

CREATIVITY AND AUTHENTICITY: PERSPECTIVES OF CREATIVE VALUE, UTILITY AND QUALITY

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Abstract

This paper is written from the perspective of creative practitioners in sound, music and the visual arts teaching in UK higher education. Seeking ultimately to refine approaches both to the development of creative abilities, and to the formal evaluation of creative activity, the research forms part of a wider project exploring the formative and summative assessment of creative arts practice, the key focus being the study of creative value in the arts. As a consequence of the impact of new technologies and changing conceptions of creative technique, craft, collaboration and origination, and diversification of possible interpretive meanings inherent with new artistic forms, increasing uncertainty in the assessment and evaluation of creative practice and creative experience in artistic disciplines is inevitable. Reflected in the increasing complexity and diversity of approaches to arts-based disciplines in higher education, this contextual instability presents an exciting opportunity for learning, teaching, and curriculum design, but also a complex challenge for the formal assessment of creative activity. A difficult and arguably subjective term in and of itself, creativity, in the context of rapidly changing and evolving arts-based education systems, requires careful consideration in order to support effective pedagogic practice and assessment processes.

Creativity models tend to emphasise utility and originality as the key factors in determining creative value; the wider recognition and impact of the outcomes of creative endeavour preminent in the interpretation and attribution of quality and significance. Whilst most evident and analytically objectifiable in the study of reception and in the analysis of outcomes, creative practices and processes nevertheless feature more prominently in the interpretation of value in some fields. Whilst the products of the creative practice of artists, musicians and writers typically occupy the centre ground in the popular discourse of creativity, the authentication of creative endeavour is nevertheless closely connected to the

narratives surrounding the inception and development of the work and the security of the connection established between the creative object and originator.

Investigating the potential for a meaningful definition of 'authentic creativity', notions of novelty, ignorance, forgery, fakery, reproduction and patterning, provide a basis for consideration of creativity as an essentially unstable concept and phenomenon that defies simple interpretation and evaluation. Considering the discourse of authenticity and aesthetics, this paper explores different perspectives of creativity as lived experience, applied process, and outcome, and positions analysis in the narratives of insight, imagination, discovery and talent. Presenting a discussion rooted in a context of collapsing distinctions between the natural and the artificial, the authentic and the inauthentic, the original and the copy, this text attempts to develop a broad definition of authentic creativity to frame future work in developing pedagogic practices. In order to support the development of creative ability, and to exercise critical judgement of creativity in the arts effectively, there are numerous elements that may well remain difficult to locate and to align with any pre-calibrated assessment criteria or rubric. Nevertheless, this paper presents the argument that all forms of creativity are valuable and that value can emerge from all forms of creative experience. Whilst some aspects of creativity will always remain open to subjective interpretation, even the mysterious and unknown can form essential features of creativity assessment and meaningful judgements of creative value.

Introduction

For a determination of creative value to take place, a creative act needs to occur (in a context) and the act itself needs to be appreciated (from a perspective). Determination events occur at the micro to the macro scale, at varying frequencies, and through considerable diversity of circumstances; through self-recognition of everyday activity, to more widespread external appreciation and assimilation over more extended timeframes. Consequently, creative value is clearly spectrum-based and subject to a significantly complex range of variables and determining factors related to any given framework of reception. Simply speaking, for creativity to exist, a series of points need to intersect, and, at the nexus of any successful intersection, there is at least the recognition of creativity as a possibility and a recognisable and definable perceptual experience.

In education, artistic disciplines incorporate well established frameworks for the judgement of creative qualities. Citing Gusky (1996), Clark (2002) highlights the three key areas of consideration in the assessment of creativity in the arts as; product, process, and progress. Whilst competency indicators relating to formal evaluation of creative value have been refined through considerable application in increasing accountable practices of assessment in education (Boughton in Eisner and Day, 2004; Schmid, 2003), creative value nevertheless remains an uncertain and unstable concept, difficult to measure and quantify with efficacy and consistency, and subject to a tension between subjective and objective indicators. As observed by Amabile (1996) in discussion of 'phenomenological response states' and the work of Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976), all educators operate judgement through encultured experience and particular levels of institutionalised expectations, reception biases (Lebuda and Karwowski, 2013), and general uncertainty of focus

between the anticipated and the unanticipated, between novelty and and 'fit' (Beghetto in Kaufman and Sternberg, 2010).

