culture
strategic foresight

The organisation, processes and structures of creation

Thomas Paris*

Foreword

"Creative industries" and "creativity" are terms which tend to be used to mean "creation". These recent additions to the language of the culture economy have already become common currency in the midst of international concern over defining the field of culture, and, even drawing up possible EC or international commercial regulations. In particular they are a reflection of shared thinking between the cultural economy and the industrial economy, indicating that creative organisation, processes and structures are at the heart of economic growth.

*A joint enterprise by both the French Government Department for statistics, studies and strategic foresight (**Département des études, de la prospective et des statistiques**, DEPS) and the Directorate-General for Enterprises (**Direction générale des Entreprises**, DGE) under the Minister for Industry, these initial research results throw some light on both artistic and industrial creative structures, and their function within the economy. They reveal the key role of organisation, and that cultural creation and production are a source of the intangible economy and the knowledge economy, paving the way for human activity at the intersection of industry and creation.*

Philippe Chantepie, DEPS
Grégoire Postel-Vinay, DGE for Industry

INTRODUCTION

The phrase 'organising creation' seems to present a troubling paradox on two counts: firstly because as a human endeavour, creation has romantic connotations and is linked in the popular imagination with the notion of an artist far removed from any organisational activity, and secondly because creative activities presuppose the physical realisation of an original mental construct. The division of labour, which lies behind the concept of organisation, immediately runs up against this intrinsic communication problem: how is work to be divided when we only know how to express it by carrying it out ourselves? The paradox is even greater when the academic world has recorded the weight and dimensions of the collective, organised and conventional areas of creative artistic activities[1], and one only has to take an empirical view of the so-called "creative" industries to see that they are all based upon organisations, which, beyond the creative individuals, are also involved in creativity over the long-term.

We need to consider how creative activities fit into a world which is organised at all levels: those made up of the most basic organised entities (collective worlds), legal entities (organisations or businesses), the industrial sectors, even nations. For if creative activities encourage talent and individuality, they also rely on systems and organisations and can be partially formalised: the knowl-

1. Howard S. BECKER, "Art as collective action", *American Sociological Review,* 1974, XXXIX(6), p. 767-776.

edge required by those referred to as "talent" can be shared.

There are various techniques and methods of teaching these skills. Organisations may themselves support creativity through rules, routines or procedures, and they can take root in any reasonably fertile environment when supported by social, legal, financial and cultural structures, as well as through original systems which can encourage meetings, development, training, etc.

By analysing organisational systems, the "creativity structures", we can tackle the industrial challenges of what the Anglo-Saxon countries refer to as "creative industries" and which cover such cultural industries as fashion, advertising, haute cuisine, industrial design, etc. These are seen as not only economic challenges by least some of these industries[2], but also international challenges, as the terms and conditions of specific regulations relating to the cultural field depend on how the field of creativity is defined.

A number of key issues can be pinpointed:
– keeping businesses afloat after inception by their founders, which depends on the their ability to encourage communication and formalise the organisation of creation;
– the reduction of barriers to entry to stimulate creative regeneration, whether it involves creatives or managers, the 'star system' and the inflation of the cost of talent being consubstantial in the creative industries[3];
– renewed public action in recognition of the fact that creation is not the product of talent alone, but also the structures and organisation which support creation.

These problems need to be analysed from a strategic management point of view, *i.e.* focussed on organisation and performance. This requires on the other hand, that creative activity be a defining principle behind any organisational solutions, and that, as creation occurs within a production-distribution continuum, its organisation should reflect this at micro level (basic organisational units, projects[4]).

The summary covers firstly the creative processes and the way in which creative activities can be managed within projects and businesses, and secondly the connection between structures and creation, *i.e.* the way in which existing structures can affect the products of creation.

Glossary

Creation – Process or act by which a creator designs a work, an advertising slogan, a culinary dish, a product design sketch, etc.

Creative industries – Industries (in the sense of "sectors" or "fields") in which the end product is the subject of creative endeavour, *e.g.* audiovisual, music, publishing, fashion, design, advertising, gastronomy, live performance, the plastic arts, etc.

Creativity – The creative "performance" of a group, business, industry or territory. It is the (quantitative and qualitative) quality of its production of created products. When referring to an individual, the ability to work creatively.

Talents – Individuals in a given creative sector who show a marked creative ability. Generally speaking, in related sectors, individuals manifesting a specific ability within their profession which makes them very hard to replace or makes them particularly rare (gifted individuals within industry, very high level sportspeople, etc). Within the creative industries there is also a need not just for creatives but for individuals who have a particular talent for spotting and managing them.

Creatives – Participants in a creative act, from the point at which it involves a division of labour.

Creators – Those responsible for creation and who are recognised as its authors.

Creative structures – All the constituent systems and organisations of a given sector of an environment which encourages creation or its distribution.

The creative processes

Creative activities across all sectors can be seen as a homogenous category, as they share a number of common distinguishing features which set them apart from other activities. These are activities whose outcome cannot be objectively evaluated nor can they be expressed in any other way than through their very execution, activities whose characteristics *a priori* conflict with companies' industrial and economic constraints (see Table 1). Managing creation therefore involves reconciling the creative processes with the demands and constraints of organisation.

There is also however a collective aspect to creative activities, so for example in the creation of a book or record this is represented by the roles of editor or producer, and the same of course applies to areas such as design and video games. Nevertheless, despite this collective aspect, the final result remains the creation of an individual, in the sense either that it is attributed to that individual, or that they are responsible for the result. Moreover, the

---

2. Maurice LÉVY and Jean-Pierre JOUYET, *L'économie de l'immatériel. La croissance de demain. Rapport de la Commission sur l'économie de l'immatériel*, Paris, Ministère de l'Économie, des Finances et de l'Industrie, 2006
3. Françoise BENHAMOU, *L'économie du* star system, Paris, Odile Jacob, 2002.
4. Howard S. BECKER, *Art Worlds,* The University of California Press, 1982.

Table 1 – The paradox of organised creativity

The creative processes	The organisational spheres
The vagaries of inspiration (the unknown, uncontrollable elements)	Economic constraints: relating to fixed costs to be covered, demand for regularity in production
Abstraction of ideas	Division of labour and formalisation
Talents, who are special individuals, are characterised by a certain fragility, due to the vagaries of inspiration and the reception of their products	Talents, due to their rarity, are extremely valuable to the companies for whom they work
The great freedom of inspiration	Constraints – the 'house style' – linked to the brand image and their customers, and working to routines designed to format their products

ability to link the collective and individual aspects of the creative process seems to be essential.

