



CCI/ FEAST JOINT RESEARCH WORKSHOP: “CREATIVE DESTRUCTION: LESSONS FOR SCIENCE AND
INNOVATION POLICY FROM THE RISE OF THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES”

‘THE FUTURE IS AN OPEN FUTURE.’

**CULTURAL STUDIES AT THE END OF THE ‘LONG TWENTIETH CENTURY’ AND THE
BEGINNING OF THE ‘CHINESE CENTURY.’**

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‘The time to work for a commonwealth of civilizations is now.’

(Giovanni Arrighi et al. 1996)

A Short History of Cultural Studies (Hartley 2003) made the claim that cultural studies is a ‘philosophy of plenty’; a way of understanding the creation of cultural values among large populations, in times of economic growth, democratisation and consumerism. However these same times – the ‘long twentieth century’ (Arrighi 1994; Brewer 2004) – were marked by unprecedented social and ideological upheaval, with imperialism, total war, totalitarianism, and ‘mutually assured destruction’ (Cold War) as the dark side of progressive secular scientific modernity. Over that long century from the 1880s, world economic and political leadership shifted from European hegemony and British free-trade imperialism to US entrepreneurial-managerial capitalism. The end of the ‘long’ century was marked by further change, often gathered under the term ‘globalisation.’ For their part, the human, political and economic sciences underwent what has been called the ‘cultural turn,’ associated with post-industrial or network society, the ‘new’ or knowledge economy, postmodernism ... and cultural studies.

Brainchildren of the West

There is no doubt that cultural studies is a Western intellectual enterprise, born out of and seeking to shape specifically Atlantic tensions as economic, political and cultural experience adjusted to American hegemony, carried around the world as much on the wings of popular culture as by military and economic power; i.e. by Hollywood, rock & roll, television; everything except sport (whose globalised forms, soccer and the Olympics, are European in origin). Interestingly it was not during the 1930s to 1950s, the period when American supremacy was established in fact, but later, when it was first seriously challenged – in Vietnam – that cultural studies came to prominence. In the 1960s and early 70s, popular culture in Europe began to turn the tables on the semiotic superpower by exporting its own music back to it, in the process changing its provenance from black blues to white pop, from authentic expression of oppressed identity to international chart-topping entertainment, albeit through the medium of working-class creative angst and aspiration, embodied in stars like John Lennon of the Beatles and later in the punk explosion associated with the Sex Pistols. Even more remarkable was that musicians began to function as the intellectual leadership of a new generation. It was through commercial music and pop culture that ‘countercultural’ politics circulated, not through the traditional technologies of democracy and party machines, although the two did collide in noisy ways, notably in the iconic year of 1968 (Gitlin 1993), when Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were assassinated as the civil rights movement gained strength, the ‘evenements’ of May set Paris alight, the Democratic Party convention in Chicago dissolved into violence as anti-war activists were attacked by police, students were gunned down in Mexico City, a massive demonstration against the Vietnam War radicalised ‘swinging’ London (Halloran et al 1970), the Prague Spring came and went in Czechoslovakia ... and youth culture turned from dancing to demonstrations.

The music-and-drug culture of ‘peace and love,’ the hippie ethic of flower-power, and the ‘politics of the personal’ arising from feminism and civil rights, merged in ‘new social movements’ dedicated to the expansion of the mind and to the liberation of women, people of colour, sexual orientation, the Third World, the environment, even children (*The Little Red Schoolbook*; Hansen & Jensen 1971) – in short the emancipation of culture and identity. These movements were not readily assimilated into the existing labour movement or representative politics, although they did intersect around nuclear disarmament and anti-war activism. Instead they began to create their own media and their own organised forms on *cultural* sites, which were often also commercial enterprises – record labels (the

Beatles' Apple), concerts (Woodstock), the 'underground' press, art 'happenings,' participatory forms of democracy and a political sensibility formed in festivals (culture) rather than in the factory (economy) or forum (politics).

All of these were Western developments, although countercultural activists were attracted to various revolutionaries from Che Guevara to Mao Zedong, whose works enjoyed a brief vogue among New Left intellectuals, along with those of liberationist thinkers from the Third World such as Frantz Fanon and Julius Nyerere. The question now is whether the passions of the 'baby-boomer' generation created an intellectual system that would outlive their own circumstances; and whether a movement that was essentially internal to the West, struggling against the dominant tendencies of its own social formation, holds any lessons for those beyond that context. To put it bluntly, why should, and how can, the career of cultural studies interest non-Western countries like China or young people today?

