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A hidden history: defining and specifying the role of the creative industries

**Frederick H. Pitts, Department of Social and Policy Sciences, University of Bath,
UK**

Biography

Frederick H. Pitts is a PhD researcher at the University of Bath, UK. His research explores work and work-time in the cultural and creative industries, with a specific focus on the struggle to measure, quantify and value creative labour. His approach is informed by a critical engagement with Marxian thought and critical theory, including Open Marxism, the German *Neue Marx-Lektüre* and Italian post-*operaismo*. He blogs at <http://themachineintheghost.blogspot.co.uk> and has an academia.edu profile at <http://bath.academia.edu/frederickhpitts>. All correspondence should be directed via email to f.h.pitts@bath.ac.uk.

Abstract

In this article I craft a definition of the role of the creative industries through time and in their contemporary specificity. I consider some of the possible approaches to the situation of the creative industries vis-à-vis the rest of the economy. I steer a middle course through contemporary debates around whether, on the one hand, the economy is cultural or, on the other, whether culture is economic. I suggest that the two bear influence upon each other. The argument presented is as follows. Standard definitions of the creative industries typically struggle to account for the diverse manifestations of creative employment and creative practices in other areas of the economy. In some ways, all industries can be considered as 'creative'. In other ways, and by extension, *no* industries may be considered specifically 'creative'. In this context, we might conceive of the contemporary specificity of the creative industries and creative employment in terms of the way in which they bring together, institutionalise and standardise the plethora of creative functions that are necessary for the reproduction of a capitalist system of commodity exchange.

Key words

Definitions of the creative industries; development of industry; history of creative activity; commodities; capitalism

Introduction

Standard definitions of the creative industries typically struggle to account for the diverse manifestations of creative employment and creative practices in other areas of the economy. In some ways, all industries can be considered as 'creative'. In other ways, and by extension, *no* industries may be considered specifically 'creative'. In this context, we might conceive of the contemporary specificity of the creative industries and creative employment in terms of the way in which they bring together, institutionalise and standardise the plethora of creative functions that are necessary for the reproduction of a capitalist system of commodity exchange.

Andy Pratt (2008) suggests that analyses of the wider economic role of the creative industries, and of culture more generally, fall into two broad strands. The first is that of the 'cultural turn', whereby attention is paid to the cultural aspects of economy activity. This approach is exemplified in the work of those such as Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift (2007). The second is the 'cultural economy' approach, whereby creative and cultural activity are studied as economic phenomena. This approach is exemplified in a volume edited by Helmut Anheier and Yudhishtir Raj Isar (2007). But both are predicated on an assumed distinction between culture and economy. Here, I propose a middle course which begins from the premise that culture and economy are intrinsically intertwined, at least in their current form. As we find them in contemporary capitalism, each is present in the other and neither bears an ultimately determining force.

As Pratt (1997, p. 2) asserts, despite the best efforts of some academics and policymakers, 'the accepted wisdom remains that cultural industrial production is both ephemeral to developed economies, and/or dependent upon more productive parts of those same economies.' Here I will suggest that culture and creative activities are far more integral to economies than the accepted wisdom permits. In so doing, I will

attempt to move beyond some of the more common arguments in favour of such a position.

Jason Potts and Stuart Cunningham (2010, p. 171) contend that the growing function of the creative industries as originators of innovation and arbiters of commodity markets calls into question their very status as an 'industry' at all. Rather, the 'creative industries' hold sway in all industries and in every corner of the economy at large, disputing their isolation as a self-contained industrial sector. The implications of this foundational, 'industry-creating' role will be unpacked further in the subsequent discussion. I will also consider the broader theoretical implications of creativity and culture with reference to industry and economic activity.

Conceptualisations and refutations of distinctiveness

Susan Galloway and Stewart Dunlop (2007) distinguish between five competing conceptions of the basis upon which the creative and cultural industries are defined as a distinct industrial segmentation.

Creativity

The first basis identified upon which to isolate the creative industries is *creativity*. This approach suggests that what makes the creative industries the *creative* industries is the role played by creativity. But as the authors suggest, this approach is 'tautological'. Of course creativity is a feature of the creative industries, by virtue of their labelling as such.