From this point of view, certain defining characteristics are discernible amongst creatives and creators.

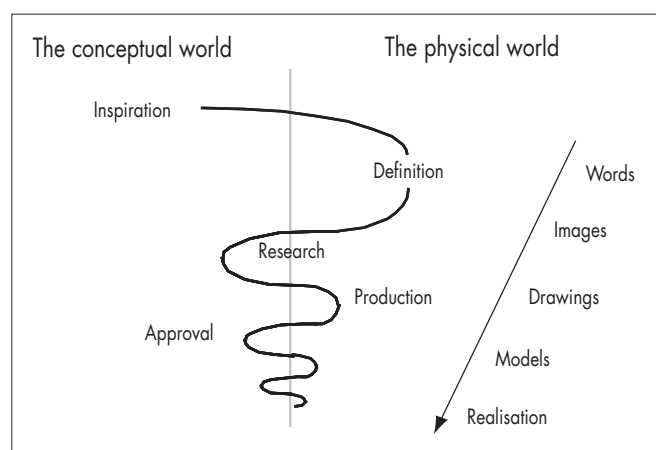## The two phases of creation management: divergence and convergence

Looking at case studies from a range of sectors, we can see patterns emerge in the creative processes that are based around reconciling the divergence and convergence phases, which can also be described as the opening and definition phases. These phases are aimed at gradually "realising" an idea in four separate stages: (i) inspiration or generation of ideas; (ii) definition or guidelines to guide the process; (iii) production, *i.e.* the stage in which the work takes physical form and (iv) approval (see Figure 1). These stages do not necessarily occur in a linear fashion, each stage can feed back to a preceding stage and thus ideas evolve. To 'realise' an idea doesn't necessarily mean that it is made into something 'real' in the physical realm, but means

Figure 1 – The creative processes

simply succeeding in expressing it, as the idea can have no other existence than when it is given form, as opposed to what one might understand by a phrase such as "the director has the film in his head".

Division of labour

Creative processes can involve one or more creatives. In publishing, as a rule, the author is responsible for all phases: therefore inspiration, definition, production and approval are no longer discrete phases but are ongoing processes. Nevertheless other models do exist: Alexandre Dumas was known to have used "ghostwriters", and although he was involved in the inspiration, definition and approval phases, he left the actual writing (realisation phase) to others. In fashion design and creation, the creator, or the one who is identified as such, is involved at the start of the process and at approval level, whilst the process of realising the garments themselves is carried out by others. Thus, at the very least, the person assuming responsibility for the work will take charge of the initial definition and the final approval stages. These phases define the notion of authorship. In extreme cases where creation is outsourced, (for instance in fashion licensing) the signatory retains the right to give items a final once-over, with the notion of the creator thus diminishing to the profit of the brand.

Inspiration

The very idea of inspiration "one is either inspired or uninspired" implies that this phase can not be controlled, whilst economic constraints on the other hand require that this phase be "activated". To this end, a number of strategies are used to help stimulate inspiration, such as travel, immersion in artistic and cultural milieux, encounters with other cultures or creative areas, etc. John Galliano, Christian Dior Couture's chief designer, goes travelling

before the launch of each collection. Chef Alain Senderens, as well as travelling, keeps up-to-date by taking oenology courses, meeting with tea experts, etc. This quest for openness and inspiration is at the heart of the creative process, in the phase where those who are involved in creation need to make proposals based on the framework or concept imposed by the creator. Managers try to maintain the creativity of creators by ensuring that they are exposed to other cultures. For example, Renault sends its designers to international cultural events to see what new trends are out there, Kalisto sends its video game creators to exhibitions and museums, and so on.

Inspiration aside, the need to create can work as part of a rhythmic flow which governs renewal, as is the case for fashion collections and shows. It can also be created through industrial constraints (shops to be supplied, stock prices to be closely controlled, factories to be used, etc.), or can be imposed through a change to the conditions of the creative processes, whether technological or economic, for example variations in the prices of raw materials can influence what a restaurant creates, for example Alain Senderens deciding to work with products whose market rate is very low. Finally, the need for novelty, for something new, may simply be linked to a natural need for renewal, for re-examination, for new challenges, etc. on the part of the creator himself.

Definition

Due to the very nature of the act of creation, the issue of definition, *i.e.* defining the framework or boundaries within which the creative is to do their research, is a thorny one. How in fact can one express the creation which one wishes to make, without actually making it oneself? The creator relies upon the arsenal of "basic" means of self-expression at their disposal, such as words, designs, images, etc. At Christian Dior, for example, these will be key words that the creator has come up with, *e.g.* "gothic chic", often accompanied by images and designed, or even stories. References to other works can also assist with structure or design. Nicolas Gaume[5] recalls the brief for the game *Dark Earth:* "To create a universe, inspired by Méliès'vision of Jules Verne – brass, recycled materials, steam – and our European culture: we wanted to reproduce the image of huge cathedrals in the midst of adobe houses."

A work can be defined in various ways, based on products to be used, (materials, themes, colours, etc.), techniques, the result (pace, atmosphere, etc.), as a creation in its own right or as an item aimed at specific target market. Thus in the fragrance sector a creative brief[6] is generally issued as the basis for a creation. The definition or concept, which is required to encourage convergence towards the actual making of a product, is also very important in encouraging team creativity.

According to Brigitte Romagné[7], if a perfume company's brief is not specific enough it will result in a lack of creativity in the scent development team. However, in creating the perfume Angel, Thierry Mugler's point of departure was highly personal, based on his memory of the scent of candyfloss at the fairground.