If history is any guide, there is not much to be gained by seeking to 'apply' Western ideas directly, even those regarded as positive:

The claim that Western civilization is the bearer of a heritage of liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, equality, liberty, the rule of law, democracy, free markets, and other similarly attractive ideals ... rings false to anyone familiar with the Western record in Asia in the so-called age of nation-states. In this long list of ideals, it is hard to find a single one that was not denied in part or full by the leading Western powers of the epoch in their dealings either with the peoples they subjected to direct colonial rule [India; Indonesia] or with the governments over which they sought to establish suzerainty [China]. And conversely, it is just as hard to find a single one of those ideals that was not upheld by movements of national liberation in their struggle against the Western powers. In upholding these ideals, however, non-Western peoples and governments invariably combined them with ideals derived from their own civilizations in those spheres in which they had little to learn from the West. (Arrighi et al 1996)

In other words, intellectual movements whose origins lie in the West, even those regarded as emancipationist, may be merely a colonising ruse to power if they are imported to the global-South or to the East as part of an attempt to *convert* the locals. They will only be of value if they are

propagated as part of a *conversation* in which both parties have a speaking role. Thus, 'applying' cultural studies directly to current circumstances is simply not going to work. Instead, what is needed is an understanding of what is at stake in the issues, combined with a vigorous effort to investigate the specificities of the new situation from within its own context. In the Chinese case this means avoiding both extremes of 'catch-up' (blind borrowing) and 'get-out' – the exceptionalist alibi, as in the oft-used phrase 'so-and-so ... with Chinese characteristics' (which turns the thing named on its head). Like other Western ideas, those associated with cultural studies, and more to the point with the problems it has sought to analyse, have assumed global significance in recent years. However China's own complex history, culture and specific circumstances will necessarily reorder this 'problem situation.' In short cultural studies is not a method to be applied like a cookie-cutter to all circumstances.

What then is at stake in cultural studies, and how might Chinese and other contemporary readers and researchers make use of its insights for their own forward strategies? Can it be 'abstracted' from its original context and remain useful? Or is it merely a passing trend – less a framework of explanation than a symptom of the times requiring explanation? Such a reflexive question about its own explanatory power is in fact one of the more enduring characteristics of cultural studies; one of its most important moves. Here is a mode of intellectual inquiry that insists on what is called 'conjunctural' (context-specific) analysis rather than 'scientific' universalism, where a 'problem situation' (or 'problematic') requires its own 'conceptual framework.'

Cultural studies and social change

Cultural studies was born out of an attempt to understand *social change*. More to point, it was an intellectual attempt to show how to *provoke* social change in certain areas while *resisting* it in others. In the country and the period in which I grew up, Britain in the 1950s, it seemed to some on the Left that, in the place where the Industrial Revolution had begun, decades of activism in the economic sphere (trades unions and the mass labour movement) and in the political sphere (the Labour Party) had not resulted in decisive social change ('revolution') in favour of working-class or progressive interests. However, the Left was also scarred by the events of 1956 in Suez and Hungary, when both Western social democracy and Soviet socialism, in their international guise, were revealed as militaristic coercive forces without emancipationist hope for the locals. Marxism, the favoured 'conceptual framework' for explaining social change, was compromised. Meanwhile, after the home-

front egalitarianism of World War II and a short period of state-socialistic nationalisation afterwards (the Labour government of 1945-51), the British working class persistently voted for conservative governments, who presided over a consumer boom, improved housing and employment, and decolonisation too. Some on the New Left thought to ask why, if ordinary people's interests were 'objectively' in line with those of the labour movement, they valued listening to pop music (subcultures) over voting Labour.

Given 'apathy' at home and 'atrocities' abroad, it was no wonder that new sources for progressive social change were sought. Cultural studies has been an extended response to this impasse. The response was both negative and positive. Negatively, those who turned to culture wanted to know if cultural factors were responsible for stopping what had been predicted as inevitable historical change, driven by economic and political determinations. Was there something about culture – in particular the workings of ideology – that needed to be better understood? Positively, it was quite obvious by the 1960s that burgeoning youth culture, subcultures, alternative and countercultures were beginning to provoke social change *through* culture – in music, performance, film, writing and other arts, which were much more successful at popularising a message or mobilising a community of action than anything being done by traditional political parties or workplace agitators (combined). Many on the Left were attracted to the possibilities opened up by these developments, despite the commercial environment in which popular culture thrived. Here, commercial enterprise seemed expansive and communicative, linking a 'we' community. It did not fit the stereotype of an exploitative and manipulative 'they,' to which leftist thinking traditionally consigned corporate values.

These things have left their mark on cultural studies to this day. The kernel of the question that remains from this conjuncture is this: what have culture, individual identity, and the pursuit of values associated with consumption, leisure and entertainment, got to do with social change? A corollary question is: if culture (as well as economics and politics) is implicated in social change, can it be construed as *progressive* (self-realisation; the emancipation of the ordinary) as well as *regressive* (ideological manipulation by media and corporate interests)? And a third question is: how can the intellectual tools necessary to explain a given situation be understood as part of the object of study; or to put it another way, how can social change be understood by its own agents? These questions would translate well to the Chinese and contemporary context.