Conversely, this opens the definition of the cultural and creative industries to include any type of activity that can be called 'creative'. This incorporates more or less any type of innovative activity one cares to name (*ibid.*, p. 19). Indeed, this criticism touches upon the truth of the matter. Many more industries than those grouped under typical definitions of the cultural and creative exhibit characteristics associated with the latter. I will sketch such an account in the subsequent analysis.

Intellectual property

The second type of argument that Galloway and Dunlop pinpoint makes a similar case. Here, the specificity of the creative industries consists in their creation and use of *intellectual property*. However, this does little to state the specificity of the creative industries. Rather, it once again expands the purview of the cultural and creative industries to include nearly all industrial activity in a 'knowledge economy'.

Indeed, accounts of the creative industries which rest upon an acceptance of the reality of the 'knowledge economy' strip this assertion of its critical content. For one exemplar, John Howkins (2002), the term 'creative industries' *can* usefully be extended to include many other types of industrial activity by virtue of a shared utilisation and creation of intellectual property. As Howkins writes, the term 'creative industry' should apply to any instance where 'brain power is preponderant and where the outcome is intellectual property' (*ibid.*).

Galloway and Dunlop claim that this 'everything is creative' conception has influenced much UK government policy on the definition of the creative industries. For instance, in the 1998 Creative Industries Mapping Document, the creative industries are defined as 'those industries which 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' (UK Government, quoted in Galloway and Dunlop 2007, p. 20).

Symbolic meaning

The first two ways of defining the creative industries that Galloway and Dunlop give hardly vouch for their specificity. Rather, they invite the liquidation of this specificity in favour of a more all-encompassing definition. Galloway and Dunlop contrast with these approaches a third position. This argues that the distinctiveness of the creative industries lies in the particular way in which they produce *symbolic meaning*. This symbolic meaning applies to goods which derive their economic value from their cultural value, and not vice versa. This position suggests that goods are the sole domain of the creative industries (*ibid.*, pp. 20-21).

Problematically, this argument does not make a case for the specificity of the creative industries. Rather, the symbolic meaning and cultural value of goods infringes, not reinforces, the picture of the creative industries as a self-contained unit of similar activities from which other parts of industry can be excluded. One can just as easily cite the production of symbolic meaning and the pre-eminence of cultural value as features of the first two characterisations of the creative industries Galloway and Dunlop cite. For instance, one might say that *all* commodities possess a symbolic meaning and a cultural value which plays a part in the determination of their economic value. Hence, by extension the supposed distinctive traits of the creative industries are dispersed throughout industry as a whole. This compromises the conceptualisation of the creative industries as something specialist and specific.

Use-value

A similar problem afflicts the next attempt at defining the creative industries as distinct listed by Galloway and Dunlop. This, the fourth in their list, considers the creative industries to be distinct due to their provision of a certain *use-value* (*ibid.*, p. 21). But it seems that this 'use-value' is little different to that 'symbolic meaning' detailed in the third conception. Hence it can be recouped by an argument for the extension of the definition of the creative industries in a similar way. This, of course, is dependent on whether one considers commodities of all kinds to possess a symbolic or 'cultural content' (Lazzarato 1996). Later, I will explore some of the ways in which this can be said to be the case and the implications that such a conceptualisations bear for the definition of the creative industries.

Joint goods

The fifth approach suggests that the products of creative and cultural industries are *joint goods* which bear both symbolic and functional value (Galloway and Dunlop 2007, p. 22). By this, one parcels out the relative proportions of which good can be said to represent the contrasting symbolic and functional sides of the particular commodity. But this would appear to be an impossible task, on at least one understanding of the

nature of the commodity and the importance of its cultural content. This understanding denies the ability to isolate a 'functional' value governed by a need that is not somehow crafted, cultivated or created by the symbolic and cultural realm. The symbolic can instead be seen to govern the functional. The latter conditions our expectations of what is 'functional' or 'useful' in the former. Hence, the concept of 'joint goods' by no means proves the specificity of the creative industries. It bases itself on an unstable theoretical foundation that, when submitted to scrutiny, collapses the very functional/symbolic distinction upon which such a differentiation can be made.

