



FROM EROS TO INDUSTRY: CREATIVITY THEORY AND PRACTICE

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Creativity necessarily involves a movement from familiarity to strangeness and newness, and it requires a period where we are, in John Keats' phrase 'between certainties'. But this phase has been undervalued, and an overly rationalist approach has, according to Ken Robinson, 'distorted the idea of creativity ... and unbalanced the development of millions of people'. We consider how a seemingly all-encompassing cultural tendency to promote expedience over long-term vision, utilitarianism over imagination, affects the way we regard creative practice and indeed, the way we live. This paper looks carefully at the corrosive effects of the rational/Romantic split in our understanding of creativity and its applications by critiquing popular creativity 'myths' and systems, and explores the misleading way in which poorly-examined terms of reference are used to promote industrial agendas. We will conclude by considering how changes in understanding of creative practices and processes might favourably influence culture as a whole.

Keywords: creativity, culture, ambivalence, myth, language.

Introduction

Creativity and Ambivalence

The nature of creativity is very much contested. Notions of inspiration and romantic revelation, though still prominent in the cultural imagination, are considered by many to be defunct; nevertheless, I will provide examples of how certain 'romantic' ideas are indeed relevant on individual, pedagogical, and cultural levels. This discussion requires that we look into two main paradigms: one that sees creative activity as rational, utilitarian and goal-oriented, or what I refer to as 'closed-circuit' creativity - commonly mobilized in applied research, industry and education. The second model maintains that creativity emerges from a position of open-minded inquiry and allows - or embraces - ambivalence and uncertainty and periods of apparent inactivity. It is often used in art practice and in pure research. We will look at the ramifications of both interpretations in cultural, industrial and academic contexts.

There are very extensive takes on processes of creativity. Some argue that it must necessarily involve collaboration; others, that it is a solitary pursuit. It is thought to be achieved by highly directed thought and activity - or from unconstrained and nebulous imaginative processes. It is seen as conscious or as unconscious; there may or may not be rational ways to explain and interpret it; its outcomes may be readily recognizable as creative artifacts, or overlooked by the mainstream of the culture. But rather than attempt to list every permutation or possible contradiction here, it is enough to say at this point that creative process necessarily involves a movement from familiarity to strangeness and newness. Also

essential to emphasise here is its inherent ambivalence. I say this because once an idea or intention is fixed, it loses its quality of indeterminacy it is not longer creative, but created. The process is over.

That having been said, it is interesting to add that a further contention is that there is no such thing as creativity. Linguist Daniel Allington (Swann, 2011, p. 277) claims that since creativity is a concept without objective reality and beyond being ‘a function of social interaction’ it does not exist at all. But to assert that a conceptual reality is somehow ‘less real’ than an objective one is only useful as a truth in a very literal sense. Creativity is present and active in the world as are other concepts – like time, or love, or hate, or the agreed-upon convention of money – the latter being an abstraction before that magical transformation into cash, houses, or roads occurs. Through creative thought the realities of scheduled appointments, relationships, cities and currencies are conceived; through creative activity, these are made concrete. Creativity is a most compelling driver of activity, of consensual reality itself.

Creativity may be better understood by considering its opposite - sometimes thought to be destructiveness, but it is actually dullness of mind represented in repetitive images and text characterised by jargon, self-seeking sleight of mind, or *cliché*. One might go so far as to argue that the opposite of creative vision is totalitarian narrowness: constraining, limited by short-sighted goals, dead-ended. Creativity, on the other hand, is an aspect of *eros*. It requires vigorous and brave thinking, reflection, persistent and focused striving, and quiet contemplation. It can be bloody-minded and uncooperative – or co-operative; it embraces tangential thinking - or the singular obsession; it is the fresh light thrown on an old subject, and as we will see, antithetical to what it is often purported to be.

We will first consider some popular currents of thought about creativity, then later, offer suggestions for practical applications of creativity theory. But firstly, I would like to briefly mention the background that informs my thinking on the subject.

