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Published PDF deposited in Coventry University's Repository

Original citation:

Marczewska, K 2016, 'The Iterative Turn' *Parse*, vol 3, pp. 13-27.
ESSN 2002-0953

Publisher: **Göteborgs Universitet**

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The Iterative Turn

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the implications of what I see as the increasingly prominent propensity to copy as a creative practice in contemporary culture. While debates about plagiarism, copyright infringement, and the state of copyright inform my argument, the focus here is on broader issues. My discussion is formulated as an attempt at defining a cultural condition that triggers novel attitudes to creativity in order to explore the possibilities of re-conceptualisation of copying as a creative category. By doing so, this project strives to interrogate the restrictions and inadequacies of the dominant categories of originality, creativity, and authorship to propose the notion of iteration as a possible alternative. Drawing on the example of recent creative projects by child-star cum performance artist Shia LaBeouf, practices of copying are represented here as a necessary condition of the contemporary culture and a manifestation of a shift in aesthetics, here defined as the Iterative Turn. In its attempt to think about the contemporary, the paper posits a framework for looking beyond the established paradigms of creativity.

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AS STEWART HOME PUTS it, “first there were modernists, then there were post-modernists, now there are plagiarists.”¹ Although hyperbolic in his attempt at defining changing attitudes towards creativity as they emerge in their respective cultural moments, in this statement Home points to a distinctive aesthetic shift, one, I suggest, of increasing prominence today. There is a sense here that plagiarism is an aesthetic category that has a clearly defined history: Home’s plagiarism emerges as historically contingent and following on from modernism and postmodernism. But if plagiarism can be seen as a natural successor to modern and postmodern thought and practice, then, by implication, both modernism and postmodernism have to be understood as conditioned upon codification of practices related to plagiarism, if not plagiarism itself. What Home seems to imply, then, is that clear affinities can be drawn between dominant models of cultural production in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and an ongoing creative commitment to acts of copying. From modernist allusion, through postmodern parody and pastiche, to contemporary practices discussed in this article, evoked in Home’s trajectory is a sense of a characteristic increase in significance of copying for creativity that reaches a characteristic tipping point today.

Examples of this move towards creative copying in both high and popular contemporary culture abound and include Kenneth Goldsmith’s wider uncreative project; Vanessa Place’s retweeted *Gone with the Wind* and her retyped legal briefs, reconceptualised as poetry, alongside a range of similar publications proliferating among the conceptual writing community; Richard Prince and Roger Koons’s ongoing commitment to appropriation art; the prominence of sampling practices in music; or a controversial debut novel by Helene Hegemann, published in 2010 in Germany to high critical acclaim, but comprising significant amounts of plagiarised material. Today, everyone from Baldessari

to Banksy dabbles in similar forms of copying as an expression of creative practice. Whether discussed as plagiarist gestures, manifestations of remix or appropriation cultures, or what I describe here as an expression of the contemporary Iterative Turn, the intensifying notoriety of creative practices reliant on the possibilities of reusing pre-published content posits challenges with respect to categories in which to consider them. At the time when on the one hand the availability and accessibility of information is far greater than ever before, and developments in information technologies encourage a culture of communal creativity and free appropriation, increased efforts are also being put into place to introduce often controversial means of control of what has varyingly been described as a democracy and an anarchy (recent examples of Stop Online Piracy Act [SOPA] in the US and attempts at an international ratification of Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement [ACTA] are a case in point). The mounting tensions between the propagators of the creative remix culture and the defenders of traditional copyright law generate contrasting rhetoric of tradition versus innovation, stability versus change, and print versus digital culture. My discussion here is an attempt at exploring this cultural framework as a trigger for what I consider an important shift in aesthetics. As I argue, creating by means of appropriation, borrowing, plagiarism—creating by iterative means—finds its particular moment in contemporary culture and emerges not as a transgressive practice but rather as a characteristic attitude towards creativity. My interests here reside not in instances of plagiarism or copyright infringement per se, but rather in the cultural condition that triggers the proliferation of acts of copying, a condition that affords their re-conceptualisation as creative, aesthetic categories.

Recent controversies surrounding Shia LaBeouf’s attempts at film-making and performance art are a useful starting point for thinking about issues of creativity and originality as they impinge on the contemporary art scene. In December 2013,

LaBeouf, a child-star turned performance artist, posted online his short film *HowardCantour.com*, which had debuted at the Cannes 2012 festival to high critical acclaim. Its availability online caused a considerable controversy after significant similarities were exposed between LaBeouf's film and Daniel Clowes's comic, *Justin M. Damiano* (2007). The script, many of the visuals, as well as dialogues of LaBeouf's film all proved to be appropriations of Clowes's, incorporated into *HowardCantour.com* without acknowledgement. On 8 January 2014 LaBeouf tweeted a storyboard for his next short, *Daniel Boring*. "It's like Fassbinder meets half-baked Nabokov on Gilligan Island" LaBeouf declared.² The storyboard was, again, a copy of a comic series and a graphic novel *David Boring* (2000), also by Daniel Clowes,³ and the statement a quotation of Clowes's description of *David*.⁴ LaBeouf circulated his *Daniel* accompanied by a "cease and desist" letter from Clowes's attorney, addressing the issue of both copied works and calling LaBeouf to undertake "all appropriate and necessary steps to redress his wrongs."⁵

While LaBeouf complied with the cease and desist note—the relevant tweets were deleted, *HowardCantour.com* taken down—his subsequent amends turned into a statement on the ambiguous status of the relationship between copies and originals in contemporary culture. His public, social-media driven apology for an act dismissed by the media as transgressive and infringing took the form of a complete appropriation stunt. None of the tweeted statements were LaBeouf's own; instead his apology for plagiarism was also plagiarised and included an eclectic mix of unacknowledged quotations from, among others, a hip hop megastar, Kanye West, the notorious Toronto Mayor Rob Ford, and Yahoo! website comments section.⁶ LaBeouf's explanation of the nature of his art in an interview for *Bleeding Cool* was also a compilation of repurposed material: statements by Marcel Duchamp, Kenneth Goldsmith, Lawrence Lessig, Gregory Betts, and Steve Jobs, among others.

It is easy to dismiss LaBeouf's transgressions as yet another manifestation of the contemporary celebrity art culture (Joaquin's Phoenix's *I'm still Here*, James Franco's various artistic endeavours), the role of the social-media information machine, "generational aversion to 'giving credit'"⁷ fostered by habits of sharing information online, and related popular culture consumerism. Charges of tastelessness, immorality,

1. Home, Stewart. *Plagiarism: Art as Commodity and Strategies for its Negotiation*. London: Aporia Press. 1987. back cover.

