. She also had the second foundation, the knowledge and skill necessary for artistic creativity. Early on, she worked with her voice, learned the music of important role models, and taught herself to play the guitar. Her motivation for artistic expression, as the third dimension of creativity, was strongly developed. Singing was her essential means of expression, and in her lyrics, she processed feelings of abandonment and self-doubt.

Unfortunately, Amy Winehouse lacked the stability and resilience to cope artistically with her psychological afflictions. Her personality, the fourth foundation of creative success, was too vulnerable to resist difficult circumstances. The positive creative quality of curiosity and openness to stimuli turned into a loss of emotional coherence. In order to cope with her crises, more stable environmental conditions would have been necessary. But she did not experience her mother as stabilizing, and her father was conspicuous by his absence. She also found no creative peer group that could have protected her from her mood swings, alcohol, and drug excesses. In love relationships, she only found affection, recognition, and security for a short time. Her “great love” contributed significantly to her self-destruction.

Amy Winehouse is an excellent example of many artists who are creative not because of, but in spite of, alcohol excesses and drug use. Unfortunately, alcohol and drugs destroyed her creativity early on. This puts her in line with Janis Joplin, Jimmy Hendrix, Brian Jones, Jim Morrison, and Kurt Cobain, all of whom perished from alcohol and drugs by the age of 27. Behind these names are thousands of fans who died in a similar way.

In terms of rock ‘n’ roll, jazz, soul, and blues, we can say with Freddy Mercury that music was Amy Winehouse’s first friend and her last. It was her lifeblood and continues to charm us to this day. Unfortunately, the mental anguish Amy Winehouse went through was too strong and her surroundings too weak to keep the gift she gave us alive any longer.

Jim Morrison: The Shaman

Coping with individual despair and social violence are also central themes in the life and work of pop icon Jim Morrison. These themes, clothed in shamanistic, mythical, and biblical motifs, shaped his lyrics and songs from the very beginning. He geared his efforts to Native American rituals as well as the Old and New Testaments. Since an early age, he read the works of important poets and thinkers such as William Blake, Friedrich Nietzsche, Charles Baudelaire, and Franz Kafka (see Riordan & Prochnicky, 1991). In his poems and lyrics, he dealt with despair, self-destruction, and violence from youth on. Compared to Madonna and the early Beatles, the lyrics of his first poems and songs were darker and more melancholic. The first song on the Doors’ first LP *Break on Through* ties into traditional notions of creation. On the surface, it’s about longing for pleasure and pushing boundaries. It’s gripping and enthralling, especially because of the infectious rhythms and original melodies. The instrumentation is interesting, and Jim Morrison’s charisma and voice are fascinating. But behind it all is a profound exploration of depression and aggression that permeates the entire body of his work.

In interaction with his environment, Jim Morrison stylized himself into a pop icon and a melancholic hero. He embodied an attitude to life between boundless hedonism and deep despair. This attitude toward life was inspired by a creative longing for a better world and threatened by monstrous destructive potential. In his

lyrics and in his life, Jim Morrison tried to escape the threat of hate and violence, unkindness, and contempt by transgressing boundaries and striving for pleasure. He was staged as a mythical figure who was exposed to severe crises and at the same time inspired by wonderful inspiration.

His biography shows how defining the confrontation with despair, hate, and violence was for Jim Morrison. James Douglas Morrison was born on 8 December 1943 in a small town in Florida. His mother, Clara, was Jim's primary caregiver in the early years. She had been characterized by former neighbors as conventional, attractive, and always busy. She punished her son mostly by withdrawing her love and shaming him. Little Jim experienced the resulting feelings of shame and guilt, as well as personal devaluation, as demeaning and hurtful (see Riordan & Prochnicky, 1991). Clara Morrison was scrupulous about ensuring that her son conformed to convention and seemed to have little sympathy for his creative, idiosyncratic, and rebellious sides. For example, after Jim had broken away from his parents and was enjoying his first poetic and musical successes, she rejected tentative attempts at reunion because of her son's long hair.

At the time of his birth, Jim Morrison's father was serving in the US Navy and was destined to rise to the rank of admiral. America was in the midst of the Second World War, and George Stephen Morrison was sent on a combat mission around the Japanese-occupied islands in the Pacific shortly after his son's birth. He took part in that bloody conflict that led to atomic bombs being dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Jim Morrison lived with his mother during the war in the house of his father's parents. He was described as a feisty and sensitive child during this time. In 1947, his sister was born during a time when the family had to move frequently due to the father's frequent transfers.

Looking back, Jim Morrison repeatedly talked about a dramatic childhood experience. In interviews, he referred to it several times as the "most important moment" in his life. During a car ride with his family, a severe thunderstorm occurred. His father woke him up to show him the powerful and frightening clouds. A short time later, a terrible car accident happened. A truck carrying indigenous mine workers collided with another car, the workers were thrown onto the road, and their bleeding bodies lay on the highway. Jim Morrison described this event years later in his song *Dawn's Highway* as a recurring memory and enacted it again and again in his mind.

The memory of this accident accompanied Jim Morrison throughout his life. It probably represents a condensation of frightening experiences and early childhood fears. Jim Morrison identified with the victims in his own unique way and later believed himself to be possessed by the spirit of an indigenous shaman. However, his poetic attempts to cope with anxiety, depression, and violence were not enough. Because of this, Jim Morrison began early in life to silence his inner demons through alcohol and drugs. The experiences that beset him resound in an impressive way in his lyrics and the music that accompanies them, giving the listener an inkling of the deep despair but also of the very special beauty that arises when one feels suffering transformed into a work of art.

However, the attempts at coping artistically did not save Jim Morrison from being exposed to destructive moods. In his poems and song lyrics, he impressively

describes his fears of annihilation and his aggressive fantasies. His most profound creative exploration of despair, hate, and violence appears in the song *The End*, which I will return to at the end of this chapter. Its use in the film *Apocalypse Now*, where it accompanies the horrific dropping of napalm bombs during the Vietnam War, is particularly harrowing.

In his sixth year, Jim's brother Andy was born. Jim began his school career and was described at this time as somewhat phlegmatic, shy, and reserved. He did not seem to develop a trusting bond with his father. Riordan and Prochnicky (1991) described the father as charming in public but rigid and neglectful in the family. Jim also failed to find convincing authorities at school. Later, when Jim's father took more time for his son, it was too late. His attempts at parenting led only to resistance and protest. Jim increasingly rejected his parents, his behavior was unusually rebellious. His parents reacted with anger and emotional withdrawal, leading to a vicious cycle of mutual rejection. Jim's behavior increasingly took on antisocial traits, which can be interpreted in the spirit of pediatrician and psychoanalyst Donald W. Winnicott (1989) as a desperate cry to be seen and heard.

Jim Morrison also felt distant from his brother and younger sister. His relationship with them could not compensate the emotional coldness and emptiness he experienced with his parents. He often viewed their presence with distaste and resentment. As the eldest, he hardly assumed a responsible role but behaved in a largely disinterested and self-centered manner. His brother Andy was less difficult for their parents and was preferred. It could be that Andy had better starting chances with the parents because he was conceived, expected, and born during a period of greater stability and affection between the parents. It is possible that he was more emotionally and intellectually familiar to his parents than the imaginative but headstrong Jim. Andy Morrison reported that his brother often mistreated him. Jim, he said, couldn't stand it when he pursued his own interests: "I don't know how many times I'd be watching TV and he'd come sit on my face and fart. Or ... put his knees on my shoulders so I couldn't move and hang a goober over my face" (quoted in Riordan & Prochnicky, 1991, p. 30). Such behavior, of course, reinforced the vicious cycle between the lack of attention Jim suffered and his aggressive behavior, which increased the rejection by his parents and siblings.

