



# 23

## Valuable Creativity: Rediscovering Purpose

Chris Bilton

### Introduction

Picking up on the editors' theme of "creativity for what?", this chapter addresses ethical and practical questions regarding the value and purpose of creativity. In pursuit of novelty and change, such questions are sometimes deferred or even ignored. The result is that "creativity" can be associated with destructive outcomes, for both individuals and organizations. Taking as its starting point Levitt's seminal article "Creativity is not enough" (Levitt, 1963), this chapter argues that pursuit of change and innovation as ends in themselves forces organizations pre-emptively to abandon valuable processes, products, markets—and *people*—in pursuit of novelty. For individuals, too, a relentless emphasis on innovation and change has negative consequences, leading to anxiety and dysfunction. The chapter begins by defining the "creativity problem" in relation to a "creativity continuum", describing an equilibrium between that which is "new" and that which is "valuable". In Western culture, that balance has often tilted towards "novelty without value"—a pursuit of difference and disruption as ends in themselves—with damaging consequences for individuals, for organizations and for social and cultural life. Furthermore, such an unbalanced approach fails to meet the basic criteria for creativity.

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The second part of the chapter aims to identify alternatives to this approach, looking first to the practice of *jugaad* in India, as well as “agile” and “lean” business processes and “design thinking”. In different ways, these models propose a more adaptive model of creativity, where product-led, individually inspired innovation is tempered by collective purposes and values, and where creativity and change are offset by continuity and “uncreativity”—a personal and organizational ballast which questions the value and necessity of new ideas. This balance has long been recognized in creativity theory (where creativity must be “fit for purpose”) and in artistic practice (where many artists are sceptical of creative “flow” and must combine the raw creative insight with craft, continuity and adaptability). This argument connects with the overall themes of the handbook, in particular the need for models of creativity to address ideals of sustainability.

## The Creativity Problem

As the assumption that “creativity” is a universally positive force that gathers momentum, some critical voices are suggesting that “more creativity” might not always be desirable. A recent collection exploring the “ethics of creativity” draws attention to some of the downsides (Moran, 2014, pp. 1–2): too much choice, too much change, too many new products and ideas crowding for attention. We seem to have reached “peak stuff” (Gwyther, 2017)—how many more software updates do we really need, how quickly will our new phones become obsolete? Creativity can appear wasteful, resulting in a proliferation of initiatives and products which we do not (really) need (Leadbeater, 2014, p. 48). Creativity pursued as an end in itself, disconnected from any ethical purpose, has a “dark side” (Cropley et al., 2010). Novel ideas, from Oppenheimer’s Manhattan Project to financial derivatives and tobacco advertising, may also produce malign consequences.

We may be reverting to a more sceptical attitude to creativity, encapsulated by Levitt’s shrewd assertion 50 years ago that “Creativity is not enough” (Levitt, 1963). This is exacerbated by concerns about global sustainability and the relentless march of technological and economic “progress”, perhaps towards self-destruction. Does this mean that creativity has become part of the problem rather than the solution? In the workplace, the creativity problem is manifest in two dimensions. For organizations, pursuit of novelty may, as Levitt noted, not be in the longer term interests of the organization or its customers. Valuable ideas (and people) are discarded in favour of the “next big thing”. As Christensen argued, “disruptive” innovation can drag an organization out

of shape, forcing it to abandon existing technologies and confusing its existing customers (Christensen, 1997). In highly unpredictable environments there is value in continuity; in such a context, creativity increases risk and escalates competition, resulting in “unintended sources of harm to both the innovator and the bystanders” (Jasper, 2010, p. 92).

Another dimension of the creativity problem is more personal and emotional. The pressure to innovate results in a high pressure, neurotic environment where individuals are perpetually dissatisfied with their own work (Zhou and George, 2001). Averill and Lunley describe how “excesses in the pursuit of novelty” can lead to neurotic behaviour and a failure to meet the criteria for creativity “by misconstruing the beliefs and rules that make emotional concepts meaningful” (Averill & Nunley, 2010, pp. 269–270). Goncalo, Vincent and Audia (2010) describe creative individuals becoming locked into patterns of “innovative” behaviour as they attempt to recapture past successes with ever diminishing returns. The correlation between creativity and mental illness (Gabora & Holmes 2010; Simonton, 2010) and dysfunction (Freud, 1985) is echoed in the jokey slogan of the 1980s office, “you don’t have to be crazy to work here, but it helps”.