It was ever thus

It seems, therefore, that the five definitions of the creative industries detailed by Galloway and Dunlop are reconcilable with a conceptualisation of the creative and cultural industries that both extends the definition to include potentially *all* industries and at the same time steals away the entire basis upon which their distinct existence can be said to rest. Conceding to this criticism, Galloway and Dunlop quote Terry Flew (2002, p. 13), who asks whether it is 'possible to exclude any activity of industrial production that has a symbolic content? Is the design and production of a Coca-Cola can a part of the cultural industry?' In a world in which culture enters into the consumption of goods and services directly, as the identities of consumers become a malleable part of the process of buying and selling, for instance, '[c]ulture is thus recast from a distinct sphere of social life to something that permeates everything'.

But where I differ from this representation is with the *temporalisation* of this 'cultural content of the commodity' (Lazzarato 1996). Rather than something that is of relatively recent vintage, I would instead say that *it was ever thus*. I would deny the claim of novelty which is apportioned to the alleged 'development' of a creative and cultural economy. Arguably, all commodities have possessed this cultural content since the inception of exchange. The creative industries mark a rationalisation of how this cultural content is organised and standardised. In the next section I will explore the interface between consumption and production and what this can tell us about how the creative industries relate to the rest of the economy.

Are *all* industries creative?

Daniel Mato contends that not only *some* industries warrant the moniker 'cultural' (or, more relevantly to us, *creative*). Rather, *all* industries and the forms of consumption associated with them can be defined as cultural or creative (Mato 2009, p. 70). This contention is grounded in a prior claim about the nature of the commodity and its consumption in contemporary capitalism. Consumers desire goods and services not only for the particular material or social needs they satisfy. They desire them also for the symbolic power of the specific meanings derived and produced from them. On this basis, all industries and the commodities that they produce may be called 'cultural'. As Mato suggests, 'all industries are cultural because they all produce products that beside from having functional applications are also socio-symbolically significant' (*ibid.*, p. 73). Therefore, a car manufacturer does not only produce a material product that services a need, but 'produce[s] meanings' aswell. Similarly, the consumers of the manufacturer's cars purchase a model not merely for its functional characteristics, but for the symbolic properties and meaning that it offers (*ibid.*, pp. 73-4).

The importance of 'user-experience design' to the production of automobiles highlights the 'cultural' nature of the commodity.¹ The experience of consuming the car as a commodity is not extraneous to the essence of the commodity. It is constitutive of its status as such. If we take 'commodity' to refer to the product that is valued and sold, then this 'commodity' need not necessarily be the material substrate of the specific product. Rather, what is sold is a symbol. It is an ephemeral experience, essentially creative and cultural and co-constituted by the consumer themselves. The attachment of the material product to this experience is purely incidental.

As Toby Miller (2009, pp. 91-92) suggests, what distinguishes Mato's account of 'cultural' industries is the focus he places on consumption at the expense of production. An industry is cultural because of its consumption rather than its production. Rather

¹ I explore creative employment in the auto industry in more detail in Pitts 2015a.

than meaning being incidental to the production of the actual material automobile, the reverse is the case: the material aspect of the commodity is incidental to its meaning.

Therefore, who produced this commodity- the new automobile? The mechanics affixing the nuts and bolts? Or the user-experience designer formulating the concept? Who, in this context, was the productive worker? It could be suggested that the creative, in this instance the user-experience designer, is responsible for performing the *productive* labour. They render a marketable commodity through the design of its cultural, symbolic content. It is this content that makes the commodity desirable, and thus saleable. Without this desire, without a sale, the commodity is not a commodity at all. It is only a product of labour, nothing more- unexchanged, unvalued and unvalidated.

An appreciation of all industries as cultural and creative, therefore, requires us to reassess the way in which we think about the divide between what are commonly considered productive and unproductive labour.² As Alan Freeman notes, considerable resources are channelled into the enlargement of desires, experiences and the cultural content which makes a commodity what it is. He writes that

the 'market' in cultural products [...] is a purely social construction in every respect including its production process. Its costs are decreasingly resource-determined and become increasingly costs of establishing taste. Dolce and Gabbana sunglasses are expensive not because they cost a lot to make, but because it costs a lot to set them above other sunglasses. Their use consists of their exclusiveness and their cost consists in making them exclusive.