Origins

The impulse came about as a gut reaction against overuse and misuse of the term ‘creative’, resulting in its meaning becoming so vague as to be meaningless. It has been used synonymously with ‘innovation’; but as almost any unscripted action performed in the course of a day is to some degree innovative, this is not a very helpful treatment of the word. It is used as a synonym for ‘imaginative’, yet is much more than that. As Ken Robinson (Robinson & Aronica, 2009, p. 67) has said, imagination may remain interiorised and never be transformed into anything at all: creativity, he avers, is ‘applied imagination’.

The misuse of the term has arisen in part as a result of an overly emphatic enthusiasm for three particular aspects of creative activity promoted by creative rationalists: immediate usefulness of a new or refreshed idea or object, the collaborative aspects of its creation, and the role of ‘field experts’ in how creative ‘products’ are received. I will contend that overemphasis on these can distort conceptions of value and meaning, and can close circuits that may be better left open.

Of Babies and Bathwater

The Rational/Romantic Dichotomy

Nineteenth century Romanticism promoted the idea of the solitary struggle towards the possibility of original insight, or to find and tell a truth. For Raymond Williams the Romantics are not to be dismissed, and I mention him here as an antidote to the derogatory light in which Romantic notions of creativity are sometimes treated and contrasted with more rational explications. Williams ‘has reminded us that ... the “ideas that we call Romantic have to be understood in terms of the problems of experience with which they were advanced to deal”’ and he warned against overlooking the historical context of social conflict and the ‘disintegration of inherited certainties’, which reflects poet John Keats’ respect for the capability

of dealing with uncertainty. For it was social upheaval which piqued the Romantic poets' impassioned commitment 'to the tragedy of the period'.

For Williams (Milligan, 2007, pp. 72-73):

Creative practice is ... already, and actively, our practical consciousness. When it becomes struggle ... it can take many forms. It can be the long and difficult remaking of an inherited (determined) practical consciousness: a process often described as development but in practice a struggle at the roots of the mind ... confronting a hegemony in the fibres of the self and in the hard practical substance of effective and continuing relationships. It can be more evident practice...the embodiment and performance of known but excluded and subordinated experiences and relationships; the articulation and formation of latent, momentary, and newly possible consciousness.

Poet John Keats asserted that creativity is characterized by a thinker's ability to be in 'Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason'. (Scott, 2002) This 'negative capability' – or transcendence of duality – means an ability to work with paradox, an instance of highly complex thinking. As psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has it,

When we say that something is complex we mean that it is a very differentiated system – it has many distinctive parts ... Creative individuals seem to have relatively complex personalities ... they are able to keep in balance the contrasting tendencies ... complexity is the result of the fruitful interaction between these two opposing tendencies. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 362)

Being at home with paradox may enable one to form order from the disorder of experience, and this level of complexity, according to Csikszentmihalyi, is characteristic of creative people. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 362) The idea is reflected in contemporary novelist Philip Pullman's notion of 'double-seeing', (Lenz, 2003, p. 53) which, like negative capability, is a way of being between modes of consciousness. Insights gained in this condition are used to affect actual changes in the world – are creative.

Yet in this current historical period it is the rational approach to creativity that is in the ascendant. Why and how this has become so is an area well worth investigating. Though the scope of this particular essay will not allow for a detailed historical analysis, further reference will be made to this issue, and we will consider the proposition that there is no need to ally oneself exclusively with one position of the other.

Further Baby/Bathwater Issues, and Creativity 'Myths'

In his book, *Explaining Creativity: the science of human innovation*, professor of creativity Keith Sawyer, provides a list of 'creativity myths', and I will refer to some of these because included amongst them are a number of broadly accepted misapprehensions. But first I would like to consider sub-heading of his book's title, 'the science of human innovation'. An Oxford dictionary definition has it that science is the 'the intellectual and practical activity encompassing the systematic study of the structure and behaviour of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment'. 'Creativity' sits uncomfortably within this scientific framework, since it is allied with art – and by this I do not mean painting or other 'fine arts' exclusively, but in the much broader sense of conceptualizing and making, in the domains of both art and science. Further, it is a human activity that intentionally departs from 'the physical and natural world', to involve itself with invention and artifice. Thus, creativity is apart from nature and falls into the domain of the synthetic: engineered by human skill and imagination rather than natural agency. It is categorically *unnatural*. Therefore, a study of this area of human endeavor armed with the methods and tools of science is likely to fail.

