Creative Futures

déjà vu

An odd intuitive feeling warms our heart and consciousness - *déjà vu.*

On Monday 24th May 2017, the United Kingdom's Labour Party's Culture Manifesto was launched in Hull, the current UK capital of culture, by Labour's leader Jeremy Corbyn and his deputy leader, Tom Watson. Why was this important? For two main reasons: firstly, it demonstrates that many in the creative and cultural sectors opposed Brexit; secondly, it confirms Labour's commitment to introducing a £160m arts pupil premium (this refers to secondary school children) and promises investments in arts facilities in state schools, recalling the era of the 1960s Labour government.

For those of my generation that had free education and went to independent art schools, the Labour government led by Harold Wilson and the Minister for the Arts, Jennie Lee (also responsible for the establishment of the Open University in April 1973), transformed whole ideas, notions, aspirations and culture so that creativity belonged to everyone. In fact, the 50th anniversary of the publication of Lee's white paper took place on 25th February 2015. It was the first white paper on the arts. Called *A Policy for the Arts - First Steps* (1965), Lee's 19-page paper argued that the arts must occupy a central place in British life.[1] For that to happen, she recognised that the arts needed to be embedded not only in the education system but, in everyday life. The arts had to be valued as highly as any other industry, and equal access to the arts wherever people lived must be made available. Significantly, the paper advised that new ventures needed to be supported as much as established institutions.

[1] check #ArtsPolicy50 for a number of links to a number of different commentaries.

As Lee wrote in the paper: "In any civilised community, the arts and associated amenities, serious or comic, light or demanding, must occupy a central place. Their enjoyment should not be regarded as remote from everyday life."[2]

[2] Cmnd. 2601 pars. 14, 91, 100.

And then she raised government funding by 30 per cent. Though she made no specific reference to the impact of the arts on the economy, 'value added' or aggregate employment in the arts, there was an emphasis on whether the state and its schools fostered artistic talent. The 'economic impact' approach became popular in the 1990s in part because it was easy to justify in statistical terms. As I outline in the essay, consultants and other external agencies and quangos add up all the money spent on the arts, regardless of what the money was spent

on specifically, and from there go on to say how much the arts matter. If all that sounds familiar it is because it should be: more than 50 years later, those involved in the arts and cultural life are still arguing for arts policy changes that Lee considered crucial to our everyday lives—to our wellbeing, spiritual and creative health.

In 2017, Corbyn was quoted saying: "We will end austerity to boost creativity. What we have proposed here today in Hull is something that will absolutely transform the cultural landscape of this country in exactly the same way [as] the 1960s Labour government."[3]

[3] Gary Younge, "Jeremy Corbyn has defied his critics to become Labour's best hope for survival," *The Guardian*, 22 May 2017.

Coupled with pledges to maintain free museum entry, the scrapping of tuition fees, extending the £1,000 pub relief fund to small music venues and reviewing how artists are rewarded for their work in the digital age, it is not surprising that all these intuitively give rise to an odd, though warm feeling of *déjà vu*. If *déjà vu* also encompasses a feeling of familiarity, in its definition, then my feeling of having "already lived through" the reassessment of the value of the arts in 1965 is strongly recalled today in 2017.

This essay is concerned with the arts and creativity. Why have the creative and cultural industries been significant to the economy over the last decade (even though I also critique them) and why is creativity, then, at the heart of everything we do? What is creativity in the first place? What does it mean to live a creative life especially as a political stand against Brexit and austerity?