2. LaBeouf, Shia. Twitter post. 2014-01-08. @thecampaignbook. The post has now been deleted.

3. Interestingly, appropriation is a persistent and characteristic feature of Clowes's work as well. As Daniel Nicolás Ferreiro points out, "Clowes's works have continually revealed echoes from films, paintings or literature, blended with different forms of popular culture". See Daniel Nicolás Ferreiro. Relational Genres, Gapped Narratives, and Metafictional Devices in Daniel Clowes's *David Boring*. In *Relational Design in Literature and the Arts: Page and Stage, Canvas and Screen*. Rui Carvalho Homem (ed.). Amsterdam: Rodopi. 2012. p. 185. *David Boring* is the prime example, built around references to superhero comic books, and Star Trek in particular, here reworked as The Yellow Streak. Clowes's response to LaBeouf's appropriations does not, however, acknowledge Clowes's interest in aesthetics of appropriation as a creative practice.

4. See Clowes, Daniel. The Velvet Gloves are off: A Boring Interview with *Ghost World*'s Daniel Clowes. Interview by Matt Silvie. *The Comics Journal*. no. 233. 2001. p. 66.

5. Michael J. Kump to Brian G. Wolf. 2015-01-07. Circulated as a Twitter post. 2014.01.08. <https://twitter.com/thecampaignbook/status/420931894935834624/photo/1>, and <https://twitter.com/thecampaignbook/status/420931951462477824/photo/1> (Accessed 2016-04-08).

6. LaBeouf's approach to writing his apologies was first identified by a Twitter user. See Molly Horan. Shia LaBeouf's Plagiarism Controversy. *Know Your Meme*. <http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/events/shia-labeoufs-plagiarism-controversy> (Accessed 2014-10-10).

7. Cowen, Trace William. Shia on the Moon: The Necessary Dissection of Howard Cantour. *Glide Magazine*. 2014-12-20. <http://www.glidemagazine.com/hiddentrack/shia-on-the-moon-the-necessary-dissection-of-howard-cantour/> (Accessed 2014-10-10).

and bad art aside, LaBeouf's act is nevertheless interesting as a characteristic manifestation of what I see as a persistent contemporary tendency to create by means of copying occurring at an unprecedented level in both high and popular culture, in mainstream and avant-garde circles alike. It is indicative of a very characteristic thinking about current means of engaging pre-published content as an aesthetic project, unique to the contemporary moment. LaBeouf's methods resonate, I suggest, with echoes of Ted Berrigan's interview with John Cage (1967),⁸ a text entirely composed by Berrigan from a compilation of statements by Warhol and Burroughs, among others, but attributing everything to Cage. As such, Berrigan's take on appropriation is manifested not only in the act of recycling textual material itself, but, perhaps even more importantly, in the selection of sources, all pointing to a carefully constructed statement on the creative possibility of the copy. Berrigan's act should not be seen as a manifestation of plagiarism. It foregrounds an aesthetic engagement with the dynamic of repetition so characteristic of Warhol's silk screens and Burroughs' cut outs, evoked in Berrigan's text, and the broader attitude it exemplifies. There is a sense of an appropriation of not just the source, but of a particular attitude to creativity that is repeated when the words of Andy Warhol are being flagrantly repurposed.

LaBeouf's plagiarism, I suggest, should be considered in similar terms; as an iteration of a certain persistent attitude to copying as a creative act that finds its manifestation in related forms of creative production, a trajectory illustrative of contemporary models of creativity. Understood as such, the propensity to repeat today should be seen as a complete aesthetic project expressed in individual works which rely on iterative means as well as on a manner in which previous appropriation gestures are evoked. LaBeouf's preoccupation with Duchamp and Goldsmith, and Goldsmith's commitment to engaging with Warhol's oeuvre both exemplify this trajectory. What LaBeouf repeats is not simply a specific source text, but the method of appropriation

itself. His contemporary iterative project surfaces as an acknowledgement of the singularity of the current cultural moment defined by a drive towards acts of re-appropriation of appropriation gestures, of repetition of repetition, to arrive at a novel, current aesthetic mode.

Like Berrigan's, then, LaBeouf's sources are significant and an expression of his commitment to copying as a contemporary avant-garde gesture. Echoing Duchamp immediately foregrounds LaBeouf's interest in the ready-made. His recurring references to Lessig and Goldsmith inscribe *HowardCantour.com*, *Daniel Boring*, and LaBeouf's apologies into the contemporary framework of debates about creativity, authorship, and copyright. While drawing from Lessig can be seen as a justification of LaBeouf's acts in legal terms, an interest in Goldsmith's work offers a creative and critical point of reference. Promoting ideas of free culture and creative commons, and of "an updated notion of genius [that centres] around one's mastery of information",⁹ both Lessig and Goldsmith respectively move away from thinking about models of cultural production in proprietary terms and towards paradigms of creativity—"uncreativity", to borrow Kenneth Goldsmith's term—based on a culture of collecting, organising, curating and sharing content. For Goldsmith, in the contemporary context, practices such as LaBeouf's assume a creative quality and are a manifestation of characteristic habits of textual production and dissemination; "it is not plagiarism in the digital age—it's repurposing",¹⁰ argues Goldsmith. "It is not plagiarism in the digital age—it's repurposing"¹¹, suggests LaBeouf, without acknowledgement.

This approach, LaBeouf argues, contributes to his ongoing creative project as an expression of "meta-modernist performance art".¹² His two artist's manifestos, positioning his work as meta-modernist and intentionally uncreative, are also, perhaps unsurprisingly, composed by means of copying, repurposing Luke Turner's meta-modernism

manifesto, passed off as LaBeouf's,¹³ and excerpts of Goldsmith's *Uncreative Writing*¹⁴ respectively. His recent "Twitter as Art" statement is a mash-up, bringing together a selection of performance art manifestos by Marilyn Arsem, Scott Wichmann and Marina Abramvić, as well as passages copied verbatim from *Painters Painting*, a 1973 documentary. "All art is either plagiarism [sic] or revolution",¹⁵ LaBeouf suggests, (mis)quoting Paul Gauguin. However, the notion of plagiarism today, as acts such as LaBeouf's seem to imply, requires a radical re-conceptualisation. Where instances of creative expression are concerned, "all rights and remedies [might be] reserved"¹⁶ under the rule of copyright law, as the "cease and desist" notice concludes, but LaBeouf's stunt seems to imply that in the contemporary context their reach, enforceability and applicability prove limited. LaBeouf's case is a reminder that the idea of culture as property is not an unquestionable absolute. Rather, as Jonathan Lethem contends, it is "an ongoing social negotiation, tenuously forged, endlessly revised, and imperfect in its every incarnation."¹⁷ When paradigms of information production and dissemination change with the rise to prominence of novel media platforms, so does thinking about authorship and creativity, a trajectory true both in the context of the now familiar, historical, "old" technologies and as a manifestation of the contemporary new media cultural transformations. Projects such as LaBeouf's contribute to a collective attempt at renegotiating the standards that are otherwise taken for granted.