In the early 1950s, the family moved again several times before Steve Morrison was ordered off to the Korean War. Jim withdrew even more during this time and began to read a lot. He developed a peculiar interest in reptiles and later called himself "Lizard King" in reference to Aphorism 276 from Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*: "In all kinds of injury and loss, the lower and coarser soul is better off than the nobler: the dangers of the latter must be greater, its probability of accident and perishing, even with the multiplicity of its conditions of life, is immense. A lizard grows back a finger lost to it: not so with man." In this sense, Jim Morrison vacillated between vulnerable openness and aggressive coarseness, developing a fragile self that was extremely sensitive and poetic on the one hand and raw and destructive on the other. Both ego states often alternated abruptly and were difficult for himself and those around him to come to terms with. It is understandable, that given his vulnerability, he admired the resilience of reptiles. In an interview, he said that only

the reptiles would have a chance to survive the next world war or the total poisoning of our planet (Riordan & Prochnicky, 1991, p. 30).

The upside of these constant moves was that Jim Morrison learned to quickly connect with classmates; the downside was that he became accustomed to not making lasting friendships. Books became his most important friends. They provided him with a sense of stability and a certain degree of coherence. His fascination with Nietzsche's works seems quite understandable, for in them, especially in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, a book to which Morrison was very attracted, Nietzsche speaks of a lonely and wounded soul struggling to survive. Like Nietzsche, Morrison sought to cope with his emotional injuries through narcissistic pseudo-independence. Thus, after his initial successes, he expressed in interviews that all his family members were dead. This did not correspond to factual reality, but to his own psychological reality. He wanted to free himself from the oppressive past and therefore broke off all family connections. As is well known, we are all caught up by what we have repressed and split off, and Jim Morrison, too, remained at the mercy of his traumatic experiences and melancholic moods.

The fight against rejection and devaluation had been a big issue since his school days. As a chubby boy, he felt unattractive and unrespected. He withdrew and found food for ideas of greatness in his books, which comforted him in dealing with everyday reality. He was increasingly disruptive at school and stood out for his lack of discipline. Nevertheless, he performed well and developed into an avid reader of challenging literature. He is reported to have once said that the key to education is reading. This, he said, can be done all by oneself, and everything one needs can be found in books (Riordan & Prochnicky, 1991). His heroes were not rock 'n' roll stars, actors, or athletes, but William Blake, Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud, and Jack Kerouac. He devoured their works and was thus better able to orient himself in his turbulent inner world. As we have seen, he found a world view and a kind of morality all his own, especially in Nietzsche, and they replaced the values of his parents. He began to write poetry and also a diary after being deeply impressed by Franz Kafka's diaries. Sometimes, he took whole pages from Kafka's notes and combined them with his own thoughts. Similarly to Kafka, he seemed to experience his father as a powerful and terrible authority from whom he could only escape through rebellious behavior.

Morrison stayed away from his graduation ceremony in 1961 to express his disdain for conventional events. Afterwards, he moved in with his grandparents and displayed massive discipline problems there as well. In college, he didn't have to try very hard and found plenty of time for nightly drinking excesses. He now developed an extravagant lifestyle and gave free rein to his fantasies in papers. Toward the end of his college years, he befriended a fellow student who wanted to become a dancer. He was attracted by her artistic side.

After graduating from Florida State University, Jim Morrison moved to Los Angeles in 1964 to continue his studies at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). His parents were strictly against this plan. A short time later, Steve Morrison disowned his son and completely broke off contact with him. Jim Morrison also seemed to have completely separated himself from his parents and their values.

By moving to California, he hoped to free himself from debilitating ties. Many young people at the time were similarly enthusiastic in their longing for alternative ways of life, which they associated with “Californian dreaming.”

At UCLA, like many of his fellow students, he felt avant-garde, and together they searched for unconventional, boundary-extending experiences. However, he also longed for binding relationships, for example, with Mary Werbelow. Mary, however, preferred to live alone, prioritizing her career as a dancer over a relationship with Morrison. During this time, Morrison began to consciously stylize his appearance and develop his “Morrison look.”

As is so often the case in adolescence, Jim Morrison’s attempts at liberation led to increased artistic activity. He wanted to become a poet, to express himself, and also to gain public attention. His first poems revolve around loneliness, loss of self, and violence. Later volumes of poetry, *The Lords* and *The New Creatures* (1969), include verses such as the following, “It takes large murder to turn rocks in the shade and expose strange worms beneath. The lives of our discontented madmen are revealed” (p. 16). These lines are dominated by a discussion of frightening experiences, violence, and destruction. Other verses describe frightening physical and psychological changes: “Everything is vague and dizzy. The skin swells and there is no more distinction between parts of the body. An encroaching sound of threatening, mocking, monotonous voices. This is the fear and attraction of being swallowed” (p. 21).

Overall, Jim Morrison’s poems reveal his struggle with violent demons that he tries to banish through writing. This is also an essential aspect of his great idols Blake, Nietzsche, Kafka, and Kerouac. Jim Morrison probably felt that the literary quality of his poems could compete with that of his idols. Things were different with his songs. The creative environment that the *Doors* would provide for him led to great songs that reached a wide audience. While they deal with much the same themes as his poems, they are transformed by the magic of music into works of art that are significant to others as well. A striking example of the transformation of loneliness, alienation, and despair is the song *Riders on the Storm*. It culminates in a longing for an all-encompassing love that redeems him from despair, alienation, and violence. Jim Morrison tried to find redemption via art and, temporarily, by sexuality. Through sex, he found a certain order in the chaos of his feelings and an access to himself and to other people. However, he experienced sex not only as liberation but also as dark and frightening.

After a very disappointing graduation from the University of California in 1965, Jim Morrison led a bohemian life in Venice Beach. In this district of Los Angeles, populated by artists, hippies, and dropouts, he met his former fellow student Ray Manzarek. The latter was enthusiastic about Morrison’s poems and discovered his beautiful voice. He motivated Jim Morrison to work on his voice and to get involved in music. A little later, they founded the rock group *The Doors* with Robby Krieger and John Densmore. This name comes from Aldous Huxley’s work *The Doors of Perception* and is considered an allusion to the hope of being able to expand one’s consciousness through psychedelic drugs.

In 1965, the year of his artistic breakthrough and first-stage appearances in non-descript clubs, Morrison met Pamela Courson. He remained with her in an “open” relationship, shaken by many crises, until his death. Soon, alcohol and drugs took over their lives. Their longing to experience more strongly and expand their selves by alcohol and drugs sprang less from simple hedonism than from feelings of loneliness and alienation felt by both of them.

Jim Morrison found expression for his despair in his lyrics, and the music helped him to transform depression and disorientation into beauty. In many of the songs, he describes how he is assaulted by incomprehensible moods that darken his existence. He felt at the mercy of traumatic memories and confusion. For only a few months, Jim Morrison was able to turn his terrible experiences, which he describes particularly unsparingly in his poems, into art. Soon he fled from life and artistic work into excessive use of drugs and eventually lethal amounts of alcohol. Initially, alcohol and drugs helped him regulate his moods and order the chaos of his ideas, but soon the self-destruction became unstoppable.

In his desperation and search for a better world, Jim Morrison hit the nerve of his generation. In the Californian sun and the longing for “Love and Peace,” this generation was confronted with the horror of the Vietnam War and the apocalyptic threat of nuclear weapons. The songs of the *Doors*’ first album, however, still predominantly express their youthful joys and sufferings; criticism of political conditions came later. At the time of the production of his first album, Jim Morrison was on a rollercoaster of emotions. He was looking for release from crippling attachments and – supported by his fans – learned to fall in love with his reflection as a rock star. Joel Brodsky’s famous photographs stylized him as a beautiful narcissist. However, the photographer also deliberately portrayed him in a crucified pose, hinting at his future tale of woe.

Despite the narcissistic self-stylization usually necessary in show business, Jim Morrison longed for trusting bonds. His musician friends gave him at least initial support, and Pamela Courson offered him a certain security. However, this was disturbed by fleeting affairs and drug excesses, and there were repeated violent rifts. His suffering from himself and the world could only be overcome for a few moments through sex, drugs, and rock ‘n’ roll. He expresses his world-weariness in songs such as *Strange Days*, which appeared in the “Summer of Love” in 1967. The lyrical self, or, as one might say, the poetic self, can no longer mask his despair. Retreat to the mundane pleasures of life is barred. The path to the “next whiskey bar” or the “next little girl,” as in the *Alabama Song* of the first LP, is closed. Now, “strange eyes fill strange rooms.” “Voices will signal their tired end.” In sleep, the self is assaulted by the guilt that it seemed to have overcome: “Her guests sleep from sinning/Hear me talk of sin and you know that is it.” The poetic self feels lonely, alienated even physically, and at the mercy of traumatic memories. “And through their strange hours/We linger alone/Bodies confused /Memories misused ...” The escape routes into transgressive excess are blocked; there is a threat of numbness: “As we run from the day/To a strange night of stone.”

