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Questioning the common sense of creativity and innovation through Deleuzian thought

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The drive for creativity remains dominant in our society as it underpins our desire for innovation. We rely on creativity as the means to save us from ourselves by finding innovative solutions to otherwise intractable problems such as climate change. Creativity is thus essential to our survival as well as central to our economy. Indeed we now have the creative or cultural industries (Hesmondhalgh, 2002) with the creative classes being seen as the key economic resource (Florida, 2002). Creativity and innovation has become big business. But what is this creativity we speak of? And what makes it creative? As with most things, we recognize a thing as ‘this thing’ because it resembles something we are already know to be ‘one of those things’. Creativity is thus recognized as creativity because it looks, acts and appears to be creative – just like all the other creative acts that we’ve identified as such – but this doesn’t give us the genesis of the idea. This raises two important considerations. First, and fundamentally, it questions what we understand as creativity, which this paper answers by suggesting an alternative conception that challenges our taken-for-granted understanding. Secondly, it behoves us to reflect on the consequences of the fashion for creativity and innovation, and its limitations. This paper will explore these concerns by drawing on the work of Gilles Deleuze. Firstly it will set out the context of the creative imperative that is all pervasive before addressing the Deleuzian approach to creativity and – more fundamentally – to the act of thinking itself. In doing so it will question what we mean by problems and how we can avoid what Deleuze would call ‘ready made’ problems. The paper will then reflect on the nature of creativity of the so-called creativity and innovation in



capitalist society before concluding with some thoughts on what it may mean to become more creative.

Be the change!

There is a wealth of literature that promises to make individuals and organisations (more) creative (for example, Brabandere and Iny, 2013; de Bono, 2007, 2015; Gray, Brown and Macanuso, 2010). Various techniques claim to enhance our creative potential, or assist us to work better in teams to produce more innovative ideas. The discourse of creativity is common and recognisable even if different techniques are adopted. The quote “Be the change that you wish to see in the world” attributed to Mahatma Gandhi has become truncated to the mantra ‘Be the change!’ which calls upon each and every one of us to be open to change and to be more creative in our lives (even if we’re not focused on achieving a ‘better’ world). A walk through any management section of an airport bookshop will reveal a vast array of ‘self-help’ type books that promise to make you more creative and to enhance the innovative potential in yourself or your organisation.

The creative imperative extends beyond national and organizational boundaries. The European Union, for example, has a commitment to invest in the creative industries, in recognition of their economic role. This investment extends beyond financial support to include the facilitation of cross-border networking. The language of creativity thus forms a central part of the global neoliberal discourse, capturing what the Boston Consulting Group term “value creating growth”. The growing engagement with the challenges

of climate change provide an example of the creative mantra. Faced with global eco-system disrupting conditions, efforts have been made to find creative and innovative responses to tackle the causes and effects of climate change. In the main these are designed to keep the Western way of living largely unchanged; creative solutions seek to find efficiencies or clever alternatives to enable us to continue living our lives much as we have done during the last few decades. The wealthier, Western nations dominate and are at the forefront of these developments¹. In contrast the local responses of communities in less developed countries, based on tradition, trial and error and community engagement are no less ‘creative’ and yet receive comparatively little attention, possibly because they do not represent the big innovative solutions that can be packaged and sold worldwide. Creativity has become commodified, and it has an image that we recognize. When the ‘how to be creative’ texts talk about ‘thinking outside the box’ and ‘questioning assumptions’ (e.g. Brabandere and Iny, 2013), they don’t mean questioning the assumptions of growth and value creation. In short, our understandings of creativity remain firmly imbedded within the discourse of capital.

The creative imperative seems to support the Schumpeterian notion of ‘creative destruction’. Schumpeter (1961) argued that economic change revolves around innovation, the acts of entrepreneurs to facilitate innovation, and the market power that incentivized such behaviour. But the call to innovate, and the creative imperative in particular, has proliferated beyond significant shifts in the economic cycle to incorporate the comparatively unremarkable micro-level creative acts that may – ultimately – have very little



effect on society. The meaning of creation has become on the one hand less precisely defined (almost anything can be described as creative) and on the other it is ever more tied to the unit of capital. We measure the success of creativity and the imperative for innovation in capitalist terms: things, ideas are all units that can be sold or utilized to create economic value. In short, there is nothing creative in the discourse of creativity. The ‘changemakers’, ‘rule breakers’ and ‘paradigm shifting’ in management discourse are what Deleuze would describe as a royal science in which the territory of our thought is limited to that in which it is grounded (in this case, capital) and which operates with perceived legitimacy: it is the established way of thinking. In contrast, to be truly creative and open to possibilities, we require an ‘untimely’ nature of thinking (Deleuze 1990: 265), what Deleuze terms a ‘nomadic’ thought. This minor, or nomadic science thinks otherwise and outside the rules of the royal or state science (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004).

