Art and Everyday Life in the City

From Modern Metropolis to Creative City

Dan Eugen Ratiu

This paper addresses the relations between art and everyday life in the city from the vantage points of urban aesthetics and sociology, where the 'city' refers as well to a normative world. The aim is to show how art/artistic life contributed to the normative change and new urban lifestyles. First, I focus on Baudelaire's theory of beauty and life in modern metropolis or the city as "poetic object" and dandyism as an art of the self, seen as a crucial normative change: the emergence of new norms of excellence and art of living, such as creativity and self-fashioning. Second, I discuss a recent yet related normative change, described by Boltanski and Chiapello (2005a) as a passage to the "project-oriented city", seen as a new way of working and living that fuses cultures of creativity and uncertainty. Third, I tackle the "creative city" hailed by Florida (2002; 2005), where the creative lifestyle of "creative people" is the new mainstream setting the norms for society: individuality, diversity and openness, but also impermanent relationships and loose ties. I will argue that extending the hyper-mobile and flexible creative lifestyle from the extraordinary figure of the artist to ordinary people, as everyday urban life, triggers both benefits and risks. | Keywords: *Art of the Self, Baudelaire, Beauty, Creative Lifestyle, Creative City, Everyday Life, Metropolis*

1. Introduction

Everyday Aesthetics (EA) was and still is for me, as for many other scholars, a major field of investigation in last decades (Berleant, 2010; Leddy, 2012; Mandoki, 2007; Melchionne 2013; 2014; Naukkarinen 2013; Naukkarinen and Vasquez, 2017; Saito, 2007; 2017).[1] Here, I will deal instead with a topic that rather fits in a more specific, intersectional area, Urban Aesthetics (UA), which is currently advancing at the junction between everyday aesthetics and the philosophy of the city (see Meagher, Biehl and Noll, 2020). Recently, Sanna Lehtinen (2020a, 2020b) has provided an informative overview of the conceptual and methodological shifts in philosophical urban aesthetics towards a new, larger, vantage point focusing on the experience of city life:

[1] I mentioned selectively some of the main contributions in Everyday Aesthetics; there are many others. For comprehensive analyses and overviews of different accounts on EA and alternative approaches, see Ratiu (2013b; 2017; 2020).

the entire urban life forms and lifeworld, with their aesthetic and social dimensions/values and ethical concerns as well. Within this framework, the aesthetic interest in cities encompasses the whole range of urban aesthetic phenomena. From a *macro perspective*, or "the broad visually oriented approach" of UA, it concerns the look of a city, the style and size of the building stock, the cityscape. A complementary *micro perspective* of UA approaches the city as "a vibrant locus of different types of experience", with regard to its aesthetic dynamics and the more subjective everyday aesthetics, notably the experienced quality of the everyday urban life. The aims are to study "how the urban lifeworld is processed in the human experience" and "how cities are envisioned, experienced and assessed" (Lehtinen, 2020a). I would say that this new, "more comprehensive idea of urban aesthetics" allying macro and micro perspectives renders the city (life) its full spectrum of colours.

Likewise, social sciences and urban studies have witnessed in the last two decades an increased interest in the spatial insertion of creativity, especially in the urban space, epitomized by the notion of "creative city" (Landry, 2000; Florida, 2002; 2005; Scott, 2006), and also noticed a shift to a city-centred perspective on cultural generativity (Menger, 2010). Moreover, the question of what we (also) mean by 'city' received a different answer in the work of French sociologists Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot (1991/2006) and Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello. There, the concept of city refers to a model of "justificatory regime" or "order of worth", an externally normative holding point of capitalism based on a specific principle of evaluation, and it is used to explain the emergence of new norms of excellence and ways of life.

My approach is consonant with these new paradigms in urban aesthetics/studies, philosophy of the city and sociology, which revive the classical idea of "urbanism as a way of life" (Wirth, 1938) and focus on the "urban lifeworld" (Madsen and Plunz, 2002) and the "urban experience" as complex dimension that constitute the city (Berleant, 2012). I will address the relations between art and everyday life in the city, from the vantage point of the aforementioned *micro perspective* of Urban Aesthetics (Lehtinen, 2020a), allied with that of sociology where the 'city' refers as well to a *normative world*, that is, a regime of values and ways of working and living (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005a). Therefore, my interest here does not lie in the built environment in the city, the architectural formations or in other significant forms of urban creativity, such as street art, graffiti and similar styles, although all these are important subject matters for Urban Aesthetics (Berleant, 1992; 2002; Berleant and Carlson, 2007; Carlson 2005; Milani, 2017; Schacter, 2013; von Bonsdorff, 2002). Rather I am interested in *the experience of city life*, specifically in the aesthetic dimension of the creative urban life forms and lifeworld, articulated with ethical and social issues, including their sustainability. The main aim is to show how art and artistic life contributed to the normative change and new urban lifestyles. For this purpose, I will explore different figures of the city. First, the city as "poetic object",[2] an imaginative and dynamic *stage*

[2] For this notion, I am indebted to Graeme Gilloch (1996) who uses it in a slightly different sense, inspired by Benjamin's (1939/1969; 1939/1999) reading of Baudelaire's writings. See Gilloch (1996), Ch.4 "Urban Allegories: Paris, Baudelaire and the Experience of Modernity", pp. 132–167.

of modern life and art in Charles Baudelaire's essays. Next, the city as a model of"order of worth" or *normative world* in Boltanski and Chiapello's *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (2005a), and the "creative city" as *stage for everyday creativity/creative lifestyles* scrutinized by Richard Florida in *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002) and *Cities and the Creative Class* (2005). Both these contemporary figures of the city include Baudelaire's aesthetics of modernity and culture of creativity as key references.

First, I focus on a key point in the long-lasting discussion on *life* and *beauty* in urban context: Baudelaire's theory of beauty and everyday life in the modern metropolis and dandyism as an art/aesthetics of the self. Both topics connect with matters of everyday/urban aesthetics, offering valuable insights into the modern urban experience. The first through the figure of the modern city/ metropolis as a *poetic object*, which reveals the everyday as the source of inspiration for artistic creativity, the second through the figure of *dandy*, which reveals modern art as a model of everyday life. These ideas signal a crucial normative change, although as Foucault noticed, "the idea of life which has to be created as a work of art" was already part of the ancient art of living or "culture of the self" (Foucault, 1991a, p. 362). I will argue that Baudelaire's attempt to turn life into art and art into a way of life indicates the emergence of a specifically modern attitude embracing new norms of excellence and ways of living. These include a new experience of time/the present and the modern city life as well as a *culture of creativity* implying a renewed relation to oneself – the self-fashioning or the inventive production of the self.