Furthermore, if it is going to turn out as predicted that China will be the 'hub' around which the next 'long century' is going to emerge into whatever new order is eventually established, then the analytical project of cultural studies has something to offer contemporary inquiry into social change. Its long attention to the 'strategic' relations among *economic* growth/ascendancy, *political* leadership/democratisation, and *cultural* experience/identity is worth following. For cultural studies is a very good place to think about how responses to shifts in power are *experienced*, how *individual agency* is amplified or stymied by global systems, how *creative values* merge or conflict with *economic ones*, and how the '*performance of the self*' may enable or inhibit political change. As its own economic system matures, China is building a (demand-led) consumer and services market on top of the (supply-led) low-cost manufacturing base established in the first decades of its opening up. To sustain economic growth, sophisticated, productive, creative agents – both producers and consumers – are increasingly required. This inevitably impacts on political arrangements. Growth and development require individual agency; meanwhile the dynamism of the system requires spontaneous order (market) rather than central control (decree); and self-realisation for myriad individuals can occur in conditions that include markets, entertainments and social networks as well as more traditional political forms. Cultural studies is an aid to new thought in this area. It was sparked into life in the first place by an urgent need to understand social change at a moment when existing paradigms of knowledge, both scientific and political, were in crisis, and when the drivers of change seemed to be migrating from the economic and political spheres to the cultural. The need to understand the role of culture in social change remains in a globalised world where strategic economic and political power is shifting from West to East.

Creative destruction

Cultural studies has been a disruptive intellectual force in the West. This too may hold lessons for China, one of which is that disruptive innovations often provoke quite negative reactions until their widespread adoption and retention neutralises the 'shock of the new' (in Robert Hughes's famous phrase). This certainly has been true for cultural studies as an intellectual enterprise. It has attracted plenty of heat for its tendency to blurt out something about knowledge in general that scientific and policy discourses have tended to ignore or even keep a 'secret' (Birchall 2006). The 'secret' at the heart of knowledge is that *all* knowledge faces a crisis of legitimacy, because the legitimacy of knowledge cannot be decided in advance. The authority of the author (the expert witness), the adequacy of the method (science), even the apparent obviousness of observation (common sense) – all

of these are seen by cultural studies in its 'postmodern' mode as emanating from language, not reality – they are 'constructs,' pretexts, ruses to power, or fictions. Cultural studies has attracted sustained derision from scientists (Sokal 2000), from outraged empiricists (it is 'educationally corrupting and professionally embarrassing': Windschuttle 2000) – and from those who wish to believe in the truth of the bleeding obvious (journalists).

But, after the heat subsides, it can be seen that this was merely what medical practitioners call referred pain. The cause of the problem was not in cultural studies but in modern knowledge itself. Knowledge is now the very engine of economic growth, public policy, business practice and the informed citizen, not to mention the sophisticated consumer, in a 'knowledge economy,' 'information society' and 'media culture.' Because of its central importance to all kinds of productivity – economic, political and cultural – knowledge plainly needs to be *trusted*. Equally plainly, it is not trustworthy. Successive crises of legitimacy rock the world, from the question of whether 'big science' is safe (Chernobyl, Bhopal; GM foods; bioscience) and tells the truth (climate change), whether or not a country has weapons of mass destruction (Iraq, Iran), whether politicians (*Independent* 2006), journalists (Danwei 2007) and authors (*Age* 2004) fake their stories, to little local embarrassments for cultural studies itself, notably the Sokal hoax (Sokal 2000).

Cultural studies has a predilection for 'deconstructive' readings of realist 'texts,' not just in the safe playpen of literary fiction but more riskily in the most exposed promontories of the real – i.e. science and politics. Small wonder that those with a stake in truth express exasperation when it is undermined. Either it is hopelessly compromised by the uncertainty underlying all knowledge, or it is hopelessly pluralised, becoming a property not of *things* but of *experience*; for example when people with religious convictions acknowledge both scientific and divine truths, despite their evident incommensurability. From there it may seem hard to resist a slide to subjectivism where truth means whatever anyone likes, as in TV comedian Stephen Colbert's brilliant concept of 'truthiness' (see *scientificblogging* 2008). Despite the protests of those who like their truth to be 'analogue' and straightforward, it can only ever be contingent, mediated and contested. The critics have a tendency to blame the messenger – accusing cultural studies of holding the views it uncovers in texts. They are made even more irritable because cultural studies is often practiced at the margins of respectable knowledge, in mass teaching colleges rather than prestigious science departments, or in 'unworthy' subject areas like media, gender, or literary studies, rather than in medical schools. In short, cultural

studies is seen as a pain in the neck, foisted on unsuspecting undergraduates by postmodern theorists in second-rate colleges.