Creative Living Beyond Fear

According to *Big Magic* (2015), a book on creativity by Elizabeth Gilbert, the reason you may not have written your first novel, taken up weaving, learnt the saxophone, or otherwise given expression to the art inside you is fear. In fact the full title of her book is *Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear*.[4] Building on her TED Radio Hour episode on the sources of creativity, Gilbert offers a guide to living a more creative life.[5] Curiosity, she argues, is the key to an interesting life and often a creative one too. Writing a book is difficult enough, but writing a book about the creative impetus of writing is even harder. As Gilbert explains in an interview with *The Guardian*, years can be spent gathering hundreds of books that examine the links between creativity and madness, creativity and depression, cultural studies on creativity, the neuroscience of creativity, or creativity and computation. However, she chose a more personal approach: "I have had a way of interacting with creativity for over 20 years that has been really satisfying and expansive and I know about this, not from research but my own lived experience. For me it was about: do I trust my lived experience enough, with no back-up, to say, 'OK guys, here's what I know'?"[6]

[4] Elizabeth Gilbert, 2015.

[5] NPR/Ted, *Where Does Creativity Come From?* Ted Radio Hour, October 3, 2014.

[6] Elizabeth Day, "Elizabeth Gibert: Chasing Perfection is the Enemy of all good things," *The Guardian*, 27 Sept 2015.

Going Sane

For many, the thought of expressing themselves creatively is frightening, since creative work often collides with deeply-rooted fears: of ridicule, social rejection, discovering you lack talent (which is partly why I find contemporary TV shows like *The X Factor* (UK) so disquieting – as if people need to be ridiculed on stage), not to mention the fear of stirring up emotions you may have kept hidden for years. When emotions are

released, they can fall into the cliché of madness, as Gilbert points out. The complexities of this are more helpfully articulated by British psychoanalyst Adam Phillips in *Going Sane: Maps of Happiness*, where he argues that there are "no famously sane poets."[7] In *The New York Times* review of *Going Sane*, Gideon Lewis-Kraus says that Phillips "fears that our reluctance to ask ourselves exactly what sanity means might be thwarting our attempts to attain it."[8] He goes on to say:

[7] Adam Phillips, *Going Sane: Maps of Happiness* (London, UK: Hamish Hamilton, 2005)

[8] Gideon Lewis-Kraus, "Going Sane: A Mad, Mad World," *The New York Times*, 2 Oct 2005.

> The problem is our tendency to romanticize madness. The mad "have traditionally been idealized, if not glamourized, as inspired; as being in touch . . . with powers and forces and voices" otherwise reclusive. Sanity, on the other hand, is described – when it is described at all – as a matter of moderation, self-control and mechanical rationality… Phillips proposes that if we stop disguising this natural ambivalence as madness, we might have a better chance of recovering these resources. We might, in turn, lead freer lives.[9]

[9] Ibid.

Personal Stories

Perhaps hang-ups about creativity begin in childhood for those of us in Western and settled communities. Having been a post-war child in London, I can still vaguely remember ration coupons and grey blankets, and my mother's fears of me ruining the saved-up rations of jelly mix, which I messed around with to create floppy sculptures that collapsed all too easily on the formica floor. Moody and diffident, my imagination was squelched; this was even more the case in the single-sex schools of the time, which promoted the aspirational values of a conservative government that emphasised (then as now) personal wealth over care for others, and power in place of the quality of people's relationships.

Nonetheless, at secondary school I could hide in the art room, draw in maths lessons and generally perform the role of a recluse depressive: a woman on the edge of finding a creative self in the face of primness and propriety. Fifty years later, of course, it is much easier to rewrite the past according to my current understanding of creative tensions, but my sense even then was that teachers generally disliked more creative pupils, however much they claimed otherwise. Indeed, some neuroscientists argue that we have evolved to distrust creative ideas except in a crisis: there's little survival benefit to trying something new. Paradoxically, however, even large corporations are looking for the holy grail of creativity to release the next big idea.

Creative Battles, Creative Lives

Perhaps the real question is not whether creativity provokes fear, but what to do when it does – even if there is an allout attack or a closing down. Steven Pressfield's book *The War of Art: Break Through the Blocks and Win Your Inner Creative Battles* (2012) is a good example of how one should resist fear. What we are frightened of is perhaps being 'really' centrestage, which is counterproductive. It simply reinforces the idea that creativity must, of course, be an ongoing struggle, a barefisted fight, bordering on Hamlet's madness or Lear's near-insanity, as Phillips has in *Going Sane* in his chapter *On Literature*.