The definition problem in the study of creativity--referred to as of continuing central significance in creativity research (Runco & Jaeger, 2012)--is one that remains inherently paradoxical in two key respects. Firstly, the essential nature of creativity being predicated on novelty, all general definitions ultimately seek to define that which as yet does not exist according to varying emphasis on impact or usefulness in specific contexts or domains, or indeed to generalise about creativity in retrospect. The basic problem being how to understand how things that didn't exist come to exist, determining characteristics of creativity considered in advance of emergence can only draw from the language and rhetoric of previous reception experience for description, and the level of impact is perhaps the most obvious indicator of value. Secondly, and equally paradoxical, creativity is almost entirely obvious and identifiable in most cases. Whilst occasionally requiring some time for full appreciation, or 'decoding', the exceptional and the useful are more commonly transparently and evidently so, and the challenge is often to describe in words what from a conceptual level is instinctively appreciated (it seems so obviously creative). Identifying creativity is often not the problem, defining the experience, the precise relationship with the previous state, and decoding the processes necessary for reproducing the outcomes or useful variations, remain more challenging questions.

Creativity may ultimately be "impossible to define in words" (Bohm, 1996), or at least words that provide for more than poetic description and record. Nevertheless, attributing the origins of the widely accepted 'standard definition' of creativity to Barron (1955) and Stein (1953) in particular, Runco and Jaeger (2012) outline the essential character of creativity being determined by the presence of an appropriate and interdependent balance between novelty and effectiveness. Also neatly expressing the wider context of reception as being significant in determining the "costs and benefits of contrarianism" at any given time (Ibid: 92), the codification of novelty according to particular levels of 'uncommonness' and determination of 'usefulness' according to specific circumstances is critical to understanding creativity in any given context. As observed by Csikszentmihalyi, "Creativity is any act, idea, or product that changes an existing domain into [a] new one. And the definition of a creative process is: someone whose thoughts or actions change a domain, or establish a new one" (1997, in Clegg, 2008, p. 220). Different forms of creativity have been identified relating both to different personality types and different subject disciplines within a higher education context; The "free" domains of many arts and the more "constrained" disciplines of architecture, design and, arguably, music, each involving different conceptions and processes of creativity (Gluck et. al, 2002). Creativity is, ultimately, a continuum (McWilliam and Dawson, 2008: 636) of different activities all defined by the emergence of new and useful ideas.

Considering creative value

A generally utilitarian discourse is evident in most analysis of creative value. From the arts to commerce, education to science, given that creativity itself is most commonly associated with domain-based appreciation, an impact-based perspective is perhaps entirely understandable. Indeed, as observed by Gregory

Bateson, "The meaning of your communication is the response you get" (1972). Creative organisations are more productive and more innovative, creative solutions are more efficient and more effective, creative artefacts are more efficient and commercially successful. It is therefore inevitable that creativity would focus on where it is most visible and identifiable and more objectifiable and quantifiable. Ultimately, "Creativity is social construct—its products need public acceptance" (Tornkvist, 1998, p. 10). Creativity would most certainly not get the press it does if it were not as useful as it was.

There are hundreds of established creativity tests and a wide range of research on the efficacy of different models (Cropley, 2010). As observed by Plucker and Makel (in Kaufman & Sternberg, 2010) established measures of creativity can be broadly categorised into two types: assessment of cognitive-affective skills including the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking, and tests designed in relation to the exploration of aspects of personality type or syndrome. Highlighting a series of broader distinctions between convergent and divergent thinking as measurable factors in controlled testing alongside factors such as creative fluency and problem solving, Plucker and Makel identify the considerable integrity of the psychometric data and psychological research but also highlight the criterion problem in all study of creativity. In any study of creative value, there are grey areas where determination becomes subject to more fluid boundaries of definition and interpretation. The dilemma of creative evaluation is one defined by moving ground, surface quality, subjectivity and reinterpretation, and, as highlighted previously, the underlying paradox of novelty. Each new act of transformational creativity produces a new reality against which a fresh assessment of value needs to be made. Unless adopting a purely mechanistic and materialistic view of creativity and simply mapping assessment methods to the measurable impact on human well-being (and ultimately simply deferring ambiguity to a point further down a semantic chain of description), there will always be scope for perspective to influence interpretation.