Second, I address a recent yet related normative change, described by Boltanski and Chiapello (2005a) as a passage to a new, "third spirit of capitalism", which is isomorphic with a third form of globalised, "network capitalism". This change towards a new normative world is epitomised by a new type of city, the "project-oriented city". Their concept of the city as normative world is helpful here for discussing the role of artistic creativity/life in the emergence of new ways of working and living and new regime of values, such as autonomy, adaptability, flexibility and hyper-mobility. I will discuss particularly their view that artistic critique since Baudelaire has contributed to this new regime of values by promoting a *culture of creativity and uncertainty*, which has at its core the opposition between stability and mobility.

Third, I address a follow up of this issue in the emerging "Creative Age", tackling the notions of "creative class" and "creative city" hailed by Richard Florida (2002, 2005). In this type of city, the nowadays "creative people" (among which the artists) with their experiential, creative lifestyle, represent the new mainstream setting the norms for society: values such as individuality, diversity and openness, but also impermanent relationships, loose ties, and quasi-anonymous lives. The reference to Baudelaire is present as well in this empirical-based theory of the current lifestyle in creative cities.

At the intersection of these topics, a question arises on the effects that these new norms of excellence and values have on the sustainability of the new

artistic-like ways of living and working. I will argue that extending the hyper-mobile and flexible creative lifestyle from the extraordinary figure of the artist to ordinary people, as an everyday urban life, triggers both (existential) benefits and risks.

2. Baudelaire: The Modern Metropolis or City as "Poetic Object"

Baudelaire is renowned for defining modern art and aesthetic modernity, both as poet and art critic. For my purpose here, I shall confine myself only to some of the crucial ideas that he formulates in his essays, notably in *The Painter of Modern Life* (1863/1995). One idea is about a new kind of *beauty* and *life* in the modern metropolis, experienced and revealed by the artist as "perfect *flâneur*". Another is about the *dandy* as an incarnation of a modern art or aesthetics of the self. These ideas give us valuable insights about new ways of experiencing time/the present and the city life, a renewed relation to oneself, as well as about how a key aesthetic value such as *beauty* changes when experienced in the urban context of a modern metropolis, in this case the city of Paris.

2.1. Looking for Beauty in Modernity: The *Flâneur* in Metropolis

2.1.1 The Art of Modern Life: A New Way of Experiencing the (Beauty of) Present

'Modernity' for Baudelaire is better understood as *a way of experiencing time* rather than as a period in time or periodizing label, despite its connections to the 19th century European reality and aesthetics; it is, first, a mode of relationship to time/the present (Foucault, 1984/1991b, p. 39; Marder, 2001, p. 4; Seppä, 2004). Baudelaire lays bare how he understands the modern relationship to time and beauty at the beginning of the essay *The Painter of Modern Life*, section 1 "Beauty, Fashion and Happiness". Here he uncovers his actual concern with "the painting of manners of the present" by establishing, through a comparison, the essential difference between experiencing (beauty of) the past and (beauty of) the present. This difference resides in the latter's "essential quality of being present" ("*sa qualité essentielle de présent*"), revealed by modern art, versus the "historical value" of the former (Baudelaire, 1995a, p. 1).

What is, in fact, this "essential quality of being present"? Answering this question is answering another one, related to the curious situation that Baudelaire's theory of modernity – and the relationship of art to *modern life*, *beauty*, and *the present* – is developed, surprisingly enough, around a "delightfully gifted but essentially minor artist" (Mayne, 1995, p. xv). This is Constantin Guys (1805-1892), called in this essay "Monsieur G.". Why didn't Baudelaire designate here Edouard Manet or Eugen Delacroix as examples of "the painter of modern life", that is, of artistic modernity?

The answer, which is spread all over his essay, is admirably synthesized in the end where Baudelaire emphasizes the singularity of Guys' aims, ability and character compared to other (great) artists:

> Less skilful than they, Monsieur G. retains a remarkable excellence which is all his own; he has deliberately fulfilled a function which other artists have scorned and which it needed above all a man of the world to fulfil. He has everywhere sought after the fugitive, fleeting beauty of present-day life, the distinguishing character of that quality which, with the reader's kind permission, we have called 'modernity'. Often weird, violent and excessive, he has contrived to concentrate in his drawings the acrid or heady bouquet of the wine of life. (Baudelaire, 1995a, p. 41)

On the one hand, Baudelaire makes use of Monsieur G's "painting of manners of the present" to settle the "essential quality of being present", that is, of "modernity", for which he was looking for. Hence, the answer to the first question is that, in brief, this quality indicates the *present in its presentness*, which is revealed by the art presenting the "beauty of present-day life". More specifically, this is the beauty of "the light and movement of life" and of "the circumstance" (*circonstance*) as well as "the memory of the present" – for, as stated by the famous formula summarizing Baudelairean aesthetics, "almost all our originality comes from the seal which *Time* imprints on our sensation" (Baudelaire, 1995a, p. 14).

The current reading of the spectacle of urban life in Baudelaire's works states that the modern urban aesthetics displayed by him consists notably in the transformed perception of urban environment and a new artistic sensibility and practice: the appreciation of the *ephemeral* and the *fugitive or fleeting*, as well as the experience of the anonymous crowd (Gilloch, 1996, pp. 133–134). It is true, as Anita Seppä (2004, p. 5) rightly observes, that the so-called 'low' dimension of modernity – the historical, affective and transitory – was for Baudelaire even more important than the 'high', classical one – the eternal and immutable. His idea of the "double composition of beauty" – the eternal, invariable and the relative, circumstantial elements – and his aim to establish a "rational and historical theory of beauty, in contrast to the academic theory of a unique and absolute beauty" (Baudelaire, 1995a, p. 3), confirms this observation. So does his belief that "eternal beauty" exists only as an abstraction or as a "general surface of diverse beauties", exposed in section XVIII "De l'héroïsme de la vie moderne" of his *Salon de 1846*. He considered the "particular" and "fugitive" element of modern beauty more challenging in that it grows from our individual passions, since for him it is due to the particular nature of our passions that we have our own specific conceptions of beauty (Baudelaire, 1846/1999, p. 237; 1995a, p. 25).