Although removed as a result of the copyright controversy, *HowardCantour.com* and LaBeouf's tweets remain accessible online. This widespread preservation and availability of the material officially deleted posits significant questions about the nature of the copy in the digital environment. The dynamic of production and dissemination of content online is foregrounded here not as a space of the original creation but of the inevitable copy, of its persistent proliferation, not only independent but, importantly, irrespective of the status of the original. The original as a centre and source of meaning, in the context, becomes only an illusory centre. This logic of the digital copy finds its manifestation in LaBeouf's complete act. LaBeouf got away with plagiarism, until he did not, his transgression identified by a Twitter user almost immediately after the release of *HowardCantour.com* online. If, as Warhol (appropriating McLuhan) puts it, art is what you can get away

8. Berrigan, Ted. An Interview with John Cage. *Electronic Poetry Center*. <http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/berrigan/cage.html> (Accessed 2014-09-10).

9. Goldsmith, Kenneth. *Uncreative Writing*. New York: Columbia University Press. 2011. p. 1.

10. Goldsmith, Kenneth. Twitter post, 2014-01-2. https://twitter.com/kg_ubu/status/418787567354785792 (Accessed 2016-04-08).

11. LaBeouf, Shia. Authorship is Censorship—Bleeding Cool in Conversation with Shia LaBeouf. Interview by Rich Johnson. *Bleeding Cool*. 2014-01-02. <http://www.bleedingcool.com/2014/01/authorship-is-censorship-bleeding-cool-in-conversation-with-shia-labeouf/> (Accessed 2014-09-01).

12. LaBeouf, Shia. Twitter as Art. Tweeted by LaBeouf in January 2014 (@thecampaignbook), the manifesto has since been taken down but is widely available online. See, for example: <http://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/gossip/shia-labeouf-bizarre-behavior-performance-art-article-1.1587660> (Accessed 2016-04-06).

13. LaBeouf's name was temporarily included in the by-line of Luke Turner's *Metamodernist Manifesto*. It is preserved on Turner's website: <http://luketurner.com/labeouf-ronkko-turner/metamodernist-manifesto/> (Accessed 2016-04-06). Turner's manifesto, now in its original format, can be viewed here: <http://www.metamodernism.org/> (Accessed 2016-04-06).

14. LaBeouf, Shia. #stopcreating. *The New Inquiry*. 2014.01.20. <http://thenewinquiry.com/features/stopcreating/> (Accessed 2014-01-10).

15. LaBeouf, Twitter as Art.

16. Kump to Wolf.

17. Lethem, Jonathan. The Ecstasy of Influence. In *The Ecstasy of Influence: Nonfictions, etc.* London: Jonathan Cape. 2012. p. 101.

with, then LaBeouf's performance is an example of how not to do art. But, perhaps, getting away with plagiarism is not the point here. Perhaps plagiarism is not an appropriate term to describe LaBeouf's act. His uncreative practice acquires an altogether different status if viewed as a clear manifestation of the influence of the contemporary digital, networked culture on the practices of information dissemination and artistic expression, on the status of the copy. As Goldsmith puts it, "plagiarizing well is hard to do".¹⁸ Plagiarising in the social-media driven culture proves an impossible feat. In this context, questions that need to be raised in relation to plagiarism shift away from ethics and towards aesthetics of borrowing pre-published content. The change in attitude might be a result of increasing availability of all published content online and of simple, widely accessible tools that make plagiarism detection possible. If a "trial by Google"¹⁹ enables any online user to detect LaBeouf's plagiarism only a few hours after his work or a statement are released online, then the motivations behind acts of copying must, inevitably, change. In the context of ubiquitous digital media, plagiarism as an attempt at passing someone else's ideas as one's own ceases to be achievable. It is this sense of an impossibility of a copy that provokes a proliferation of copies, but generated as an expression of transgressive creative gestures achieved through inherently uncreative acts. Plagiarism seen as such is not antithetical to creativity, but rather, as Lethem argues, a necessary condition of all writing and creativity, and organically connected to it.²⁰

There is a certain sense that LaBeouf's complete work of plagiarism came together as an afterthought, an attempt at reframing an unambiguous instance of plagiarism as a carefully constructed performance to avoid the consequences of copyright infringement. LaBeouf, by choosing Goldsmith, Duchamp or Abramović as his sources, makes a stand about the status of his copy as an avant-garde project. His self-fashioning as an experimental performance artist is a conscious choice to shift

attention away from the illegality to the aesthetics of the act. But this is exactly why LaBeouf's case serves as a useful example here. It points to the urgency and ubiquity of the debates and to the dynamic of the environment that generates them. That LaBeouf has an extensive knowledge of the history of appropriation art is a possibility; that *HowardCantour.com*, released two years before the plagiarism controversy started, had been created to incite the uncreative performance that followed is likely. But there is also a chance that it is the exigency of the current debates about open sourcing, file sharing, copyright in the digital age, the ubiquity of the debates about information dissemination and circulation online, and the ease of accessing materials about them that collectively enabled a construction of LaBeouf's defence that was only one Google search away, collated as a publicity rather than an artist's statement. And while the approach might raise questions about the creative qualities of LaBeouf's art, the controversy touches at the core of the contemporary cultural condition that drives the aesthetic developments discussed in this article. Acts of plagiarising an artist's statement, a performance piece, plagiarising apologies for plagiarism, although dismissed in LaBeouf's case as instances of copyright infringement and plagiarism by law and media respectively, should be seen, I argue, as neither. Rather, LaBeouf's tenacious copying should be considered a manifestation of a condition of iteration as an emergent aesthetic attitude.