Table 2 – Forms and examples of definition

	Subjects of definition			
	Raw materials (product, colour, etc.)	Techniques	Result (pace, atmosphere, etc.)	Target market
Creative tools				
Words	"Calves'sweetbreads" (haute cuisine) "brass, recycled materials, steam" (video games)	"Warm liver" (haute cuisine)	"Gothic chic" (fashion)	Creative brief (perfume)
Illustrations			Boards (posters) (fashions)	
References			"Candyfloss scent" (perfume) "The world of Jules Verne" (video game)	

5. Nicolas Gaume is the founder of Kalisto, a video game development company.
6. A creative brief defines the aim, medium, concept and tone of a creation as well as the message to be conveyed. It relates to the thought/discussion phase preceding the action phase (advertising brief).
7. Brigitte Romagné was successively the head of planning and marketing for a perfume and cosmetics company, then headed up a scent development team in her capacity as creative director. She trains marketing professionals on discovering natural perfumes. She has published several works on aromatic plants and spices.

Thus, in each sector, there are creations by individual creators and creations that are designed more *for* a specific type of individual. Finally, depending on what is being created and the senses to which it appeals, the design brief will be more or less easy to accurately execute. In gastronomy or perfumery, expressing the expected result based on given words and images will be a harder task than it is in, say, design.

Production

Creative teams usually work from a proposed definition or concept. How complex a creative work is to make and how expensive the development costs are determine how manageable the creator's control over self-expression is: with the paintbrush or pen, creators find it relatively easy to reconcile the final product with their original vision, whereas creative processes which require the use of more complex techniques and large creative teams mean there is a greater 'distance' between the two, as evidenced in the making of a film or video game. In film, the use of a monitor means creators can visualise the position and movement of the actors, as well as framing the shot, and can change them before a take, whereas when making an animation work, creators only see the final result once the work is completed and no longer have the option of shaping their creation.

In practice, the greater the distance, the more intermediary stages there are in the actual production stage of a creation, with each stage corresponding to different objectives which gradually move the project towards completion. Each stage gives the option for approval and/or redesign, and thus allowing the creator's vision to be fine-tuned. There are various means of representation during the creation phase, some based on form, (*e.g.* sketches, designs, models, etc.), others of which deal with structure, (particularly in dramatic works, for example), such as synopsis, screenplay, script, etc.

Approval

At each of these stages, the creator responsible for the creation will approve or reject various proposed ways of executing the work. This phase may also involve selecting a particular project from a variety of proposals.

This is how it works at Renault, where the automotive design process involves a competition organised at each stage. The creator is usually the one who decides on the 'final cut', to borrow the language of cinema, but this may be done in con-

cert with a manager, project manager, financial investor or brand image consultant.

The overall creative process model described here covers all situations that may occur across a range of very varied sectors. However, variations may occur according to different sectors and businesses, as there will be differing constraints according to each sector and creator.

Sector-specific factors

Three factors account for differences in the way these processes may be carried out: incommunicability, the complexity of the tools required and the nature of distribution constraints.

Incommunicability can vary in accordance with the item being created, and indicates the degree of difficulty the creator has in expressing the desired result using the usual communication tools. Thus the problem is more acute in, say, the field of perfumery, as it operates in the realm of a sense for which few words exist, as compared with the area of literature, whose content is expressed entirely in words.

The complexity of the tool used to form a creative work is relative to the creative techniques on which the creator relies for self-expression, the hand of the sculptor for his sculpture, for example, or, in the case of cinema, the complex arrangement of technical tools and teams made up of people with varying skills. In the case of the former, the various stages of creation are closely interlinked, as each movement of the sculptor's hand is able to incorporate all of these phases, whereas in the case of the latter, work is subject to economic and organisational constraints.

Generally speaking, the more complex the creative tools, the greater the cost of progressing to the next level, and the tighter the controls over progressing to each. Therefore, whilst for creations made directly by the creator the divergence-convergence process is circular, this becomes rather more compartmentalised when the production tool is a complex organisation. The greater the number and variety of skills required, the more compartmentalised the process becomes, and the more stages it comprises.

The constraints on the distribution of creative works depend on industrial factors. When new creations are produced at regular intervals, the creative processes and their schedules are pressurised. Moreover, when creation is part of a business's activity, and particularly when a company wants to control its brand image, the fact of having a regu-

lar clientele and well-identified target market has a much greater impact on the workflow of the teams involved. In such cases, the initial definition process may be constrained by the notion of brand image, whereas in other situations there may be much more room for manoeuvre.

The industrial organisation of creation

Creative processes can therefore lead to very varied forms of industrial organisation (or value chains): creation may be integrated or not, the process itself may be initiated by the creators themselves or by external agents (see Table 3).

The various models that exist vary depending on the extent of the creatives'"input", *i.e.* the way in which they are involved in a new project. The first model, "auto-input" is prevalent in publishing, particularly in the field of literature, or in musical creation, and, broadly speaking, in artistic activities as a whole. In audiovisual, alongside the traditional model in which the screenwriter initiates the process, there is also the scenario in which a writer may be recruited to work on a particular subject or theme[8].

Finally, in the third model, it is not the company itself that sets out the specifications for the project on which they will work, but an external agent. This model is prevalent in the perfumery sector, for example.

Alongside these dominant models, a number of others exist within each sector. Moreover, the dominant models vary depending on era and geographic area. In cinema, for example, the French and Hollywood systems vary greatly, as does the current Hollywood system when compared with that of the 1970s. This indicates that the ways in which creation is organised are also dependent on matters of convention.

Behind the general creative process model, there are various forms of industrial organisation. There are three ideal, but by no means exclusive, types: the 'romantic' model, the integrated model and the outsourced model (see Table 4). In the 'romantic' model, typified by literary publishing, creation is almost entirely externalised. In the integrated model, creation occurs entirely within the company that finances it. For the outsourced model, if creation is carried out externally, it is done so to order by a specialist company or outsourcer.

In terms of management, problems vary depending on the model: chosen or imposed. Within companies where selection and final execution of projects are developed spontaneously and outside of any structure, the business needs to be organised so as to detect and select projects to ensure regular creative output; publishing houses are typical of this model.

Companies that employ creatives need to recruit, train and retain them, their inspirational processes need to be organised, and failures managed. Those companies that outsource their creative work need to manage their brand image. The way a company is organised always has an impact on the creativity and quality of the final output.

Creators, and creatives, what's the difference?