In this sense, ruptures and discontinuities appear commonly as the essential traits of Baudelaire's aesthetics of modernity. Notably, Foucault in *What is Enlightenment*? (1984/1991b) suggests the reading of Baudelaire's definition of modernity in terms of the "discontinuity of time". At the level of the relationship to time/the present, he accepts initially the characterization of Baudelairean modernity as a "break with tradition, a feeling of novelty, of vertigo in the face of the passing moment" (Foucault, 1991b, p. 39). However, as Foucault points out next, it is significant that Baudelaire also connects these "ephemeral, fleeting and contingent" aspects of modernity to another

complementary aspect. Namely, to the attempt to recapture something "eternal" in this very present, as in the famous definition in section IV: "By 'modernity' I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable" (Baudelaire, 1995a, p. 12). Therefore, Baudelaire does not attempt to recapture this eternal as something that goes "beyond the present instant, nor behind it, but within it". As Foucault further observes, "modernity is not a phenomenon of sensitivity to the fleeting present; it is the will to 'heroize' the present". Yet such "heroization is ironical", since "the attitude of modernity does not treat the passing moment as sacred in order to try to maintain or perpetuate it" (Foucault, 1991b, pp. 39–40; Seppä, 2004). As Seppä subtly puts it, "in Baudelaire's view, the experience of the present demands both the archive that the past offers to us, and the actual experience of the present, for without this dialectic there is no such thing as an experience of the *living* present or, alternatively, of modernity" (Seppä, 2004).

Therefore, I concur with Foucault and Seppä in stating that, at this level of relationship to time, Baudelaire designates by 'modernity' primarily the present in its purely instantaneous quality but which also contains an eternal element. In this sense, as Foucault advocates, "Baudelaire's analysis of modernity contains elements that are applicable to various other historical phases of modernity as well, including our own time" (Foucault, 1991b, p. 42; Seppä, 2004).

2.1.2 The Artist as "Perfect *Flâneur*": Experiencing the City as Stage of Modern Life

Such a con-temporary element in Baudelaire's analysis of modernity is the experiencing of city life by the "perfect *flâneur*". In section III "The Artist, Man of the World, Man of the Crowd, and Child", and section V "Mnemonic Art", Baudelaire cites Monsieur G. as example of the artist as a "man of modernity", understood as "*parfait flâneur*". My interest here lies precisely in this kind of artist's wandering in the streets of the metropolis, regarded as a dynamic stage of modern life. In section IV "Modernity", this figure is opposed to the "mere *flâneur*", in that the former's aims are different, more general than "the fugitive pleasure of circumstance" of the latter. Apart the "task of seeking out and expounding the beauty in modernity", that Monsieur G. has taken upon himself, another major aim is the search for that quality called "modernity", that is, the "essential quality of being present" – notably by "distilling the eternal from the transitory" (Baudelaire, 1995a, pp. 12, 34). It is precisely for this ability that Baudelaire cites him in section IV "Modernity", in opposition to the "mere *flâneur*":

> [T]his solitary, gifted with an active imagination, ceaselessly journeying across the great human desert – has an aim loftier than of a mere *flâneur*, an aim more general, something other than the fugitive pleasure of circumstance. He is looking for that quality which you must allow me to call 'modernity' [...] He makes it his business to extract from fashion whatever element it may contain of poetry within history, to distill the eternal from the transitory. (Baudelaire, 1995a, p. 12)

The next question is what kind of 'life' Baudelaire envisions here. The kind of life that modern "pure art" or artist – since pure art includes both "the world external to the artist and the artist himself" (Baudelaire, 1995b, p. 205) – should present is not the "natural life" of "the purely natural man". It is the *modern life* – "the supernatural and excessive life", the fashion, the artificial, and the "*maquillage*" (Baudelaire, 1995a, pp. 31–34). It is also "the multiplicity of life and the flickering grace of all elements of life", up to the "life itself, which is always unstable and fugitive". It is as well "the eternal beauty and the amazing harmony of the life in the capital cities", and "the swarming ant-hill of human life" within "the landscapes of the great city – landscapes of stone, caressed by the mist or buffered by the sun" (Baudelaire, 1995a, pp. 10, 35). Accordingly, the *beauty of modern life* in the metropolis, in contact with the metropolitan crowd of passers-by, is not conventional and pretty, it is rather "fleeting", "strange" and "bizarre". Moreover, in this "vast picture-gallery which is life in London or Paris", it is also "the special beauty of evil, the beautiful amid the horrible" (Baudelaire, 1995a, pp. 11–12, 34, 37–38, 41).

This kind of beauty illustrates well the contrasted mode of aesthetic experience including the *negative*, in which Everyday Aesthetics is interested. Walter Benjamin in his essay on Paris and some literary motifs in Baudelaire has identified it as the 'shock' experience (*Erlebnis*) that is lived through and registered as fleeting fragments of personal impressions and stimuli, and that Baudelaire has placed at the very centre of his artistic work and personality as well (Benjamin 1939/1969, pp. 163–164). Instead, Foucault detects in the artistic practice of C. Guys – whom he sees as an example of the modern painter *par excellence*, yet not as *flâneur*! –, a "transfiguration" of the world or reality (Foucault, 1991b, p. 40; Seppä, 2004). He explains the nature of this transfiguration as follows:

> [It] does not entail an annulling of reality, but a difficult interplay between the truth of what is real and the exercise of freedom. […] For the attitude of modernity, the high value of the present is indissociable from a desperate eagerness to imagine it, to imagine it otherwise than it is, and to transform it not by destroying it but by grasping it in what it is. (Foucault, 1991b, pp. 40–41)

One way or another, the artist–*flâneur* that Baudelaire describes as mobilized and inspired by the urban spectacle "distils" or transfigures this ambulant, aesthetic practice into *an (ambiguous) art*. It could be an art of grasping the living expression of actual beauty as the essence of modern city life. Or it could be a "phantasmagoria" of the urban modernity, as Benjamin in *Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century* (1939/1999) calls such transfiguration following Baudelaire himself (1995a, p. 11), understanding it in its positive guise as an active, imaginative participation in the city life (Benjamin, 1999, pp. 14, 21, 26; Kramer and Short, 2020, p. 162).