In *Living and Sustaining a Creative Life: Essays by 40 Working Artists*, editor Sharon Louden introduces the reader to various illusions expressed by those interviewed regarding what they thought would happen after art school.[10] Many commentaries are situated within a belief system that galleries would support the artist both emotionally and financially, and that dialogues with other communities and fellow alumni would automatically follow. The interviews reflect the reality of how artists juggle their creative lives with the needs of everyday living, including families and care, institutional responsibilities, and running an individual studio space. Of course, the power of creativity does not just lie in an artist's work, but also in the ways in which he or she continues to create regardless of the obstacles that life puts in his or her way. What the interviews reveal is the reality of how a professional, contemporary artist sustains a creative practice over time, both with and without funding, inside and outside the studio.[11]

[10] (Chicago, USA: The University of Chicago Press, 2013).

[11] Further examples of this can be found in Jones (1996) and Jacob and Grabner (2010).

Everyone is Creative

Most artists now working in academia would agree with the proposition that there has been an academic professionalisation of visual artists since the 1960s, which makes their education closer to that of academic disciplines such as architecture, design and sociology. Such a process of academic levelling also makes sense of the theoretical and multidisciplinary turn in most contemporary art practices, as explained in a seminal book by Howard Singerman, *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University* (1999). Not only has creative labour itself become a frequent topic in contemporary art but *how* artists labour.[12] Under the financial, speculative and flexible conditions set by the 'New Economy,' artistic labour has changed, and so have the terms of how creativity is organised and valued. The term 'New Economy' is commonly used in contemporary sociology and political economy to refer to the financial, speculative and highly 'technologised' economy of the 1990s. Here I use the term in a broader sense—as the mode of production that has become dominant since the 1970s in Western countries and the developing world, notably in relation to the arts and the designated creative economy.[13] This 'New Economy' has relied heavily upon the financial, media and entertainment, and cultural sectors as resources for the production of capital. For a general characterisation of the changes the 'New Economy' has brought, I refer to Richard Sennett's *The Culture of the New Capitalism* (2009).

[12] Although labour under capitalism has been a topic at least since 19th century, as Marina Vishmidt explains in her article "Situation Wanted: Something about Labour," *Afterall*, 19 Autumn/Winter (2008): 21–34.

[13] This is explored in Eve Chiapello's 2004 article "Evolution and Co-optation: the artists as critique of management and capitalism," *Third Text*, 18(6) (UK: Routledge) 585–594.

Professor Angela McRobbie, my colleague at Goldsmiths, has dealt with the issue of cultural and creative labour and the 'New Economy' in England. Her observations in *Club to Companies: Notes on the decline of Popular Culture in Speeded Up Creative Worlds* (2002) were noted in an article in *The Sociological Review*:

> [McRobbie] proposes that in the 'new cultural economy' of the United Kingdom over the last decade, the 'specialness' of the artistic or creative practitioner has been extended to people working in a very wide range of fields, including art, fashion and music, so that workers, especially those who are young, are attracted to the contemporary creative industries by the freedom and status associated with a particular artistic identity, that of the auteur.

> These cultural industries are regarded as highly successful. They have been estimated to 'account for 8% of the UK economy' (NESTA 2006: 2) and 'more than 5% of GDP' (Leadbeater, 2004). They 'employ more than a million people in over 110,000 businesses' (NESTA, 2006), many of them working in short-term, project-based jobs on a freelance, self-employed basis. This situation has been presented positively as offering flexibility and freedom, and as the model for the future of work, especially when linked to the 'knowledge economy.' However, critics point out that many creative workers have very limited job security and are low-paid or even unpaid. McRobbie argues that the artistic identity of the auteur reconciles new creative practitioners, at least for a time, to poverty or an uncertain income.[14]

[14] Stephanie Taylor and Karen Littleton, "Art work or money: Conflicts in the construction of a creative identity." *The Sociological Review*. 56.2 (2008) 275–292.