Individuals involved in creative activities, *e.g.* creatives, creators, artists and other authors, all have

Table 3 – Models of creatives'"input"

	Author-led project	Producer-led project	Internal order	External order
Entity instigating the project	Creator	Creative business	Internal client	External client
Examples	*Literary publishing*	*Video games*	*Automotive*	*Perfumery*

Table 4 – Three ideal types of creative industrial organisation

	Stages of the process			
	Initiation and definition	*Development and construction*	*Approval and branding*	*Examples*
The 'romantic' model	Creator	Creator	Creator	*Literary publishing*
The integrated model	Creator	Internal creation teams	Creator	*Haute couture, automotive design*
The outsourced model	Brand	External creation teams	Brand	*Perfumery, advertising*

8. Thomas PARIS, *Le droit d'auteur. L'idéologie et le système,* Paris, PUF, 2002.

three things in common, whatever they create: the desire for renewal, their own personal rules and fragility.

The quest for the new. To exist, to be visible and to stand out from the crowd, creators needs to convey something new and different, and therefore need to question existing rules and forms, question themselves and maintain their drive for renewal, regeneration and revitalisation. It is therefore essential that creators have an in-depth contemporary and historical knowledge of their field; fashion designers, for instance, when arriving at a new fashion house, will go and look into their archives for both inspiration and direction.

Personal rules. Alongside the usual rules (whether cultural, artistic, etc.), creators also have their own personal set of rules, whether formalisable or not, which more or less explicitly defines their individual style. When it comes to rules of composition, in perfumery for example, it is generally agreed that a perfume is a marriage of base notes, middle notes and top notes. The rules of harmony: Alain Senderens for example has over time built up a number of very specific rules on marrying wine and foods, using his "painter's palette".

The fragile ego. The third characteristic that helps make sense of creative activities and the way they fit into organised spaces is the creators'ego and sensitivity.

Pascal Nègre[9] explains that the very process of what musical artists do, *i.e.* constantly exposing their inner feelings to the public in a performance situation, can feed an already perhaps considerable ego, which then also results in tremendous fragility when faced with failure. Patrick Le Quément[10] has demonstrated the importance of explaining to designers whose projects have not been selected that they have still made an important contribution to the team's work, and therefore to those projects which were selected. The French football team also employs this type of talent management when selecting players.

STRUCTURE AND CREATIVITY

Understanding the connection between creation and structure presupposes an understanding of how these structures (whether companies, organisations or otherwise) influence the processes which occur as part of artistic creation and the result in terms of the finished product. To compare the creative processes with the various structural levels of the companies in which they occur, their specific economic, industrial and organisational constraints need to be identified, along with the systems that ensure these processes work despite these constraints.

Once these have been identified, we also need to understand how projects are managed and organised in the convergence and divergence phases. In addition to projects, businesses in the creative industries need to manage creation, *i.e.* take into account the specific concerns surrounding organising creative activities, *e.g.* managing multiple projects, talent spotting, managing training as well as failures, ensuring the house style or brand image remains consistent, etc. Finally, since environments designed to foster creativity work on a number of different levels, it is worth considering the question of public policy, and whether systems to encourage creativity can be put in place.

Managing creative projects means balancing the divergence-convergence process

One of the challenges of managing creative activities is ensuring that those involved in these processes are completely free in their research, whilst ensuring permanent systems are in place to encourage convergence towards completion of specific projects. Convergence and divergence are not sequential steps of a process but constantly cut across each other.

Definition

The definition stage immediately introduces the idea of convergence: it marks out the area in which the creators are to carry out their research, and can take various forms: a specification sheet in design, a brief in perfumery, thematic suggestions in the search for new service ideas, guidelines for setting up a new restaurant, keywords or mood boards in fashion, a description of an atmosphere in video games, history/stories in fashion or video games, etc. These different ways of defining a project, far from stifling creativity, can in fact stimulate it: a designer in charge of a fashion collection saw the creativity of her teams improve when she introduced a very specific definition process for designing new collections. The problem with defining a

---

9. CEO, Universal Music France.
10. Senior Vice President, Corporate Design at Renault, Patrick Le Quément is the man behind most of the current Renault models.

project lies in its ambivalence as it limits openness whilst at the same time encouraging creativity: for the director of an advertising agency, a specific brief is never any hindrance to creativity but a project is nevertheless limited by the requirement to stick to a specific format.

Whilst the definition is certainly important, it does not mean a project brief is then set in stone. It is clarified at each successive stage as work progresses. Giving form to thought is the other great hurdle in the definition stage, the person who launches the project expresses their expectations through descriptions of sensation, mood, taste, etc. using a range of what are effectively very basic tools, *i.e.* words and images. Let us consider two possible scenarios: definition can be expressly left open to give free rein to creativity, or to correspond to the creator's vision of the product he wishes to create.

The first case in which definition is left open is quite common, and is usually the case when definition is given by managers and not creatives. In radio, for example, those commissioning a documentary for a large national station may propose a thematic definition or brief; however, this is also an approach which may be taken by a creative when developing a collection rather than a product, so for instance in haute couture the fashion creator's brief will be left very open as he hasn't yet envisaged the exact forms of the garments yet, but rather its overall spirit and mood.

In the second scenario, definition may relate to the creator's vision of how they would like the final product to be: in this instance the aim is to realise this vision, even if its actual construction will require the artistic collaborators'divergence (inspiration); film-making is a good example of this.

Divergence

Managing divergence requires various organisational systems or forms to be set in motion that encourage the creative processes to be open to different cultures. Immersion in very different environments and experiencing new ways of doing things (see text box) are a way to get creatives to think outside the box and to challenge any constraints that may be holding them back.

When creation is only one part of a company's business activity (Renault, France Télécom's Studio Créatif, etc.), creatives are often isolated from the rest of the business in order to keep them at as great a remove as possible from all constraints (technical, marketing, etc.), in the divergence phase.

It is also a way of protecting them from other forms of pressure, for, as Brigitte Romagné would say, pressure and creativity do not go hand in hand.

Renault's head of design demands and defends the right of his designers to be *bad boys*, transgressing the usual boundaries. Advertising agency, BETC also encourages the throwing off of all constraints, and managers encourage teams not to focus on customer relations or speed, but on work of which they can be proud. Other systems are built around the idea of comparison as a way to organise divergence, *i.e.* teamwork that, as one former perfumery director puts it, avoids creative myopia. For example, within advertising, this can involve organising brainstorming sessions, along formal or informal lines; restaurants and film animators may hold regular project progress meetings.