This demonstrates that

investment in creative products is, primarily, investment in second-guessing, understanding and managing social behaviour. Hence, for example, the advertising industry, whose essential function is to establish and manage tastes. Hence, also, the typical structure of the fashion industry which is [...] to identify

² I discuss this issue at length in Pitts 2015b [forthcoming].

and set trends in taste whose crucial inputs are no longer spinners, weavers, tailors and dressmakers, but inexplicable behaviours of the creative market: branding, trendsetting, imitation, reputations establishment, the pundit, and so on. (Freeman 2012, pp. 15-16)

This bears two implications for definitions of the creative industries. In broadening the ascription of creativity to multiple different areas of economic activity, they reflect the reality of the way the economy functions. But they also risk the very status of the creative industries as a specific and isolatable phenomenon. In this sense, we might equally pose the question as to whether *any* industries are specifically creative. In the next section, I will seek to overcome this line of argumentation. I will give an analysis of how, in the context of the claims of Mato and Freeman, we can establish the identity and function of the creative industries and employment in contemporary capitalism.

Are *any* industries ‘creative’?

Two implications can be taken from the suggestion that ‘all industries are cultural/creative’. The first is that industries uncommonly considered cultural or creative are in fact so. The second negates the specificity supporting the definition of the creative industries as an industry. Mark Banks and Justin O’Connor identify the latter manoeuvre as a feature of accounts situating the creative industries as a prime mover in an innovation system consisting of all industries. This subordinates the specificity of the creative industries as producers of creative goods to their role as a service provider to industry as a whole. As a part of all other industries, the creative industries are not an isolatable and specific industry in themselves. This leads Banks and O’Connor to pose the question as to whether ‘we might be entering a phase where the *special and exceptional claims* of the creative industries [...] may be coming to an end’. If this is the case, they ask, ‘are we entering a period ‘after’ the creative industries?’ (2009, pp. 366-7). Banks and O’Connor emphasise the considerable dangers presented by the discourse of innovation. Subsuming the creative industries under the sign of industry as a whole, they suggest, ‘risks undermining the very distinctiveness through which this value can be generated and legitimised’ (*ibid.*, p. 370).

Art and work, play and labour

The periodization of the creative industries as a recent occurrence is challenged by some scholars. One such account is presented in the Work Foundation's *Staying Ahead* report (2009). Here, the creative industries- and the wider 'knowledge economy'- are seen as novel on the basis that they arise in response to a new set of consumer demands. These demands arise from the ability of the 'rest' of industry to provide the necessities of life. Thus, it is suggested, people can turn their attention to satisfying their desires in the field of leisure and entertainment.

But even before 'industry' became a reality at all, creation and the consumption of creative products preceded organised production and the forms of labour associated with it. A recent exhibition at the British Museum, *Ice Age art: arrival of the modern mind*, collected an array of artistic creations stretching back 40,000 years. The exhibition made a clear statement of its thesis, augmenting the material evidence with findings from neuroscience to suggest that it was the ability to make art that marked the crucial factor in the evolution of our early ancestors into *homo sapiens*. Where the mind led, the body and the material elements of this evolutionary process followed.

Central to this is the *imaginary* of these transitional humans. In the design and production of abstract figures, they exhibited a new capacity to conceive of something on a purely conceptual level before putting it into practice. They demonstrated the ability to generate a pure idea only to realise it later. Items such as a figurine of a part-man, part-lion do not represent something that exists in reality. The creation of something entirely novel, therefore, represents the development of the mind to a point where an abstraction can be translated into something concrete.