In 1968, the *Doors* released their third album *Waiting for the Sun*. The music became more pleasing but also paler, and the lyrics more banal. Jim Morrison

seemed to lose his dark luminosity, but the songs are still remarkable today. Thoughtful love songs like *Hello, I Love You* are accompanied by cheerful harmonies and rhythms. Morrison combines political themes with his subjective attitude to life, for example, in the song *The Unknown Soldier*. Despair and violence remain general topics in Morrison's lyrics.

The presentation of *The Doors'* fourth LP, *The Soft Parade*, released in 1969, shows the further decline of Jim Morrison. Even on stage and for studio recordings, he hardly ever appeared to be sober anymore. He came often late to his concerts, so that the band had to play instrumental versions or Ray Manzarek had to take over the vocal part. Nevertheless, *The Soft Parade* still contains remarkable songs and lyrics that poetically condense Jim Morrison's struggle with his inner demons and the horrors of the world. The lyrics, rich in associations, invite many interpretations. In the sense of "écriture automatique" or "stream of consciousness," Jim Morrison strings together a wide variety of topics in an unconnected manner. As in rap, rhymes serve as bridges between disparate associations. Compared to the earlier songs that made Jim Morrison famous, it is noticeable that *The Soft Parade* no longer seems immediately comprehensible and has no coherent structure. Presumably, this is a reflection of Jim Morrison's sense of self at the time.

During the production of *Soft Parade*, Jim Morrison was already badly marked by his alcohol and drug abuse. The pop star, so attractive just 2 years earlier, had become grossly overweight, and his face looked bloated. He neglected his clothes and personal hygiene and appeared like a completely unstoppable drunkard. In his performances, he became more and more chaotic and ignited turbulent riots with wild brawls, for example, in 1969 in Miami. He was convicted of "indecent exposure" and "public profanity." His obscene productions seem to be vain attempts to revive his lost poetic power through sexualization. More and more often, the planned concerts had to be cancelled. The band members of the *Doors*, however, managed to persuade him to make studio recordings and, at least for these recordings, to give up alcohol and drugs for a short time. So in 1969, the LP *Morrison Hotel* was released with some remarkable songs. Psychologically interesting is the fact that Morrison expresses with *You Make Me Real* his longing to overcome despair and (self-)hatred through sex and love.

Musically, Morrison returned to old roots in *Morrison Hotel*, e.g., with his *Roadhouse Blues*. In blues songs, he can express his feelings of isolation and depression: "Well, I was down and lonely...." Hate and violence keep intruding, as in *Peace Frog*: "There's blood in the streets/it's up to my ankles .../Indians scattered on dawn's highway, bleeding/Ghosts crowed the young child's fragile eggshell mind. Blood in the streets...." The violence Jim Morrison inflicts on himself also dominates his lyrics and performances, but unlike Madonna and Mick Jagger he cannot tame it through his creativity. The LP *L.A. Woman*, released in October 1970, was to be his last. After a long interruption, his musician friends managed to get Jim Morrison to do some halfway sober studio recordings for the last time. Great songs like *Love her Madly*, *L.A. Woman*, and *Riders on the Storm* emerged. In *Been Down so Long*, he once again succeeded in giving lasting artistic expression to his depressive moods.

The longing to be freed from his despair through erotic relationships and creativity, which permeates Jim Morrison's life and work, remains present in his last year too. Unfortunately, his love relationships and creative gifts could not sufficiently protect him from his self-destructive energies. His personal attachments were too fickle and his creative discipline too weak to cope with his despair at himself and the world. Even his friendships with other pop icons like Andy Warhol couldn't ground him and were usually only bearable for him on drugs. Sex with fans and groupies left feelings of emptiness and could not alleviate his depressive moods.

Jim Morrison's hopes for fulfillment in the dark glow of intoxication and ecstasy became increasingly unrealistic. His performances lapsed more and more into delirious chaos. In 1970, his aggressive outbursts increased noticeably, and he rarely seemed to be sober anymore. In concert recordings, his despair and self-destruction became unmistakable. In March 1971, he took flight from his disorganized life and went to Paris. Friends described him during this time as "severely depressed" and "lonely." He reportedly planned to return to the USA and passed the time with long walks through the city and intemperate drinking and probably drug use. He had now lost all strength to express himself artistically and fell into complete despair. On 3 July 1971, Jim Morrison was found dead in the bathtub at the age of 27 by his lover Pamela Courson. She reported after her return to the USA that Jim Morrison had died of a heroin overdose. Pamela Courson died 3 years later, also of a heroin overdose and also at the age of 27. She too perished in the struggle between creative and destructive forces.

The most impressive condensation of Jim Morrison's struggle with creative passion and destructive despair is found in his mythical song *The End*. If we look at the lyrics from a psychoanalytic point of view, what stands out is that the author or poetic self speaks to a narcissistic mirror image, his "beautiful friend." But this mirror image does not respond, at least the poetic self fears the lack of resonance. "My only friend" may mean narcissistic enclosure, a state in which other referents are out of reach. The future is closed off – "the end of our elaborate plans." The world shatters, and chaos begins its reign – "the end of everything that stands." This affects both outer and inner worlds. The psychic structures become so destabilized that the sense of a coherent self dissolves.

The familiar references of life also dissolve – "No safety or surprise" – and the hope of returning to a common world give way: "I'll never look into your eyes again." The vision of a boundless and free world – "Can you picture what will be? So limitless and free" – leads to desperate loneliness. The loss of natural self-evidence, ordered structures, and values activates the need for support in a world full of despair: "Desperately in need of some stranger's hand,/In a desperate land." Is the longing for God or for his antagonist, who later appears in the form of the serpent, implied here? Does "Lost in a Roman wilderness of pain" imply an overwhelming despair that can no longer be ordered and alleviated by divine Christian hope?

Mental pain and feelings of despair lead to the dissolution of the ego into madness: "And all the children are insane." Memories of early childhood fears emerge,

echoing early traumas and the longing to feel at home in nature: "Waiting for the summer rain." One is reminded of Morrison's penchant for indigenous rites and their connection to nature. The pleasures of civilization are seductive, as in the songs *L.A. Woman*, *City of Light*, and *Twentieth Century Fox*. But they are also dangerous: "There's danger on the edge of town." The poetic self feels drawn to, and threatened by, the abysses of its own memories: "Weird scenes inside the gold mine." In the background stands the lament of what we are doing to Mother Earth. Against this, the lurching search for pleasure and entertainment can only help temporarily: "Take the highway west, baby," the road of dreams does not end in redemption.

The surface is highly fragile, and the self is suddenly plunged into archaic depths: "Ride the snake to the lake, the ancient lake." Jim Morrison, who called himself "Lizard King" to capture something indestructible in the face of rampant destructiveness, chooses here the mythical image of the snake. In mythology, it is a symbol not only of evil but also of the indestructible. It leads into abysses, also into abysses of lust, and is thus also creative. Sexual pleasure, if it really deserves the name, touches the deepest layers of experience – "the ancient lake" – with which sexual partners come into contact in orgasm. One might think here of the ancient Egyptian creation myths, which see in the seeds of the primordial slime the origin of all living things.

Lust evokes a change in space and time, "wants eternity, only eternity," as Nietzsche says, and leads into the abysses of archaic experience: "The snake, he's is long; seven miles... He's old and his skin is cold." These powerful abysses, fascinating but endurable only for more or less brief moments of poetic illumination, are eluded by the poetic self with an ironic reference to the present: "The West is best." But here, too, the magical and uncanny are encountered: "The blue bus is callin' us. Driver, where you takin' us?" In the ride of the powerful serpent, there is possibly a longing for a magical connection between past, present, and future, such as Morrison found enacted in ritual indigenous dances. Desire and the creative, however, are so confusing that they lead to chaos, which the poetic self can only order through violence: "'Father', 'yes, son', 'I want to kill you'/Mother I want to..." This appears as an Oedipal attempt to structure an early embodiment of despair, fear of annihilation, and destructiveness.