Dividing labour too strictly does not seem to encourage divergence, for, as creative processes are not linear, so the implementation and construction phases, as well as the constant comparing and contrasting of ideas and forms, can be a source of inspiration. These systems, which have aspects that encourage both divergence and convergence, show the potential for infinite creativity. Creative activity works in opposition to the decision-making processes, which, theorists postulate, are based on the search for an optimum or satisfactory solution[11]. To recognise this specific aspect of creative activity is to recognise the importance of time itself as a factor in the creative process, and even to recognise that creative activities cannot be assessed using the evaluation methods of other activities.

Systems: two examples

The immersion system – Creatives within advertising agencies regularly read lifestyle, fashion and arts magazines to immerse themselves in these various different milieux; visits to cultural events are organised as part of "trend missions" (Renault), or to exhibitions or museums (Kalisto, Senderens, Renault); the Renault designers can go and visit satellite centres within large, cosmopolitan cities.

Collation system – When they opened a restaurant together, Alain Ducasse and Chanel did some "bridge-building" work, which involved work exchanges within each other's workplaces; at Renault, designers have worked with watchmakers and boat builders so as to be exposed to new ways of thinking and to possibly open up new avenues of creative thought; when training designers, Strate College and France Telecom's Studio Créatif see interdisciplinary meeting and comparison as routes to creativity. The founder of PR agency La Chose uses packs of cards in creativity meetings as a way of imposing new constraints, helping those attending to change their usual ways of thinking.

---

11. J. G. MARCH et H. A. SIMON, *Organizations,* New York, John Wiley & sons, 1958.

Convergence

Convergence starts at the point the creative process begins: putting a team together already pushes a project in a particular direction, in the sense that the choice of team or creator determines the direction in which it will go.

Its subsequent organisation also determines a project's timescale, and takes into account different constraints such as technical and economic feasibility, format, ergonomics, etc. These constraints are managed using two different approaches. One approach involves integrated teams working in workshops in which they will meet other skilled workers, and thus be conversant with the constraints they face.

In these workshops, the divergence-convergence process is ongoing, for example in the video games sector, where IT workers and creatives work together on projects and are thus constantly exchanging ideas on technical and economic feasibility. In the second approach, creatives are isolated and the issue of constraints is only introduced at a certain point in the process. This is common in the construction industry, where, for example, architects design a project before sending it to the construction companies who are to carry out the building work. However, increasingly, to improve efficiency, working methods are evolving and more architects are now working more closely with businesses[12].

Taking one or other of these approaches will tend to impact on efficiency or creativity, as the example of the Ducasse-Chanel restaurant project illustrates: whilst the former tends to formalise constraints relating to the restaurant trade, creation at Chanel tends to occur under secretive and event-based conditions. These opposing "working group/secret" cultures are a result of the nature of their respective businesses, particularly in haute couture where, to ensure the maximum market visibility within the predictable seasonal timetable of collection releases, the house tends to rely on the element of surprise in the collection content.

In joint creative projects (the more common scenario), convergence also consists of ensuring that the various players are all working towards the same vision. Making clear the precise expectations around the creation and communicating them effectively at all levels is a problem. However, three factors do favour the convergence of views and contributions: regular communication, intermediate construction stages, and time. The idea of acculturation is very important: words alone may not be enough, but within the context of a shared common culture which has developed over time, and in which there are shared references, a commonly-understood language may evolve. At Alain Senderens'restaurant, this shared understanding is developed when the chef sends his staff to exhibitions, recommends books to read, etc., so that they build up a wider understanding of his creative world. A former director in the perfumery industry developed her own specific language that allowed those in charge of planning a creation to be very specific.

In this regard, small structures are perhaps better when it comes to mutual understanding, as a common culture develops more easily. Indeed, this perhaps explains the prevalence of the combined manager/creative team in creative activities, of which Domenico De Sole/Tom Ford and Yves Saint-Laurent/Pierre Bergé are great examples. In a strong relationship, such partnerships can internalise the communication difficulties with which creativity is fraught. Another important factor is the timescale on which teams work, as this can affect the extent to which a common culture can develop and can encourage teamwork and communication. When creation relies on temporary teams, as is the case in cinema and theatre, building a team that can work creatively together requires a certain amount of time. For this reason, a former Kalisto manager reckons one third of the budget for developing a video game is devoted to teambuilding.

At each of the construction stages, choice is another aspect of convergence. Choice can occur upstream of the creative process, in its organised form, or downstream. In this case, convergence is implemented through a project filtering and selection system based on reconciling the views of those either within or without the business, or on various different economic or technical criteria.

Convergence and divergence are two phases that constantly feed back and forth to each other, expressing the duality of the two separate realms of inspiration and organisation. One springs from freedom, the other from structures that act as constraints. The way in which their balance is maintained, and, more generally, the way in which the structures of organised realms enter into the processes of creation, have an impact on the production of these processes.

---

12. T. PARIS, « Le cas de Bouygues Habitat. Le projet de logements "René Villermé" », in S. BEN MAHMOUD-JOUINI (ed.), *Co-conception et savoirs d'interaction* [French governmental research body for urban development construction and architecture plans], Paris, Plan urbanisme construction architecture (PUCA), 2003, p. 211-225.

Managing creative businesses

Creativity is also managed above and beyond creative project level. A business needs to organise the abundance of upstream projects, to identify, train, manage and retain talent, to equip itself with financial management tools, etc., all of which elements will have an influence on creative output.

Managing abundance

Abundance is part and parcel of the creative industries, which is all part of the "nobody knows" problem[13]. On the one hand, to feed into the distribution networks and cover all their costs, production and distribution networks need a regular production flow; on the other hand, creation is not an activity with predictable results. Uncertainty as to the outcome results in a necessary overabundance of projects in relation to the market requirement and thus in the implementation of selection processes at all stages, whether before, during or at the end of projects.

Abundance can be organised within businesses themselves or simply left to the market. Within the publishing, music and film industries, this process occurs upstream of the business, with aspiring talent engaging in spontaneous creativity and submitting their creations to production companies. Within the automotive or telecoms sectors, this is organised internally, with designers such as Renault running internal competitions on each project.