Knowledge Economies and Artistic Labour

The flamboyantly auteur relationship to creative work is now being extended to a much wider section of a highly 'individuated' workforce, operating in a deregulated environment or 'set free' from both traditional workplace organisations and social institutions.[15] In *Club to Companies*, McRobbie also suggests that the culture industries "reproduce older patterns of marginalisation" affecting women, black, Asian and minority ethnic workers. According to Leadbeater, about 4.6 per cent of Britain's creative industry workforce is from an ethnic minority, compared with 7 per cent of the economy as a whole.[16] In London, it is even starker: the discrepancy in the statistics is even greater. Another telling statistic is drawn from the *2013 Women and the New Economy* seminar held at the Centre for Creative Collaboration, King's Cross, London: explorations of all the available data showed that the rates of new enterprise formation by women in the UK rank significantly below those of G8 competing economies.

[15] Anthony Giddens. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991)

[16] Charles Leadbeater, "Britain's Creativity Challenge." *Creative and Cultural Skills*. Retrieved in 2007 from http://www.ccskills.org.uk

***Assemble*: Turner Prize 2015**

The extension of artistic labour beyond the 'specialness' of the artistic or creative practitioner has taken an interesting turn with the announcement of the 2015 Turner Prize. The winners, *Assemble*, are a London-based collective who work across art, design and architecture to create projects in cooperation with the communities who use and inhabit them. The collective's architectural spaces and environments embrace a Do-It-Yourself sensibility, and arguably promote direct action. *Assemble's* 18 members received their £25,000 prize on 7 December 2015 from Sonic Youth co-founder and artist Kim Gordon; the awards dinner was broadcast live on Channel 4 from Tramway, Glasgow.

Assemble are the first non-artists (in the strictest sense of the word 'artist') to win the prize. They were nominated for their work tackling urban dereliction in Toxteth, Liverpool, where their aim was to use architecture and design to improve the houses and lives of residents living in an area called Granby Four Streets. Drawing on long traditions of creative and collective initiatives, their experiment in architecture and design tried to offer alternative models of how society can work. *Assemble* also has entrepreneurial flair. For the Turner Prize show, the

group created a shop/showroom of products made by a social enterprise set up by the collective as a result of the nomination. When items are sold, the money is ploughed back into the project. For £15, people have been able to buy a door handle made from sawdust; there are also pairs of Granby rock bookends at £40, while £150 will buy you a pressed terracotta lampshade. This shop has created an alternative and creative business model to a standard market-led approach. The studio in *Assemble's* case is an architecture design practice, and the gallery is only one of the outputs for their work.

As art critic Adrian Searle pointed out in *The Guardian*:

> *Assemble's* win signifies a larger move away from the gallery into public space that is becoming ever more privatised. It shows revulsion for the excesses of the art market, and a turn away from the creation of objects for that market. Their structure that was on show at this year's Turner exhibition must be seen not as a work, but as a model of work that takes place elsewhere; not in the art world, but the world itself. *Assemble* demonstrates how artists and architects can engage with communities, and work creatively in the wider social sphere.[17]

[17] Adrian Searle, "Power to the people! *Assemble* win the Turner prize by ignoring the art market," The Guardian, 7 Dec 2015.

And yet, despite its centrality, the nature of creativity – its defining conditions, its workings in different arenas, and its values – often seem to be assumed rather than critically understood.

Creativity is increasingly linked – almost formulaically – in a new conjunction, 'creativity and innovation.' This is proposed as a key driver of a nation's economy, not in the same way as Searle's reading of *Assemble's* Turner Prize win, but as embedded in a nation's deterministic vision of 'creative industries.' Creativity and innovation are seen as forces to be harnessed in the service of economic growth. In 2000, the European Union agreed on the Lisbon Strategy, which argued that 'creativity' and 'innovation' are central to progress and development: the goal for Europe was to become "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based community in the world by 2010." This puts 'innovation' at the top of the European research agenda.