However it is just these symptoms of disruption at the margins that have led one observer, Richard E Lee (2003), to claim that cultural studies is part of a much larger crisis of legitimacy of knowledge; one in which it plays the same role for the social sciences and humanities that *complexity studies* have done for the sciences 'proper' (Lee 2004). Together, argues Lee, cultural studies and complexity studies mark 'a shift away from emphasizing equilibrium and certainty,' where causality is defined as 'the consistent association of antecedent conditions and subsequent events amenable to experimental replication and hypothesis testing' (Lee 2004). In other words, both cultural and complexity studies have acted as agents of 'creative destruction' (in Joseph Schumpeter's famous phrase) of the modernist paradigm of knowledge, in the natural and social sciences respectively. This is provoking a reordering of the field of knowledge as a whole, in which positivist value-free science and value-laden but economically neutral culture are alike disrupted. Both science and culture have been thrown from Newtonian equilibrium and reinserted into the 'arrow-of-time' of irreversible historical change, which in turn requires attention both to historical contingency and to personal positionality. Lee writes:

During the period from the late 1960s, the 'new sciences', emphasizing complexity, irreversibility, and self-organization, have effectively abdicated a role of guarantor of truth in knowledge and reintroduced the arrow-of-time into the natural sciences. The world of nature, like the human world, has now been shown to bring order out of chaos – it is creative; the future is an open future (rather than a predictable Newtonian one), determined only by creative choices and contingent circumstances at unstable moments of transition. This has the effect of freeing knowledge production from the aporia of uncovering infinite disconnected particulars in search of impossible universals. In a world recognized as creative in all its aspects, values and knowledge, *Wert* [meaning and values] and *Wissen* [systematic knowledge of reality], are necessarily fused. (Lee 1997)

These far-reaching consequences of early cultural studies were not immediately evident to observers (although they may have been aspired to by some of those involved); but from those small and simple beginnings, seeking to understand how cultural pursuits might trump socio-economic structures,

something of system-wide significance is still propagating, across disciplines, institutions, and problematics.

Excess of representation; representation of excess

Along the way, cultural studies was caught up in a crisis not so much of knowledge as of *representation*, which was also entering the period of 'creative destruction' known as postmodernism. Here the legitimacy of both political and semiotic representation, as inherited from nineteenth century philosophy, was challenged. Commentators became interested in the *productivity of signs*, and in particular the excess of mediation in contemporary societies, whereby signs – often entirely detached from any plausible referent – suffused the public and private domains. Although they were often criticised for turning the world into a text, the postmodernists were among the first to see clearly, right across the domains of politics, culture and the economy, that representation had been emancipated from reality, and that the process of abstracting textuality, signification, meaning and value from situated context or referential causation was a phenomenon of the system, not of their own fantasies. Everywhere, signs were proliferating; referents retreating. Excessive media signification, in movies, advertisements, TV and the arts, was only the most visible form. Easily observed and readily taught, *media studies* 'caught' postmodernism early and popularised it widely, to the dismay of the nineteenth-century disciplines.

However, *abstraction* and the detachment of the sign characterised even economics, where capital itself was 'textualised' in the form of financial markets, releasing unprecedented energy into the global financial system. Work was abstracted from the labourer in automated factory systems. The wide distribution of personal computers detached words from pages, allowing 'text' to become mobile in ways that would have astonished typewriter-bashing journalists of the modern era, but they too were busy textualising the world in order to know it. Recipes were abstracted from food, allowing celebrity chefs to prosper even as cooking declined as a social practice. In short, 'the economy' shifted decisively from manufacturing to information. Politics shifted from representative to mediated forms, in which class, party or ethno-territorial loyalty gave way to a system where politicians auctioned promises for votes and events mattered in direct proportion to their visibility on network TV. Culture became the site for the tensions, struggles and 'affordances' associated with these changes to be worked through at the local, contextual and experiential levels.

In such circumstances, which were fully operational in the West just as China began its opening up process, the most pressing needs were the problems of *plenty* – how to manage information overload, semiotic excess, an *affluence of the mind* that was rapidly extending to whole populations the resources of knowledge hitherto enjoyed only by expert specialists and rich elites. *Productivity* migrated from ‘producers’ to ‘consumers.’ The better business plan henceforth was not the one devoted to origination and unique creative invention but the one dedicated to information and knowledge sharing and management – the search engine, the editor, the filter, the synthesiser.

This was part of a more profound shift, where the modernist paradigm of realist representation as a whole was transforming. Excess of representation (postmodernism) was but a symptom of a general shift of productivity (semiotic and economic) further along the ‘value chain of meaning’ (Hartley 2008a). Productivity is manifested in the assumed *source of meaning* in any system, and this general shift can be observed across many domains and processes (see Fig. 1).