But the poetic self wants to live. It seeks liberation from its entanglements through communication and activity: "C'mon, baby, take a chance with us," signifies the turn to life. The self seeks to free itself from the horrors of mythic violence and destructiveness through eroticism and through the creation of its world, especially through poetry and music. However, this succeeds only for the moment of sexual fulfillment and artistic inspiration. Immediately, "the end of laughter and soft lies" reappears: "The end of nights we tried to die. This is the end." This apocalyptic despair and violence is made bearable only by its transformation into poetry and music.

The success and failure of creative coping with depression and aggression in Jim Morrison's life and work

As in all times, as in every culture and as for most people, music was of elementary importance for Jim Morrison. Similar to the mythical Orpheus, he fought against the powers of the underworld with his singing and poetry. In a wonderful way, Jim Morrison succeeded in giving melancholic feelings and chaotic thoughts a shape with his songs and thus counteracting destructive forces. This can be illustrated by the song *When the Music is Over*. Here, Jim Morrison sums up his suffering in himself and the world, his resignation and rebellion, his longing for love, and his fascination with violence. Accompanied by suggestive rhythms and harmonies, the first verses evoke a mood of transience. The listener senses a melancholic fading away. Lyrics and music create a mood of doom, while the singer's voice conveys closeness and humanity. The song now sings about music being the most important, indeed the only, friend in an otherwise eerie world: "Music is your only friend, until the end, until to the end, until the end!"

Poetry and music enable us to transcend the narrow confines of everyday life. They act as a "dance on fire" without sinking into the chaos of violence and destruction. In life and on stage, Jim Morrison increasingly staged himself as a dangerous destroyer. He insulted his audience and endangered them, for example, by throwing around an iron microphone and exposing them to the tumults he himself created. His destructive impulses, however, were directed most strongly against himself. In *When the Music is Over*, he sings of a radical loss of hope. He no longer seems to believe in healing through music and poetry. Music is fading; he can no longer use it as an inner solace and a means of contact with others. He sings that he had to "cancel my subscription to the resurrection" and that his "credentials" should be sent to the "house of detention." There, he will meet friends who have suffered similar fates.

In the mirror, the singer cannot recognize himself; he has become a stranger to himself and feels alienated. The text becomes confused; it is unclear whether "the girl in the window" wants to jump. The poetic self wants to hear the "scream of the butterfly" before it sinks into a "big sleep." The butterfly is a classic symbol of springtime revival but also rapid transience. In the song, this cycle is not calmly described as a cycle of nature, but is staged as a drama: "The butterfly screams."

In the next verse, the poetic self seeks to escape its downfall and regain its vitality through love: "Come back, baby, back into my arms." It tries to escape from depressiveness and destructiveness: "We're gettin' tired of hangin' around, waitin' around with our heads on the ground." Relief comes from music: "I hear a very gentle sound..." Everyone will develop their own memories and sensations when listening to this musically enchanting passage, brought to the listener by Jim Morrison's warm baritone. The music here provides the illusion – possibly vital – of union with beauty, nature, and humanity. The sound in Jim Morrison's song comes "Very near, yet very far, very soft, yet very clear." After this longing and hopeful passage, however, the poetic self is again assailed by the pain of human

destructiveness: “What have they done to the earth? What have they done to our fair sister? Ravaged and plundered and ripped her and bit her. Stuck her with knives in the side of the dawn and tied her with fences, and dragged her down....”

Jim Morrison’s frequent allusions to the Bible and his identification with the torments of Jesus Christ and the annihilated indigenous population of America culminate in an indictment of the human destruction of nature and the world. In the background, there is a faint hope of being redeemed through music. In the song we hear, accompanied by poignant rhythms and tones: “I hear a very gentle sound, with your ear on the ground.” Here, the primal reference to “Mother Nature” is invoked as in an indigenous dance. The poetic self protests against the violent destruction of nature, the song grows louder, and the singer desperately cries out, “We want the world and we want it.” This verse is repeated and then ends in a questioning “Now?” – and the answer, “Now!”

The song then returns to a softer intonation, and the lyrics continue the longing for love and redemption: “Persian night! Babe, see the light! Babe. Save us! Jesus! Save us!” The song fades out with the repetition of the first two verses, leaving the listener thoughtful, comforted, and bewildered, as if the terror has – for a moment – been overcome. We are reminded of Rilke’s verse from the *Duino Elegies*: “For the beautiful is nothing but the beginning of the terrible, which we can still just bear....”

From the perspective of the “Big Five of Creativity,” we can summarize as follows: Jim Morrison was very gifted and had many talents. He acquired broad cultural knowledge as well as special vocal skills. He was also highly motivated artistically. Unfortunately, he lacked the discipline and resilience to work out his inspirations for longer periods of time. He sought redemption from melancholic moods and his suffering from the outer world through drugs and finally suicidal doses of alcohol. This led to a destruction of creative capacities and finally to his end.

In terms of his creative personality traits, he was exceptionally curious and open-minded. But again, he lacked the resilience and resistance necessary to creatively manage crises. His environmental conditions were initially not conducive to his artistic development. In his childhood and early adolescence, he did not find the positive response from parents, siblings, and friends that might have protected him from his mood swings. It wasn’t until after his college years that he found enough affirmation and sufficient support from Ray Manzarek and the artist friends of the *Doors*. With them, he succeeded for 3–4 years in creating works of art of lasting beauty.

Jim Morrison found himself exposed to the abysses of existence in an extraordinary way and captured them in lyrics and music. He delivered himself to borderline experiences that we normal mortals tend to avoid. Perhaps this accounts for part of his enchanting effect, which still grips us today. Central themes of his artistic work were despair, hate, and violence. However, he experienced these destructive forces so intensely that he himself burned in the fire of his inspirations. But this also contributes to his world fame to this day.

Mick Jagger: Sympathy for the Devil

“Just call me lucifer” is the climax of *Sympathy for the Devil*, one of the most powerful songs in pop history. The song tells its story from the perspective of a wealthy, stylish, and tasteful man as he goes around robbing people of their souls and faith. He describes having been present when Jesus Christ was tormented by doubts and torments and Pontius Pilate “sealed his fate.” He also “stuck around” in the Russian October Revolution and “killed the Tzar and his ministers” while “Anastasia screamed in vain.” He drove a tank in the German Nazi blitzkrieg and gained a general’s rank when “the bodies stank.” Excitedly, the singer describes the 100-year war between England and France, in which those nations fought for the “gods they made.” And “you and me” were ultimately responsible for the assassination of the Kennedy brothers. Then, the song describes the ritual murder of troubadours and finally states that “every cop is a criminal” and “all the sinners saints.” Thus, it is advisable to be polite and make friends with the devil.

Mick Jagger and the Rolling Stones take up ancient traditions dealing with evil in their lyrics. During the composition, Mick Jagger read the novel *The Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov. His lover Marianne Faithfull, who sang “As Tears Go By” so beautifully, is said to have introduced him to this book (Norman, 2012). It begins with a verse from Goethe’s *Faust*, which it chooses as its motto: “Faust: Well then, who are you? - Mephisto: A part of that power,/Which always wills evil and always creates good.”

In his song, Mick Jagger treats evil, like Goethe in his *Faust tragedy*, not as an abstract theme but in its concrete manifestations. Just as Goethe worked on his *Faust* for almost 60 years, Mick Jagger interpreted the song *Sympathy for the Devil* over and over again for 50 years. It is an almost lifelong companion for him, just as *Faust* was a lifelong “inner fairy tale” for Goethe. And the text also has general significance, which is why it’s worth taking a closer look at it. Like Goethe’s *Faust*, it’s about getting to know the demonic and the devilish, even making friends with it, in order to be able to cope with evil. To take the song as a satanic manifesto is a big misunderstanding. If one takes into account the background of the novel *The Master and Margarita*, one can suspect the influence of the complex psychoanalytic theory of the significance of destructive drives.