2.2. The Artist as Dandy: a Modern Art of the Self

As mentioned previously, in Baudelaire's view modernity is an individually chosen attitude towards the present that includes aesthetic principles, such as

the modern beauty experienced and presented by the artist–*flâneur*. However, it is not reducible to this. Secondly, modernity includes the endeavour to cultivate this idea of modern beauty in one's person and the attempt to turn one's life into a site of art (Baudelaire 1995a, pp. 26–29; Foucault, 1991b, p. 40; Seppä, 2004). This "attitude of modernity" (*attitude de modernité*), as Foucault (1991b) calls it following Baudelaire, is best epitomized by the artist as "painter of modern life" and as *dandy*. On the other hand, Baudelaire makes use of Constantin Guys to illustrate both these twin figures, even if the figure of "The Dandy" portrayed in section IX goes beyond that of Monsieur G.

Imagination, originality, curiosity, childlike (that is, acute and magical) perceptiveness, and memory, all these are the qualities of the modern artist portrayed by Baudelaire in section III "The Artist, Man of the World, Man of the Crowd, and Child", and section V "Mnemonic Art". Yet these indispensable qualities do not delineate all the merits of Monsieur G. in Baudelaire's view. He describes him not so much as "an artist pure and simple". Monsieur G. appears to be a 'dandy' as well, a description that in this particular case "implies a quintessence of character and a subtle understanding of the entire moral mechanism of this world" (Baudelaire, 1995a, p. 9).

In sections IX "The Dandy" and XI "In praise of cosmetics" ("*Éloge du maquillage*") Baudelaire proceeds farthest to the glorification of the dandy and the praise of artificial. These ideas have been seen as "extreme statements", since his doctrine became "a corollary of the greatest importance" once transferred to the criticism of the arts in the mid-19th century (Mayne, 1995, p. xvi). Indeed, this doctrine has nourished the anti-naturalistic and anti-mimetic trends of modern art and criticism. Yet, what is more, in "The Painter of Modern Life" Baudelaire not only defines artistic modernity and the modern artist, but also sketches another kind of art – a modern *art of the self*. He does so through the analysis of *dandyism* in section IX, where he characterizes it as follows: "a calling [...] to cultivate the idea of beauty in their persons, to satisfy their passions, to feel and to think"; a "burning need to create for oneself a personal originality"; "a kind of cult of the self"; "a doctrine of elegance and originality", and "the last spark of heroism amid decadence" (Baudelaire, 1995a, pp. 27–29). In other words, as Foucault puts it, dandyism is for Baudelaire "an example of the specifically modern attitude (*culte de soi-même*) of making one's body, behaviour, feelings and passions, and existence a work of art" (Foucault, 1991b, p. 41).

Therefore, in Baudelaire's view, *modernity* is a form of relationship both to the present and to oneself. As Foucault points out, for Baudelaire to be 'modern' is not something that is given but a choice and a task one should accomplish, manifested in one's critical relation to the present and to oneself. Such a task is, chiefly, "not to accept oneself as one is in the flux of passing moments". What he demands instead is a certain "asceticism" and active aesthetic self-shaping. It is precisely "this taking of oneself as object of a complex and difficult elaboration [that] Baudelaire, in the vocabulary of his day, calls *dandysme*" (Foucault, 1991b, pp. 39, 41). On the level of the relationship that one has to establish with oneself, modernity for Baudelaire represents a new

type of *art of the self*, the inventive aesthetic self-creation. This is based as well on ideas of detachment and disinterestedness – dandyism as a manifestation of social inactivity and non-utilitarian liberty –, and on attempts to constantly bring forth one's originality in relation to one's own historical era and one's inventiveness in relation to one's own limits (Seppä, 2004).

Another important aspect of Baudelaire's art/aesthetics of the self is that this implies both soul and body, since he emphasizes "the perpetual correlation between what is called the 'soul' and what is called the 'body'" (Baudelaire, 1995a, p. 14). As Seppä rightly points out, "his modern reflexivity of the self pervasively affects not only one's psychic processes or gestures but also the experience of the body". In this way, the Baudelairean "man of modernity" tends to turn toward the aesthetic cultivation of the 'low', that is, the body, the feelings and passions (Seppä, 2004).

It is also crucial to note that, as Foucault emphasizes, this complex and difficult elaboration of the self – accompanied by the ironic heroization of the present and the transfiguring play of freedom and reality – did not take place "in society itself, or in the body politic. They can only be produced in another, different place, which Baudelaire calls art" (Foucault, 1991b, p. 42). Thus, art/artistic life appear as the favourite medium of this aesthetic elaboration of the self. This means that a dandy cultivates his own body, understood as an artificial work of art that is to take over the naturally beautiful, as a "site of aesthetic re-creation". Finally, as Seppä sums up following Saidah (1993, p. 145), in Baudelaire's view, "the dandy serves both as the creator and the object of his art. The aesthetic cultivation he practices on his body is meant to transform his art into an art of living, and his style into a personal style of living" (Seppä, 2004; see also Ratiu, 2021, pp. 60–65).

2.3. Baudelaire's Aesthetics of Modernity: New Norms of Excellence and Art of Life

To conclude, Baudelaire's view of aesthetic modernity and his attempt to turn life into art and art into a way of life signals a crucial normative change. It is about the emergence of a specifically modern attitude embracing new norms of excellence and ways of living. These include: i) A new way of experiencing time/the present and the modern city life – that of the "perfect *flâneur*" vs. the "mere *flâneur*". ii) A *culture of creativity* – since imagination, originality, curiosity, acute/magical perceptiveness and memory become the main faculties of the (artist as) "man of modernity". iii) A renewed relation to oneself incarnated by the *dandy* – the self-shaping or inventive production of the self, whose model is art/artistic life.

Thus, Baudelaire proves to be a key author in the long-lasting philosophical discussion on *life* and *beauty* in modern-urban settings as well as for Urban Aesthetics. He did contribute to the latter by sketching the figure of the city as a *poetic object*, that is, an imaginative and dynamic stage of modern art and life, experienced and revealed by the artist as "perfect *flâneur*". This gives us valuable insights into modern city life and the experience of the modern individual – "man of modernity", "man of the crowd" – in the dynamic urban setting. He also

contributed by indicating through the figure of *dandy* the fusion of everyday aesthetic creativity and the detachment/liberty that is the ferment of creative life in the modern city/ metropolis, but also a source of uncertainty.