Fig. 1: The value chain of meanings [reproduced from Hartley 2008a, p. 28]

ERA: 	PREMODERN 	MODERN 	GLOBAL
<u>Value chain...</u>			
<i>... of merchandise</i>	origination/production	commodity/distribution	consumption/use
<i>... of meaning</i>	author/producer	text/performance	reader/audience
<u>When, where, who (time, place, population)</u>			
<i>When</i>	medieval	modern	postmodern
<i>Where</i>	church	public sphere	private life
<i>Who (population)</i>	the faithful	the public	DIY citizen
<i>Who (intermediary)</i>	priest	publisher	marcom/IMC
<u>How (regime)</u>			
<i>Theorist</i>	Bible	Marx	Foucault
<i>Subjectivity</i>	soul	individual(ism)	experience
<i>Power-base</i>	pain of death/hell	war	administration of life ("market")
<i>Sovereign</i>	monarch/divinity	nation state	self
<i>Arms-bearer</i>	knight/crusader	conscript/volunteer	terrorist
<i>Enemy</i>	peer/heretic	country	civilian
<i>State</i>	'Hobbesian'	'Machiavellian'	'Kantian'
<u>Why (knowledge)</u>			
<i>Philosophy</i>	revelation	scarcity	plenty
<i>Epistemology</i>	theology	empiricism	plebiscite
<i>Educational reach</i>	elite	mass	universal
<u>What (form)</u>			
<i>Interpretive form</i>	exegesis	criticism	redaction
<i>Creative form</i>	ritual/liturgy	realism (journalism, novel)	reality
<u>What for (communicative politics)</u>			
<i>Mode of literacy</i>	hear only	read only	read and write
<i>Mode of address</i>	convert	convince (campaign)	converse
<u>Who says (choice control)</u>			
<i>Source of control</i>	'Him' – divine control	'Them' – expert control	'Me' – self control
<i>Source of choices</i>	no choices	publisher/provider	navigator/aggregator
	= Fundamentalism	= Modernism	= Globalization

From DIY to DIWO

(Do-It-Yourself to Do-It-With-Others)

Postmodernism was the philosophy of *representational excess*, but it proved to be a mere symptom, because representational productivity was soon overtaken by a more direct kind, in which consumers began to be producers themselves. This expansion of productivity was closely associated with, and most visible in, the growth of Web 2.0 social networks and DIY applications, although the shift from closed expert system to open innovation network can be observed much more generally. While these developments were clearly American in origin and tone – they were individualistic, entrepreneurial, technological and expansionist – their impact was global as the internet followed financial capital and business practices on to the world stage. The consumption of signs, in the form of mass media entertainment supplied by giant corporations, which had been international if not globalised for many decades, began to feel the heat of competition from myriad locally-originated user-led innovation (e.g. open source), consumer co-creation (OECD 2007), and DIY culture (see Hartley 1999: 179-81).

These changes posed a challenge to cultural studies as it had become widely institutionalised, because by this time it had developed a reasonably stable set of concerns about ideology and cultural struggle, the politics of the personal, the indeterminacy of knowledge, and a toolbox of methods for demystifying ‘dominant’ cultural forms and practices. In other words cultural studies was kitted out to deal with the representational productivity of an essentially industrial system. Now, it is faced with a new kind of productivity – that of the open network, in which individual agency is *creative*, not an effect of power or causal determination from somewhere else (like ‘corporate capitalism’). Even system-wide innovations might be seen as ‘bottom-up’ rather than ‘top-down’ phenomena, such as ‘crowd-sourcing,’ the blogosphere, social networks, and the reordering of knowledge via ‘folksonomy.’ The distinctions between expert and amateur, producer and consumer, power and subjectivity have all been thrown into crisis.

The challenge in these developments is to resist using a cookie-cutter version of cultural studies (as ‘critique’) to reduce them to a known framework of analysis before exploring the potential of new forms of productivity based on individual agency, technological affordances, global interconnectedness, and rapid social change. For instance a certain branch of ‘critique’ (see Lovink 2008) has fixed on cultural labour in order to argue that user-led innovation and consumer co-

creation are little more than a further step in capitalist exploitation, by normalising casual employment and the 'precarity' of labour, and the dissolution of political activism into consumer commercialism. As always it is important to maintain critical distance and scepticism in relation to the object of study, but to maintain a *structural* model (of inequality, struggle and antagonism) in the face of *dynamic* disequilibrium (change and growth) is to pre-judge how things will turn out, and to deny an open future.