At heart, the creativity problem is rooted in a fundamental paradox at the core of our definition of creativity as “novelty plus value”. These two criteria, that which is new and surprising, alongside that which is fit for purpose in a given time and place, are always to some extent in conflict. Creativity seeks to balance these apparently contradictory properties. The “bisociation” which characterizes creative thinking, the linking together of two apparently contradictory frames of reference, requires a “tolerance for contradictions” (Barron, 1958) and a yoking together also of apparently contradictory modes of thought (Koestler, 1976). At the meta-level, bisociation also applies to creativity as a concept—it holds together two apparently contradictory characteristics of novelty and value.

Figure 23.1 visualizes the creativity continuum, showing the two dimensions of novelty and value as overlapping but also conflicting tendencies in creativity. A pursuit of novelty squeezes out value at one end of the continuum; concern with value marginalizes novel ideas at the other. Creative products need to find a balance between that which is new and that which is



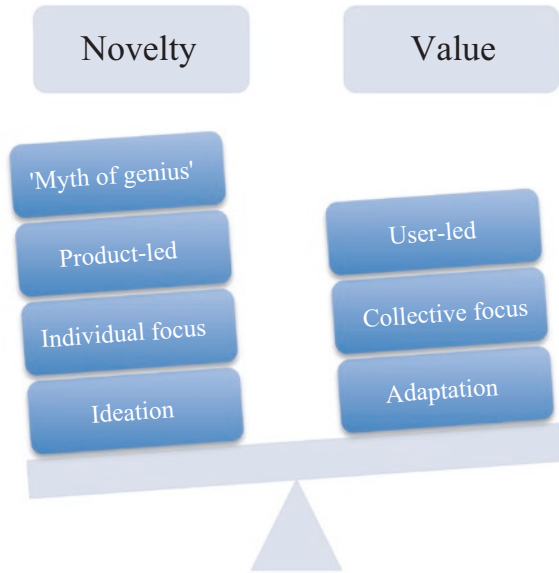
Fig. 23.1 Creativity continuum—novelty versus value

valuable, but their optimal position on the continuum will depend upon the context in which they are to be applied or used. This balance can be traced across three dimensions of creativity: products, people and processes. At the extreme end of novelty without value are products and services which serve no appreciable purpose. Crucially, the purpose or value of a product must be understood within an appropriate context; in a commercial operation, a product which is valued by only the inventor, not by its potential users, fails the value test. Creativity in this scenario is essentially product-led, individualistic and relies on an internal process rather than a collective system.

A fictional example captures these extremes on the creative continuum. In the BBC comedy *I'm Alan Partridge*, Alan is a presenter recently sacked by the BBC, brainstorming a sequence of unlikely TV formats which might win back his old job. At the extreme of "novelty without value or purpose", he proposes "Monkey Tennis", his tone of quiet desperation suggesting that even he recognizes the utter pointlessness of his idea. At the other end of the creativity continuum are products which are entirely serviceable, but lack any distinctive, original features. One of Alan's later suggestions, *Around the world with Alan driving on the left in a bullnose Morris* pastiches an existing, successful BBC TV series, *Around the world in 80 days*, presented by Michael Palin. Again the context defines what is perceived as absence of novelty, and something which is new to the individual may not be new to the world. In a commercial market, a product which is too similar to existing competitors is not only unlikely to win Alan a new contract, it fails to meet one of two criteria for "creativity".

Turning from products to people, it seems that ideas which tilt too far towards novelty without value are more likely to be associated with an isolated individual (like Alan Partridge, alone in his hotel room), working without external consultation or connection to the social milieu. In commercial language, such ideas are both "product led" and based on the internal logic of their inventor rather than responding to any external interest or need. Conversely, ideas which are valuable without novelty are more likely to be market driven, mimicking existing consumer preferences; consequently they lack individuality or personality, as if "designed by committee".