This abstraction is demonstrated in the numerous female figures created by our ancestors that were on show at the exhibition. Often these are reduced to the most abstract details: a few outlines, vague shapes. The shape of the figurine is abstracted from the shape of the idealised female. This abstraction brings with it a new sense of uncertainty. It endows the products not with a meaning that is the sole domain of the

person who created it, but one which is malleable to the particular feelings and impressions of the consumer or perceiver of that piece of art. What is more, these female figures often served a functional purpose as anything from ornamental handles of tools and weapons to pendants on necklaces. This combination of functionality and the making of meaning is reflected in the goals of creative and cultural industries today. Furthermore, the careful attention paid to the decoration of spatula handles, spear-throwers and fishing gouges with abstract lines and representations reveals the way in which art and creativity was a deeply *everyday* experience. It was not merely just a part of 'play', a mere addendum to all the other stuff of life.

Anthropological accounts suggest that, in fact, 'play' and creative pursuits were the forerunners to 'work', commonly considered. According to Jean Baudrillard, primitive societies functioned around the 'exchange of symbolic meaning'. Rather than an extra added onto production, symbolic exchange in these societies is the primary force from which production derives only as a 'residue' and 'remainder'. Baudrillard suggests that '[t]hings of functional use are *taken from*' the sphere of 'symbolic exchange', of art, meaning-making and creative activity. This includes 'eating, drinking and living'. Although counterintuitive to how we might understand the world from a more materialist, 'productivist' perspective, it is suggested that these activities are first and foremost conducted by means of symbolic exchange (Baudrillard 1973, pp. 78-79).

Baudrillard's understanding challenges an economically deterministic view of the world, whereby economic necessity and the production of goods bear a determining influence upon every other aspect of life. This view of society was a cornerstone of Soviet interpretations of Marxism. The Russian Marxist Georgi Plekhanov wrestled with this predicament in his letters on art (1957), quoting from the anthropologist Karl Bucher:

[T]he development of manufacturing industry begins with ornamentation of the body, tattooing, piercing or other means of deforming various parts of the body, after which the making of ornaments, masks, drawings on bark, hieroglyphs and similar occupations develop little by little. . . . Hence, technical

skills are acquired in the course of play, and are put to practical use only gradually. The hitherto accepted succession in the stages of development must therefore be replaced by its very opposite: play is older than work, and art is older than the production of useful things (Bucher, quoted in Plekhanov 1957, p. 75).

Plekhanov greets these words with trepidation, sensing the burden Bucher's conclusion places upon the economic determinist picture of human activity and history. This conception, in the hands of those such as Plekhanov, holds economic activity to determine art and other social realms. Bucher's account indicates instead that art determines economic activity. This throws the whole theoretical system into dispute and uncertainty (*ibid.*, pp. 75-6). But it is not only orthodox Marxism that struggles to disabuse itself of this way of thinking about the relationship between creativity and the 'real economy'. The most commonplace conceptions of the relationship between the creative industries and the 'rest' of the economy can be seen to rest on such implicit assumptions.

The creative industries and the development of industry

Freeman (2012, p. 1) makes the claim that 'both the cultural and (recently-defined) creative industries are not a recent phenomenon but historically central to the development of the modern industrial economy'. Central to this proposition is a belief in the essential nature of 'creative human labour' to every aspect of economic activity. Freeman (*ibid.*, p. 5). writes that

neither the cultural nor the creative industries are new. Actually, they predate manufacture, agriculture and 'services', to which statisticians usually confine themselves. People have been paying money for culture since antiquity. Creation is as old as, well, creation. Culture and creation should be recognised as an industry not because they have just arrived, but because they have always been there. The problem is only that we have not noticed them.

Freeman gives several examples of this ever-present status. The most ancient form of 'wealth', 'treasure', derives its 'preciousness' from no other criterion than the way in which the creative mind ascribes it to metals and stones. This proceeds by means of 'intelligence, taste and labour'. This symbolic process of ascribing meaning and value continues with the commodities that eventually come to supersede treasure and the money used to exchange them, expressed in the 'ritual symbols of reputation' that mark our coins. These are all subject to creative labour, Freeman claims (*ibid.*, p. 5).