This brings to our attention the question as to why one would determine to explain creativity as a science at all? Since science unarguably is an academic pursuit one wonders if possibly the book title represents an impulse to imbue the inherently nebulous and difficult-to-define ‘creativity’ with a certain sense of historical and academic respectability, and also to limit the scope of creativity to the notion of ‘invention’. But this is to mistake inventiveness for perception, or *aisthesis*, a Greek concept (not to be confused with aesthetics, or beauty) based on the Aristotelian usage which denotes activities of the senses accompanied by desires and aversions. So: *aisthesis* involves the exercise of physical, emotional and mental volitions simultaneously, providing ‘a dialectical matrix for cognition in a manner that incorporates diverse and contradictory impulses...aisthesis authorizes a poetic expression grounded in desire, a narrative of mind and body’. (Nichols, 1988, p. 83)

In *Creativity: flow and the psychology of discovery and invention*, psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi refers to comments made by scientists he interviewed on the subject of intellect (mind) and intuition (senses), where interviewees often responded that both these faculties need to be employed simultaneously for creative work to take place. He also cites author Madeleine L’Engle on the subject: ‘Your intuition and your intellect should be working together... making love.’ Further, if linked with the activity of contemplative attention, an affective intentionality is produced that causes changes in the world, which is therefore, in other words, *creative*. Where ‘innovation’ refers to products of creativity, *aisthesis* is a way of participating in as well as conceiving of reality, a category of human experience greater than but embracing inventiveness and innovativeness. It can be activated by Pullman’s ‘double-seeing’ or Keats ‘negative capability’ or Csikszentmihalyi’s ‘complexity’, and relies on an interplay between senses and intellect in the domain of imagination and intuition, liminal activities reliant on both conscious and unconscious impulses.

In enumerating creativity ‘myths’, it is apparent that Sawyer is using the term as synonymous with untruth, or ‘fantasy’. However, other usages of ‘mythical’ suggest durable stories whose imagery is potently connotative and resonant, because myths may harbour - amongst their intricate themes constructed over centuries of retelling and reimagining of images - metaphorical truths about the culture that invents and repeats them. That is to say, ‘myth’ may be better understood as the opposite of untruth or fantasy: it is complex truth rather than simple untruth.

Confusing myth and untruth is akin to conflating imagination and fantasy. This point requires further explication as it may throw some light on the subject of how creative work influences culture: When engaged in the creative pursuit of inventing stories, for instance; that is, stories that resonate and therefore endure, imagination rather than simple fantasy must be activated. Novelist and philosopher Iris Murdoch reminds us that ‘“Fantasy” [may be seen as] mechanical, egoistic, untruthful ... “imagination” [is] truthful’. (Murdoch, 1993, p. 321) Novelist Philip Pullman elucidates this insight in fictive form, where in *The Amber Spyglass*, his protagonist comes of age when she finally learns the difference between fanciful yarn-spinning and stories that actually reflect the truth of her experience. She effectively becomes a successful version of that great transgressor, Orpheus, defeating old narratives and participating in the creation of a new one: true stories, which involve the activation of imagination rather than mere fancy, become a literal ‘Bridge to Transformation’ – of the individual and of the culture. (Lenz, 2003) This idea may be viewed from a Jungian perspective: fantasy is only able to tell you what you already know; that is, it is a fiction confined within already existing consciousness; whereas imagination comes from the unconscious, and knowledge that is drawn from that place has the power to illuminate, to show and to tell something new. Imagination feeds creative activity, and the latter may then bridge the gap from “the known” to “the unknown”, in turn, making new things known. (Pope, 2005, p. 11)

However, Sawyer maintains that it is a ‘myth’ that creativity comes from the unconscious. Yet insofar as it has to do with intuition and imagination, one might argue that it certainly does come – in part – from the unconscious. Not from a muse, but from an ingathering of thoughts, feelings, impressions, intuitions over time and with a great deal of patient effort. Csikszentmihalyi propounds the tradition of five phases of creative process. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, pp. 79-80) These include ‘a period of preparation, becoming immersed, *consciously or not*, in a set of problematic issues’, and the second phase is ‘a period of incubation, during which ideas churn around *below the threshold of consciousness*’

(italics mine). It is important to note here that such stages should not be looked at as a sort of ‘A to Z’ progression; they are recursive, and may overlap. An instance of this is Van Gogh’s letters, ‘among the most lucid and frank ever written by a painter’, that he composed while incarcerated in a lunatic asylum. (Hughes, 1990, p. 146) These, as well as his careful and systematic cataloguing of his own work while he continued to paint, attest to this crossing over of incubating and making. So let us keep the unconscious in the equation, though qualified with the inclusion also of a great deal of conscious labour – both are necessary components of creative activity.