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Sigmund Freud (1920) had contrasted erotic forces and life drives with a destructive force, which he called the “death drive.” He saw not only constructive but also destructive forces at work in nature and society. In a letter to Albert Einstein published in 1933 under the title *Why War?*, Freud concluded that cultural development is humanity’s only chance to overcome its destructive forces. Cultural activity, including scientific work, is essential to perceive and creatively transform evil. Mick Jagger and the Rolling Stones contributed to this constructive process through their songs. In the process, however, they also released destructive forces, if one thinks, for example, of the outbreak of violence during the famous *Altamont Concert* (see Sandford, 2003).

Musically, *Sympathy for the Devil* is a highlight of the Rolling Stones' output. A catchy harmonic theme is accompanied by rhythm and blues and rock 'n' roll rhythms overlaid with a samba rhythm. Maracas and congas reinforce the samba rhythm, and Nicky Hopkins contributes a congenial piano accompaniment. It's no surprise that the Stones perform the song over and over again. It's ideal for Mick Jagger to showcase his Luciferian side, especially sexual attraction and aggressive repulsion. Ever more elaborate concerts make this song a trademark of Mick Jagger and the Rolling Stones. In ever new variations, Mick Jagger finds a means of expression that also helps him personally to deal with depressive moods and aggressive impulses.

When he was confronting the evil in the world, Mick Jagger also dealt with the dark inner-psychic side of evil. Since the beginning of his career, melancholy has been a surprisingly central topic in his lyrics. His early blues songs and especially the ballad *Paint it Black* are impressive examples of this. They came out at a time when Mick Jagger and the Rolling Stones were working their way to worldwide fame. The song, which was released in 1966, brought Mick Jagger a huge success and, like *Sympathy for the Devil*, would accompany him for 50 years in ever new interpretations. The ballad ties in with the classic literature on black melancholy: "I look inside myself and see that my heart is black..." The text impressively depicts a severe melancholic mood. The depression seems to be triggered by the loss of a beloved person. The black melancholy is clothed in poetic images: "No colours anymore, I want them to turn black." Through poetic and musical imagery, the depression becomes more tangible and bearable. Guitarist Brian Jones underpins the song with enchanting sitar sounds, thus adding new moods to rock music and giving it quite unusual colors.

Let's take a look at where Mick Jagger drew his inspiration from. He was born in the midst of the Second World War on 26 July 1943 in the small southern English town of Dartford. This town was within the range of the Nazi regime's V-1 rockets, which partially devastated this stretch of land. The house next door was destroyed and its inhabitants killed. Nevertheless, in particular Eva Jagger, Mick's mother, did all she could to maintain an orderly and secure household. She enjoyed listening to music, her favorite singer was Bing Crosby, and she took piano lessons for 4 years (Andersen, 1993). She had loved to dance since her school days and accordingly admired Ginger Rogers. During the difficult economic times of the "Great Depression," she found work as a hairdresser, and in her early 20s, she met Basil Jagger, who was working as a physical education teacher at a school.

Basil Jagger is described as polite; he came from a middle-class family and had a college education (Norman, 2012). He was career-minded and developed into a respected physical education teacher at a prestigious Catholic teachers' college. He established himself as a leading British expert on basketball. He wrote a successful book and was appointed to the British Sports Council. Meanwhile, Eva ran a perfectly organized household. Their first child was christened Michael Philip in July 1943. According to the well-known biographies, he was a little sunshine for his parents. His brother Christopher was born in December 1947. Both brothers grew up in relatively sheltered circumstances despite the hardships of war and

the postwar years and were coached in sports at an early age. Discipline was held in high esteem by the family, and Michael Philip, called Mick, seemed happy to comply.

Mick Jagger showed his interest in music at an early age, sang loudly, listened to swing and jazz on the radio, and danced to this music. Andersen (1993) describes him as a bundle of energy and always on the move. Mick was a good and diligent student. A teacher described him as cheerful, friendly, and helpful. During his school years, something that plays a major role in so many artists' biographies began. He met a like-minded comrade. Keith Richards was similarly fascinated by rhythm and blues and rock 'n' roll as Mick Jagger and could already play the guitar quite well. Unlike Mick, Keith came from an uneducated background and also had problems at school (Richards, 2010). Since he was seven years old, he had played the saxophone, and his grandfather encouraged him to play the guitar. The young Keith Richards spent whole afternoons with this instrument. Records by John Lee Hooker and Muddy Waters accompanied him; he tirelessly tried to imitate their songs. Like Mick Jagger, he sang along when Frank Sinatra or Nat King Cole were on the radio. Soon more independent and rebellious sides stirred in him. In music, especially in the blues, he learned to express his youthful longings and disappointments.

Mick Jagger became more antagonistic and rebellious only toward the end of his school years. He immersed himself in the darkly attractive poems of Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud, and William Blake. Alongside this, he read historical biographies. His school performance declined; it is noticeable that he was preoccupied with other things. As a basketball player, he felt his limitations; he was too small and lanky and stopped playing. He openly admitted his hopes of becoming wealthy and influential one day (Andersen, 1993). He planned to study economics at the prestigious London School of Economics. At the end of his schooling, his headmaster noted that he was more intellectually focused than expected and showed perseverance when something interested him. He said that Mick would succeed in his endeavors, but it seemed unlikely that he would excel in any field.

At the beginning of his college years, Mick Jagger initially still lived at home, probably for financial reasons. During his university studies, he began to feel alienated by the confines of Dartford. He remained a devoted and dutiful son to his mother, however, and continued to work out with his father. He was skeptical of his fellow students' boozing, preferring artistic pursuits. Erotically, he was more reserved than his later appearances would suggest. He had his first sexual experiences while "wanking," masturbating in a circle of boys of the same age (Norman, 2012). He is said to have had his first fleeting sexual encounter with a woman at 18 and a more intense sexual relationship at 19.

When Mick Jagger accidentally met Keith Richards again after a few years, the latter already had the reputation of being a "bad boy," while Mick still cultivated the image of a hardworking middle-class youth. To Keith's excitement, Mick carried Chuck Berry's latest LP under his arm, and he in turn took an interest in Keith's guitar. An artistic friendship began that would last, with many ups and downs, for over 60 years. Mick's ambition, discipline, and goal orientation seemed to ideally complement Keith's stubbornness and unconventionality. They formed the core of

the semiprofessional “Blue Boys” and developed their own blues. With the rock classic *Around and Around*, Mick ventured on the first short gigs. He was to reinterpret it again and again.

His first appearances seemed somewhat shy, naive, and clumsy. However, they already showed his dancing talent, which would later inspire and provoke so many. He not only chose Chuck Berry and Little Richard as his role models but also tried to imitate Marilyn Monroe and developed his very individual androgynous style. In Alexis Korner’s Jazz Club, Mick Jagger, Keith Richards and Dick Taylor met Charlie Watts and Brian Jones, and soon they would launch the *Rolling Stones*. Mick Jagger still toyed with thoughts of a journalistic or political career.

In July 1962, *Jazz News* announced the *Rolling Stones*’ first appearance with Mick Jagger as the rhythm and blues singer. Mick tried to leave his middle-class background behind and adopted a cockney-patois accent. However, he continued to attend the London School of Economics. While Keith Richards and Brian Jones devoted themselves entirely to their music and maintained a chaotic lifestyle with lots of alcohol, cigarettes, and increasingly illegal drugs, Mick Jagger remained more disciplined. As many sexual contacts as possible challenged his ambition. Anita Pallenberg told of Mick’s sexual enterprises, which also involved men. She should know because she maintained sexual relationships at various times with Mick, Keith Richards, and Brian Jones (Andersen, 1993). Coping with depressive and aggressive impulses in his lyrics and music, as well as self-discovery in the context of stage performances and sexual relationships, were to become Mick Jagger’s defining life events. He strived for recognition as an artist and as a sex-star.

Musically committed to rock ‘n’ roll and rhythm & blues, sexual love became Mick Jagger’s decisive point of thematic orientation. This thrilled his young fans and enraged their parents. The Stones worked on their rebellious-unconventional image and did everything not to commit similar mistakes as the Beatles. It had leaked out that John Lennon was married and had a son. In other ways, too, the Beatles had to contend with their reputation for being good boys. For the media’s self-staging as wild rebels, Mick Jagger and the Stones amplified their objectionable demeanor. They concealed their disciplined work in order to appear as spontaneous creating geniuses.