The same goes for selection: either businesses or institutions are responsible for dealing with it. They can be brought in at various stages in development, for example, film plans (storylines), or finished products in publishing (manuscripts). Businesses can manage abundance and selection at each stage: before projects, when they decide how many they are going to commission; during the project, through decision-making at each stage of the realisation process; at the end of the project, when they receive creations from the market. Systems dealing with abundance will vary, depending on whether it is managed internally or dealt with by the market. When the market itself is abundant, businesses need to be able to initiate projects and talents and to select them. The organisational systems used can have an influence on the nature of creativity. In publishing for instance, results will vary depending on

whether the section process is done by editorial committee or is down to the managing editor.

The former system is more consensual, more risk-averse but can result in rounds of negotiations that fall somewhat outside the remit of textual evaluation. The latter, by eliminating any justification process, relies more on an individual's instincts and thus is more risky, for instance if the editor enters into an intimate relationship with the writer.

The necessary and organised abundance within creative industries means there is no need to manage it in this way. According to David Kessler[14], this is one of the main issues facing modern French cinema, as, although it has learned to organise abundance to feed its production pace, it has not implemented enough processes to put a stop to a certain number of projects and make a more drastic selection. The problem is twofold: financially speaking it is hard to call a halt to a project in which investments have been made; in personnel terms, halting a project is seen as a failure for the people involved. Pierre Chevalier[15], of Arte et France Culture offers another example: in the first scenario, selection is made by various committees, editorial committees, programme committees, etc., and in the second, everything is managed through the relationship between the head of one cell in the programme schedule and the producers. Whilst each system limits risk, it also imposes an additional level of standardisation to the creative process.

Committee members, the profile of those in charge of selection, etc. are all factors that determine production type, whether aesthetically, economically or strategically. The issue of selection method is closely related to the way in which a business then supports its projects: experience shows that those choices that are made by a single individual tend to then receive greater support, whereas those made collectively are less strongly supported, as part of the risk already has been managed through the collective decision-making process.

The need to organise abundance involves selection processes, in some cases even supporting candidates whose projects were not approved. This requires that accounting systems take into account any "wastage" in the creative process.

13. Quote from Richard Caves. See R. E. CAVES, *Creative industries. Contracts between Art and Commerce,* Cambridge (Mass) and London, Harvard University Press, 2000.
14. When he was head of CNC.
15. Former head of the fiction division at Arte France.

Talent management

Finding and selecting projects is often closely linked to spotting talent. However, creatives are not recruited using any formal criteria, as the evaluation of talent is a subjective matter, which in turn means a particular type of talent is required to spot it and recruit it.

Various channels are used to identify possible talent, but the basic principle is to leave no stone unturned: competitions and festivals (Cannes young talent, short film festivals, various prizes, etc.), speculative applications and plans, use of formal or informal talent scouting networks, casting sessions, etc. There are three basic systems: talent scouts, who are individuals commissioned by companies to comb places where talent is likely to be found and recruit accordingly (this is prevalent in professional sports, for example); independent agents who liaise between talents and businesses and who do their own talent scouting; informal networks, a system ubiquitous in all sectors.

Alongside these three active methods, there are other more "passive" methods on which companies with a strong image rely, letting talent and ideas come to them, knowing that the initial selection is made by the candidates themselves, who approach the company based on its high profile. This means of detection presupposes that the company has the means to handle the project ideas that come in. The ability to remain open to external influences is difficult to manage when there is an abundance of project ideas flooding in, but it is crucial to businesses that want to combine editorial rigour with a strong image.

Managing creatives must take into account the possibility of "failure", as it is an integral part of the creative professions, both because the success of a production can never be guaranteed and because the creative sectors work on a highly selective model. When creatives are part of a business, it needs to be able to manage feelings of failure. Small companies, where talent and management can rub shoulders, can use this as a way to deal with it. Pascal Nègre likens a label, one of the basic structures within a record company, to a village. Renault's design division manages failure (or having to start a project over again) by sending designers to satellite centres, and by using "concept cars" (*i.e.* vehicles not destined for production) which allow designers to express themselves over a greater number of projects.

Economically evaluating creativity

This necessarily abundant supply explains the considerable financial demands of creative activities, which is their inherent problem. Thus to take the idea of the mass production of ideas to its logical conclusion, France Télécom would have to devote infinite resources to its Studio Créatif! In video games, the issue of finance is even more critical as studios need to cover the cost of advancing technologies on a five-year cycle. This issue of resources is even more crucial when dealing with the matter of evaluating creative organisations, which only go on to complete a fraction of the projects they explore.

Although the convergence phase, in which products are made to meet market requirements, is associated with economic evaluation criteria, it cannot be dissociated from the divergence phase in which ideas are generated, and which is much harder to put a value on. Whether this takes place within a business or an industrial group, such as France Télécom, Actes Sud or Universal Music, or at the level of a sector such as film, the classic economic style of analysis, which is based on the production and turnover model, seems unsuited to the practices of creative businesses, which are more consistent with ideas of "collectivity", catalogues and long-term results.

The ability of creative businesses to prioritise editorial choices over short-term financial matters seems to be crucial to many creative businesses. Radio Nova is a good case in point: the station owner imposes constraints over its teams not to earn money but rather to prevent its loss, the most important thing being that the business does not sell its soul. This may translate into businesses prizing independence, which is closely associated with the nature of creative activities, but this independence must be reconciled with the important need for financial backing.

Here a problem arises. On the one hand, we have small organisations, which are not in a situation to generate and support the required creative abundance. On the other hand, big companies which mean rules, routines, barriers, constraints, all of which stifle creative freedom. Of course, creation can be isolated within a business, broken down into smaller organisations within bigger companies, but these will never be hermetic entities, and the fact remains that creativity will always be easier within small, precarious organisations.

Behind this observation lies the more widespread question of the relationships that exist between organisations and creativity, and underpinning this

issue is another, more practical question: what do we mean by building an environment which encourages creativity?

Which spaces favour creativity?

The way existing companies are organised, *i.e.* through financial, marketing and technical constraints that impinge upon the creative process, clearly shapes the creation itself. On the other hand, as they are not starting with a blank canvas, and as they have customers, in the broadest sense of the word, companies can tend to simply recreate the past, and to limit, to some extent, new creative work.