We might also argue in favour of the idea of ‘inspiration’ – the third stage, that Csikszentmihalyi refers to as the ‘aha!’ moment. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 80) This does not mean *spontaneous* inspiration, an idea to which Sawyer rightly takes exception, for as already mentioned, most creative work is indeed the result of many years’ rigorous years of work within a discipline. Nevertheless, although it has not come from out of the blue it still has a ‘lightbulb’ feel that comes about as a result of the working of *both* unconscious and the conscious, and a balance between intellect and intuition: *aisthesis*. An apt expression of this idea is Robert Hughes’ evocation of van Gogh’s *modus operandi* as, ‘Work and seriousness: this, not the vulgar image of the madman issuing orgasmic squirts of yellow and blue at the dictation of his lunacy, is the real van Gogh’. (Hughes, 1990, p. 147)

‘Work and seriousness’ is not incompatible with ‘lightning bulb’ moments. Indeed, when one’s attention is concentrated on developing an idea over time, so much of what one sees and hears and reads seems to feed into that project, or ideas surrounding that project, and yet the precise origin of an idea may still be mysterious to its author if, at the time, she is engaged – as previously discussed – in a perceptual process that relies to some degree on the workings of the unconscious fueled by ‘desire, a narrative of mind and body’ (Nichols, 1988, p. 83). Csikszentmihalyi cites poet Mark Strand: ‘You don’t know when you’re going to be hit with an idea ... I have no idea where things come from. It’s a great mystery to me.’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 240)

These experiences are not uncommonly referred to as romantic clichés about creative process. For instance, in their essay, ‘Rethinking Creativity and Approaches to Teaching’ Phillip and Elizabeth McIntyre reasonably point to the rather starry-eyed notions of daemonic possession or otherwise otherworldly sources of inspiration in the Romantic tradition, but then go on to derogate author Ray Bradbury’s compulsion to immediately write down his ‘lightning strikes’, (McIntyre, 2007) which Coleridge might have referred to as flashes of inspiration or bursts of insight. However, it is also reasonable to mention that recording ideas as they occur is a common practice of creative people. Indeed, failure to keep a notebook for *aides-memoires* would be remiss – not because it would disappoint a muse or mean missing a penny falling from heaven – but because one might simply forget a good idea that arrived unexpectedly when one was not at one’s desk.

Sawyer is highly critical of the idea ‘that art might be created through nonrational processes’ or the possibility that ‘rational deliberation [might] kill creative impulse’. (Sawyer, 2012, pp. 15-16) Csikszentmihalyi however, points out that the last stages of creative process involve evaluation and elaboration (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 80)– and it is here that rational deliberation becomes most relevant and useful. But a further implication here is that attempts to evaluate before the incubation period is complete can sometimes be counterproductive: premature deployment of analytical faculties may well be inhibiting and lead to underdeveloped results rather than a fully formed concept or creative artifact.

Sawyer comfortably assures us that ‘we now “know” that you can’t explain creativity as an expression of a person’s inner spirit’ (double quotes mine), because ‘scientists have discovered that explaining creativity requires us to know a lot about the culture, society, and historical period.’ (McIntyre, 2007, p. 20) There is no attempt to explicate ‘spirit’ or to explain why the *zeitgeist* need be at odds with the spirit of an individual. All that is demonstrated here is that context is also a vital consideration, as mentioned earlier with reference to Raymond Williams. An inner/outer dichotomy is not useful.