Mick seemed to have found for himself an ideal combination of closeness and distance. He danced at his audience in an openly sexual manner, only to recede mockingly. Sometimes he was tender as in *Lady Jane*, sometimes vulgar as in the unreleased *Cocksucker Blues*, obviously an attractive mix. Audiences were divided. Some experienced the mix of sentimentality and provocation as liberating, others as repulsive.

The tender sides that Mick Jagger expressed with songs like *As Tears Go By* were increasingly drowned out by his wild performances. There were riots at concerts, with considerable damage to property. Mick Jagger seemed to consciously use the energies of repressed sex and political rage to electrify his audience. His irrepressible will to rise in society also took him into aristocratic circles. These suddenly found what was initially so repulsive chic and Mick learned to behave well in posh circles. He knew how to play on the keyboard of social relations with a view to

success. Christopher Sandford (2003) called him a “Rebel Knight.” Later, Mick Jagger was in fact ennobled.

However, his lyrics were also about coming to terms with disappointment and defeat. This is shown by the songs *Play With Fire* and *The Last Time*, which were written around the same time, as well as the later songs *Angie*, *No Expectations* and the original version of the Robert Johnson song *Love in Vain*. Contrary to his public portrayal as an arrogant, uncommitted, and promiscuous womanizer, Mick Jagger sings about the misfortune of failing relationships. He could engage with disappointment and even despair due to his talent and his literary, musical, and dancing skills. His motivation and energy, as well as his both open-minded and stubborn personality traits, helped him to overcome depressive moods and aggressive impulses. Additionally, he found supportive and demanding environmental conditions, which in their interplay with the other factors of the “Big Five of Creativity” granted him incomparable success.

In contrast to his public image and his provocative and rebellious sides, his extraordinary diligence and resilience need to be emphasized. He took his performances anything but lightly and strived to “increase” himself artistically, as Goethe would say, even into old age. To this day, he keeps himself alive through dancing and music and old and new relationships. Again and again, he returns to his musical and biographical roots, which he sang about in songs like *19th Nervous Breakdown*, *Mother’s Little Helper*, and *Out of Time* decades before. Disappointment and despair and hate and violence remain central themes.

In contrast to John Lennon, who in *Imagine*, for example, describes the ideal of a peaceful world freed from religious, national, and economic conflicts, Mick Jagger repeatedly confronts the evil “in you and me,” as in *Sympathy for the Devil*. His lyrics reveal a great sensitivity to disappointment and failure but also anger, hatred, and violence. *We Love You* begins with a reminder of the trauma of incarceration and is less naively optimistic than the Beatles’ song *All You Need is Love*. *Street Fighting Man* deals openly with hateful violence. Personally, however, Mick Jagger remained stable, finding artistic expression for his failures in his songs and developing a focused working style in contrast to his disengaged and strident façade. He sums up the message that creativity requires resilience in his beautifully orchestrated song *You Can’t Always Get What You Want*.

Accordingly, Mick Jagger saw the salvation messages and world redemption fantasies associated with the yogi Maharishi Mahesh more critically than the Beatles. The performances of Maharishi Mahesh Mick Jagger understood, unlike John Lennon and George Harrison, rather as circus acts than as realistic instructions for world improvement. Jagger himself was also hyped as a messianic icon but always kept his distance from this role. This fundamentally distinguishes him from John Lennon, who seriously compared himself to Jesus Christ, and Jim Morrison, who actually imagined himself possessed by Native American spirits. Like Madonna, Mick Jagger played with his role without merging with it. This doesn’t necessarily make him more sympathetic, but it protects him from losing his sense of reality in the media hype. The early drug deaths of his guitarist Brian Jones and his manager Brian Epstein, as well as the sometimes life-threatening addiction of Keith Richards,

made him more than thoughtful. Most haunting for him was his friend and manager Andrew Oldham's complete destruction of his productivity with drugs.

While Marianne Faithfull's drug use also became so dangerous that her son, whom Mick was very fond of, could not live with her, Mick Jagger established himself more and more in England's high society with his discipline and purposefulness and underlined his upper-class and aristocratic claims by acquiring a magnificent country house. At the same time, he continued to deal with the dark forces of life in, for example, the album *Their Satanic Majesties Request* and the song *Jumpin' Jack Flash*. Mick Jagger is said to have written the lyrics in an hour. Early childhood memories as well as mythical experiences resonate. There are probably many subconscious associations underlying the composition that contribute to its effect. It contains echoes of Mick's birth during the Second World War: "I was born in a crossfire hurricane." Early fears and pains are named: "I howled at my ma in the driving rain." Finally, liberation through personal growth, music, and dance: "But it's all right now ... I'm Jumpin' Jack Flash." The second verse names childhood deprivations, neglect, and punishments that the singer is able to overcome through his vitality and creativity: "I was raised by a toothless and bearded hag/I was schooled with a strap across my back/But it's all right now... I'm Jumpin' Jack Flash." The third verse recalls the Old Testament king's children abandoned in a river like Moses: "I was drowned. I was washed up and left for dead/I fell down to my feet and I saw that they bled..." Finally, a Jesus Christ image emerges: "I was crowned with a pike through my head." But "It's all right, I'm Jumpin' Jack Flash."

The character of Jumping Jack embodies the irrepressible energy and agility that helped Mick Jagger avoid many of life's traps. This agility was always evident physically in his dancing and mentally in his musical work. In songs like *Brown Sugar*, he actively confronts hate and violence. On the occasion of an erotic relationship with an African American woman, he recalls barbaric slavery. However, with the Stones, he seems not only to sing about hate and violence but also to incite it, much like Jim Morrison. Both of them caused riots and brawls during their performances. But Mick Jagger rejected the propagation of political violence that the activists of the "Black Panther" demanded from him. Sometimes, it seemed that the Stones couldn't get rid of the ghosts they had summoned.

This whole spate of physical altercations and property damage came to a climax in December 1969 in Altamont, California. Two people were killed in the organizational chaos on the way to the concert. One person drowned in a canal, and the area around the performance venue was vandalized. Finally, African American Meredith Hunter was stabbed to death by a Hell's Angel. He is said to have previously pulled a gun while under the influence of drugs.

Here, the destructive side of sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll became apparent. Things were less peaceful in the hippie communes than the love and peace songs lead us to expect. The 1968 cult film *Easy Rider* paints an ambivalent picture of the longing for unbound self-realization. The hippies were also endangered from within and not only from the outside by reactionary psychopaths. The drug movement

carried within itself the roots of recklessness and violence. Mick Jagger himself, however, was protected against the destructive pull of drugs. He found support and structure in his erotic relationships and his artistic work.

Politically, too, Mick Jagger remained two-faced. He continued to cultivate his bourgeois and even aristocratic lifestyle and on the other hand expressed that he admired Mao Tse Tung and Lenin. In his relationships, he was also ambivalent. Artistically, the theme of violence came more and more to the fore. The film *Performance*, released in October 1969, was praised by some critics for overtly depicting violence and sado-masochistic enactments. *The New York Times* spoke of “decorative decadence and casual omnisexuality.” Others felt repelled by the unbridled brutality, and even today the question arises to what extent Mick Jagger’s artistic stagings of violence not only served to cope with destructive impulses but also fueled them.

The song *Midnight Rambler*, which the Stones had been performing and varying since 1969, is based on the confessions of the serial killer and rapist known as the “Boston Strangler.” Although no invitation to violence can be inferred from this song, the Stones faced considerable danger during this period. Fans brought knives and firearms to concerts and engaged in street fights with the police. Groupies trying to force a touch from Mick frightened him. He also felt threatened by criminals and carried a revolver. Sexual violence was also on the rise around him, and it became apparent that he couldn’t always banish the ghosts he had summoned. After his extravagant celebration of his 29th birthday, renowned columnist Harriet van Horne, writing in the *New York Post* of 29 July 1972, compared the spectacle to an ancient Roman orgy: Nero, Caligula, and the Marquis de Sade would have felt at home. The journalist also recalled the violent film *A Clockwork Orange* and the cult of the satanic murderer Charles Manson.