In terms of process, novelty without value is associated with the spark of ideation, the moment of "breakthrough thinking" before the resulting proposition has been applied and evaluated. In Graham Wallas' formulation of the creative process, novelty is born in the solitary ruminations of "incubation" and the flash of "illumination", without reference to the more outwardly directed processes of "preparation" and "evaluation" which precede and follow it. Alan subscribes to the myth of individual genius, even though the viewer



**Fig. 23.2** Tilting towards novelty—Western models of creativity (aka “the myth of genius”)

recognizes his inability to live up to the role. So he “brainstorms” into a portable voice recorder, mimicking the model of free-flowing idea generation to which he desperately aspires.

As illustrated in Fig. 23.2, these three tendencies—product-orientation, individualism and specialization—are reinforced by Western cultural assumptions about creativity. These assumptions, summarized by Weisberg (1986) as the “myth of genius” are reflected in both cultural policy and management. In the UK, cultural policy towards the creative industries prioritizes individual talent and skill over collective systems and identifies creativity with the origination of intellectual property, rather than the adaptation, reconfiguring and sampling of existing ideas (DCMS, 1998). Even the designation of specific “creative” industries seems consistent with a mindset which seeks to divide and limit rather than embracing the richer and more complex reality of “bisociative” creativity. Whereas “cultural” industries appeared to connect creativity into a system of values and a shared culture, “creative” industries are cut loose into a discourse about “individual, creativity, skill and talent” (ibid.; see also Bilton, 2016).

This same separation of “novelty” in relation to creative products, people and processes is manifest also in the creative industries themselves. The separation of “creative” roles reflects a knowledge-based industry where work is highly individualized and specialized; but it also reflects some careless assumptions about the nature of creative processes and people. Management structures in UK advertising industries have until recently assigned “creativity” to a particular

department or division, even to named individuals. In the wider creative economy, the R&D division, the product development team, the specialist developers of new technologies are labelled as creative, thereby consigning everyone else to an implicit status of “uncreativity”. Ironically, to overcome this tendency to “mere novelty”, the innovators may need to seek out “uncreative” colleagues—these uncreative ones must question, filter, manage, apply and sustainably develop the raw ideas of the creative few. Meanwhile the most lucrative sectors of the creative industries have long been associated with the branding, packaging and delivering of creative content, not with ideation and product development. In other words, the underlying reality of collaboration, networking, value chains and shared practices in the creative industries does not square with the rhetoric of individual talent and ideation.

To summarize, the creativity continuum highlights the need to balance different outcomes of “novelty” and “value” in order to achieve creative outcomes; this in turn requires a combination of inputs, both in terms of thinking styles (Gabora & Holmes, 2010, pp. 286–289) and people (Cummings et al., 2015). This bisociative complexity of creativity is widely acknowledged in the creativity literature (Amabile, 1998; Boden, 1994; Sawyer, 2006) but often overlooked in management practice. When one-half of the equation is neglected, the creativity continuum is unbalanced. Creativity then gives way to formulaic repetition or “mere novelty”. In Western culture, social, political and economic forces threaten to tip the balance of creativity towards creative individuals rather than creative systems, towards product development rather than consumer value, towards short-term commercial priorities rather than longer-term strategic and ethical considerations. The result is “novelty without value”. This in turn is damaging both to individuals and to organizations (Bilton, 2015).

There are of course cases of “value without novelty”—where a profitable formula is favoured over a risky innovation, for example, in market-driven film sequels or reversioning of media content in secondary formats (games based on films based on comics or vice versa). These might be profitable in the short-term, but a lack of original content means they are less likely to survive. Nevertheless, in a Western culture where individualism and originality are highly esteemed, stereotypical perceptions of creativity tilt the other way, towards “novelty without value”.

Trying to restore equilibrium of the creativity continuum, it may be necessary to reintroduce some of the elements which have been neglected in the rush to novelty. For example, “uncreative” individuals might play an important role in rebalancing creative teams by introducing critical questions and by filtering, adapting and applying raw ideas. It may be necessary to tilt the value chain towards users and adapters at the point of consumption and away from innovators at the point of origination and ideation, acknowledging that this is

where “value” is often created. It may be necessary to refocus on the purpose and value of creative ideas and projects rather than their novelty. Meeting this challenge would allow not only a healthier, more balanced creativity for individuals and organizations, it might also address some of the ethical concerns of “too much creativity” and “peak stuff” for the wellbeing of the planet.