Further arguments setting the rational and non-rational, or scientific and romantic against each other are presented in ‘Rethinking Creativity’, in which the cliché of the writer starving in a garret is sardonically recalled. This old saw neglects the fact that actually, many artists and inventors do in fact work for little or nothing. There is also the contention that this view may foster the idea that creativity is

innate in some but not in others. However, this is not just a romantic idea. Csikszentmihalyi, in referring to the complexity he identified in his study of creative people across a very broad spectrum of disciplines including philosophy, literature, science, theatre, art, psychology, criticism, music, economics, mathematics etc., found they tended to share an ability to bridge particular oppositional tendencies of, for instance, intelligence and naivety, passion and objectivity, playfulness and discipline, extroversion and introversion, arrogance and modesty. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, pp. 59,72,61,65,280) To possess several of these (and other) attributes might be said to indicate an unusual mind, so we might argue for degrees of creative ability as there are degrees of astigmatism or sensitivity to gluten or length of limb.

Imaginative Failure of Babies and Bathwater

If Western culture has suffered a failure of imagination it takes the form of corrosive duality where I and thou, subject and object remain forever unreconciled, and which the Romantic movement attempted to treat. It was Coleridge who, in struggling to articulate the difference between imagination and 'fancy' suggested as a force of reconciliation 'creative imagination'. (Avens, 1980, p. 18) In chapter xxii of his *Biographia Literaria* Coleridge spoke of imagination as being *literally* creative and of the 'fusing power Imagination and Passion', which activity has the ability to make the alien intimate, and to create something new. (Hill, 1978)

To conclude this part of the discussion: the idea of explaining creativity as a 'science of innovation' does not deal adequately with the possibilities that may become available to us when we seek to immerse ourselves in a creative pursuit. Although innovation is an aspect and often an aim of closed-circuit creativity, it is demonstrable that the *aesthetic* notion of creativity is broader, and that it benefits no-one to attempt to constrain it either practically or conceptually. Yet this is precisely what happens when definitions are used for unnecessary delimitation or demarcation of intellectual or imaginative territory. There is no need to throw the Romantic baby out with the rational bathwater in order to propound an understanding of creativity.

Reception and 'The Field'

Being in the Right Place at the Right Time, and the Systems Model

In Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's relativistic analysis, creativity is a systemic phenomenon operating between individual, a domain (or area of endeavour - discipline) and a field of experts who act as gatekeepers and guarantors of the validity of the created work. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 6) In the writing domain this would include publishers, editors, agents, peer groups. In other words, interrelationships are behind the production of creative works, and individual creativity is but part of the functioning of 'chance, perseverance or being in the right place at the right time'. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 29) If this happy confluence fails Csikszentmihalyi claims that not only will the work have little impact, it will not actually be considered 'creative', for he sees appreciation by the 'right' people of the work as determining its value, because 'creativity cannot be separated from its recognition' and in order for recognition to occur, it must belong to an already extant domain and field. This is unfortunate for people who exhibit, for example, great wisdom or compassion, as there is neither domain nor gatekeepers to measure the novelty of their creative expression. Csikszentmihalyi points out that it is common that 'relatively trivial but easy to measure' domains are more likely to foster the emergence of creative 'novelties', (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, pp. 7,20-31) but he does not mention that this has proven historically disastrous for half the world's population (and by default, the world), given that it is traditional women's roles for which no domain and therefore no measure exists. Perhaps rather than considering that almost all women over the centuries have failed creatively, we might consider that culturally we have failed to embrace a broad enough value spectrum. Yet, disappointingly, given the overall scope and brilliance of *Creativity: flow and the*

psychology of discovery and invention, Csikszentmihalyi moves quickly away from further discussion of what seems to be a massive void in understanding of human endeavour, seeming to accept as the qualifier and quantifier of all creativity a value system that embraces novelty but fails to establish a domain that would recognize the creative value of essential humane attributes.

Csikszentmihalyi's 'systems model' reflects upon 'mysterious fluctuations in the attribution of creativity over time' and he claims that it is rare for creative people not to be accepted by the field, and if they are not then they are not creative at that time. He asserts, for example, that van Gogh's creativity only emerged after his death, because it was not until then that 'a sufficient number of art experts felt that his paintings had something important to contribute to the domain of art'. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 31) Yet although the art establishment may not have endorsed his work at the time (though they did a mere decade after his death) van Gogh was in fact 'an artist in constant dialogue with his comrades' (eg Cezanne, Signac, Gaughin). Indeed, it is hard to accept that an artist who is considered one of the main proponents of a key modernist style which indicated, according the critic Robert Hughes 'a new concern with the semantics of art', or that this 'very great painter' whose work 'offers one of the most moving narratives of development of Western art' in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries could be fairly dismissed as lacking creativity at the end of the nineteenth. (Hughes, 1990, pp. 134,133,144)