A question arises here about the posterity of Baudelaire's 'attitude of modernity', in particular the new norms of excellence and the corresponding way of life or modern art of the self: should all these characterize once again our relation with our own present and with ourselves? In Foucault's view the answer is positive, considering his aim to restore or reinvent the (lost) culture of the self or "aesthetics of existence", which was forgotten in spite of its recurrences in the Renaissance and the tradition of artistic life (*vie artiste*) and dandyism in the 19th century (Foucault, 1991a, p. 362).[3] Nonetheless, there are other, different views on the various effects of the normative change aroused by Baudelaire's aesthetics of modernity and his legacy in the artistic critique on capitalism, such as that provided by French sociologists Boltanski and Chiapello in *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (2005a). The conceptual framework they set up there is helpful in reflecting on the current normative changes in the art-world (as well as in other worlds of creative production) and the urban life-world, and it also provides a critical standpoint on these changes.

3. Boltanski and Chiapello: "The Project-Oriented City" as a New Normative World

Baudelaire's articulation in his aesthetics of modernity of new artistic norms and ways of living, especially the *culture of creativity and uncertainty* perpetrated later in the artistic critique on capitalism, plays an important role in Boltanski and Chiapello's assessment of the recent yet related normative change in capitalism, described as a passage to a new, "third spirit of capitalism".[4] That is, a distinct set of norms or legitimizing value system that is associated with the capitalist order, and strongly related to certain forms of action and lifestyle conducive to that order (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005a, p. 10). A new type of 'city', the "project-oriented city", epitomises the change towards this new normative world that includes new ways of working and living.

A particular focus of Boltanski and Chiapello's analysis on the interactions between the arts and other worlds of production is also significant in this context. They noticed the increased influence and expansion of the new exigencies of the artistic and intellectual professions – *creativity, inventiveness, self-expression, flexibility, adaptability* –, up to become the "new models of excellence" or "worth" for all working people (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005a, pp. 18–19, 419–420). This kind of analysis is evidently not singular. Other authors have also pointed out

[3] For further analysis of Foucault's view on this subject, see Ratiu (2021).

[4] In Boltanski and Chiapello's model of change of contemporary capitalism and its normative system, the concept of "spirit of capitalism" designates "the ideology that justifies people's commitment to capitalism, and which renders this commitment attractive". The concept of the new, "third spirit of capitalism" is used by them to explain the ideological changes that have accompanied the transformation of capitalism over the last thirty-forty years, towards its third form – that of a globalised, "network capitalism" (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005a, pp. 3, 8–11). For a previous, detailed account on the topics in this section, see Ratiu (2018), pp. 175–189.

that, since the 1980s, the norms of work have changed following an internalization of the values associated with *artistic creativity*: autonomy, flexibility, non-hierarchical environment, continuous innovation, risk taking and so on (Menger, 2002, pp. 6–7; Zukin, 2001, p. 263). Yet the account by Boltanski and Chiapello is distinct in that they strongly relate this normative change with the "new spirit of capitalism", the correlated "project-oriented city", and the effects of the artistic critique thereof. In the following, will explore these complex inter-relations.

3.1. The Project-Oriented City and the Dynamics of Normative Change in Capitalism

To put it briefly, two important items of their "axiomatic of change" regards the central role of *critique* (social and artistic) as a catalyst for changing the spirit of capitalism and possibly the capitalism itself, by offering justifications that capitalism takes over and absorbs through its spirit (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005a, pp. 489–490). These justifications appeal to externally normative hold points of capitalism, which are, in essence, the 'cities' (*Cités* in French). This theoretical construct refers to models of "justificatory regimes" or "orders of worth", that is, normative worlds each based upon a different principle of evaluation. Boltanski developed it together with Laurent Thévenot in an earlier publication, *De la Justification. Les économies de la grandeur* (1991), translated in English as *On Justification: Economies of Worth* (2006). The six types of city outlined there are the reputational, inspirational, domestic, civic, industrial, and commercial city. These notions suppose a complex integration of relations governed by normative standards and relations of power, thus placing the orders of justification and the power relations into the same frame of analysis (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005b, pp. 167–169).

The city, in its new instantiation as "projective" or "project-oriented city" (*Cité par projet*), is one of the key concepts Boltanski and Chiapello use to explain the recent dynamics of change in capitalism and its spirit or normative system. This concept is helpful for discussing the role of art and artistic life in the emergence of new ways of working and living as well as new regimes of values that are of interest here. In their view, this change is about a major re-organisation in the dominant value system or sets of norms that are considered relevant and legitimate for the assessment of people, things and situations. In brief, this new "project-oriented city" is organised by networks and emphasises *activity, autonomy, adaptability, flexibility* and *mobility* as "state of greatness" or worth. Moreover, it conceives life itself as a series of different short-lived projects, and poses the ability to move quickly from one project to another as a paradigmatic test of worth (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005b, pp. 164–166, 169–171).

3.2. Artistic Life's Contribution to the New Norms of Working and Living

3.2.1 Artistic Practice and Life as a New Conception of Human Excellence and Lifestyle

One of Boltanski and Chiapello's viewpoints of major interest here is that the artistic life and practice/critique since Baudelaire have contributed to

constituting the new regime of values typified in the current project-oriented city, including a new conception of human excellence and a new (urban) lifestyle. They not only recall the importance that artistic critique – originated in the intellectual and artistic circles and the invention of a bohemian lifestyle in the 19th century Paris –, attached to creativity, pleasure, imagination, and innovation (as pointed out by Seigel, 1986). They observe as well that the artistic critique also foregrounds the loss of the sense of what is beautiful and valuable, and it is based upon a contrast between *attachment* and *stability* on the one side (the bourgeoisie), and *detachment* and *mobility* on the other side (the intellectuals and artists). Boltanski and Chiapello see this opposition as constituting the core of the artistic critique and found its paradigmatic formulation in Baudelaire's *Painter of the Modern Life* (1863): specifically, in his model of "the artist free of all attachments – the *dandy* – [that] made the absence of production (unless it was self-production) and a culture of uncertainty into untranscendable ideals." It is chiefly the absence of ties and the mobility of an artist-dandy "passer-by" that contribute, in their view, to this particular fusion of creativity and uncertainty (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005a, pp. 38–40, 52). Along with Baudelaire, they list as contributors to this new value system the subsequent trends in artistic critique that promoted in their own ways such fusion of creativity and "culture of uncertainty". This kind of culture has spread out particularly through Surrealism and the movements stemming from it, such as Situationism, as well as through some trends in contemporary art that promote the "project culture" (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005a, pp. xxii, 38; Boltanski, 2008, pp. 56, 66–67).