Boden (1998) characterises three broad types of creativity; 1) Improbable, 2) Exploratory, and, 3) Transformational, demarking broad boundaries between the more spontaneous (1), the focused and discipline-based (2), and the ultimately profound and significant (3). Kaufman and Beghetto's '4C' model (2009) also provides a practical conceptual framework distinguishing between the everyday and the individual activity of developing new ideas (or 'mini-c'), and progressively more mature levels of creativity through educational competence ('little-c'), professional application ('Pro-c'), and the most enigmatic forms of creativity leading to impact and germinal change to all of humanity at the 'Big-C' level. Correspondingly, Silvia et al (2012) present a significant evaluation of self-report scales in the assessment of creative value and the issue of consensus. Exploring the Creative Achievement Questionnaire, the Biographical Inventory of Creative Behaviors, the revised Creative Behavior Inventory and the Creative Domain Questionnaire, they argue that the close correlation of each assessment method underpins validity and that self-report mechanisms provide a secure basis for the determination of creative value. Further reflecting the taxonomic tendency towards groups of three or four, Amabile (1996), citing Jackson and Messick (1965), introduces their notion that 'outstanding creativity' is essentially a combination of four aesthetic responses: 1) Surprise (novelty); 2) Satisfaction (suitability); 3) Stimulation (breaking the boundaries);

and, 4) Savoring (elegance and emotional meaning). Creative events are merely those that elicit these forms of responses and creative ability that which is capable of producing this form of impact. Reception and experience matter ultimately in the development of a consensus of creative value determination in educational contexts in particular. Creative value is a dynamic and unpredictable concept reliant on numerous factors and creative assessment clearly more secure when dealing with explicitly 'original' utilisation of established and well understood mechanisms, conventions, materials, or frameworks, and tangibly more challenging when dealing with the unfamiliar and the unusual, open to subjectivity and interpretation. The unfamiliar is much more palatable when it 'works' and quite alien and certainly marginalised as a minority pursuit when it doesn't.

Ambiguities in the assessment of creativity

However difficult to predict or evaluate, that creativity is a natural phenomenon is clear. Scientific research in genetics, evolutionary biology, and indeed particle physics, is increasingly demonstrating that spontaneous variation is a natural phenomenon from the cosmic to the neurological scale and that diversification is an inevitable consequence of natural processes over time. Whilst this position is subject to challenge perhaps from different theological perspectives, it is sufficient to establish that, from a scientific perspective, there is no requirement to call upon the supernatural or divine in order to account for the presence of creativity in the natural realm. Indeed, as argued by David Bohm (1996), creativity appears to be merely a natural extension of creative patterns evident in all aspects of reality distinct only by a specific level of awareness. To paraphrase Niels Bohr, humanity may simply be creativity's way of looking at itself.

Artificial creativity

The history of artificial creativity can be classified in several different ways. Scientific and philosophical debates about the underlying notion of creativity and design and the distinction between supernatural and natural creativity have taken place for centuries if not millennia. From William Paley's arguments for the necessity of an intelligent designer for "complex adaptive systems" (Spector, 2006), exemplified by the history of automata and machines imitating life as corollaries of "god the divine watchmaker who constructed them and set them in motion" (Williams, 1978), through to Darwin's demonstration of complexity emerging through simple processes over time, and changes in scientific perspective resulting from the emergence of computation and psychology, conceptions of real and artificial continue a dynamic arena of discourse. The term 'artificial creativity' itself emerged through the field of computing in the 1950s and is now well established. Boden (1998), highlights the significance of artificial intelligence in creativity research, most notably in terms of the potential for increased levels of scientific objectivity and control, an example of which being the work of Saunders and Gero (2006a/b/c) who, drawing from Csikszentmihalyi's systems view of creativity, study the dynamics of novelty selection through controlled computer algorithms.