Mick Jagger responded with disciplined artistic work. The 1973 album *Goats Head Soup* became a great success, especially the raunchy rock song *Star Star*. Mick Jagger wanted to call the song *Starfucker*, which recalls the early years of the Stones. The sexually very direct lyrics once again led to public controversy, and the stage versions show how uninhibited Mick Jagger continued to stage himself as a sex idol. *Angie*, the most successful song on the album, however, strikes a quieter chord, both musically and lyrically: “Oh Angie, oh Angie, when will these dark clouds disappear... With no loving in our souls and no money in our coats ... Angie, Angie, but we can’t say we never tried...” *Angie* is a blues song about the futility of love that is also musically touching. The song picks up on the classic theme, and the singer condenses his longings and disappointments. The lyrics are probably inspired by Mick Jagger’s relationship with David Bowie and his wife Angela. Keith Richards also mentioned his daughter Angela as a background. But ultimately, the song takes on a life of its own from its occasions, resonating moods in its listeners as they engage with their own unique experiences.

As Anita Pallenberg relapsed more and more into her heroin addiction, her rival Bianca Jagger publicly insulted her as a “fucking bitch,” and Keith Richards underwent another rehab treatment, Mick deepened his friendship and love affair with David Bowie. The “glitter rock” and androgynous charm of David Bowie developed

a great attraction not only with the public but also with Mick Jagger. Bianca Jagger had to put up with this relationship like the constant other smaller and bigger affairs. One of his mistresses, Bebe Buell, relates that Mick Jagger constantly tested his sexual limits. But he never seemed to lose control. Sex was rather a way to gain power over himself and others. In an interview, he once said that he was not a very emotional person (Andersen, 1993, p. 302).

Purposeful, orderly, and controlling was Mick Jagger's approach not only to sexual affairs but also to his audiences and the media. The performances and media stagings became more and more immaculate. Nevertheless, he remained true to his roots in rhythm and blues and rock 'n' roll. Contrary to his earlier announcement that he would retire from the rock 'n' roll circus at the age of 33, he continued to keep a firm grip on the reins of the Stones. The album *Black and Blue* was released in April 1975 and contains hard rock songs like *Hot Stuff* as well as thoughtful ballads like *Fool to Cry*. Mick Jagger, who in the trailer accompanies the song on the piano, sings about the dejection of a worker who is comforted by his daughter in the evening. Obviously, Mick Jagger, despite all the glamor, has not lost his sensitivity to the sad sides of everyday life. Criticism of the social deprivations of the working class is also unmistakable.

To his retreats, e.g., a property rented from Andy Warhol on Long Island, Mick Jagger invited not only the celebrities of pop culture but also his parents. He also looked after his mother and father in other ways and bought a house for them on the coast of Kent. There they often looked after his daughter Jade, to whom he could hardly devote himself. Attempts at reconciliation with Bianca Jagger remained half-hearted; holidays together could not resolve the deep rift and bitter dislike. Mick Jagger preferred glamorous party life with constantly changing partners. Then he also consumed drugs and is also said to have once been treated for an overdose. Nonetheless, he maintained control and was very concerned with media glamour. What went on behind the scenes we don't know. That many of those around him would perish from drugs or die of AIDS like Rudolf Nureyev is probably just the tip of the iceberg. Most of the physical and emotional injuries probably remain below the threshold of public perception and are revealed at best to doctors, psychotherapists, and counselors.

His fast-moving life left its mark on the health-conscious Mick Jagger. His face was already in his mid-30s unusually wrinkled, and his teeth were bad. While his friend Keith slid deeper and deeper into heroin addiction, Mick kept himself fit with sports, dancing, and singing and his usual home remedy: sex. Many affairs were staged and embellished by the media. The Texan photo model Jerry Fay Hall, almost a head taller than Mick, knew how to effectively stage her sexuality. Asked what brought her and Mick together, she answered frankly that it was sex, what else?

The song *Some Girls*, released in June 1978, mockingly and self-ironically describes erotic escapades. Musically, the lyrics, considered by many to be politically incorrect and sexist, are carried by familiar rock 'n' roll rhythms and harmonies but also by punk and funk elements. The Stones thus connected with current

trends. On the same album, in stark contrast to this highly provocative song, there are again gentle and yearning tones, for example, in *Miss You*. The song's lyrics express an existential ambivalence between commitment and passion. Mick Jagger's striving for stable relationships seemed incompatible with his need for unattached sex.

He was becoming increasingly skeptical about drugs. Too many users in his environment had already died young from marijuana, amphetamines, cocaine, and heroin. The drug-related fatal accidents and acts of violence in his environment also made him think. In an interview with the journal *High Times*, he said that it was terrible to encourage young people to take drugs. While he himself appeared to occasionally smoke marijuana and snort cocaine, he remained focused and purposeful in his creative work and business dealings. Increasing his wealth required sober calculations. Sometimes, his employees complained about how meticulous Mick Jagger was about his business interests.

The elaboration of his musical ideas continued to give Mick Jagger support and security. Here, he could find and realize himself. In June 1980, the new album *Emotional Rescue* was released. It once again contains a lot of love lyricism, which is skillfully implemented musically. Some consider these songs banal and self-indulgent. They overlook the fact that they also tentative feelings of longing. This is already evident in the title track of *Emotional Rescue*. The lyrics provocatively describe seduction but also contain tender words. It is not as intrusive as the song *Star Star*, but still arrogant enough to turn away in annoyance. The garish red tongue stuck out has become a trademark of Mick Jagger. With peculiar relish, it attracts and repels the audience.

The album *Emotional Rescue* contains besides sexually exciting songs also politically thoughtful ballads like *Indian Girl*. It tells of the misery of an indigenous girl and her parents in Nicaragua. The lyrics describe the desperate situation of the population in the civil war in Nicaragua, where left-wing rebels fight the dictatorship supported by the USA. The girl and her mother are starving, while her father is far away in Angola fighting with Cuban troops. Musically, the song is also touching. It contains elements of North American country music, accompanied by Central American rhythm instruments and a piano. It shows how Mick Jagger is evolving musically. He is not only a dazzling performer, a focused businessman, and a sex idol but also a serious artist. He embraces new musical forms and works on the quality of his performances. His voice remains elastic, he changes registers easily, and his head voice in particular retains a youthful freshness and clarity.

Overall, Mick Jagger seemed to accept his aging at this phase of life and no longer had to play the youthful rebel. This also included his daily fitness program with 10-kilometer runs, weight lifting, and calisthenics learned from his father. It all helped him maintain his ideal weight and get through 2- to 3-hour performances in constant motion. Increasingly, he abstained from alcohol and drugs altogether. When Mick Jagger turned 40, serious tributes to his life and work appeared in the press. The head of the rock band *The Who*, Pete Townshend, published a comprehensive article in the London Times. He praised Mick Jagger's music and stage performances and his beauty and androgynous attractiveness. Tucked into a

rhetorical question, however, he also dealt with the darker side: “But is Mick Jagger really the ruthless, conniving, duplicitous, scheming, evil-touched, money-greedy, sex-mad, cowardly, vain, power-hungry swine his biographers and the newspaper hounds have made him out to be?” (London Times, September 15, 1983).

Mick Jagger’s lyrics increasingly dealt with hate and violence. His album *Undercover*, released at the end of 1983, contains a downright bloodthirsty song, *Too much Blood*. Accompanied by cheerful disco music, it tells of a horror film about a chainsaw massacre and a cannibalistic murder that the Stones learned about during their studio recordings in Paris. The lyrics deal with the violence constantly presented in the media. It also alludes to the perversions of an aggressive fun culture that is becoming increasingly widespread. Overall, it touches on the question of the extent to which media portrayal can help combat violence or rather inspire it.

After Mick Jagger and Keith Richards temporarily split, their *Hall of Fame* nomination ushered in a reconciliation. Keith Richards was able to work again after some drug rehab treatments and his stable marriage and children gave him support. The Stones produced the album *Steel Wheels*, which was released in September 1989. It became one of the Stones’ most successful albums. Mick Jagger’s business tenacity also ensured that the corresponding tour significantly increased his wealth. Meanwhile, his songs criticized politicians. For example, he attacked the first Gulf War in his song *High Wire* and railed at the arrogance of the Western world.