Here then is a fork in the road for cultural studies. It has been well theorised by Mark Gibson, who was among the first to see that the 'career' of cultural studies had taken it on a journey in which its early curiosity about the role of culture in social change had been overtaken by a singular and theoretical (rather than plural and historical) concept of power (Gibson 2002; 2007; see also Cultural Studies Now 2007). Taking one direction at this fork in the road, and following Stuart Hall, were those who tended to reduce emergent phenomena to a *structural* model of power, and therefore culture to a 'whole way of struggle' or conflict. This idea displaced culture as a 'whole way of life' (Raymond Williams's founding formulation) in which ordinary life is understood as more than an effect of power; rather it may be the ground for emergent forms. In the 'power' model, and following the work of Michel Foucault, power was said to be 'everywhere,' which led to a tendency for cultural critique to focus on local, micro-analysis of instances of power, and for it to neglect further macro-scale thought about how the system as a whole may be changing and dynamic, capable of generating 'emergent' as well as 'dominant' values. Thus there is a version of cultural studies that finds power everywhere, but nowhere does it rethink power. Gibson proposes that the concept be pluralised – to 'powers' of various types – and historicised, so that conjunctural analysis can allow for an 'open future,' and not an endless repetition of the model.

Taking the other fork in the road have been those for whom culture is equated with creativity. Whether user-created content is critiqued as a corporate ruse or celebrated as an opportunity for 'digital democracy' – whether you see a glass half-empty or half-full – the fact remains that the rise of self-made media poses important questions for cultural studies. A rethink of the metaphor of 'industry' is in order for a start, to get beyond the populist fixation with evil capitalist moguls like Rupert Murdoch and Silvio Berlusconi, and to rethink what is meant by production, labour, and consumption in terms of complex networks (including markets). This is also to get back to cultural studies' real interest in *all* of the agents involved in the system (ordinary life), not just inherited

corporate structures (media industries). It is time to abandon the assumption that causation and communication flow one-way only, and to take seriously the *agency* of the critical-creative citizen-consumer within an overall system in which major enterprises are *also* at work. This multi-sourced causation in 'scale free' complex systems, where consumers join in to 'do it with others' (DIWO), is modelled on the 'hubs' and 'nodes' of network theory and complexity studies (Beinhocker 2006) rather than on the structural antagonism of classes.

The place where this rethink seems to have progressed most energetically in recent years is in the new field of 'creative industries' (Hartley 2005; 2008b). The issues raised in the attempt to identify and explain the creative industries are of significance to cultural studies, because the creative industries are located at the very place where new values, both economic and cultural, new knowledge and new forms of social relationship are *emergent* (rather than 'dominant') and where they are in process of society-wide adoption and retention, often through market mechanisms. It may even be argued that the 'creative industries' are the empirical form taken by *innovation* in advanced knowledge-based economies, in which case their importance – like that of the media – exceeds their scale as a 'sector' of the economy. It extends to their role as a general *enabling social technology*. This would place *creative innovation* on a par with other 'enabling social technologies' like the law, science, and markets. Where the media (in the guise of 'cultural industries') were regarded as the social technology of *ideological control* in the modern industrial era, the creative industries may be regarded as the social technology of *distributed innovation* in the era of knowledge-based complex systems.

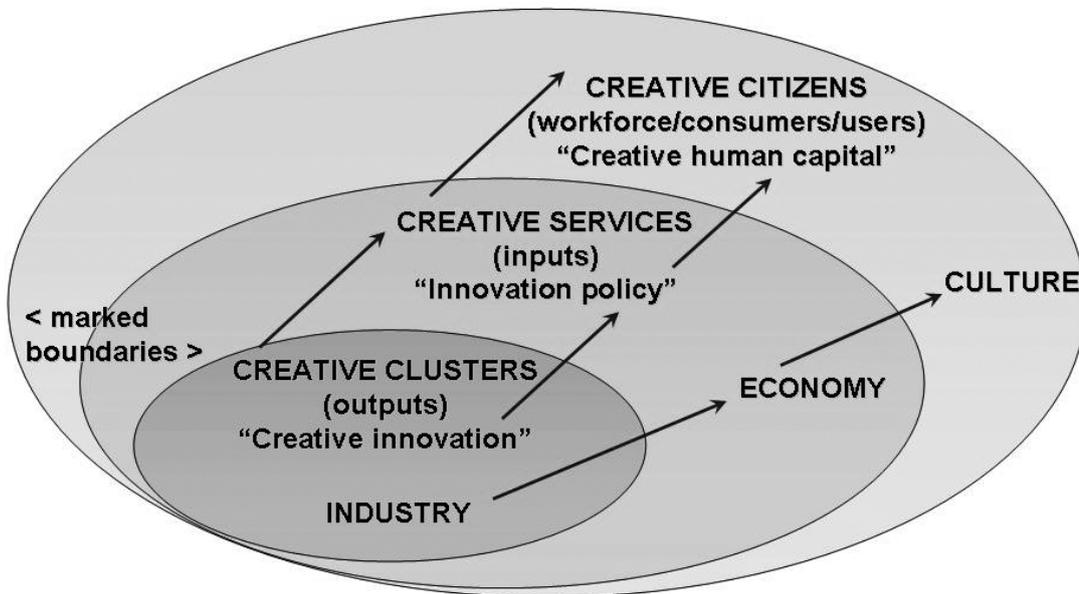
In order to understand the creative industries as a general enabling social technology it is necessary to move beyond the 'industry' or supply-side model of the publisher/provider, and instead to develop a demand-led or 'navigator/aggregator' model of creative innovation (see Figs 2.1, 2.2., 2.3; see also Fig 1).