The underlying questions of ownership and authorship and attribution in the digital arts (what is human, what is machine?) continue to present significant challenges in the interpretation and determination of creative quality and value.

Whilst the development of artificial intelligence represents a remarkable feat of creativity in and of itself, as does the considerable technical sophistication of modern computer-based tools routinely involved in the creative manipulation of media, the questions of how the presence of machinery and technology impacts on the authenticity or creative value associated with a given example can vary significantly. On the one hand, creativity emerging authentically from an AI source would undoubtedly be accepted, however ultimately interpreted, whereas where origination or attribution becomes complex or difficult to define, the attribution of creativity becomes at best speculative if not entirely unstable through the use of technology. In the context of digital arts disciplines and music in particular, the authorship of sound elements can require careful transparency to substantiate authorship and originality. Sophisticated digital editing tools and unprecedented access to component materials and patterns render any representation of original musical creativity subject to innumerable questions of influence, process, tools and techniques.

Fakery, forgery and integrity

In August 2013, the New York Times published a new article about a court case involving art forgery. Not a historically novel event in itself, there being historical attempts at forgery recorded in line with the commercial value of reproducible art, the case demonstrates a key factor in the determination of creative value and in the factor of attribution and originality. Involving the fraudulent production and sale by auction of newly discovered 'Titans of Modernism' (Cohen and Rashbaum, 2013), \$80 Million in auction sales were generated for work commissioned for mere thousands of dollars. Simply speaking, artwork indistinguishable from that produced by an 'original' artist, has a commercial ratio of value of an approximate factor of 1:1000 purely on the basis of authorship context with 'discovery' leading to the effective annulment of the previous estimation of value. What the painting 'looks like' being a mere 0.1% factor in the commercial value in this example. Whilst there are of course complexities of legality related to breach of faith and other mitigating factors, the example nevertheless demonstrates that creative value can vary significantly and independently of the creative object itself.

Provenance and the origination and historical significance of artwork remains critical to at least commercial value; the death of the artist and consequent inability for continued production plus the passage of time and consequent antique status elevating certain individual paintings to extraordinary auction values. As well as provenance, a range of factors are identifiable as significant in the determination of creative value. Whilst the fake modernist paintings represent a stark example of how provenance and authenticity can compromise value, numerous other 'non-functional' narratives feed the decoding of creative artefacts:

1. **Artistic value:** The basic aesthetic integrity and qualities perceivable by the receiver.
2. **Cultural impact value:** The level and quality of cultural impact over time.
3. **Historic value:** The perceived association with wider historical events and age (overlap with rarity and political value).
4. **Rarity value:** The basic economic laws of supply and demand.
5. **Cultural trend value:** Cultural dynamics informing focus on 'currency'.

6. **Innovation value:** Judgement as to the novelty value and influence.
7. **Novelty value:** Judgement as to the commonality with lived experience and level of contrast/contrarianism.
8. **Germinal impact value:** Level of impact in terms of replication and influence.
9. **Craft and technique value:** Related to point 1, the quality of artistry or manipulation of related materials.
10. **Political value:** The political context of the artwork and the ideological context of the art or the reception of the art.
11. **Esoteric value:** Abstract factors including previous ownership or object history.

Ultimately, fakery and forgery are fundamental to the development of technique in the arts. The development of pastiche has formed part of formal artistic study for centuries and continues to inform learning and teaching strategies at all levels of education. Competent modelling of artistic practices in particular, support the development of competence with different artistic forms and styles as well as the technical knowledge of production. Whilst attribution is more straightforward in more structured circumstances, over time it becomes more difficult to identify the distinction between the origination of new artistic ideas and the recollection of artistic experience. For example, from deliberate musical quotation to disputed originality of musical ideas and pursuit of legal action, a fake may be worth less than the original in terms of innovation value, but nevertheless much more valuable in many other respects. The very concept of tradition or indeed musical genre being predicated on the shared use of specific musical attributes, ownership becomes a fluid concept and, as observed by Howard Dietz, “composers shouldn’t think too much--it interferes with their plagiarism” (in Barber, 1998).