Practices of copying today should be considered a necessary condition of the current cultural moment. While notions of plagiarism, copyright infringement, and iteration all imply that forms of authorship are defined in relation to a shared preoccupation with means of creative production informed by acts of copying, the base assumptions about the essence of creativity and originality differ significantly where the first two concepts and iteration are concerned. Both plagiarism and copyright infringement favour originality of creation, where originality is synonymous with,

simply, not copying. Iteration, on the other hand, recognises the creative potential of copying. Iteration, as I define it here, represents a tendency to repeat available material as a creative gesture; as an extension rather than a synonym of copying and appropriating. While copyright infringement and plagiarism are preoccupied with questions of whether copying has occurred, copying is always already implied in iteration. This approach is inherent in my use of the term, itself an appropriation of Derrida's concept of iterability. According to Derrida, the word "iter" means "again". The logic of iterability is the logic of repetition. But iterability also inheres change. As Derrida explains, the term "iter" most likely derives from "itra", or "other" in Sanskrit. Hence, "everything that follows can be read as the working out of the logic that ties repetition to alterity."²¹ Repetition is that which, for Derrida, alters. The principle of iterability assumes alterity as a condition of otherness, difference or change. Iterability implies a repetition, but a repetition with a *différance* rather than a repetition of the same. Thinking about creative practice as iterative necessitates a completely new set of questions, which, I argue, define contemporary attitudes to creativity and the cultural moment that breeds them. I describe that moment as the Iterative Turn.

LaBeouf's project evokes this new iterative attitude. In line with the dominant logic, LaBeouf's acts are a case of a "clear copyright infringement and a misappropriation of Daniel Clowes's work."²² Dismissed as a "blatant copy", and a manifestation of "improper and outlandish conduct", the derivative

nature of LaBeouf's "foolishness" fails to comply with the copyright paradigms of authorship and originality. Similar thinking pervades popular understanding of what it means to create, echoed in the media debates about LaBeouf's plagiarism. While often considered a manifestation of an unlawful practice, plagiarism is not a legal term. Unlike copyright infringement, plagiarism is an ethical category. Although inherently transgressive, acts of plagiarism do not, in all instances, constitute copyright infringement. As Laurie Stearns explains,

*in some ways the concept of plagiarism is broader than infringement, in that it can include copying of ideas, or of expression not protected by copyright, that would not constitute infringement [...] fundamental to both plagiarism and copyright infringement is wrongful copying from a preexisting work. But the form, the amount, and the sources of the copying prohibited as copyright infringement are different from those of the copying condemned as plagiarism.*²³

But, as it is often the case, the logic and the media rhetoric of plagiarism surrounding LaBeouf's performance mirror the legal understanding of copyright infringement. There is a sense that plagiarism is synonymous with a failure of a creative process. Plagiarism, as Lise Buranen and Alice M. Roy put it, "is perceived as a problem [...]: 'using someone else's words without telling whose they are or where you got them'; 'stealing other people's ideas or words.'"²⁴ Plagiarism, then, is considered synonymous with theft and the under-

18. Goldsmith, Kenneth. Interview by Trace William Cowen. *Nailed*. 2014-01-08. <http://www.nailedmagazine.com/interview/interview-with-kenneth-goldsmith-by-trace-william-cowen/> (Accessed 2014-08-18).

19. Shields, David. *Reality Hunger: A Manifesto*. London: Hamish Hamilton. 2010. p. 38.

20. Lethem, Jonathan. I'm suggesting [originality] is an overrated virtue. Interview by Harvey Blume. *The Boston Globe*. 2007.03.04. http://www.boston.com/news/globe/ideas/articles/2007/03/04/qa_jonathan_lethem/?page=full (Accessed 2013-02-24).

21. Derrida, Jacques. Signature Event Context. In *Limited, Inc.* Trans. Samuel Weber and Jeffrey Mehlman. Gerald Graff (ed.). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press. 1988). p. 7.

22. Kump to Wolf.

23. Stearns, Laurie. Copy Wrong: Plagiarism, Process, Property, and the Law. In *Perspectives on Plagiarism and Intellectual Property in a Postmodern World*. Lise Buranen and Alice M. Roy (eds.). New York: State University of New York Press. 1999. p. 9.

24. Buranen, Lise, and Roy, Alice M. Introduction to *Perspectives on Plagiarism and Intellectual Property in a Postmodern World*. Lise Buranen and Alice M. Roy (eds.). New York: State University of New York Press. 1999. pp. xv-xvi.

25. Randall, Marilyn. *Pragmatic Plagiarism: Authorship, Profit, and Power*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 2001. p. 61.

26. Halbert, Deborah. Poaching and Plagiarising: Property, Plagiarism, and Feminist Futures. In *Perspectives on Plagiarism and Intellectual Property in a Postmodern World*. p. 111.

27. Boon, Marcus. *In Praise of Copying*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 2010. p. 101.

28. Siegert, Bernard. *Cultural Techniques: Grids, Filters, Doors, and Other Articulation of the Real*. Trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young. New York, NY: Fordham University Press. 2015. p. 2.

standing of the notion derives, Marilyn Randall explains, from the Latin origins of the term, *plagium* meaning “to kidnap a person”, used only with reference to children, servants or slaves, people who could be considered in proprietary terms.²⁵ The same logic translates into paradigms of creative production as soon as creative outputs are considered property, as defined by Intellectual Property law. “Once it becomes possible to think of literary work as property”, Deborah Halbert suggests, “it becomes possible to ‘steal’ that property.”²⁶

There is a sense here that a copy is almost a taboo. However, my argument stems from an assumption that as technologies and economies of writing change, so does the inherent understanding of authorship and the dominant attitudes towards both creativity and plagiarism. We find ourselves now at a transitional cultural stage—at the Iterative Turn—characterised by the propensity to copy as an expression of creative practice. Perhaps, this contemporary persistence of acts of copying, of which LaBeouf’s performance is only one example, should be seen as a shift, to borrow from Marcus Boon, “in relation to the forces that constitute that taboo”.²⁷ If copying emerges as an increasingly prominent avenue of creative expression, then perhaps the base assumptions of creativity need to shift accordingly. The critical and creative move towards the Iterative Turn I propose here offers one possible way of thinking about creativity in response to these assumptions.

Today, the context that triggers iterative thinking is digital. As Lev Manovich suggests, it is technology, more than

any critical impulse that should be seen as a driving force behind developments in modern paradigms of creativity. But it is easy to give into techno-deterministic reductionism while focusing on technological progress alone. My thinking about the logic of iterative creative practices is influenced by but not limited to the digital environment. I am interested in the critical potential of technological change and technology’s ability to destabilise the familiar cultural codes and consider the contemporary digital culture as a contextual framework, a cultural technique in Bernard Siegert’s terms, that exerts significant impact on the dynamic of creative practices both online and offline. Following Siegert, I see new technologies as a characteristic “condition of representation”,²⁸ a system of reference for paradigms of contemporary creativity. This is to say that the iterative attitude is not limited to digital practices, but it emerges in response to the impact of digital culture on cultural production broadly conceived. Hence, it is the backlash of the Internet copy-paste culture of ubiquitous sharing rather than that culture itself that forms the context for the Iterative Turn, emerging under the condition of postproduction and not as a straightforward expression of mechanism of digital culture.