Tried-and-tested routines and reliance on past successes can mean that, over time, working patterns fall into a rut, become psychologically internalised and then simply followed like rules. Indeed, one leading fashion designer comments that advertising agents tend to "view everything through the rear view mirror". Even so, existing organisations can find it hard to take on board new ideas: presenting the pitch[16] to get the budget for *The March of the Penguins* seemed doomed to failure as the format did not seem to convey how the film would work. "It's the story of the penguins in Antarctica…". BETC'S advertising campaign for Air France ran into similar difficulties when the agency decided to emphasise slowness, which represented a radical new approach within the world of advertising.

To identify creative spaces, three types of situation have been established that can lead to more openness in creativity: the challenging of financial constraints by businesses, the emergence of new spaces or distribution channels, and the advent of new technologies.

Challenging financial constraints

In a bid to stand out from the crowd, or suffering from financial constraint itself, or perhaps even because it is involved in some form of sponsorship, some creative businesses have to challenge traditional economic constraints. Doing so can prove fruitful: when Alain Senderens decided to break the rules of haute cuisine and to turn his back on the all-important Michelin three-star system, he questioned prior financial constraints and imposed new cost constraints to significantly reduce the price of his services. This resulted in a kind of 'star system'

as rather than relying on luxury goods or wines, he had to put more effort into sourcing unknown but high-quality products such as wine, finding new "talents" as it were, and then had to be more creative to make them work. Moreover, small scale or "impoverished" organisations are compelled to find new ways of working to promote their creations, small labels being a case in point.

Radio Nova demonstrates another kind of openness, showing how the financial aim not to waste money, imposed by the owner on the teams, can also kick-start creativity. When choosing presenters and music, a certain amount of risk-taking becomes possible once freed from the constraints that most radio stations face, *i.e.* appealing to the greatest possible audiences, which allows them to take a much more avant-garde, experimental approach.

Another possible model is seen in VIA, a company financed through a dedicated tax deducted from all furniture manufacturers; its budget is not directly connected with its activity, meaning it can act as a spur to the furniture and lifestyle design industries' creativity by encouraging work around themes ("the chair"), financing young designers and exhibiting their work.

New distribution channels

New spaces for distribution can be a breath of fresh air for creativity. For example, when Pierre Chevalier set up a cinema and TV project for Arte, he only had a limited budget and therefore went for young, inexperienced directors, which brought a new generation of directors into the film industry. A festival like the Angoulême Comics Festival, which is independent and therefore needs to provide fresh, avant-garde material, is dynamic in attracting young talent by providing a space for showcasing new creations, as well as inspiring people to new careers.

Within the structures of the creative fields, any party providing a new, visible space for artistic expression contributes towards promoting creativity: the success of the Franco-Belgian comic strip is linked to the emergence of new means of distribution, such as magazines that provide a forum for young talent[17]. Each institution, through the way it works, selects talent and links with other networks, functions as a type of filter for talent and creativity. The training and licensing bodies therefore have considerable clout when it comes to structuring creativity. The setting up of new institutions, when they

---

16. A film pitch is a summary of it in a few words, and is used as a promotional tool.
17. Jean-Marc Thévenet, former director of the Angoulême International Comics Festival.

rely on other means of selection, offers new opportunities for talent, as evidenced by Cube for digital creativity and the Easter festival at Deauville for music.

Finally, building bridges between related distribution methods, such as television and cinema, can also be a source of creativity. These links can lead creators to look at other constraints, as each distribution method tends to impose a particular format on creative works. This is also a way to improve how training is organised, as such links can allow talent to move from less costly to more costly formats. When a new format emerges, although it may attract existing talent from related areas, it also opens the door to new talent, as the shorts format on television and the internet have shown.

The emergence of new technologies

Broadly speaking, innovative technologies can help open up new spaces and create multiple opportunities for creativity to thrive. These new technologies put everyone on the same footing, and thus challenge the established order and the skills of existing creators. They can also bring costs down or displace them, as we have seen with digital formats, and therefore the barriers to creation can be lowered.

This new channel gives new players a space, a chance to seize the means of producing something creative, and offers new forms of creativity. This has given the existing markets a good shake-up and these structures as a whole, and the rules governing the creations that they help generate, are now facing a tremendous challenge.

CONCLUSION

Creation and organisation both rely on working systems which are *a priori* opposed but which are reconcilable when generating creativity. Creation can be "managed" as, behind the creative processes, mechanisms interact with organisations. Creation can be managed within the worlds of organised entities, so long as these worlds, the systems around which they are built, and the effects they have, or may have, on creation are suitably analysed. It is also managed globally to the extent that these worlds fit within each other: projects within businesses, businesses within industries. If some ways of organising creativity can serve as models, at this stage they certainly cannot be seen as the only way of doing things. Owing to their tendency to standardise creation, the more varied these structures are, the greater their creative freedom will be. ■

Summary of current research

In 1974 Howard Becker published an article entitled "Art as Collective Action[1]", which debunked the romantic notion of creation and placed artistic activities firmly in the field of collective action. This research then paved the way for works dealing with "institutional approaches to art", and developed the idea that cultural goods were also the product of a socio-economic system which was subject to various constraints: financial and technical[2], institutions'struggle for recognition[3], conventions relating to individual areas of the art world[4], contractual practices[5], legislative environments[6], industrial structures[7].

Individual and collective work

There has recently been an increasing amount of research[8] on "organisational creativity", trying to identify how businesses can improve their creativity. From a psychological and sociological point of view, they study the group as a whole to determine what affects its creativity and the ways in which the collective can interfere with individuals' ability to generate ideas.

A more divergent view[9] suggests that research into management tools reveals the existence of an invisible technol-

1. H. S. BECKER, "Art as collective action", *op. cit.*
2. Michael BAXANDALL, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1972.
3. Pierre BOURDIEU, *Les règles de l'art* [*The Rules of Art*], Paris, Le Seuil, 1992.
4. H. S. BECKER, "Art as Collective Action", *op. cit.* and *Art Worlds, op. cit.*
5. R. E. CAVES, *Creative industries…, op. cit.*
6. T. PARIS, *Le droit d'auteur. L'idéologie et le système, op. cit.*
7. Pierre-Jean BENGHOZI and Thomas PARIS, "Analyzing distribution to understand the markets of cultural goods", 8th International Conference on Arts & Cultural Management, HEC Montréal, 3-6 July 2005.
8. Theresa M. AMABILE *et al.,* "Assessing the Work Environment for Creativity", *Academy of Management Journal,* 1996, vol. 39, no. 5, p. 1154-1184, and "How to Kill Creativity", *Harvard Business Review,* September-October 1998. Cameron M. FORD and Dennis E. GIOIA, *Creative Action in Organizations. Ivory Tower Visions and Real World Voices,* Sage Publications, 1995.
9. Michel BERRY, *Une technologie invisible*, Paris, École polytechnique, Centre de recherche en gestion, 1983.

ogy, which often mechanically directs individuals' choices and behaviour beyond their will, which can lead organisations in directions in which no-one wishes to go and even renders them resistant to efforts to change.