## The Creative Alternative: “Jugaad”

Alternatives to the individualized model of innovation and product development have emphasized a less deliberate, more improvised process, resulting in outcomes which are “good enough” rather than setting out to shift the paradigm. Examples include the Indian concept of *jugaad*, “frugal innovation” and “lean” or “agile” approaches to engineering or technology projects (see also Weston and Imas, Chap. 15, in this volume). The emphasis is on working through problems as they arise and adapting to changing circumstances, instead of following a planned process of product development and product testing. These alternative models of creativity are oriented towards the other end of the value chain, where value is revealed through uses and applications, rather than towards a laboratory-style process designed to build innovative products which will then be exported into the world (Sundbo & Sørensen, 2014). To summarize, I shall refer to this alternative approach as “value-based innovation”—a reversal of the “novelty-based innovation” shown in Fig. 23.2. “Value-based innovation” (Fig. 23.3) describes an emphasis on

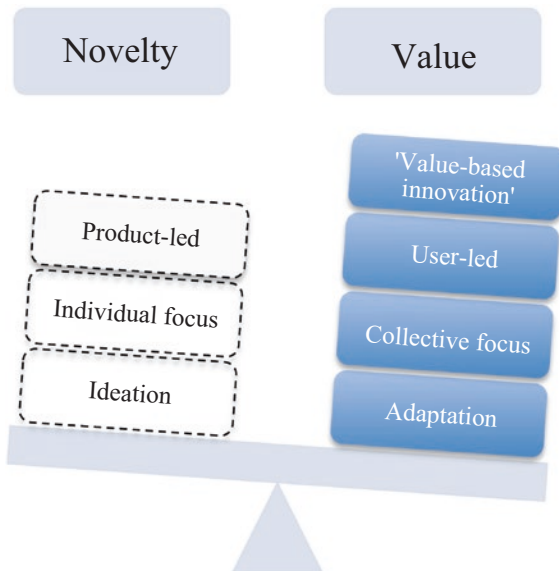


Fig. 23.3 Correcting the balance: creativity and “value-based innovation”

value as well as novelty, a basis in shared cultural values rather than individual talents and not least an attempt to achieve “value for money”, by using the resources at hand to solve an immediate problem rather than an often expensive innovation process designed to “disrupt” an existing paradigm. From a strategy perspective, the approach is “emergent” and improvised rather than “deliberate” (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985).

This more ad hoc, emergent approach to innovation is often a consequence of resource or budgetary constraints, especially in developing countries; *jugaad* evolved out of necessity in Indian communities where local people substituted ingenuity for a lack of material resources, and similar practices have evolved in Kenya (*jua kali*) and in parts of China. *Jugaad* translates roughly as an “improvised fix using simple means”, and in practice may involve repurposing existing technologies or adapting traditional materials which are cheap and freely available in the absence of sophisticated and expensive components. In their book *Jugaad Innovation*, Radjou and Prabhu (2012) give the example of the “Mitticool”, a fridge made of clay which uses the condensation and evaporation of water in the upper chamber to cool the contents of the lower chamber. The “fridge” is in essence a clay pot, inspired by a newspaper caption describing a broken clay pot as a “poor man’s fridge”.

This points to a second principle of *jugaad*. As well as conforming to resource constraints, improvisation is often inspired by the needs and practices of users, rather than the intentions of producers. At root the creativity of *jugaad* builds on the everyday, adaptive ingenuity of ordinary users and consumers, working from the bottom of the pyramid by using local people and resources, rather than starting with the special insight of an inventor or creator directed from above or outside the localized context. Above all, *jugaad* emphasizes flexibility and adaptation (Ajith & Goyal, 2016; Prabhu & Jain, 2015).

*Jugaad* has been taken up by Western companies, including Pepsico and Procter and Gamble, and by Western policy think tanks such as NESTA, whose concept of “frugal innovation” explicitly draws on *jugaad* (Bound & Thornton, 2012; see also Leadbeater, 2014, pp. 51–52). In India too, the meaning of *jugaad* has been extended beyond local ingenuity to describe the activities of large manufacturing companies, such as the Tata automobile company and their “world’s cheapest family car”, the Tata Nano (Prahalad & Mashelkar, 2010). Other Western media outlets such as Business Insider and Financial Times have also featured stories on *jugaad* as a source of inspiration for Western entrepreneurs, noting the rapid growth of the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China). Popularising *jugaad* as a source of “break-through innovation” (as in the subtitle of Radjou and Prabhu’s book) and



integrating its principles into mainstream production by Western business and major corporations may have the opposite effect of neutering its subversive, improvisatory spirit and its principles of “good enough” quality and user ingenuity.