Developed by Nicolas Bourriaud, the notion of “postproduction” is useful here as a critical framework for conceptualising the state of contemporary creativity. While contemporary digital technologies heavily inform the dynamic of the postproduction culture, the technology is only one aspect of this much more comprehensive cultural ecology and of the processes that inform the contemporary aesthetic shift towards iteration. For

Bourriaud, postproduction epitomises the contemporary, and offers a means of presenting “an analysis of today’s art in relation to social changes, whether technological, economic, or sociological.”²⁹ He sees contemporary culture as defined by a characteristic sense of excess which manifests itself through excessive information production, dissemination and manipulation characteristic for the contemporary digital culture. This understanding of the contemporary condition serves as a means of distinguishing between the contemporary and postmodern moments, the latter characterised by extreme consumerism of hypercapitalism that triggered appropriation art as it developed in the 1970s. This characteristic trajectory exemplifies the changing nature of appropriation, with the aesthetic transformation driven by a move away from the overload of things to information overload as a defining features of creativity today.

The contemporary remix culture that Bourriaud poses as a pre-condition of the postproduction moment inherently subsumes self-conscious acts of appropriation as the dominant creative mode of today. “It is no longer a matter of elaborating a form on the basis of a raw material”, Bourriaud writes, “but working with objects that are already in circulation on the cultural market, [...] objects already *informed* by other objects. Notions of originality [...] and even creation [...] are slowly blurred in this new cultural landscape.”³⁰ The negotiation of consumption-production dynamic implied in Bourriaud’s statement lies at the core of his postproduction thinking. His postproduction Web is an environment synonymous with what Christopher Schmidt describes as a “waste media

capitalism”,³¹ an environment characterised by an abundance of language as an object of widespread, constant consumption and production online. However, the features of material consumed and produced online alter the nature of this capitalism. In the digital context, technologies come to be defined in terms of processes of reproduction rather than production. Within a culture of information consumerism, governed by what Goldsmith defines as “re-gestures”,³² i.e. re-blogging, re-tweeting, the nature of information circulation and processing presupposes a “scrambling of boundaries of consumption and production”.³³ This is a culture that, as Bourriaud stresses, “denies the binary opposition between the proposal of the transmitter and the participation of the receiver [...] the producer is only a transmitter for the following producer.”³⁴ As such, any act of consumption simultaneously turns into an act of production, eradicating, to turn to Bourriaud again, “the traditional distinction between production and consumption, creation and copy, readymade and original work.”³⁵

What transpires, then, is a notion of creativity that turns copying into a creative paradigm. But copying in the postproduction environment assumes a hyperbolised structure of reproduction; “everything digital is a copy”,³⁶ Carolyn Guertin contends. Driven by models of digital re-creation, postproduction is characterised by proliferation of copies of copies, copies without originals.³⁷ Mark Poster points to a similar feature of digital information production. For Poster, an act of digital mediation can only produce reproductions, not copies of originals but rather copies as simulacra,

29. Bourriaud, Nicolas. *Postproduction, Culture as Screenplay: How Art reprogrammes the World*. Trans. Jeannie Herman. New York, NY: Lukas and Sternberg, 2002. p. 8.

30. Bourriaud, p. 7.

31. Schmidt, Christopher. *The Waste Management Poetics of Kenneth Goldsmith*. *SubStance* 37. February 2008. p. 37.

32. Goldsmith, Kenneth. *The Bounce and the Roll*. *Harriet: a poetry blog*. 2011-04-16. <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2011/04/the-bounce-and-the-roll/> (Accessed 2013-02-10).

33. Bourriaud, p. 19.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

36. Guertin, Carolyn. *Digital Prohibition: Piracy and Authorship in New Media Art*. London: Continuum, 2012. p. 21.

37. Poster, Mark. *The Mode of Information: Poststructuralism and Social Context*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007. p. 9.

38. Ryan, Marie-Laure. Cyberspace, Virtuality, and the Text. In *Cybertext Textuality: Computer Technology and Literary Theory*. Marie-Laure Ryan (ed.). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999. p. 89.

39. Lévy, Pierre. quoted in Ryan, p. 90.

40. Derrida. p. 7.

41. Bourriaud, p. 8.

42. Ibid., p. 93.

43. Fitterman, Robert, and Place, Vanessa. *Notes on Conceptualism*. New York, NY: Ugly Duckling Press, 2009. p. 32.

44. Benjamin, Walter. The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. In *Illuminations*. Hannah Arendt (ed.). London: Pimlico, 1999. p. 219.

i.e. copies that have no originals. A characteristic propensity for the fake is implied in this understanding of the virtual culture and, as Marie-Laure Ryan points out, the term “virtual” itself encompasses two distinct concepts: “the largely negative idea of a fake, illusionary, non-existent, and the overwhelmingly positive idea of the potential, which connotes productivity, openness, and diversity.”³⁸ As Ryan explains (quoting Pierre Lévy), “the virtual is not at all the opposite of the real. It is, on the contrary, a powerful productive mode of being, a mode that gives free rein to creative process.”³⁹ Hence, the derogative culture of copying turns into what could be described as an aesthetics of plagiarism, a different kind of creativity, distinct from what we traditionally understand by the term, flaunting the convention and speculating about the potential of the fluidity and the openness of the source. Here, the new text remains at the same time a deconstructed, displaced old text in a new context, linking, to repeat after Derrida, repetition to alterity.⁴⁰ In such a cultural frame, iteration becomes a cornerstone of creativity.