Regarding the question of collaboration and fitness with the concerns of his time, Robert Hughes also points out that van Gogh and his colleagues' 'ambitions went beyond the formal, into the domain of symbolic meaning', and one may argue that the late Impressionist and early Expressionists' contributions were indeed domain changing. (Hughes, 1990, p. 134) Further, Richard Brower claims that is 'by an ongoing quest for novelty, the creator seizes upon innovation when it surfaces, and amplifies it'. (Brower, 2000, p. 187) For some time van Gogh collaborated with Paul Signac and both used dynamic line work, yet it was 'van Gogh who is known for developing a style of expressionism in which the entire canvas consists of undulation'. (Brower, 2000, p. 187) Thus, regarding Csikszentmihalyi's assertion that creativity is rarely – if ever - produced by an individual, but is the result of collaboration between culture, individual and a field of experts he characterizes as guarantors of value, van Gogh's oeuvre does indeed fit the first two categories. However, it fails with regard to opinion of some contemporaneous field experts. Perhaps, rather than derogating the actual creative ability of van Gogh, one might instead consider the failings of expert opinion, and consider what values are being imposed in order to validate the work.

Expert opinion is subject to broader cultural tendencies; therefore what is valued by 'the field' reflects that culture, its zeitgeist. While being aware of the argument that it is an 'unconscious conceit' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 31) to attempt to judge the validity of past cultural values - for example, criticizing the conservatism of the Dutch burghers who failed to recognize van Gogh's brilliance - one might still speculate upon the climate from which cultural artifacts emerge. A narcissistic zeitgeist (Lasch, 1991), for example, or a growth and productivity-based culture such as the current Western one, will naturally laud what it values, but what it values may or may not demonstrate a profound appreciation of artistic or other creative endeavour. This points to a problem with this use of the word 'creative', which Csikszentmihalyi and others use synonymously with 'novel'. For instance, given that the yoyo probably became popular for being invented 'in the right place at the right time' and is indeed a novelty and a cultural artifact, perhaps being in the right place at the right time is more aptly characterized as being *lucky*, rather than particularly creative. The yoyo is clever and innovative though perhaps not an example of domain-changing creativity. Possibly it is because of a failure of cultural imagination allied with a misplacement of values that we arrive at a place where the yoyo (domain: manufacturing) is 'creative', but compassion (domain: non-existent) is not.

Magical Machinations

Pierre Bourdieu speaks directly to the problem of contestation within the field. Decades ago, in his 1980 essay, 'The production of belief: contribution to an economy of symbolic goods', he brought our attention

to the 'collective mis-recognition' of the symbolic power of the artist's signature and of the 'power, bestowed on certain individuals, to mobilise symbolic energy,' that is 'produced by the functioning of the whole field'. (Bourdieu & Nice, 1980, p. 267)

The ideology of creation ... conceals the fact that the cultural businessman (art dealer, publisher etc) is at one and the same time the person who exploits the labour of the 'creator' by trading in the 'sacred' and the person who, by putting it on the market, by exhibiting, publishing, or staging it, consecrates a product which he has 'discovered' and which would otherwise remain a mere natural resource; and the more consecrated he personally is, the more strongly he consecrates the work. The arts trader is not just the agent who gives the work a commercial value by bringing it into a market... he is the person who can proclaim the value of the author he defends. (Bourdieu & Nice, 1980, p. 263)

Bourdieu recalls anthropologist Marcel Mauss' observation about the 'problem of magic' having to do with discovering what that power-enabling collective belief, appropriated by the 'magician', is actually based upon. In other words, we must question the authority of gallerists, publishers, theatrical producers etc, who have the power to identify greatness in a book or painting or play, at the same time as we question the authority of the artist's exalted signature.