Boltanski and Chiapello further explain in Chapter 7 of *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, "The Test of the Artistic Critique", the way in which artistic practice/critique contributed to the current normative change. In brief, the third spirit of capitalism has recuperated and appropriated many components of the artistic critique: the demands of liberation, individual autonomy, creativity, self-fulfilment, and authenticity. Nowadays, these seem to be not only widely acknowledged as essential values of modernity, but also integrated into management rhetoric and then extended to all kinds of employment. Hence, their thesis that the artistic critique has, over the last twenty-thirty years, rather played into the hands of capitalism and was an instrument of its ability to last (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005a, pp. 419–420). A proof would be, by example, the way in which managers made use of such demands in transforming the organizational ethos and practices: "At a time when the watchword was to reinvent one's existence every day, heads of firms were able to enhance creativity and inventiveness in their organizational mechanisms, and thus emerge as men of progress" (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005a, p. 498).

Boltanski and Chiapello (2005a) and later Boltanski (2008) also emphasise the contribution of artistic practice to the coupling of references to "authenticity" and "networks", assembled in a new ideological figure, that of the "project", flexible and transitory. This constitutes the core of the new conception of human excellence, the new societal arrangement aiming to make the *network* with its "project culture" a pervasive normative model. In a debate following-

up *The New Spirit of Capitalism*'s account on this topic, *Under Pressure: Pictures, Subjects and the New Spirit of Capitalism* (2008), Isabelle Graw mentions the example of Conceptual Art and its emphasis on projects, communication, networking, self-management and the staging of one's personality. Furthermore, the "project culture" that has emerged in some segments of the art world in the early 1990s sees its limits and guidelines set up precisely by the project-oriented city described by Boltanski and Chiapello. For example, most activities in this new normative world present themselves as short-term projects, the distinction between "work" and "non-work" becoming obsolete, as in the post-Fordist condition: "Life turns into a succession of projects of limited duration, and subjects are expected to quickly and flexibly adapt themselves to constantly changing conditions and unexpected developments" (Graw 2008a, pp. 11–12; 2008b, pp. 76–77).

3.2.2 The Artistic-Driven Normative Changes: Benefits and Side Effects

All of this raises serious questions about the effects of the new norms of excellence and values on the current artistic-like ways of working and living and their sustainability. There are certain benefits of this normative change triggered by the artistic practice/critique. In the Postscript of *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, "Sociology *contra* fatalism", Boltanski and Chiapello underscore the new liberties – *autonomy, self-expression, self-realization* – that have emerged in the third stage of the "network capitalism" (or post-Fordist condition) and accompany its constraints (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005a, pp. 535–536). As Graw (2008b, p.78) puts forward, it is a better solution to avoid the scenario of "total co-optation" of the artistic critique, and to acknowledge the valuable accomplishments made by the artistic critique and emancipatory movements of the 1960s and 1970s in terms of "autonomy" and "self-realization".

However, in Chapter 7, Boltanski and Chiapello also provide a critical standpoint on some side effects of the recent normative change. In fact, they take care to report and criticize some paradoxical effects of the demands of liberation, autonomy, and authenticity that the artistic critique has formulated and then capitalism has incorporated into its new, third spirit and eventually into its displacements.

Boltanski and Chiapello's critical stance targets firstly the "anxiety" (*inquiétude*) and the "uncertainty" (in a sense that contrasts it with calculable risk) related to the kind of liberation associated with the redeployment of capitalism. They argue that this affects all relationships linking a person to the world and to others and, by closely linking autonomy to job insecurity or precariousness, undoubtedly make "projecting oneself into the future" more difficult. They also call attention to the fact that the introduction into the capitalist universe of the arts' operating modes has contributed to disrupting the reference-points for ways of evaluating people, actions or things. In particular, it is about the lack of any distinction between time at work and time outside work, between personal friendship and professional relationships, between work and the person of those who perform it – which, since the 19th century, had constituted typical characteristics of the

artistic condition, particularly markers of artist's "authenticity" (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005a, pp. 422–424).

The main target of their critical stance is nonetheless what they call the "culture of uncertainty", which emerged in Baudelaire's work along with the culture of creativity and was promoted by that trend of artistic critique having at its core the opposition between stability and *mobility*, above mentioned. In their view, this has become nowadays a *hyper-mobility* and its over-valuation has led to "insecurity" and "precariousness" in work and life. Therefore, a revived artistic critique would accomplish its genuine task only if undoing the link that has hitherto associated liberation with mobility (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005a, pp. 38, 535–536; Boltanski, 2008, p. 56).

On the one hand, it is true that for Baudelaire the path to modernity is difficult, because it is full of uncertainties and risks (this is the reason why the attitude of modernity represents for him a new form of existential heroism). However, as Seppä observes, this uncertainty is largely due to the imaginative and contingent nature of modern creativity. For Baudelaire, modernity or the "present in its presentness" is not a reality the artist should copy. It is rather a work of the artist's imaginative creation, able to pass through the banality of appearances towards the instant where eternity and ephemerality are one (Seppä, 2004). Understood as a condition of (self)-creation, uncertainty is therefore unavoidable in the modern art-world and life-world.

On the other hand, the emergence of such oppositions and new norms of excellence and lifestyles also relates to a certain type of city life explored by Baudelaire – the life in modern metropolis. As Iwona Blazwick mentions in *Century City: Art and Culture in the Modern Metropolis* (2001), by contrast with the stability of small city life, the metropolis offers a ceaseless encounter with the new. Thus, along with the oppositions between stability and mobility, there is another opposition between the traditional/familiar and the sense of the loss of identity and past, in many ways in accordance with the figure of the modern artists:

> Within the metropolis, assumptions of a shared history, language and culture may not apply [...] It is a paradox of the metropolis that its scale and heterogeneity can generate an experience both of unbearable invisibility and liberating anonymity; and of the possibility of unbounded creativity. (Blazwick, 2001, pp. 8–9)

To conclude, the link between uncertainty and creativity is bound to the very structure of life in modern metropolis and, in these kinds of urban settings/life-worlds, seems unavoidable. The issue at stake is how to tame this connection and channel it in ways allowing an urban lifestyle both creative and sustainable. The next question is whether Florida's model of "creative city", with its prescriptions for urban policies and creative lifestyles, does provide a sound solution to this problem or it still faces similar side effects.