In education, fakery is a concern in the form of academic plagiarism where consistent attribution of sources and authorial integrity are subject to often stringent regulation and enforcement. In music, originality is subject to different levels of interpretation in the context of creative value. Firstly, whilst there are many parallels between text and music in terms of grammar, syntax, language and form, the stylistic context of new musical ideas provides for structures arguably more stringent than that of written language and the conventions associated with instrumentation, musical language and form, dictate that a level of unoriginality or use of established conventions is necessary for meaningful reception. Furthermore, in an educational context predicated on mapping pedagogic approaches to the professional landscape like never before, prevailing standards in relevant fields such as the commercial music and media sectors, will be inevitably drawn into the maintenance of creative value judgements. To develop an original blues song, one must first adopt a significant number of constraints through which to express that originality. To complete the task at a professional standard, the result must also ‘fit’ according to a set of additional technical and musical factors. The more generic the result, the more it will ‘be’ a blues song. The more original, less so.

Serendipity, spontaneity, and accidental discovery

‘Yesterday’ by Paul McCartney is one of the most covered song in commercial music history, voted the best song of the 20th century in a BBC poll in 1999, the

number one pop song of all time by MTV and *Rolling Stone* magazine in 2000, with some estimates indicating that the song was performed in excess of seven million times in the 20th century alone. Famously emerging almost musically complete in a dream, Paul spent considerable time playing the outline of the song to many people before finally accepting authorship: "Eventually it became like handing something into the police. I thought if no one claimed it after a few weeks then I could have it" (McCartney in Cross, 2005).

That the unconscious and insight can produce such seemingly complete creative outputs is not uncommon. The arts, sciences, sports and indeed almost all areas of human endeavour are littered with stories of incredible spontaneity, discovery, and the unanticipated emergence of new ideas. Whilst "chance favours only the prepared mind" (Louis Pasteur), as the history of scientific and artistic discovery demonstrates, almost serendipitous moments do account for innumerable major changes in thinking and understanding. Many creative ideas and insights emerge from hidden places and unconscious processes as well as unforeseen circumstances. How do we account for creative value if even the originator doesn't feel particularly involved in the creative act?

Succinctly characterised as the "clear and sudden understanding of how to solve a problem" (Bowden et al., 2005), insight, whilst potentially the proverbial vanishing point in terms of psychological or neurological research, is nevertheless a significant factor of creativity and arguably the very definition of creativity itself. The level of conscious awareness of the event may vary as may the level of significance or unlikelihood of the result but the capacity itself is has direct equivalences with aspects of general language processing, word-play and humour (Bowden, 2005). In discussing key facets of creativity, Robert Sternberg clarifies the preeminent position regarding expertise and creativity on any given field: "one needs to know enough about a field to move it forward. One can't move beyond where a field is if one doesn't know where it is" (Sternberg, 2006). Implying that a certain level of creativity can only emerge with a base level of expertise whilst also recognising the inhibiting factor of routine, there is a clear case that serendipitous experiences emerge at least from their home domains framed by strong foundation knowledge and practical expertise. However, on the subject of serendipity and creativity, it is noted that there is value in consideration of the accidental and naivety as important elements in the creative process. As recorded of Elvis Presley, "I don't know anything about music. In my line you don't have to" (Barber, 1998). In order to innovate, deliberacy can be required, but the accidental, the intuitive and the unintended are simply a matter of routine through naivety.

Bohm (1996), categorises a typology of insight distinguishing between 'imaginative insight', 'rational insight', 'imaginative fancy', and 'rational fancy', observing that whilst it may be tempting to categorise these hierarchically, they are, nevertheless, mutually informative processes and potentially interdependent. With reference to the spontaneous creativity of Lennon and McCartney's 'Yesterday', the technical proficiency and practically 'tuned' focus on songwriting, melodic invention, chord positions and progressions, and intensive daily experience of rehearsal and recording sessions clearly lend themselves significantly for successful generation of new musical ideas of the type that 'emerged' ('rational insight'). However creative the spontaneous outpouring of such an original and technically creative song may

be in the circumstances, it would be far more surprising and arguably a much greater creative act had Paul emerged with insights significant to the contemporary work in computing or medical transplantation. The work emerged from near perfect conditions, relevant to established expertise. However, the inception of the Beatles collective musical careers was marked by both a lack of formal musical training. As is the case for a great many of the most significant music of the 20th century, creativity was the very definition of self-constructed, improvised, and the product of experimentation through naivety or at least in absence of formal frameworks supporting musical development.