Bourdieu illuminates the problems of pecuniary pursuits and political power-plays as they contribute to the field's accumulation of 'symbolic capital', and how this is assessed by the 'field experts', or 'magicians'. Their expertise – mythical or otherwise - supplies meaning and importance to the symbolic objects produced by artists and writers in an operation he characterises as 'valid imposture' or a 'legitimate abuse of power'. And yet, Csikszentmihalyi seems to have a great deal of faith in what Bourdieu portrays as the 'charisma ideology' of the field. (Bourdieu & Nice, 1980, pp. 28-29)

We have established that creative greatness of individuals is deemed so by the field largely because of economic and political machinations in that area; and that the reliability of some field experts' evaluation of the 'creative' products themselves is questionable. Since the field is so highly contested, it is important to consider how much value is attached to the idea or artifact and the reasons for this, else we may fall into the trap of assuming that the main hallmarks of 'creativity' are profit-making potential or utility. Such misapprehensions are reinforced by the terms of reference we use to describe the nature and purposes of created objects, and of ideas. In the following section we will discuss how the language of industry and commerce is used in reference to creative work, and the converse: the way terms used to communicate creative values have been borrowed by industry.

Words Fail Us

As Gilles Deleuze has remarked, 'These days, information technology, communications, and advertising are taking over the words 'concept' and creative', and these 'conceptualists' constitute an arrogant breed that reveals the activity to be capitalism's supreme thought'. (Pope, 2005, p. 3) One might add that terms such as 'vision' and 'dream' have been similarly and unacceptably appropriated. What is corporate 'vision', for instance, if not a broad view towards future profits; what are the 'dreams' inculcated within (particularly young) 'consumers', but marketing ploys to encourage expenditure on material goods by means of which consumerist aspirations may be realized?

Regarding material fed to young 'consumers', we might consider the constraints placed on schools and universities by the corporatization of the creative domain of education, and the language used to frame teaching and learning practices. For example, in the official Australian National University document below, on the subject of 'enhanced student experiences and outcomes', I have italicized certain questionable terms:

The ANU School of Music needs to position itself now as *a sustainable entity in a rapidly changing educational and professional environment* that

reflects the University's *aspirations*. This is a *business driven change* ... All courses will have modes of delivery and opportunities for student engagement that utilise appropriate technologies to *enhance learning* ... In partnership with the College, the School will set *strategic objectives*, and align their resources to achieving agreed priorities. ("ANU School of Music Change Management Plan 2012-2013,")

The corporate-speak is awkward and empty, and to this arts lecturer and writer at least, pernicious. The opacity of the jargon is expected to deflect criticism. For instance, who would question the desirability of 'enhance[d] learning' that 'reflects the University's aspirations'? (We must trust that in due course this document, or possibly an addendum to this document, will explain the author's understanding of 'learning enhancement' and what the 'aspirations' of the university represent.) The claim that the university 'needs to position itself as a sustainable entity' is apparently ethical, even noble – except that what 'sustainability' means in this context is unclear. Worst of all is the assumption that business should (inevitably!) drive the changes prescribed, as is stated right at the outset. I would like to suggest that the notion of the teaching and learning of music being governed by 'a business-driven change', and the framing of the needs, intentions and desires of musicians and composers through simplistically conceived notions of industrial imperatives, is of dubious value to creative practice.

It is crucial to consider the nature of the domain under discussion in its own terms, using language that clearly reflects its concerns. The concept of language constructing meaning is hardly new; thus, when we refer to the arts (or education, or health) in the context of business; that is, as 'industries', we are constructing these pursuits as commercial enterprises, and the aim of which in a capitalist economy is the generation of money: growth and expansion for its own sake. But when growth and profit, utility and expedience are perceived as primary motivators in the arts, artworks and literature, these things are then conceived, processed, and produced in such ways that their value is largely perceived as 'product' for galleries or publishing houses or media, rather than as 'artworks', 'books', or 'games'. This in turn changes – though may not improve – the quality of those artworks, books and games, and the fundamental meaning and motivations at the heart of practicing creative arts and literature (and learning, and caring for the sick). An example of a practitioner who finds this tendency abhorrent is Australian playwright and novelist Stephen Sewell, who in a mood of disgust with the machinations of his domain – or 'industry' – and its terms of reference expressed in the language of corporate consultants, wrote to me in an email,

'I will never use the words "market", "customer", "client" or such-like disgusting, predatory and utilitarian terms myself, or allow them to pass unchallenged in my presence, again; and that from now on, I will use the terms we used to use, namely our audience or readers or reader, for those people with whom we explore the worlds we as writers and audience members and readers ourselves wish to open up and be opened up for us'.