What is the alternative? What is difference?

For Deleuze creativity is not that which we recognize in its common understanding, but is a far more radical notion – a fundamentally different way of thinking. Whilst much of his consideration of what creativity is can be found in his collaboration with Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* (specifically, creativity as the creation of concepts), the fundamental concern about thought is evident in *Difference and Repetition*, a text which tackles the nature of difference and what he describes as the problematic image of thought. This image is a concern for Deleuze as it limits us to certain ways of thinking and

representing things and – crucially – fails to enable us to demonstrate genesis in thought, which conceals how philosophical thought relies on presuppositions. Creativity, transformation and evolution are central to Deleuze’s work. For Deleuze, creativity is central to life, and what he calls ‘becoming’. To understand his arguments it is therefore useful to explore some of his concepts which – following Deleuze’s notion that concepts should be used as ‘tools’ – will be utilized to set out how he conceptualizes creativity. Central to this discussion are his notions of difference and repetition, and his ambitions to develop a genetic account that sets out one of his key challenges to philosophical thinking, namely its representational mode of thought.

Difference plays a critical role in Deleuze’s work. He understands difference as a process of individuation: ‘becoming’ that is particular and not general. His idea of difference stands in contrast to something being different from this or that (difference between this and another object). For Deleuze difference is ‘difference-in-itself’, a concept that does not rely on other objects with which it can be compared. It is a difference that is incomparable, for comparison suggests a shared basis upon which comparison could be made, and concerns things external to itself to enable a comparison. To compare suggests a degree of sameness to afford this measurement, and hints at the grouping of similar things, which in either case amounts to a form of generality or sameness. Instead, ‘difference-in-itself’ is unique in its particularity and becoming. It relates to difference that is internal to the thing. This enables Deleuze to explore the differential field of intensity that gives us movement and becoming in multiple



ways, but that does not rely on something outside of itself. In doing so he lays the foundations for his genetic account that avoids presuppositions – individuation remains singular and unique and not based on a pre-existing identity. It is what Somers-Hall (2013: 23) describes as the “*process of the emergence of form, which cannot be captured within the structure of the already formed*”. What Deleuze challenges in his understanding of difference is the reliance of philosophy on resemblance, of representations in thought that lead us into certain ways of thinking about difference that rely on sameness to represent difference. As McMahon (2005: 43) puts it “*the function of the concept of identity ... is essentially that of “managing” difference. Thus for example, a concept subordinates differences by picking out qualities or things as “the same” or identical across (and despite) different cases*”.

In his second chapter in *Difference and Repetition* he investigates the notion of repetition, which he explores through reference to the likes of Kant, Hume, Bergson and Freud. For Deleuze repetition involves something that is the same (for it to be repetition) but that changes something in the mind that contemplates it (2004: 90). He seeks to determine whether it is possible to give an account of the organization of experience without relying on a subject to actively synthesise an understanding (as Kant does). This is important as the Kantian approach would prevent the concept of difference Deleuze wants to argue – it doesn’t allow us to look at the genesis of the subject as the subject is already given. Instead he relies on Hume and Bergson (and their work on habit and memory respectively) to explore a passive synthesis. Whilst Kant’s synthesis is an active synthesis, De-

leuze distinguishes the passive synthesis, which is responsible for bringing subjects into existence.

Deleuze draws on Hume and the repetition of a pattern: AB AB AB, A... where the second ‘AB’ is a “repeat”. In this case the repetition changes nothing in the object that repeats but changes something in the mind that contemplates it - it enables habit (when I see ‘A’ I expect ‘B’). Hume argues that this happens in the imagination and is a contractile power that creates a qualitative impression, but one that does not require understanding. This passive synthesis is not carried out by the mind even though it occurs in the mind and becomes a habit. This introduces time: we anticipate the future based on the past. Qualitative impressions are retained and anticipated accordingly and habit becomes the “*constitutive root of the subject*” (Deleuze, 1991: 63). Once the subject has emerged then, “*on the basis of the qualitative impressions in the imagination memory reconstitutes the particular cases as distinct ... no longer the immediate past of retention but reflexive past of representation, of reflected and reproduced particularity*” (Deleuze, 2004: 92), meaning an active synthesis of the Kantian kind. By starting with the passive synthesis Deleuze is able to avoid starting with a subject, and in doing so he achieves a genetic account, one that is not based on the presupposed subject.