Quick fixes might also overlook issues of customer safety or environmental sustainability. The Hindu word *jugaad* contains an implication of criminality, a sometime unethical approach to problem-solving in which the ends justify the means and where rules and conventions can be bypassed (Ajith & Goyal, 2016, p. 6). There may be cases where *jugaad* is not fit for purpose—we might not expect or desire ad hoc improvisation to feature in aeronautical engineering or pharmaceuticals. Like any model of creativity, *jugaad* does not offer a universal solution, simply a process which fits with a particular environment and set of needs. However, when viewed in the context of poor, rural areas of India, *jugaad* describes the use of resourceful thinking to counteract an absence of material resources; in relation to “sustainable creativity”, *jugaad* does not increase the environmental costs of product-led innovation, it responds to an environment where the cost of product-led innovation is already out of reach.

In contemporary Western culture, *jugaad* might translate as “hack”—taking an existing device or technology and tweaking some of its components to serve a new purpose. “Hacking”, with its culture of short-cuts, improvisation and repurposing, is at the core of the “agile” model of software development introduced over the last decade in many Western technology companies. The practice of “agile” software development, like *jugaad*, uses an improvisatory, ad hoc process born out of necessity. Rather than following predetermined plans to the point of no return, “agile” software developers adapt to problems as they occur and recalibrate plans and objectives in response to a continually changing reality. Daily meetings of project participants (sometimes including clients or users) allow an adaptive approach to project management, whilst working within strict time and budgetary constraints. These constraints inform and reconfigure the project objectives, reversing the strategic approach to product innovation where fixed objectives determine the allocation of budgets, time and human resources. As with *jugaad*, parallel processing of different tasks by small teams allows greater flexibility, efficiency and speed than the highly planned, sequential approach used by R&D departments in large companies.

“Lean” manufacturing translates the “agile” approach into project management more widely. The emphasis is on “frugal” resources, and as with “agile”, the aim is to fail fast and fail cheap, adapting rapidly to changes in the production process rather than attempting to plan too far in advance. Applied to

everything from car manufacture to road building, “lean” echoes the just in time, adaptive mindset of *jugaad*. Lean manufacturing can be traced back to Toyota, a Japanese car company with limited resources attempting to compete with the big Western companies like Ford and General Motors. Toyota pioneered “just in time” production methods and small-batch production, working with small teams to respond quickly to changes in production needs and consumer demand—the opposite of the mass manufacturing model.

However, lean manufacturing misses some elements of *jugaad*, notably the emphasis on localization and “bottom-up” innovation. Some principles of *jugaad*—frugality (adapting existing resources and technologies), flexibility (parallel processing rather than top-down planning and linear production methods) and inclusivity (working with consumers to respond to their needs and lifestyles)—have been partially adopted by companies in the West, especially in the technology sector. But there have been differences, notably an attempt to streamline and standardize the more ad hoc, improvisatory qualities of *jugaad*, perhaps because localization and bottom-up innovation do not fit easily with modern industrial processes and business models. Toyota’s lean manufacturing may pursue low cost, elimination of waste, emphasis on people over process, flexibility—but there is not much scope for “good enough”, improvised solutions, nor is Toyota placing the local needs and resources of its users ahead of proprietary expertise. In their *Harvard Business Review* article, Prahalad and Mashelkar prefer the term “Ghandian innovation” to *jugaad*, arguing that “the term ‘jugaad’ has the connotation of compromising on quality” (Pralhad & Mashelkar, 2010, p. 134). The changes in terminology signify a reversion to more familiar Western business practices; the authors identify three models of Ghandian innovation, “disrupting business models”, “modifying organizational capabilities” and “creating or sourcing new capabilities” (Pralhad & Mashelkar, 2010, p. 135). The rhetoric, together with the case studies used, reverts to a more conventional pursuit of business expansion, increased profits and “disruptive” change.