Cultural Policies and Creativity

At one end of the spectrum, the question of creativity focusses on the relationship between the professional creative artist and a creative ensemble (which is how I would describe *Assemble* and their work with social housing – a kind of socially-engaged design practice that uses the institutions of art and conventional gallery spaces as a model for their creative output). At the other end of the spectrum, creativity, now coupled with innovation, has become a question on which the wealth of nations is seen to depend. In the UK, a report by the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (Nesta), *Creating Growth: How the UK Can Create World Class Creative Businesses* (2006), estimated that the creative industries accounted for eight per cent of the UK economy – a total of £56.5 billion – with exports contributing £11.6 billion to the UK balance of trade in 2003. Globally, Nesta estimates that the global market value of the creative industries increased from US$831 billion in 2000 to US$1.3 trillion in 2005, with global revenues from cinema admissions alone amounting to US$25 billion.

Indeed, more recent UK government reports stress the importance of creative skills in supporting innovation for the future vitality of the British economy.[18] The business-oriented psychologist, Keith Sawyer agrees, stating: "innovation is what drives today's economy, and our hopes for the future – as individuals and organisations – lie in finding creative solutions to pressing problems."[19]

[18] Department for Culture, Media and Sport – DCMS, 2008; Nesta 2012.

[19] Keith Sawyer, *Group Genius: The Creative Power of Collaboration* (London, UK: Basic Books, 2008) xiii.

This is clearly very big business. Economic, social and policy research has become a matter of national or regional priority in a number of territories as the economy shifts from production to consumption, and from manufacturing to services. The challenging questions may lie in the links that stretch from one end of the spectrum to the other, and that might tie together – perhaps in critical tension – familiar questions of creativity and expressiveness with new questions of creativity and innovation.

In a 2001 paper, *Cultural Policy: Rejuvenate or Wither*, Tom O'Regan, Director of the Australian Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy, builds upon the work of Australian economist David Throsby.[20] He proposes a model comprising three concentric circles: the first circle consisting of traditional creative arts such as dance, theatre, literature, visual arts, as well as new arts like video art, performance art, multimedia; the second consisting of industries such as television, publishing and film, whose output is cultural but whose structure is industrial; and the third consisting of industries like advertising and tourism, which exist outside the cultural sphere but whose outputs may have cultural dimensions. Such a model, as O'Regan recognises, has informed cultural policy and state intervention, dividing the field into different business models, from subsidy to free market competition.

[20] David Throsby, *Economics and Culture*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

The danger of such a division into compartments is two-way: it may miss *both* the questions of creativity and culture which flow from the inner circle to the outer *and* the questions of innovation and entrepreneurship which may flow from the outer to the inner. Some of these issues are addressed in work on the 'creative city' and the rise of the creative class, which Richard Florida discusses in his influential US 'national bestseller,' *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002).[21] Whilst Florida's book has come under criticism (rightly so) both for its data and its categories, it is suggestive in its identification of both the material and the intangible components that provide the environment within which a creative community flourishes: not only employment opportunities and technology, but also lifestyle, social interaction and openness to diversity.

[21] Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class and How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life* (New York, USA: Basic Books, 2002).

In policy initiatives across Europe there has been a growing recognition of the significance of cultural amenities in attracting mobile middle- and upper-management to cities, which traditionally depended on a 'captive' industrial labour force. There is continuing scope for such work, tracing the workings of creativity through the various communities that make up an innovative, risk-taking regional or national culture. Additionally, there is scope to bring the questions that arts and humanities researchers are most adept at addressing into a new alignment with the questions that are the specialist province of economists and policy researchers. For humanistic research particularly, focus on the 'demand' side of culture and creativity might profitably adjust the balance, which has previously been heavily weighted towards the supply side.