4. Richard Florida: the Creative Lifestyle in the "Creative City"

The artistic life and work are processes where production, self-expression, and self-creation meet. As seen above, it is from the vantage point of the

interrelations between art and life – resulting in both the art of grasping the essence of city life and the art of the self as inventive self-production –, that the interactions between artistic life/creativity, normative change, and everyday life in the city become a major issue. Hence, there is need to explore further the role of artistic life in relation to the current imperative to *creativity* or the "creative ethos". This leads to a social figure not exempt of controversy: the artist as a model of existence or lifestyle not only for the "creative people", but also for everyone's daily life in the "creative city". Due to their impact on the everyday city life, all these social figures and urban formations turn out to be a challenge of great significance. I will address this challenge by analysing their avatars in Richard Florida's theory of the "creative class" in the "creative city".[5] The reference to Baudelaire is present as well in his theory of the current creative lifestyle in the city.

4.1. Creativity, Creative People and Artists in the City

4.1.1 Creativity as a Virtually Universal Capacity and Limitless Resource

The notion of a causal relation between (post)modern art or culture and the recent normative change at societal level is not new in sociology. Daniel Bell in *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1976) already observed that since the beginning of the 20th century culture has taken the initiative in promoting normative change. In addition, he formulated the idea that the "expression and remaking of the self" in order to achieve self-realization and self-fulfilment has become the axial principle of modern culture. Moreover, the cultural sphere has transposed its hedonistic-narcissistic principles – self-expression and pleasure as way of life – in the sphere of economy and geared it to meet these new wants. By altering the principle of efficiency of the economic sphere, (post)modern culture has had a dissolving power over capitalism, because this way the capitalist system has lost its transcendental (Protestant) ethic. Bell thus follows a line of thinking that persists in seeing work and life, or economy and culture/art, as separate spheres with distinct principles or value systems, and criticizing bohemianism because of its principles and effects (Bell, 1976, pp. xxiv–xxv, 13, 21–22).

Unlike Bell, Florida in *The Rise of the Creative Class and How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life* (2002) admits instead the possibility of synthesis between hedonist ethic and Protestant ethic, between bohemian and bourgeois, or of actually moving beyond these old categories that no longer apply at all (Florida, 2002, pp. 196–199). According to him, *creativity*, understood as "the ability to create meaningful new forms", is nowadays valued more highly and cultivated more intensely than ever. Moreover, after analysing the current "Transformation of Everyday Life", he states that creativity "is not the province of a few selected geniuses who can get away with breaking the mould because they possess superhuman talents. It is a capacity inherent to varying degrees in virtually all people" (Florida, 2002, p. 32).

[5] For a previous, detailed account on the topics in this section, see Ratiu (2013a, pp. 125–133).

Thus, creativity appears as an ontological capacity that, albeit not actual for all people, characterizes at least a new class, the "creative class". The artists have a prominent position in the elite of the creative class, which is its "super-creative core". Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that artists are not the sole representatives of the super-creative core – this includes as well scientists, engineers, educators, designers, architects, and so on –, much less of the creative class as a whole (Florida, 2002, pp. 5, 72–77; 2005, pp. 34–36). In the subsequent publication, *Cities and the Creative Class* (2005), Florida has tried to defend the creative class concept against those criticizing it as elitist and exclusionary, by stressing the idea that "every human being is creative". In this way, human creativity or talent seen as "creative capital" would be a virtually limitless resource and the principal driving force in urban development (Florida 2005, pp. 3–5, 22). Consequently, 'creativity' in everyday life/work surpasses 'creation' in the field of art, as an extended potential capacity of everyday people (although not actualized in all cases) versus a rare (yet actual) capacity of an individual artist.

4.1.2 Creative People in Creative Cities: the Shared Values of an Experiential Lifestyle

Next, Florida identifies the "creative ethos" as "the fundamental spirit or character of [today] culture", that is, the emerging "Creative Age" or "Age of Talent". I would say (in terms borrowed from Foucault) that through this notion he offers an alternative ontology of present reality and of ourselves: "The creative ethos pervades everything from our workplace culture to our values and communities, reshaping the way we see ourselves as economic and social actors – our very identities" (Florida, 2002, pp. 21–22). Florida also define the creative ethos as an overall commitment to creativity in its varied dimensions. In his view, the rising of the "creative economy" in the Creative Age is not only drawing the spheres of innovation, business/entrepreneurship and culture into one another, in intimate combinations, but it is also blending the varied forms of creativity – technological, economic, artistic and cultural. All these forms are deeply interrelated: "Not only do they share a common thought process, they reinforce each other through cross-fertilization and mutual stimulation" (Florida, 2002, pp. 33, 201).

Another key assumption of Florida's theory is that the "creative people" gathered in "creative communities" in creative cities share values, norms and attitudes, and these have significantly changed due to the shift from the (declining) social capital to the (increasing) creative capital and the process of global talent migration. Supposedly, the members of these creative communities or the Creative Class share values such as: *individuality* and self-statement; *meritocracy*, hard work, challenge and stimulation; *diversity* and *openness*. As many of them are "migratory talents", they prefer *weak ties* to strong ones and desire "quasi-anonymity" and "experiential lifestyles". Therefore, the *impermanent relations and loose ties* that allow creative people live the quasi-anonymous lives they want define the creative communities. Florida correlates overtly these values and loose social relations of today creative people in creative cities with those aspects of the city life that

Baudelaire loved: its freedom and its opportunities for "anonymity" and "curious observation" that were reflected in the *flâneur*'s quasi-anonymity and free enjoyment of the diversity of the city's experience (Florida, 2002, pp. 15, 77–80, 267–282; 2005, pp. 30–33). Furthermore, these values and social relations have become nowadays the pattern of an experiential lifestyle and a model of existence. Florida admits, indeed, that the nowadays creative people (among which the artists) are not Baudelaire. Still these creative people – with their creative values, creative workplaces, and creative lifestyles – "represent a new mainstream setting the norms and pace for much of society" (Florida, 2002, p. 211).