From a different direction, “design thinking” can be seen as an attempt to rebalance the Western emphasis on individual creativity and product-led innovation with greater respect for their value and purpose. At root, design thinking is an attempt to reconnect R&D and product development with an understanding of future consumer needs. As Verganti argues, “design-led innovation” is not a case of limiting possibilities by asking designers to give customers what they want (or rather what the market researcher believes customers want, based on current behaviour and needs). Rather it is an imaginative search for “radical innovation of meanings” (Verganti, 2009, p. 21), based on future possibilities. Design-led innovation “shines a spotlight on the

cultural dimension of products and consumption” (Verganti, 2009, p. 38). Such an approach has the potential to bridge the gap between product-led and customer-led innovation. A similar logic characterizes the service innovation lab model proposed by Sundbo and Sørensen (2014); as with *jugaad*, the service lab engages users in the innovation process, and is consumer driven rather than product based.

Yet Verganti emphasizes that designers are still in the business of “proposing” innovations, not following customers; they remain the experts, and the pressure is on the firm and its people to take the lead on innovation. *Jugaad* is perhaps a more radical reordering of conventional pathways to creativity. By starting with purposes and outcomes then working backwards, by prioritizing outcomes and applications over creative ideation, *jugaad* reverses the familiar linear models of creativity, from Wallas’ four stage model of “preparation-incubation-illumination-verification” to Osborn’s brainstorming model in which the free flow of ideas takes precedence over evaluation and filtering. As with lean manufacturing, the principles of *jugaad* are only partially present, reframed within a paradigm of deliberate strategy and a linear, progressive framework from ideation to application.

At root, *jugaad*’s improvisatory emphasis on making do with “just good enough” quality and working with the resources available at the given time and place places creativity firmly in the immediate social and cultural context of users. This emphasis on collective culture and social circumstance challenges Western conventions of top-down planning and individual brilliance. In terms of the creativity continuum in Fig. 23.1, *jugaad* ensures that value and purpose are not relegated in the pursuit of “mere novelty”. Consequently, *jugaad* addresses many of the ethical concerns over misappropriation or misapplication of creative ideas highlighted at the start of this chapter.

## Crafting Creativity

Relocating creativity in a shared social purpose carries implications for policy and education. *Jugaad*’s emphasis on useful adaptations of existing objects and resources requires a different kind of intelligence, described by Matthew Crawford as “situated” knowledge (Crawford, 2009, pp. 161–164).

Crawford describes the work of motorcycle maintenance or “speed shops” as rooted in a notion of “thinking as doing” rather than “abstract knowledge”. Crawford’s own double life, working as a “knowledge worker” in an information company whilst moonlighting as a motorcycle mechanic, allowed him to observe these different systems of knowledge first-hand. Crawford found his

work as a mechanic intrinsically satisfying because the results were immediate and apparent; broadening from his own experience, he considers how tradesmen and mechanics are part of a “community of use” where producers and users interact, and a carpenter can see the door that he made being used. This self-fulfilment is contrasted with the alienated labour of the white-collar knowledge worker.

Crawford further argues that “working with your hands” rather than with your brain is intellectually satisfying, because it demands a heuristic intelligence, a “know-how” based on long experience and experimentation, rather than a “know-what” of abstract knowledge and rules. Considering the “problem-finding” work of the auto-mechanic, Crawford cites Frank Levy’s claim that “creativity is knowing what to do when the rules run out” (Levy, 2006, cited in Crawford, 2009, p. 35). Such an intelligence fits with a view of creativity as “a by-product of mastery of the sort that is cultivated through long practice” (Crawford, 2009, p. 51), the antithesis of the individualistic, free-floating “creativity” attributed to Richard Florida’s creative class. By associating creativity with individualism, unconventionality and freedom (Crawford describes Florida’s ideology of freedom as “freedomism”), the rhetoric of creativity offers an illusion of self-fulfilment and freedom through creative work:

The simulacrum of independent thought and action that goes by the name of “creativity” trips easily off the tongues of spokespeople for the corporate counterculture, and if we’re not paying attention such usage might influence our career plans. The term invokes our powerful tendency to narcissism, and in doing so greases the skids into work that is not what we hoped.’ (Crawford, 2009, pp. 51–52)