Banksy at Dover (2017)
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Critical Functions of Creativity

A question that may have been lost in the research focus on economics and cultural policy formation concerns the 'critical' function of creativity. However much we may regret its cultural pessimism, the accusation that Adorno and Horkheimer levelled against the cultural industries in their 1944 treatise *Dialektik der Aufklarung* (since printed in English as *Dialectic of Enlightenment*) still haunts us. Adorno and Horkheimer originally used the term 'cultural industries' to refer to industrially produced commercial entertainment – broadcasting, film, publishing, recorded music – as distinct from the subsidised 'arts' – visual and performing arts, museums and galleries.[22]

The function of 'genuine art,' Adorno and Horkheimer claimed, was to negate and challenge the alienation of advanced capitalism; the 'culture industry' merely extends the 'administrative rationality' of industrial production into the sphere of art and culture. The culture industries, in their analysis, deprive art of its critical function. Much of the current thinking about cultural policy, creativity and innovation seems to confirm their suspicion: creativity and innovation are described in incremental and instrumental terms as adding value that enables social and economic benefits – such as economic growth and social well-being – rather than as inherently valuable as challenges and provocations.

[22] Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," extract from *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. (New York: Continuum, 1993).

The historiography of the terms 'cultural industries' and 'creative industries' (which I have been guilty of using rather interchangeably in this chapter) has been richly traced elsewhere, most notably in a 2007 paper that Susan Galloway and Stuart Dunlop[23] developed at the University of Glasgow's Centre for Cultural Policy Research. The article, *A Critique Of Definitions Of The Cultural and Creative Industries In Public Policy*, shows that although the concept of 'cultural industries' was originally separate from the creative arts, it was not until the election of New Labour in Britain in 1997 (when Tony Blair became Prime Minister) that the decisive shift in terminology occurred, and the term 'creative industries' reached ascendance in public policy (Pratt, 2004).[24] The term is, however, highly context specific – it has been widely adopted in advanced capitalist countries with a tradition of state support for culture, but has little or no purchase in the United States, "where the market place and consumer rule."[25]

[23] Susan Galloway and Stuart Dunlop. "A Critique Of Definitions of the Cultural and Creative Industries in Public Policy." *International Journal of Cultural Policy.* 13.1 (2007): 17-31.

[24] A.C. Pratt, "The cultural economy: A call for spatialized 'production of culture' perspectives," *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 7.1 (2004) 117–128.

[25] Stuart Cunningham, "From cultural to creative industries, theory, industry and policy implications," *Culturelink, Special Issue* (2001) 19–32.

The other aspect of this repositioning relates to culture. Whereas 'culture' is abandoned as elitist and exclusive, 'creativity' is somehow embraced as democratic and inclusive. In most people's eyes, the cultural industries and the creative industries are basically the same thing. However, rapid technological change (including the World Wide Web and digitalisation) has overtaken the old concept of the 'cultural industries,' which was more focussed on the 'Arts' plus commercial media (film, broadcasting, music). Thus, whereas the 'classic' cultural industries arose from the technological advances of the early 20th century, the creative industries are a product of the technological change of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Originally the cultural industries – broadcasting, film, publishing, recorded music – were incorporated into cultural culture, now they have been subsumed within a 'creative industries' agenda of economic policy, and in the process their distinctive aspects have been obscured.

A range of values – imaginative, spiritual, aesthetic – informs discussions about creativity and innovation. For example, the idea of experimentation seems to have slipped out of the vocabulary. The "everything is creative" argument also underlies the current UK government's approach to creative industries, which it defines as those industries that have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent, and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property. I have already indicated Angela McRobbie's anxieties about an 'individuated' workforce, and Galloway and Dunlop's critique of definitions of the creative industries, but another spanner must be thrown into the works: that copyright is now viewed as the "organising principle" for the creative industries and is the basis for defining the cultural industries.