However, Florida posits eventually an instrumental view on creative peoples, the artists in particular, since he envisages them as dispensable tools of urban economic growth or regeneration. In his view, the creative capital is a highly mobile factor, like technology: both are "not fixed stocks, but transient *flows*", "flowing into and out of places" (Florida, 2005, p. 7). This situation may look like that in "the city of passing encounters, fragmentary exchanges, strangers and crowds" portrayed by Baudelaire in his musings on 19th century Parisian life, as Florida suggests (2002, p. 278). Indeed, the theme of the *passer-by*, who is only passing through from one place to the next, from one situation to another is present in Baudelaire's essays. Yet, as shown above, this is notably the figure of "the mere *flâneur*", not of the artist as "perfect *flâneur*" whose ambulant aesthetic practice and aims are different and freely assumed. Today, instead, the transient flow or hyper-mobility of the creative people/ artists in the creative city could be a forced one: the increasing wealth for a city and property development also mean increasing gentrification that trigger an *out*-migration of artists or bohemians (Florida, 2005, pp. 24–25, 278). Ultimately, Florida's theory of creative capital approaches the urban community mainly as a social structure able or unable to generate economic prosperity, and a supportive context in attracting and retaining migratory talents (Scott, 2006, p. 15).

4.2. Towards a Creative yet Sustainable Urban Life

All of this raises, again, questions about the effects of the extension of such a hyper-mobile and flexible creative lifestyle from the exceptional figure of the artist to everyday people, up to becoming an ordinary lifestyle in a creative city. Would this creative-and-uncertain way of life be sustainable?

The playful form of the "creative ethos" that hails contingencies of making and unmaking of the social fabric in the creative cities, described by Florida, is at some distance from Baudelaire's "attitude of modernity" and its corresponding artist of the modern life. Yet it is not unforeseen. It can also be found in the normative world of the "project-oriented city" or the managerial discourse demanding creativity, inventiveness, autonomy, flexibility, mobility and ability to adapt to rapidly changing situations, discussed above. However, this creative lifestyle, because of its characteristics such as flexibility and

hyper-mobility, is unsustainable. Boltanski and Chiapello (2005a) have credibly called attention to the costs, in terms of material and psychological security, associated with the lifestyle adjusted to the recent development of "network capitalism", organized around short-lived projects: the increasing anxiety, instability, insecurity, and precariousness (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005a, pp. 16–18, 466–468).

There are nonetheless clear benefits of the ongoing extension of creativity to the everyday and the presence of creative communities in the cities. Florida's account of *Cities and the Creative Class* suggests that a significant positive correlation exists between the incidence of creative class in different cities and the local economic development. He also emphasizes the increasing importance of the *immaterial* economic dimensions of the urban space – the creativity associated with the human capital – since the decline of physical constraints on cities and communities in recent decades (Florida, 2005, p. 1).

Consequently, his prescriptions for urban policies aiming to "build creative communities" and accelerate the dynamism of the local economy are mainly oriented toward the deployment of packages of selected amenities as a way of attracting elite workers, the "creative class", into given urban areas. Florida's strategy for developing a creative city revolves around a simple formula – "the 3 T's of economic development: Technology, Talent, and Tolerance". He stipulates, first, the development of urban amenities that are valued by the creative class desiring a high-quality experiential life. Among these amenities are: the "street-level culture" venues – cafes, bistros and restaurants, street musicians, art galleries, and the hybrid spaces like bookstore-tearoom-little theatre-live music space –, as well as fitness clubs ("the body as art"), jogging and cycling tracks for active recreation, and so on. Next, he instructs to ensure a prevailing atmosphere of tolerance, openness and diversity that will incite the migration of other members of the creative class. Finally, to further upgrade the urban fabric and thus to enhance the prestige and attractiveness of the city as a whole. Thus, the "quality of place", measured by various indicators of urban amenities and lifestyle, would be a main ingredient of viable creative cities (Florida, 2002, pp. 165–189, 249–266, 283–313; 2005, pp. 5–7, 37–42).

Florida's model of "creative city" and his prescriptions for urban policies aiming to boost its development have had a visible impact on current cityscapes and provide valuable insights into creative urban lifestyles. However, as stated above, this model confronts side effects similar to those detected in the case of the "project-oriented city". There is still need to find satisfactory answers in terms of creativity-led strategies for sustainable patterns of urban development and city lifeforms.

On the one hand, one might argue that we can measure the success or viability of an urban space by examining not only its *activity* – economic, social, cultural – and its *form* – the relationship between buildings and space. Its *meaning* – the sense of place, both historical and cultural –, and its *human dimensions* are very important as well (Roodhouse, 2006). As Roodhouse argues in his analysis of cultural districts, these are viable as long as they nurture and sustain those

within and around it, and they should be organized with this goal in mind (Roodhouse, 2006; Galligan, 2008, p. 138).

On the other hand, Florida's theory of creative class/capital not only overlooks the human and symbolic dimensions of places or creative cities. He also lacks to mention *sustainability* qualities – such as sociability, solidarity, and democratic participation – by which cities or urban communities could cope with the problems that he himself calls "negative externalities" of the global creative economy, among which the mounting stress and anxiety, and political and social polarization (Florida, 2005, pp. 171-172; Scott, 2006, p. 11). Instead, Scott contrasts Florida's view on urban community and values by emphasizing the complex interweaving of relations of production, work, and social life as well as the strong communal ties and forms of affectivity and trust as conditions for a sustainable urban existence (Scott, 2006, pp. 9–15).

Therefore, to conclude, a creative city would be viable and sustainable as long as it is about shaping both viable urban places and communities. From this standpoint, the ongoing extension of creativity to the everyday world of working and living does not show its benefits by deeming the creative people/artists as dispensable tools of urban development or regeneration. Rather these benefits would emerge when they actually play a role in fostering a wider and sustainable sense of place and of creative community.

5. Conclusion

I embraced here an intersectional Everyday–Urban Aesthetics approach, which combines an analysis of the experience of modern city life and beauty from a sensitive artistic viewpoint that envisions the city as a "poetic object" (Baudelaire) with a sharp sociological analysis of the normative changes instantiated recently by the "project-oriented city" (Boltanski and Chiapello) and the "creative city" as stage of everyday creativity (Florida). I hope to have proved this approach helpful for understanding the role of art/artistic life in the emergence of new norms of excellence and lifestyles and, this way, to have contributed to the ongoing discussion on the everyday life in urban setting, especially in the present-day creative city, as well as on strategies for making it more sustainable.

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Dan Eugen Ratiu
Babes-Bolyai University
Department of Philosophy
M. Kogalniceanu str. 1
RO-400084 Cluj-Napoca
dan.ratiu@ubbcluj.ro