Crawford belongs in a line of thought which runs back through Richard Sennett to William Morris, and which identifies the importance of craft in intrinsically satisfying work (Sennett, 2008; Banks, 2010). Like Morris, Crawford laments “the separation of thinking from doing” in twentieth-century labour (Crawford, 2009, pp. 37–38); like Sennett, he takes pride in the independence of craft, based on an understanding of the chain of decisions and knowledge which lie behind everyday objects and their production (Crawford, 2009, pp. 17–21). Within this tradition of craft and creative labour, Crawford’s distinctive contribution is to focus on the intelligence which lies behind “the mechanical arts”. He argues that “fixing” things (whether hacking a resource in the manner of *jugaad* or fixing a motorcycle) is a “stochastic” process, meaning that it requires an adaptive approach to “fix things that are variable, complex, and

not of our own making, and therefore not fully knowable” (Crawford, 2009, pp. 81–82). This in turn requires a “cognitive and moral” attentiveness to the problem in hand, rather than a narcissistic assertion of one’s own creativity (Crawford, 2009, p. 82).

To achieve this adaptive mindset requires first the acquisition of knowledge and experience in a particular domain. Second, it requires a deep engagement with the object or problem in hand. Robert Weisberg, on the basis of nearly 30 years of studying the psychology of creativity, argues that “creative thinking is ordinary thinking plus expertise” (Weisberg, 2010, pp. 245–246). Domain-specific expertise, like “craft”, comes from experience and practice, not from abstract knowledge. Creative thinking builds from this base of expertise incrementally, proceeding “through small steps ... rather than great leaps” (Weisberg, 2010, p. 248). The “attentiveness” described by Crawford fits also with Weisberg’s emphasis on domain-specific expertise—the artistic and scientific breakthroughs analysed by Weisberg arise from an immersion in a specific field, not from “divergent” thinking outside the box.

This type of thinking will require new forms of education. Weisberg goes on to argue that if his notion of “ordinary thinking” is correct, educators should avoid stratifying and separating education, dividing up “creative” and “noncreative” skills. “Stochastic” or “heuristic” creativity grows out of ordinary everyday problems; it is not exterior to them. Helping children to acquire practical skills and ensuring that mechanical and “practical” disciplines are recognized as inherently “creative” will be more productive than isolating specialist creative thinkers and creative thinking skills in the curriculum. This holistic, cross-curricular approach to creativity was advocated in a report commissioned by the UK government on creativity and skills (NACCCE, 1999). The report’s recommendations were not taken forward and “creative education” in schools instead gravitated back to the more familiar Western model of individual excellence, specialization and ideation (Neelands & Choe, 2010).

The other implication of this approach to creative thinking is the opposite of the “alienated labour” which those writing in the “craft” tradition (Banks, Sennett, Crawford, William Morris in this section) associate with contemporary capitalism. The separation and specialization of tasks in hierarchical systems of production prevent the worker from any profound engagement with the outcomes of their work. Instead of being able to validate their work by observing its practical implementation, industrial workers, including those working in the “creative” industries, are cut off from the uses and applications of their labour. By contrast, the crafts worker described by Morris or Sennett, the mechanic or plumber described by Crawford, and the adaptive creators of

*jugaad* are part of a “community of use” in which producers and users are connected, through the object of their work or through physical proximity. The creative solutions of *jugaad* are localized and specific, not globalized and generic. This suggests the need to devolve creative problem-solving to localized communities who understand a shared social and cultural context, rather than deferring to a footloose global creative class.

## Conclusion: Recovering Multiple Creativities

This chapter has criticized a rhetoric of creativity which prioritizes novelty over value and purpose. This is manifest in an emphasis on individual talent over collective processes, on creative ideation over adaptation and application of creative outcomes and on specialized “creative” disciplines, departments and businesses, summarized by Weisberg as “the myth of genius”. This rhetoric is associated with a dominant paradigm in commercial enterprise which pursues breakthrough thinking or “blue sky”/“blue ocean” innovation and seeks to achieve this through a deliberate, top-down strategy.