In 1982, Mike Cooley published *Architect or Bee?: The Human Price of Technology*. The title alludes to a comparison made by Karl Marx in *Capital* on the issue of the creative achievements of human imaginative power. In *Architect or Bee*, Cooley talks about "new technology networks" and devices for 'socially' useful production, and attacks the division of labour, knowledge and authority. He also asserts that we learn by doing: by exploring creativity and taking risks (a process of thinking by doing) new knowledge is generated. Indeed, he suggests that those who know what they are doing – craftspeople with skill and expertise – are those who best understand what needs to be done.[26]

[26] Mike Cooley, *Architect or Bee? The human price of technology* (London, UK: South End Press, 1982).

Creativity, Cooperation and Collaboration

One way is, of course, to understand the places and spaces in which creativity can grow. *Assemble* winning the Turner Prize celebrates how *Assemble* engages with communities, and work creatively in the wider social sphere. But we also need to understand what is necessary for cooperation and collaboration to flourish. In *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation* (2012), Richard Sennett observes that we added another term to this list called dialogical: "The subjunctive mood is most at home in the dialogical domain, that world of talk that makes an open social space, where discussion can take an unforeseen direction. The dialogic conversation… prospers through empathy, the sentiment of curiosity about who other people are in themselves."[27] In fact, Searle's commentary on *Assemble* in *The Guardian* rather concurs with this point.[28]

[27] Richard Sennett, *Together: The Rituals and Politics of Cooperation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012) 15.

[28] Searle, op. cit.

Cooperation, and indeed the very complex nature of collaboration, needs more than goodwill: it is a craft that requires skill. In modern society, traditional bonds are waning and we must develop new forms of secular, civic ritual that make us more skillful in living with others (and now living with technologies). Sennett explores the nature of cooperation from Medieval guilds to today's social networks, exploring why it has become weak and how it can be strengthened. He argues that it needs dialogic conversation, but more than this. In terms of practical application, change requires the desire to find spaces and places: caring and trusting environments where there is time, respect for difference, and a generous capacity to listen to others whose ideas about creativity might be different from our own.

Human Creativity is 'social'

I appreciate that for many individual artists and educators, creativity seems to be a poor substitute for imagination and the individual. Judy Millar provocatively proposes that art can be an antidote to society's short attention span.[29] She suggests that imagination (although a slippery word) encompasses far more than creative solutions. Millar believes that within visual arts, 'artistic' has almost been entirely replaced by 'creative': largely, she proposes that creativity is a marketable skill. Here, I ask for some reflection and caution – otherwise we lock ourselves in silos, cementing barriers and splitting a powerful lobby for creativity and creative thinking, which applies as much to economics as the arts. Economics went wrong when it tried to ape what economists perceived to be 'proper' scientific methods. In recognising that economic policy is an art, we also recognise that it needs to be a very public one. I do not assume that being creative is largely about innovation, which brings with it an assumption that the arts should serve economic ends, as Millar concludes in her final sentence of her opinion piece.

[29] With thanks to Sue and Rob Gardiner of the Chartwell Trust for the reference.

Much human creativity is 'social', arising from activities that take place in a social context in which interaction with other people and what they make embodies collective knowledge as essential contributions.[30] The analysis of creative people and creative objects has demonstrated that most scientific and artistic innovations emerge from joint thinking, passionate conversations, and shared struggles among different people, emphasising the importance of the social dimension of creativity.[31] On the one hand, interactions humans with other humans and with artefacts and tools are not only needed, but also central to social creativity. On

[30] as in the example of *Assemble*.

[31] Warren Bennis and Patricia Biederman, *Organizing Genius: The Secrets of Creative Collaboration*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA: Perseus Books, 1997; V. John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000).

the other hand, people participate in such collaborative inquiry and creation as individuals, and individuals need time to think and reflect on their contributions to social inquiry or creativity.[32] Creativity, then, does not reside in a job description, but in social interaction, through creative individuals and collectives.

[32] Gerhard Fischer et al., 2005.

Just one question nags: where in today's political landscape can we find the Jennie Lee to take the lead?

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