In summary, we need to look at each field in context, and to consider the role interest groups within that field might play in identifying what is and what is not of educational, social, and cultural value. This feeds into what we decide is or is not or is not 'creative'. According to Ken Robinson, our current "partial form of education" ... has "wasted or destroyed a great deal of what people had to offer because we couldn't see the value of it" '. (Hartley, 2005, p. 175) The way creative activities are termed and measured (and valued, and therefore funded) may say a great deal more about a culture as a whole than the creative activity that goes on within it. Perhaps notions of creativity in this sense can be seen as a kind of cultural canary that reflects the values of the time of its production.

A Call for Slow Creativity

There is a tendency to assume that when embarking on a task, that a lack of certainty regarding goals and intentions means directionless meandering and is a recipe for failure. This is likely to be true in closed-

circuit industry-based creative activities, where an outline needs to be developed with steps to be negotiated on the way towards a particular premeditated end: a resolution to be made or a problem solved within financial and temporal constraints. Time exerts pressure; competition for 'creative outcomes' in industry and business is fierce. Indeed, social and economic theorist Richard Florida claims 'Creativity ... is now the decisive source of competitive advantage'. (Hartley, 2005, p. 1)

This is the language Toby Miller terms 'market-oriented creative-industries discourse', (Miller, 2012) and it obviates other cultural imperatives. Here, the demand for 'outcomes' within time-constrained industrial contexts is highlighted, and the attitude it represents is pervasive, and well underway in colonizing all sites wherein creative work is undertaken.

In universities, for instance, which are held to be centres of creative thought and activity, and where 'we need to have the chance to think and act sufficiently slowly to make the connections that ... contribute to creative thinking' according to Theresa Anderson, 'there is increasingly less time to think'. (Anderson, 2011) This is due largely to the culture of managerialism which regulates and limits how teachers and researchers spend their time. Miller sees managerialism as, 'new kind of conformity ...[to]... commodification in which faculty devote vast amounts of time to filling out forms describing what they have done, are doing, and intend to do ...[where] administrators frequently link budgets to outcomes ...[and].. conduct themselves like captains of industry'. (Miller, 2012) The expedience and speed required in this climate do not lend themselves to the accommodation of time to spend 'between certainties' for reflection, experimentation, speculation, or filtering through apparently extraneous notions, theories, or information before drawing conclusions and resolving an idea into a concept. And this is the very time and space which creative practice usually requires. Paul Virilio has written extensively on the speed at which we live, and avers that it can bring about a 'choking of the senses, a loss of control over reason of sorts', (Virilio, 1995). I would like to add that although there are those who thrive on pressure, and for whom fragmented thinking is highly stimulating, 'choking' sensations will disable creativity in many of us.

Conclusion

As we have seen, ambivalent, paradox -embracing approaches to the work of thinking and making are not always highly valued in creative domains. We have discussed how this has to do with the inappropriate use of scientific tools of analysis or scientific terms of reference; with the pervasive utilization of corporate concepts, and the jargon of business and industry that expresses them; with the managerialist culture of many workplaces, regardless of the nature of the work done in those places; and with the time constraints under which many of us must work.

The cultural climate informs notions of what creativity is, and how it is 'done'. Today, this often means: for a clear purpose, within a set timeframe, to accommodate needs of extant 'domains', and to appeal to 'field experts' who may be in the thrall of business interests – all according to a perceived need for economic growth. Improvement is unlikely to occur without massive cultural change involving a re-examination of how we live and what we value, which is a study far beyond the scope of this particular discussion. However, I would like to mention in this conclusion that there are counterarguments to the growth model - which essayist John Ralston Saul contends has long been out of date. (Saul, 2012) He points instead to an ethic that promotes the wellbeing of the citizenry rather than our ability to serve as compliant 'producers' and 'consumers'. This requires the mobilization of the ambiguous, energising force of creative drive, or an aesthetic balancing act between intellect and imagination to assist in determining how we create value, which informs what we make and how we make it, and ultimately, how we live.

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