This preoccupation with creative possibilities implicit in acts of reusing material is, of course, as Bourriaud himself admits, “nothing new”.⁴¹ The affinities of the postmodern and postproduction practices are significant. The task of the early twenty-first century is in the end, as Bourriaud stresses, “not to start from zero or find oneself encumbered by the store-house of history, but to inventory and select, to use and download.”⁴² As such, the contemporary digital impulse brings forward new concerns; similar forms, similar approaches to uncreative

practice, already explored at different stages of the twentieth century, arise in the culture of postproduction through an engagement with and in response to the new digital hegemony, to address a different range of questions, distinct from the preoccupations of the postmodern predecessors. Today, Fitterman and Place argue, “production (industrial age) [becomes] replaced by simulation (information age).”⁴³ The trajectory precludes a particular relationship between technology and creativity where advancements in reproduction technologies inevitably result in association of creativity with acts of copying. As modes of information, (re)production and dissemination become more advanced and necessary technologies more accessible, notions of creativity and copying gradually converge to eventually emerge as interchangeable terms. As Benjamin predicted, in the age of post-mechanical reproduction the work of art becomes “designed for reproducibility”⁴⁴ rather than for the aura of its manifest singularity. This is not to say that a propensity for originality is abandoned when increasingly more advanced technologies emerge; rather, the attitudes to originality alter as technologies develop.

Similarly to Bourriaud’s, my reading of contemporary reproduction strategies in their current technological moment is an attempt at identifying a broader cultural tendency that emerges under a unique, contemporary cultural condition, an attitude that I see manifested in the emergence of the Iterative Turn. As Bourriaud explains, “today certain elements and principles are reemerging as themes and are suddenly at the forefront, to the point of constituting the ‘engine’

of new aesthetic practice.⁴⁵ The same sense of contemporary culture that relies on iterative gestures evoked in Home's trajectory manifests itself clearly in Bourriaud's postproduction thinking. The aesthetic paradigms of both Home's plagiarist culture and Bourriaud's postproduction condition presuppose a dominance of inherently derivative practices, relying on repurposing and recycling of the abundance of available material proliferating and constantly generated online, a dynamic that influences habits of cultural production and consumption also outside of the immediate confines of the Web and strictly technology-oriented contexts.

This is a key assumption, indicative of a particular thinking about technology that informs the dynamic of the Iterative Turn. If contemporary reading and writing habits develop as a result of the ubiquity of digital environments that transform and influence our behaviours also outside of the digital sphere, then acts of creativity today can be conceived of as a manifestation of the Heideggerian "essence of technology" and not of the technology itself. This is a distinction which informs Heidegger's inquiry in "The Question Concerning Technology"—not a question of technology per se, but of what Heidegger refers to as *Wesen*, the essence of technology: "by no means anything technological."⁴⁶ "Technology", Heidegger explains, "is not equivalent to the essence of technology [...] the essence of a thing is considered to be *what* the thing is."⁴⁷ In line with Heidegger's thinking, it is the changing understanding of the very conception of technology, of what technology is, rather than simply of the

changes in the apparatus of technology that should be seen as a trigger for a shift in aesthetic attitudes in their respective cultural moments. As Žižek puts it, the "essence of technology" does not designate a complex network of machines and activities; rather it is a manifestation of a particular attitude towards reality; "technology", Žižek comments, "is the way reality discloses itself to us in contemporary times."⁴⁸ Today, then, we operate by means of a Heideggerian essence of technology, which, as a dominant attitude, "structures the way we relate to reality".⁴⁹

The problem for Heidegger is not the existence of technology—or its manifestation in a variety of forms it assumes—but rather a propensity for and orientation towards technology and technological thinking, a certain technological imagination that finds its manifestations in an aesthetic project. The framework within which contemporary iterative practices are best considered, I suggest, should be based on this concept of technology as an essence rather than simply viewed as a response to changes in technology themselves. Of course, the technological developments and thinking about technology that Heidegger posits are inherently interdependent. It is impossible to speak of the essence of technology without considering technology in instrumental terms, while any manifestation of technological progress is contingent on the conceptualisation of the essence of technology:

because the essence of technology is nothing technological, essential reflection upon technology and decisive confrontation with it must happen in

45. Bourriaud, p. 9.

46. Heidegger, Martin. The Question Concerning Technology. In *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Trans. William Lovitt. New York, NY: Garland Publishing, 1977. p. 4.

47. Heidegger, p. 3.

48. Žižek, Slavoy. *Event: Philosophy in Transit*. London: Penguin Books, 2014. p. 31.

49. Žižek, p. 31.

*a realm that is, on the one hand, akin to the essence of technology and, on the other, fundamentally different from it.*⁵⁰

“Such a realm”, Heidegger suggests, “is art”.⁵¹ In order to think about creativity in the contemporary postproduction moment, a model of technological thinking is required that goes beyond the restricted definitions of technology viewed in purely instrumental terms. The notion of the essence of technology invites a broader, more adaptable and comprehensive approach to conceptualising the nature and role of technology today. Technology as essence cannot be defined as a specific machine or a tool, but rather should be seen as a more general concept of making, inclusive of processes of artistic production. As Heidegger puts it,

*if we speak of the “essence of a house” and the “essence of a state,” we do not mean a generic type; rather we mean the ways in which house and state hold sway, administer themselves, develop and decay—the way in which they “essence” [Wesen].*⁵²

If we speak of an essence of digital technology, it is not the specific applications, devices, or Internet browsers that we address—not the platform which LaBeouf might have used to create his works—but a broader attitude towards the ways in which we engage with the means of information production and dissemination in an environment in which all of these technologies influence creative practices.

This is a trajectory that has its roots in what can be described as Heidegger’s taxonomy of technology. Heidegger draws a distinction between modern technology and its traditional equivalent. While, for Heidegger, the modern technology restricts the definition of the technological to that which is purely instrumental, the traditional technology, or *technē*, typically encompasses manifestations of skill, art, or craft. *Technē* is a category used to denote both the creative and the instrumental practice; it is, Heidegger writes, “the name not only for the

activities and skills of the craftsman, but also for the arts of the mind and the fine arts. *Technē* belongs to [...] *poiēsis*; it is something poietic.”⁵³ It is in the affinities between *technē* and technology that the nature of the essence of technology resides. *Technē* is both technology and *poiēsis*, *technē* as a cultural technique perhaps, where technology assumes a sense of a method of the arts, turning itself into an aesthetic tool. It is a matter of a certain orientation towards technology as a wide-ranging cultural attitude. It involves an extensive engagement with processes of making and producing and is not a manifestation of a singular machine or tool.