A broader approach[10] analyses the decisions made by individuals within organised spaces to form organisational theories focused around notions of power[11], rules[12] and limited rationality within the decision-making process[13].

More recent research into the processes and management of innovation demonstrates that creation and innovation involve different cognitive processes to decision-making[14].

Work at territorial and sectoral level

Other research tackles questions of how "macrostructures" influence the creativity of an industry, territory or country. Whilst the question of organising an environment that encourages creativity is not universally posed across all academic studies, it echoes a similar question that has arisen in studies over the past few years.

The issue of "national systems of innovation" which is the counterpart for innovation within the "public action" area of our research, studies institutional environments on the way

Figure 1 – A cross-disciplinary problem involving various strands of research

in which they encourage or discourage innovation at national level[15].

Certain theorists on regional economic development have observed the influence of various individual geographic, demographic, sociological, and cultural factors on the creative drive of a territory, *i.e.* its ability to attract what are referred to as the creative classes and to generate new projects[16].

With this in mind, it is worth highlighting the United Kingdom authorities' initiative to set up creative industry monitoring centre as part of a wider policy to prioritise this area[17].

A cross-disciplinary approach

The decision to include all these different levels of analysis to adopt a cross-disciplinary approach is based on the observation that the environment which generates creativity is composed of a series of concentric circles. It also allows for a more fruitful comparative view. Indeed, the organisational systems adopted within the different sectors to structure creativity can be seen as either sector-specific conventions or constraints. A cross-disciplinary approach to system analysis means all constraints specific to the sectors studied are taken into consideration; it also helps to clarify which aspects of existing organisational systems can be classed as constraints, which are conventions and which are choices.

Moreover, this takes into account the varied nature of creative industries, which are organised around an ongoing process of exchange between organisations and the market. Firstly, they are based on talent, *i.e.* individuals who have a specific creative ability. The irreplaceability of individuals *(A List/B List property*[18]*)* and uncertainty over their talent demands the collective management of selection risk, with the group collectively assuming the risk of training and pre-selection. In this way, businesses are dependent on the training system in place, and the organisational and sectoral levels interlock in the building of a creative environment. Secondly, the creative industries bring *ad hoc* organisational structures into play, which gives considerable weight to those companies (regulatory systems, organising consistent skill levels, etc.) which facilitate the movement of individuals and the drawing up of relevant projects. Thirdly, the output of these industries is intangible. This means that external elements become more important, which impact as much on issues such as value (the value of a work, or talent will depend on the value of other works or talents) as on those of ownership and intellectual property.
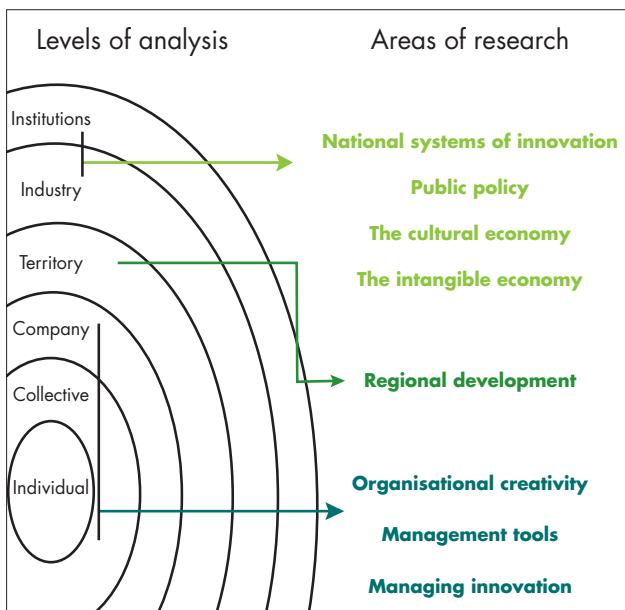
10. Gilles CABRIDAIN, *Apports et limites de l'instrumentation financière dans l'émergence de la gestion par projet dans l'industrie automobile,* Palaiseau, École polytechnique, 1988 (PhD thesis).

11. Michel CROZIER, *Le phénomène bureaucratique,* Paris, Le Seuil, 1963. [*The Bureaucratic Phenomenon,* 1964]. Michel CROZIER and Ehrard FRIEDBERG, *L'acteur et le système*, Paris, Le Seuil, "Points" collection, 1977 [*Actors and Systems: The Politics of Collective Action.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980].

12. Jean-Daniel REYNAUD, *Les règles du jeu. L'action collective et la régulation sociale,* Paris, Armand Colin, 1989 (3rd edition 1997).

13. Herbert A. SIMON, *Administrative Behavior,* New York, The Free Press, 1945 et *id.*, "A behavioral model of rational choice", *Quarterly Journal of Economics,* February 1955, p. 99-118. James G. MARCH and Herbert A. SIMON, *Organizations, op. cit.*

14. Armand HATCHUEL, Pascal LE MASSON and Benoît WEIL, *Les processus d'innovation. Conception innovante et croissance des entreprises,* Paris, Hermès Science Publication, 2006.

15. Philippe LAREDO and Frédérique SACHWALD, *Le système français d'innovation dans l'économie mondiale: enjeux et priorités,* Paris, IFRI, Institut de l'entreprise, 2005.

16. Richard FLORIDA, *Cities and the creative class,* Routledge, 2004. *Id.*, *The Flight of the Creative Class. The New Global Competition for Talent,* Harper Business, 2005. Martin KENNEY and Richard FLORIDA, *Locating Global Advantage. Industry Dynamics in the International Economy,* Stanford University Press, 2003.

17. Ministerial Creative Industries Strategy Group, *Creative Industries Mapping Document,* London, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2001.

18. R. E. CAVES, *Creative industries…, op. cit.*