With the rise of industry, it is not the machinery of manufacture that drags the world in its wake. Rather, cultural production is the true innovator. Whereas cultural and creative practices are typically seen to be determined by movements in the underlying basis of industry and technology, the metaphorical 'tail' of the popular imagination here 'wags the dog'. Commonsense dictates that what constitutes an economic good is a dependable material substrate rather than immaterial, intangible experience or service. But an arsenal of instances undermines this. As Freeman writes,

[t]he modern world trading system which fuelled the early city-states of Venice and Genoa, and the subsequent emergence of Flanders and Netherlands as the epicentre of early capitalism was set in place by rise of luxury and artistic consumption among the new merchant, industrial and yeoman classes who saw, in the purchase and flaunting of things, a way to 'prove' their social status by means of products in the face of a dominant social class which defined itself by birth. (*ibid.*, p. 6).

This account contrasts with that given in the Work Foundation report mentioned earlier. There, the creative industries arise relatively recently due to the novel capacity of consumers to buy from a sense of discernment rather than out of necessity. But this creative meaning-making has been a feature of commodity production and exchange from its inception onwards.

Furthermore, Freeman asserts, it was clothing- and hence fashion- from which the Industrial Revolution derived its momentum. Indeed, I work with the results of the

boom in the clothing business and the intensification in cycles of trends and styles as I type: computing has its roots in the Jacquard Loom and its automated pattern-making, which, Freeman tells us ‘inspired Ada Lovelace to devise the world’s first punched card computing system’. Later still, it was the desire for colour in creative products that instigated the development of the modern chemical industry, and motion pictures and the gramophone stand as the truly ‘iconic’ industries of the twentieth century (*ibid.*, p. 6).

However, alongside these examples, we must also remember that a commodity traditionally thought of as mere ‘nuts and bolts’ such as the automobile must not be relegated to the status of a non-creative product. Rather, as discussed above, the car too is a creative product that carries with it symbolism and cultural content all of its own. Indeed, Freeman points towards this when he writes that there is ‘a case for treating culture as the quintessential outcome, and creativity as the quintessential activity, of what makes production and consumption distinctively human social, political and economic activity’ (*ibid.*, p. 8). Rather than something isolatable and separate, creativity and culture is something common to all production and consumption.

The role of the creative industries today

What then renders the time that we live in today special as concerns the creative industries? Freeman concludes that the examples given show that ‘[c]ultural and creative activity constitute, in short, an *economic factor*’. But the uniqueness of the situation today is that they constitute an economically *hegemonic* factor. This is analogous to the role of steam machinery from 1830, electrical machinery from 1890 and oil in the Fordist period (*ibid.*, pp. 6-7). Just as the oil industry was defined as such not because its only product is oil, but because its *input* is oil, so the creative industries can be defined by the fact that their overwhelming input is *creative labour*. Whilst this input is also an input into many- if not *all*- other industries, it is its predominance in one area in particular that gives the creative industries any analytical distinction that they may possess, according to Freeman. The creative industries, he claims, are the

'specialist users of *creative labour*' (*ibid.*, p. 19). It might also be added that they are the specialist *providers* of creative labour.

It is the hegemonic nature of the creative industries today with reference to other industries that gives them their contemporary specificity. This position is elaborated by Jason Potts, Stuart Cunningham, John Hartley and Paul Ormerod (2008, p. 175). For Potts and his co-authors, the creative industries are any industry that at any one time is driving innovation and change in the economy. This 'creative' quality has been seen before in other industries, such as those examples given above (steam machinery, oil, etc.). Defined thus, nanotechnology is likely the contemporary frontier of the creative industries. Potts and his co-authors are clear that '[n]ew technologies are part of the CIs [creative industries],' and that 'old technologies are (mostly) not.' Thus, the definition of the creative industries will be constantly changing depending on where the driving force of innovation and change in the economy lies. This may include traditionally creative pursuits, new ideas instilled through consultancy and academia, and science and technology. This echoes the argument Joel Mokyr makes in his book *The Gifts of Athena* (2004). He argues that the 'knowledge economy' is nothing new. In fact, it bears a direct resemblance to the wave of enlightenment thinking that inspired the first industrial revolution.