The risk here is first that creativity divorced from purpose can be diverted into ethically and morally questionable outcomes. Second, the pressure to innovate can lead organizations to discard people, products and processes prematurely in the search for the “next big thing”. Discarding “uncreative” intermediaries through “restructuring” or “business process reengineering” is not only painful for those who are removed from the organization or team, it also overlooks their often important, less-overt role in facilitating, filtering or adapting creative ideas initiated by their more overtly “creative” colleagues. Finally, the emphasis on rapid obsolescence and reinvention carries larger ecological and social consequences for sustainability as we approach “peak stuff”—an overload of options, data, commodities and upgrades which are eating up resources (both natural and human) and hijacking consumer attention in the name of “creativity” and choice (Schwartz, 2005).

For individuals, the consequence of novelty without value is firstly a psychological pressure to “think different”, with all of the potential for social dysfunction, neurosis and narcissism this entails. As Crawford suggests, the myth of effortless, effervescent genius can entice creative workers into badly paid and unfulfilling jobs, trading this off against the promise of future freedom. The more laborious, deliberate reality of creative work is what connects creativity to value and “fitness for purpose”. “Novelty without value” distorts the priorities of creative work, but it also cuts the individual off from any objective sense of self-worth. Without “the pride of accomplishment”,

Crawford argues that individuals become more dependent on approval, more risk-averse, less self-assured (Crawford, 2009, pp. 155–160).

In advocating a different approach to creativity, this chapter builds on existing socio-cultural and “systems” models of creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988; Sawyer, 2006). As Weisberg (2010) observes, creativity depends upon “non-creative” or “uncreative” skills and ordinary thinking. Innovators need adapters (Kirton, 2001). Creativity is not confined to the point of origination, it can be identified along the value chain, as “market innovation” (Bilton & Cummings, 2010, pp. 75–77) or as social process of co-creation with users (Gauntlett, 2011). This in turn opens up other definitions and models of creativity, less producer driven and less individualized. *Jugaad* starts from the other end of the creative process, beginning with adaptation and application and working backwards to reinvent or adapt existing resources.

The models of creativity referred to earlier are very different from the individualistic, specialized and product-led model of creativity and innovation which is associated with both Western cultural assumptions (described by Weisberg (1986) as “the myth of genius”) and with commercial business assumptions about growth, change and innovation. By starting with the social context and working backwards, creative thinking is reoriented towards a specific social purpose. This places emphasis on the social value of the innovation rather than its relative novelty, yet nevertheless as the examples in this chapter demonstrate, “value-based” innovation can still be highly inventive. Resource constraints and localized adaptations are shown to increase creativity, not discourage it.

Prioritizing a specific social outcome over “disruptive” novelty, this approach to creativity addresses some of the ethical conundra introduced at the start of the chapter. The value of a creative idea is always relative to a specific social context. Reconnecting creativity to value means rediscovering a shared, social purpose. Considering the creative continuum from novelty to value, something that is “creative enough” to solve that social purpose is preferred to an elegant, clever idea which “disrupts” or “challenges” the status quo.

Thinking about creativity in terms of social value also means broadening our understanding of what it means to be creative, beyond the notion of individual talent. Domain-specific expertise and knowledge of the social context become equally important. This has implications for education and the value we place upon different types of knowledge; as Crawford suggests, a heuristic, problem-solving approach is needed, but also a willingness to adapt and work within an area of domain-specific expertise. *Jugaad* in particular further implies a decentralization of creative work, prioritizing local knowledge and experience—the antithesis of the free-floating individualism of a globalized creative class.

“Valuable creativity” or “value-based innovation” encourage us to work within the boundaries of a specific social purpose and within situated constraints on time and resources, whether these are deliberately designed (as in “lean” or “agile” processes) or circumstantially imposed (as in *jugaad*). It might mean rediscovering and repurposing the “last big thing” rather than searching for the “next big thing” and accepting “good enough” creativity rather than always trying to shatter or disrupt existing paradigms. The competitive pressure to be new and different is not always in our best interests and the gains of “blue ocean” or “blue sky” thinking may be short-lived as well as carrying a heavy cost for individuals, organizations and society as a whole. This chapter raises more questions for future research than answers. But if we want a sustainable, ethical model of creativity, then local patterns of knowledge and experience may be the best place to start.

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