In educational assessment of creative artwork it is common for some form of written commentary or explanatory notes to form part of the basis of overall evaluation. The determination of creativity dependent in part on analysis of qualities intrinsic to the artefact and in part on an assessment of aspects of ownership, technical understanding, and the ability to explain creative development and to present a narrative to inform reception of the work. This presents challenges in several different ways; Firstly, the ability to describe or to articulate and the ability to develop and generate do not necessarily correlate and there is little evidence to suggest that an ability to describe more effectively implies the means to reproduce successfully; Secondly, if instinctive and intuitive approaches can be seen to inform effective practice, there may even be a potential for self-conscious record keeping and self-awareness to disrupt the creative process negatively as well as not providing the means of capturing it effectively; and, Thirdly, any form of creative assessment requiring substantiation in parallel with some of written explanation or description of process, can lead to the creative practice being catered towards that which is explainable and attributable as deliberate action. As with other aspects of assessment-driven learning behaviours, creative practice developed for the purposes of academic assessment can suffer from the unconscious mitigation of risk leading to banal and formulaic outcomes, designed from the assessment perspective backwards to map closely to safe creative territory that can ultimately lead to creative atrophy.

The inability to articulate the reasons for creative decisions, and indeed even to know in a real sense, is an experience common to all practitioners of creative disciplines. Euphemistically defining artistic vision as simply that of 'seeing what others don't' (Gary Klein), creativity can often be difficult to see even for the self. Ask yourself, for example, how do you construct your dreams? Even taking Emile Borel's 'dactylographic monkeys' theorem, whatever the selected work of literature being identified to implausibly but nevertheless probabilistically emerge from sufficient symians, time and typewriters, there remains the problem of identification or external agency. In the famous example so readily adapted and misinterpreted over time, the creative act would only be complete when, as with aspects of particle physics, exposed to recognition.

Ultimately, there are values associated with the development of new ideas and new artistic expressions; there are also values inherent in the reception and decoding of expression. Whether deliberate should be considered more valuable than accidental, the explained given precedence over the unexplained, modelled or artificially produced considered inferior to the originated or the natural, requires careful consideration and evaluation.

Authentic creativity

Creativity inherently defies concrete definition and is subject to continual reinterpretation and creative value is determined by intrinsic and extrinsic factors ranging from the practical to the esoteric. The aim in this text being to develop a framework understanding of creative value through which to inform practice as educators and creative arts practitioners and future research, there are a number of key conclusions; Firstly, albeit identified from the outset, any framework for the analysis of creative value needs to be flexible. Given that creative evaluation involves the consideration of the novel and then new, it is not possible to predetermine judgement beyond a certain extent even in the form of applicable solutions to concrete physical problems; Secondly, whilst understanding of creativity as a psychological process continues to grow, the mysterious and the uncertain remain consistent features of creative practice and reception and represent valuable experiences in their own right, capable of enrichment through educational processes, and; Thirdly, creativity can be judged to be authentic where a resonance is achieved in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. In many contexts apparent in the synergies evident in ideas that 'have their time', both those born of necessity and those of opportunity, authenticity can be considered independently of quality with respect to level descriptors, but nevertheless also as a significant aspect of creative experience.

Authentic creativity can be described in many ways according to perspective of appreciation. As practitioners, creative experience is the primary driver for practice. Whilst there is satisfaction in the completion of a particular project, the deepest fulfilment invariably falls elsewhere 'within' the process. This process may not always be pleasant, understood, deliberate, or indeed entirely original or organic, but is always central to the inception and the integrity of creative events.

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CONTEMPART '15

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