What is of particular significance to my argument here is the possibility afforded by thinking about technology as essence to explore the dynamic of alterity, subversion, and change, implicit in the logic of the Iterative Turn. *Technē*, unlike modern technology, is inherently non-instrumental; the essence of technology is a matter of constant change. As Heidegger argues, the world is set in place (*gestellt*), and the modern technology as a tool and a means to an end, is what Heidegger describes as an Enframing (*Gestell*). While Enframing is characterised by an attempt at regulating, securing, using technology as a means of setting in place, the emphasis of *technē* is on engaging with technology in non-instrumental terms, on unsecuring and unsettling the familiar categories and paradigms. The use of technology that informs contemporary aesthetic practice should be seen as the essence of *technē* rather than of technology per se. The engagement with technology that informs iterative creative practices can be considered as a response to an ever-increasing technological move towards Enframing, a response to an effort to regulate the arts, to secure the *technē* in purely instrumental terms. The aesthetic premise of iterative creative acts stems from, I suggest, the possibilities of thinking about technology and creativity as *technē*, where creative process emerges as a result of unsecuring and unsettling the familiar, dominant categories. While Heidegger sees Enframing as the essence

of modern technology, I suggest that turning towards *technē*, with allowances for digital thinking, offers a more accurate framework for the contemporary context. As such, the creative thinking at the contemporary postproduction moment should be seen as governed by the essence of technology (*Wesen*) rather than by its Enframing (*Gestell*). In this approach, any act of digital reproducibility, assumes an aesthetic rather than instrumental function. It becomes an end in itself, governed by its own logic of iteration rather than by the rules of techno-deterministic pragmatism. The iterative aesthetic, with its subversive take on mechanisms of technology, becomes a space where the possibilities of *technē* as a universal creative paradigm are recognised and realised.

Such understanding of the essence of technology as a flexible and fluid category, as a cultural state that is coming to presence,⁵⁴ is inscribed into my notion of the Iterative Turn. Thinking about the contemporary change in technology emerging in the postproduction moment as “a turn” allows for an acknowledgement of a certain sense of continuity in conceptualising practices of appropriation in the variety of their historical guises, always informed by the essence of technology, and changing as a result of shifting conceptions of technology in their respective cultural moments. A turn does not imply a break away from the older models of technology or creative practice—Home’s plagiarism, for example, develops from rather than rejects the postmodern and modernist projects—but as an unsettling process that has generative qualities at the same time, as a Heideggerian “turning”. Heidegger speaks of a turning as that which comes to pass within Enframing. As Heidegger writes, “if a change in Being—i.e., now, in the coming to presence of Enframing—comes to pass, than this in no way means that technology [...] will be done away with.”⁵⁵ A change in the coming to presence of a new aesthetic paradigm in no way means that earlier creative models will be done away with. Rather, the coming to presence of a new conception of technology is characteristically driven by what Heidegger describes as the “change of its destining”.⁵⁶ The change, as a turn, or turning, manifests itself “out of the arrival of another destining”.⁵⁷ A change in the Enframing, in the technological apparatus, a development of new technological possibilities, i.e. the ubiquity of the digital tools and methods, results in a turning not just in the technology itself, but in the essence of technology, in its conception and the attitudes towards an

50. Heidegger, p. 35.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid., p. 30.

53. Ibid., p. 13.

54. In his translation of “The Question Concerning Technology” William Lovitt renders the noun *Wesen* as both “essence” and “coming to presence”, with the latter translation of particular prominence in Heidegger’s essay “The Turning”. See Martin Heidegger. *The Turning*. In *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Trans. William Lovitt. New York, NY, and London: Garland Publishing. 1977. p. 35, n. 1.

55. Heidegger, *The Turning*, p. 38.

56. Ibid., p. 39.

57. Ibid.

altered technological reality that emerge as a result. In the turning, “everything is reversed”, but nevertheless it is “not a change of standpoint”.⁵⁸ Rather, it is a change conceived of as a turning point⁵⁹ that allows for a shift in established paradigms in response to the change in the conception of technology. The turning, then, emerges from a pattern of discontinuities with what comes before it—appropriating in postproduction moment differs from the related modernist and postmodern acts—but the conception of technology and the related aesthetic that emerge as a result of the turning are interpretable from within and through a relationship to earlier projects and concerns.

Hence, what is manifested in the contemporary postproduction turn towards digital technology and iteration is a transformation in the attitudes towards forms of knowing (and *technē*, as Heidegger explained, is linked with the word *epistēmē*—“both words are names for knowing in the widest sense”).⁶⁰ “Such knowing”, Heidegger suggests, “provides an opening up. As an opening up it is revealing”,⁶¹ indicative of epistemologies of contemporary aesthetics, revealing shifting paradigms of creative thinking and alternative approaches to originality that emerge at the backdrop of such a conceptual framework. For Heidegger, technology is a way of revealing (*das Enttöben*) of that which it brings forth, i.e. letting a thing disclose itself rather than simply producing or manufacturing an object in purely instrumental terms. “What is instrumental in *technē*”, Heidegger writes, “does not lie at all in making and manipulating nor in the using of means, but rather in the aforementioned revealing. It is as revealing, and not as manufacturing that *technē* is bringing forth.”⁶² Creative acts such as LaBeouf’s, overtly reliant on repurposed material, are a manifestation of such an assumption, openly disclosing themselves, their methods and sources to draw attention to their distinctive aesthetics, to alternative models of thinking about creativity today. It is not the manipulation of sources, making by means of remaking, that is at the core of iterative creative

work, but rather the revealing of the making as remaking. Conceptualised as such, contemporary uncreative works should not be considered instances of plagiarism or copyright infringement but are better described as iterative acts and an expression of the contemporary Iterative Turn. Iteration as it manifests itself at the postproduction moment can be seen as an expression of what Bourriaud describes as a “configuration of knowledge, which is characterised by the invention of paths through culture.”⁶³ Here Heideggerian thinking and Bourriaud’s project converge to form a notion of an Iterative Turn that is indicative of shifting aesthetic attitudes and emergent means of conceptualising them.

Understood as such, the notion of iteration serves as a broad and flexible concept akin to, or perhaps itself a manifestation of, the Heideggerian essence, an essence of making by means of transgressing the familiar notions of authorship and creativity that turns into a creative act, one that is revealing of the paradigms of creativity constructed by iterative means. Hence, iteration should be considered as a category particularly relevant to describing the dynamic of technological and aesthetic turns, where a change, a shift in tools, practices, and attitudes, involves both a move away from the earlier paradigms and a repetition of the earlier paradigms at the same time.⁶⁴ Hence, each turn, regardless of the cultural condition that defines it, is always an iterative process, repeating and altering earlier aesthetic models and systems of thought in a chain of constant change of charged differences.