[This section is reproduced from Hartley 2008b]

Fig 2.1: Industrial-era or 'provider' model of creative causation

Creative industries: creative economy: creative culture

From... supply-side provider-publisher model – ripple out effect

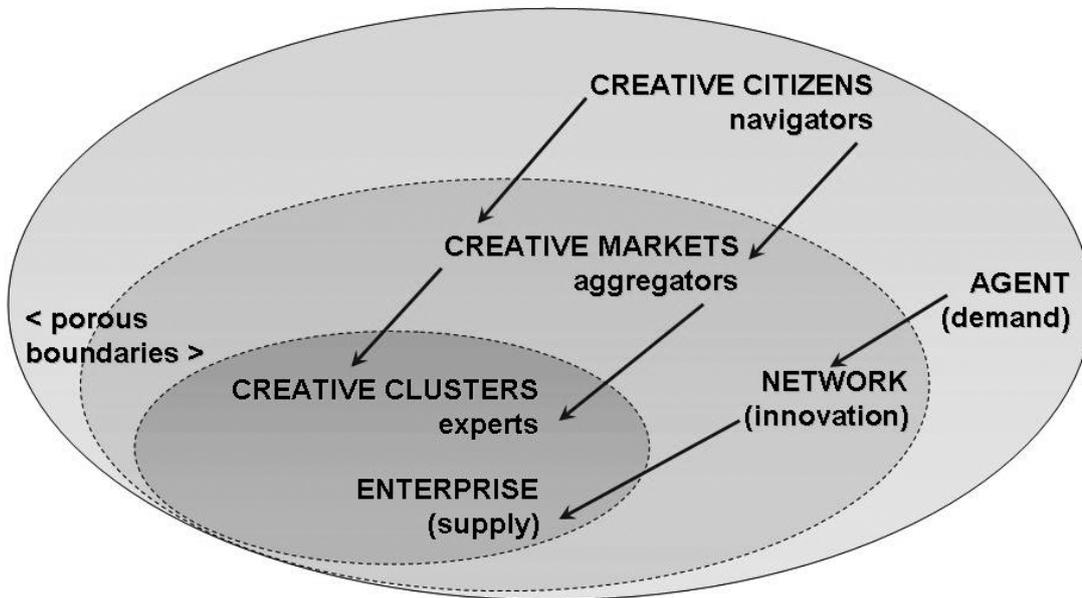


Instead of the industrial or modern-era model is now possible to propose a *demand* model of creativity in an evolutionary model of the economy. This sees creative culture in terms of the growth of knowledge among the entire population, not merely among industry or artistic experts. Instead of being the *objects* of causal sequence, consumers, users and citizens become its *subject*, navigating as agents, not being pushed around as passive effects, thus:

Fig 2.2: Network-era or 'demand' model of creative causation

Agent: network: enterprise

To... demand-driven navigator/aggregator model – feedback effect

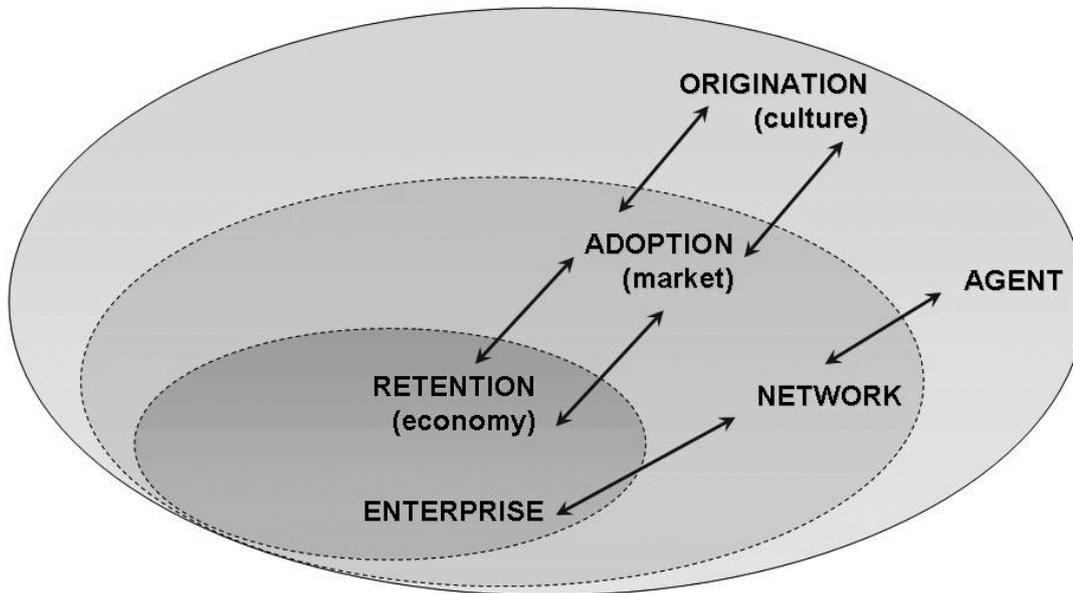


This model pushes out towards the future, not the past; it is an 'emergent' model of innovation. Here creativity may be located as part of 'human capital.'

These provider/demand diagrams are of heuristic value only, of course: in reality the arrows always go both ways; like this:

Fig 2.3: Interactive model of knowledge growth

Evolution of knowledge:
Agents, network and enterprise – interaction process



Social network markets

Seen this way, the evolution of the creative industries does allow us to make a significant conceptual advance; one based on evolutionary economics (Beinhocker 2006), and taking seriously the dynamics of change and innovation, the emergence of order in complex systems, and the possibility that both economic and cultural ‘behaviour’ may be explained using game theory and complexity theory. In this environment, the object of the exercise is to understand the *origination, adoption and retention of knowledge*, not simply to critique the activities of firms. Indeed, the very term ‘industry’ has been part of the problem. A better term than ‘industry’ is ‘market,’ specifically ‘social network markets’ (Potts et al 2008). For one thing, it shifts causal sequence from a supply-driven to a demand-driven dynamic. A demand-led model of creative citizen-navigators requires a reformulation of the familiar ‘value chain’ approach to cultural production, which typically follows a one-way logic of causation, like this (and compare Fig. 1):

- i. **producer** (creation) and production (manufacture);
- ii. **commodity** (e.g. text, IP) and distribution (via media);
- iii. **consumer** or audience

Instead what is needed is:

- i. **agents** (*origination*), who may be individuals or firms, characterised by choice, decision-making and learning;
- ii. **networks** (*adoption*), both real (social) and virtual (digital);
- iii. **enterprise** (*retention*), market-based organisations and coordinating institutions (Potts et al 2008).

And instead of linear causation, what is needed is a dynamic and productive interrelationship among *agents*, *networks* and *enterprise*; all are engaged in the mutual enterprise of creating values, both symbolic and economic. This is a complex open system in which everyone is an active agent, not a closed expert value chain controlled by 'industry.' Individuals originate ideas; networks adopt them; enterprises retain them.

Towards an open future

'The 20th century was the American century; the United States changed the world...developing all the major new technologies: telephones, automobiles, television, jet aircraft, the internet and so on. We all assume, as Washington undoubtedly assumes, that we are still living in the era of American hegemony, though it is already clear that China may be an emerging superpower. (*William Rees-Mogg* [former editor of *The Times*] 2005)

Thus for analysts interested in social change the creative industries are a bellwether for the 'open future' predicted by Richard E Lee. Current directions in the study of the continuing encounters among culture, economy and politics do not focus so much on struggle, subject-positioning or structure, as on change, disequilibrium, and growth. It does seem to many that the current period is one of indeterminacy between two relatively stable 'long centuries' – the existing 'American' one and the coming 'Chinese' one (Shenkar 2004; Fishman 2004; Rees-Mogg 2005). Therefore, contemporary readers and researchers who are interested in the evolving conceptual framework gathered under the rubric of 'cultural studies' need to look out for the next stage, when 'disruptive renewal' stabilises into a new emergent order. At that point we can look forward to a 'macro' model of the overall dynamic knowledge system, in which cultural, economic and political values can be studied in a unified way. If emergent creative innovation is itself an 'enabling social technology,' then analysts will need to focus on local-global instances of *popular creativity*, the *productivity of consumption*, and the

propagation (especially via the internet and other technologically enabled social networks) of the ‘*means of semiotic production*’ across whole populations, coordinated in hybrid ‘social network markets’ (Potts et al 2008) that allow commercial and community enterprises, corporate giants and micro-businesses, to co-exist and co-create values. In such a context it will be possible to understand the uses of creative and cultural resources for enterprise at both community and commercial levels, and to extend from ‘defensive’ cultural identity to expansive creative innovation. Cultural studies emerges not only as a philosophy of plenty but as a policy and practice too: it is a useful conceptual framework for analysing innovation systems, creative industries, and the propagation of creative productivity. At that stage, when it is part of a unified study of the growth of knowledge, it may have to change its name – to ‘cultural science.’ Certainly it will have to change its centre of gravity – from West to East.

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