As Jason Potts and Stuart Cunningham (2010, p. 177) note, this argument situates the creative industries in the lineage of 'creative destruction' exemplified in the past by nineteenth-century engineering. Innovations in engineering had effects beyond industry, impacting not only upon the wider economy, but changing the face of society and culture. Today we witness an analogous 'engineering' by the creative industries of a new kind of 'culturalised', 'creativised' capitalism. It functions on a tight proximity between production and consumption facilitated through digital interfaces, social networks and the carefully cultivation of trends, fashions and the 'cultural content' of commodities (Lazzarato 1996). The implications of this 'creativized' capitalism are significant, with creative industries the conglomeration of various creative functions in one industrial grouping. The specific status of the creative industries today consists in

the way in which the production of the creative and cultural content of commodities is concentrated, standardised and institutionalised in one industrial area.

Rationalisation, standardisation and specialisation

The specificity of the creative industries cannot lie in their novelty. Creative and cultural activity precedes the advent of the creative and cultural industries by some margin. Further, the kind of processes that are ascribed to the creative industries are found in many other industrial areas. The system of modern commodity production and exchange has often incorporated elements of creativity and culture in the designing, making, marketing and selling of the goods and services. What *is* novel and specific about the creative industries today is the way in which these activities have been *specialised*. They have been grouped together, away both from their status as cultural activities dispersed through society at large and from their status as an integral part of the production and circulation of commodities carried out as a part of wider industry. This specialisation has created an industry of creativity, the creative industries. The processes associated with creating ideas and culture have been standardised, rationalised and institutionalised in a single network of businesses, employees, professional associations, representative bodies, government departments, and so on.

As the work of Bill Ryan (1992) conveys, the need to rationalise and standardise creative processes is crucial for businesses. In many instances, conventionally routinized working practices can easily have an evaluation of their productivity made on the basis of averages and measurements which abstract a general overview from the concrete particularities of what goes on hour-by-hour. The formal way in which working tasks are structured in, say, factories, shops or call centres allows management to compare like-with-like. However, artistic and creative practices, David Hesmondhalgh and Sarah Baker write, 'resist[] this abstractness'. This makes it very hard to assess the contribution they make. 'This causes a constant problem for capitalist businesses', they write. In response, there is a tendency for the *rationalisation* of cultural production, 'both at the creative stage and the circulation stage.' Creative management thus always 'struggl[es] against the relative autonomy given to creative

workers' (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011, pp. 83-84). The 'irrationality' and immeasurability of creative work, by means of a system of commodity exchange which brings everything into comparison with all other things, results in a tendency towards specialisation, standardisation, and rationalisation. The institutionalisation of creativity into the creative industries is an outcome of this.

Conclusion

The concept of the 'creative' (and by extension the 'cultural') can be extended to a wider range of examples of economic and industrial activity than might usually be considered to be the case. This can be achieved by means of a qualitative mode of analysis that allows us to explore the sociological, cultural, historical and anthropological dimensions of the economy. Against those interpretations which emphasise one to the detriment of the other, as a result of this analysis the economy is shown to be as cultural as culture is economic. Creative industries and their non-creative counterparts interrelate on numerous levels, and creative workers breach the divide between the two by supplying a range of creative functions in all sectors.

In a context where all appears cultural and, by implication, creative, it is hard to see how any industry can specifically be called creative when all industries can be named as such. But despite these issues, I have staked a claim for the contemporary specificity of the creative industries as consisting in the institutionalisation, rationalisation and standardisation of historically present creative functions in a specialist and collected form.

The historical analysis of the relationship between creative pursuits and those of economic production reveal the two as intermingled and co-determining of one another. The contemporary constitution of the creative industries (for which concerted government efforts are largely responsible) marks the result of a process whereby the cultural aspects of commodity production and exchange come increasingly to the fore and become organised in a more rational and efficient way by business on an individual and collective level.

The practices and functions grouped together under the mantle 'creative industries' are not a meagre bonus to the process of 'real' production, the exact role or relationship of which to industry as a whole we need to root around for in order to find something that fits. They can actually be seen to play the major rather than a minor part in the prosperity of capitalist economies. The integral cultural content of the commodity and its cultivation by 'creative' industries have always been important. It was ever thus. A recognition of this is required. This article contributes to an appreciation of the historical unfolding of creative industries through new organisational forms which confer upon them their contemporary specificity at the culmination of a hidden history.

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