Mick Jagger has achieved everything possible for him. He is an internationally famous figure in cultural and social life. He is admired and loved by many, despised and hated by few. Millions appreciate his music and are enthralled by his performances. At the same time, he has constantly developed personally – from a lively child to a diligent and athletic student to a rebellious adolescent, who never loses the attachment with his origins, and later to a disciplined working adult, from a wild blues and rock musician to a writer of sophisticated lyrics, from leader of a small band to organizer of complex stage shows, and from rebellious singer to dazzling pop icon. In the process, he has developed an attractive double face: pleasure-seeking libertine and concentrated worker, rough daredevil and tender lover.

Like his female counterpart Madonna, he can assume many roles. He provokes and soothes, agitates and calms, is in constant motion, and worries about his stability. Both pop icons are similar in their discipline, diligence, and goal orientation. In their constant transformations they are able to stay as they are. They can use their activities to realize and develop their personal and social worlds. In this process, they push their contradictions to extremes: the nun student who later blasphemously sexualizes religious symbols and the satanic sex star and anti-capitalist rebel who rises to the upper middle class and is finally ennobled.

At the same time, Mick Jagger remains aware of his limits; he knows what he can and cannot achieve with talent, skill, motivation, resilience, and favorable environments into old age. Thus, in his later concerts, he engages excellent musicians who make his performances become celebrations of joy and creativity. Events like Havana Moon transform despair, hate, and violence into beautiful social experiences. They transmit hope of the triumph of Eros.

Consequences for a Creative Lifestyle



Childhood and Youth

Every child is creative. Even babies actively process stimuli from inside the body and from the outside world. Although this happens mainly unconsciously, it is no exaggeration to say that children “compose” their own world from the very beginning. In a constant process of growth and education, they develop physically, psychologically, and culturally. In this process, they are, on the one hand, subject to general biological, psychological, and social laws and, on the other hand, always unique and original. In their development, they are probably already exposed to intrauterine tensions and preliminary forms of displeasure. The first cry is a cry of pain, not a song of joy. Sensitive caregivers sense this and help to ease the tensions of the expectant self through nurturing, touching, cradling, glancing, and soothing sounds.

Increasingly, children learn to soothe themselves through drinking, touching, looking, and creating sounds. However, they remain dependent on the response of those around them. Their parents, siblings, and caregivers help them develop their innate basic talents: seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, moving, feeling, and thinking. These talents enable children to shape chaotic excitements and agonizing tensions and thus make them bearable. From this everyday creativity, products later emerge which we experience as extraordinary, novel, and useful. We call them creative in the narrower sense.

It is a millennia-old question how far one should intervene in the individual educational process. At the latest since the Axis period around 500 BC, we find concepts that focus more on pedagogical discipline or more on autonomous development. While Confucian pedagogy emphasizes instruction and disciplined learning, Buddhism, which emerged at about the same time, emphasizes letting things grow and happen. At the same time, in Ancient Greece, ideas emerged of a perpetual interplay between structured education and free development. Every society, every

family, and every individual has to shape this dialectic again and again and with recourse to traditional forms.

Thus, there are no universal rules for the promotion of talents. However, we know that talents cannot be bred, but only discovered. That is why it is so necessary to provide children with as many materials as possible on which they can test themselves. All children should be offered a wide range of cultural techniques in kindergarten, primary, and secondary schools. However, the interests and inclinations that emerge in this context must also be seen and responded to. In this respect, educators must have not only empathy, interest, and social intelligence but also professional competence. When children show special talents in the context of their diverse cultural activities, they need targeted support. This begins with the acquisition of the necessary knowledge and skills, which is not possible without competent guidance. This also includes learning to deal with obstacles and frustrations, i.e., resiliently implementing one's own motivation. Finally, supportive and also challenging environments are necessary to bring individual personality traits productively into play.

All this allows children to cope with their early tensions and excitements and later disappointments, which can grow into despair. Feelings of anger also assail most children. It depends on their creative development whether they can use these feelings productively or whether they will erupt in hatred and violence.

Everyday and Political Creativity to Cope with Despair, Hate, and Violence

In early childhood education, school, training, study, and professional life, we learn to live out our talents, skills, motivations, and personality traits in a hopefully favorable environment. But even in the most supportive circumstances, we are confronted with painful renunciation and disappointment. In our professional lives, we are rewarded for our resilience not only financially but also by the feeling of contributing something meaningful to the community. This feeling is not a luxury, it is vital (see Holm-Hadulla, 2017). We know that the conviction that we can contribute something meaningful not only increases our enjoyment of life but is also a "salutogenic," i.e., health-promoting principle. This implies that our everyday activities are embedded in a complex culture. Thus, we have to constantly strive for a cultivated way of life. Sigmund Freud, in his letter to Albert Einstein published in 1933 under the title *Why War?*, summarizes a long history of ideas when he states that we must constructively shape erotic and aggressive impulses in order to live in an individually and socially meaningful way. In this cultural development, he sees the only way to peaceful coexistence of mankind. Everyday creativity and especially the great works of art also contribute to this cultural process. However, it is not always easy to decide which kind of cultural staging of despair, hatred, and violence leads to a positive development and which enactments also have a destructive effect.

The double face of creativity between construction and destruction is evident in the individual life stories of artists as well as in general cultural development. Some are able to artistically shape their erotic and aggressive impulses; others burn in the fire of creative striving. Creative intelligence (see Holm-Hadulla, Funke & Wink 2022) is obviously necessary to find new and useful ideas that are not only oriented toward individual self-realization but also toward the common good. Challenges such as wars, climate change, water and air pollution, and pandemics can only be met by a cosmopolitan discourse ethic (Habermas, 2011).

Ethical-moral creativity is a necessary corrective against an illusory and self-overestimating faith in technology. Some still believe that technical progress alone can save the world. But compared to technical intelligence, cultural memory is infinitely richer. In manners, languages, music, architecture, and images, cultural evolution is embodied, and we need this to find our way in the world.

A liberal democracy thrives on the fact that the search for the good, the true, and the beautiful is always linked to public debate. Political creativity relies on the power of judgment, a sense of responsibility, and the ability to creatively face the tasks of the present and the future. It should not be forgotten that creativity in art and science, everyday life, and politics differs considerably. If artists create from often unconscious motives and sometimes chaotic impulses in free originality, politicians, at least in democratic societies, must also be able to put aside their personal emotions and inspirations. They must perceive and balance the interests of many others. For the most part, this makes them seem less charismatic than artists, but intelligent and respectful restraint establishes much of their political creativity. Self-referential and narcissistic political “geniuses” have wreaked great havoc in history.

Democratic societies thrive on independent artists whose works open up new perspectives and possibilities for action. They can help to discover the creative potential hidden in nature and culture. In doing so, they should not conceal the destructive forces at work in human beings but contribute to overcoming them. Relapses into barbarism threaten again and again and we desperately witness how war-mongering dictators, without any human emotion, bring about suffering and death of people who are full of life and hope. Living feelings also seem to have drained from their coopted perpetrators. Without any compassion for the unimaginable cruelties that await their victims, they take up the apocalyptic announcements of the leaders and execute their intentions and orders. With perfidious malice, despair over their own limitations and mortality they lead to hateful and violent attacks on life itself and on all creativity.

We are left with the hope that through everyday charity and political mindfulness, as well as professional, scientific, and artistic work, we can contribute to overcoming individual and social destructiveness. African-American poet Amanda

Gorman gave us a beautiful poetic summary of this hope with her “Hymn for the Hurting”¹:

Hymn for the Hurting

Everything hurts,
Our hearts shadowed and strange,
Minds made muddied and mute.
We carry tragedy, terrifying and true....

We’re burdened to live out these days,
While at the same time, blessed to outlive them ...

Thus while hate cannot be terminated,
It *can* be transformed
Into a love that lets us live ...

¹Amanda Gorman: *The New York Times*, May 27, 2022

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