The contemporary turn should be seen, I suggest, as iterative in such a broad sense. It should be understood as evocative of the modernist and postmodernist commitment to repetition associated with a certain propensity for technological change as an aesthetic dominant. At the same time, this current Iterative Turn is a turn towards iteration as a creative method and form that defines the cultural and aesthetic dynamics today. As a response to the postproduction condition, iteration, or the essence of

iteration, perhaps—a general attitude towards re-appropriating earlier paradigms of aesthetic thinking for a cultural moment—translates into specific forms of expression that assume repetition as a model of creativity. Here the principles of an iterative turn in general, and of a turn towards iteration triggered by the current cultural moment converge at the Iterative Turn. In Heideggerian terms, the contemporary Iterative Turn combines an essence of iteration and an Enframing of iteration at the same time, or, as Derrida would have it, an example of iteration in general—a condition of iterability—and a singular iteration in itself. Seen as such, iteration should be considered both a method of creative practice and a historical category of aesthetics. The contemporary turn emerges as a result of a conflation of the two models, always intertwined in the contemporary iterative thinking, where the condition of iterability as an attitude to creative practice, finds its momentum and a manifestation in related iterative forms. Seen as such, iterability turns into a law of not only repetition itself but of postproduction creativity more broadly. While the possibility of a repetition of a particular creative form or mode of expression is always a probability, it is the specific context of the postproduction moment that creates a condition for the Iterative Turn to manifest itself most explicitly. That is to say, iteration as a creative paradigm reveals itself in the mode of revealing that is most suited to it.

At the Iterative Turn, the function of reproduction technologies is not simply a matter of technological reproducibility as a means to an end, but rather an end in itself. At the Iterative Turn, an act appropriating already authored content turns into an expression of iterative thinking. Today, it is not simply an aestheticisation of technology or technologisation of aesthetics that are at stake. The ubiquity of contemporary digitalisation means that distinctions between the technological in the instrumental sense and the digital aesthetics are increasingly impossible to draw, with digital technology assuming a role of all-encompassing digital culture. It is in such a context that the Iterative Turn emerges, a moment in which both technology and aesthetics are at a turning point, turning away

58. Heidegger, Martin. Letter on Humanism. In *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*. Trans. F.A. Capuzzi and J. Glenn Gray. D.F. Krell (ed.). London: Routledge. 1993. pp. 231-232.

59. My description of change as a turning point is a reference to Heidegger's statement in his letter to William J. Richardson which, in the German original, reads: "Das Denken der Kehre ist eine Wendung in meinem Denken." The notion of "die Kehre" mentioned here has been variously translated as 'a turn,' 'a turning,' or 'a reversal,' and the statement itself has been translated with references to a 'turning point' and 'change.'" William J. Richardson translates the statement as: "The thinking of the reversal is a change in my thought." Reprinted as Preface to *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*. William J. Richardson. New York, NY: Fordham University Press. 2003. p. xviii. In contrast, Emad Parvis's translation reads: "The thinking of the turning is a turning point in my thinking." In *On the Way to Heidegger's Contribution to Philosophy*. Emad Parvis. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press. 2007. p. 111. See note 41, p. 214 on Parvis's comment on his translation.

60. Heidegger, The Question, p. 5.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid., p. 6.

63. Bourriaud, p. 19.

64. The same iterative logic is implied in my conflation of Heidegger and Derrida's terms and the relationship between Heidegger and Derrida's thought. Derrida's could be described as an iteration of Heidegger's philosophy, as its altered repetition. This association with Heidegger is one that Derrida makes explicit himself. See Jacques Derrida. *Positions*. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press. 1981. pp. 52-54. Derrida's wider philosophical project is, in fact, an iterative one. It is governed by what Spivak describes as "the notion of the joyful yet laborious strategy of rewriting the old language [...] Derrida acknowledges that the desire of deconstruction may itself become a desire to reappropriate the text actively through mastery, to show the text what it 'does not know'." See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Translator's Preface to Jacques Derrida. *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore, MD, and London: The John Hopkins University Press. 1997. pp. xx, lxxvii. Derrida's work is within and without the work of Heidegger, and his other predecessors more broadly; it repeats it by means of alterity, it reverses it without rejecting it, offering a framework particularly useful for thinking about the Iterative Turn and my attempt to question the familiar terms of creativity, originality, and authorship.

65. I refer here to Walter Benjamin's notion of the "aura". The aura is an aesthetic category, a way of describing particular qualities of art that Benjamin saw waning in modernity as a result of increasing mechanisation of society. The aura of a work connotes its singularity and qualities such as authority, authenticity, and originality grounded explicitly in the Romantic understanding of creativity. As Benjamin argues, the aura disappears in the modern age, as a result of the possibilities of reproducibility that proliferate. Benjamin associates the notion of originality with an artwork's unique presence in space and time and argues that a reproduced piece loses the quality of originality exactly because it is always removed from the auratic original, because in reproduction the origin is always absent, and so the work loses the quality of originality, authenticity, and authority. Benjamin writes: "the presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity." Benjamin, p. 214.

66. This statement is a reference to Heidegger's notions of *danger and saving power*. Heidegger understands modern technology as danger, danger to man, danger to Being, technology in its instrumental sense, as Enframing, "endangers the relationship to the essence of truth". See Heidegger, *The Question*, p. 33. Enframing, Heidegger explains, "banishes man into that kind of revealing that is ordering. Where this ordering holds sway, it drives out every other possibility of revealing. Above all, Enframing conceals that revealing which, in the sense of *poiēsis*, lets what presences come forth into appearance." (p. 27) But, for Heidegger, the danger always harbours the possibility of transformation, of a turn, there is a possibility of liberation in every danger. Heidegger writes: "where Enframing reigns, there is danger in the highest sense. But where danger is, grows/The saving power also." (p. 28) In line with Heidegger's argument, acts of copying emerge as antithetical to paradigms of creativity and as inherently creative acts at the same time. Copying assumes creative qualities exactly because it is dismissed as "danger", by law, by publishing standards, by prevailing notions of creativity and authorship.

from earlier paradigms without rejecting them, and turning into one another as *technē*. Here, the process of digital reproduction loses its instrumental, purely functional associations, to assume its own all-pervasive iterative logic. This is not to say the Iterative Turn permits or favours plagiarism and copyright infringement. It does not offer a context for a defence or indictment of either, or of projects such as LaBeouf's. Instead, it draws attention to the changing conditions of cultural production, where questions of the aura⁶⁵ are no longer a creative concern. The iterative project offers means of reconceptualising attitudes towards technology and, as a result, transforms the "danger" that acts of copying typically pose to creativity into a form of liberation from it, a "saving power",⁶⁶ transforming plagiarism into iteration, copying into a paradigm of creativity itself.