Repetition is therefore not the repeat of the same, but varies with each repetition, and what repeats is difference. As Parr (2005: 223) notes “*repetition is best understood in terms of discovery and experimentation; it allows new experiences, affects and expressions to emerge. To repeat is to begin again; to affirm the power of the new*



and unforeseeable.” This destabilizes habit and creates something new. This affirmation of the power of the new and the understanding of pure difference contrasts with the regulated discourse of creativity and innovation, where innovations are categorized (by scale or type, for example), and creativity is often a structured process. Our understandings are always already captured by their form; classified and compared. As a consequence, radical difference, or difference-in-itself, is always prevented. Instead, we operate on the territorialized plane which is occupied by a certain language and unit of measurement that subordinates difference in favour of recognizing sameness.

Challenging presuppositions

The work undertaken in the first two chapters of *Difference and Repetition* sets out the possibility for difference-in-itself that does not require a pre-given subject. It allows for a genetic account. Having set out this possibility he goes on to challenge the failures of the current ways of thinking that do not allow for the concept of difference(-in-itself). Current ways of philosophical thought, Deleuze argues, leads us to an image of thought based on representation, relying on presuppositions about the nature of thought itself, that are not expressly discussed, but that are taken as ‘common sense’. Whilst common sense plays a useful role in everyday life, for ordering things, it is – Deleuze argues – problematic as a means of philosophy. Indeed it would make philosophy somewhat redundant as it would equate to common sense. Thought should, instead, be disruptive to common sense, it should question the form of thought. It shouldn’t take

for granted this common sense or fail to question how this ‘order’ came to be (McMahon, 2005). In this sense it is both a philosophical and political concern. These presuppositions are not only ‘common’ but also ‘moral’ as Deleuze explains, drawing on Nietzsche, “*because morality alone persuades us that thought has good nature and a thinker good will, and that only the good can ground the supposed affinity between thought and the true*” (2004: 167). Yet Deleuze renounces this and argues not everyone is equally predisposed to this thinking nor should thought be considered universal to all thinkers. Further, it is the ones without good will who challenge presuppositions.

Somers-Hall (2013) argues that what Deleuze seeks to challenge is, firstly the systematic image of representation in thought, or that “Everybody knows, no one can deny², *is the form of representation and the discourse of the representative*” (Deleuze, 2004: 165). Secondly, he seeks to demonstrate how this representational mode is incapable of novelty (concepts may be created but they are formal but not real – the model doesn’t allow for the experimental philosophy that Deleuze wishes to achieve). And thirdly, that philosophy must begin with something outside thought – that is it requires something passive, as we have already discovered. “*Once the good nature of thought has been assumed, philosophy becomes the systematic portrayal of a form of reason already implicitly present in common sense*” (Somers-Hall, 2013: 103). For Deleuze, philosophy must act against this image. It must begin with something outside – an encounter, which must involve a passive notion of sensibility.



Deleuze makes evident the tendency for ‘common sense’ to prevail. After all, who would be against common sense? But in explicating the meaning of ‘common’ he brings to our attention that its persuasive power should not be mistaken for truth. Our common understandings of creativity and innovation do not make them ‘better’ or ‘right’ and, crucially, they curtail the very possibility of their being creative. Common sense enables the ordering of everyday life, but it does not permit novelty; it works with what we know, not what we don’t know.

Recognition

Common sense, therefore, precludes the possibility of the passive encounter. We can see this through the process of recognition, which Deleuze understands as “*the harmonious exercise of all the faculties upon a supposed same object*” as he demonstrates, with references to Descartes: “*wax remains wax, even as I put it by the fire*” (Deleuze, 2004: 169). He goes on to explain that whilst each of the faculties (such as perception, memory, imagination, understanding and so on) acts differently, the object is recognized when the faculties relate it to a form of identity. Recognition thus relies on a subjective principle of faculty collaboration for ‘everyone’ (common-sense), and upon the unity of the thinking subject (Cogito), whose senses collaborate (in common) to recognize the object (*ibid*: 169). What this tells us is that the unity of the object (for the faculties) is given by the subject – the subject unifies the various properties into a coherent object. We judge something to be this or that object when the sense impressions accord (and we can therefore equally misrecognize something on this basis (Somers-

Hall, 2013: 106-7)). While common sense crosses faculties of the Self, good sense allows this to be distributed, or as Williams (2003: 117) puts it, “*for a thought to be in principle shareable and good, it must be able to unify both within each individual thinker, and between thinkers*”.

Although common and good sense are formally empty (recognition is a process without prior content) we make presuppositions in a general way; that is we exclude things that we do not recognize. It presupposes the way of thinking. It compares the new to what we already know. “*Recognition discounts the new as pure difference ... because recognition must operate by breaking down difference into that which has already been recognised*” (Williams, 2003: 119). Or as Deleuze puts it: “*The form of recognition has never sanctioned anything but the recognizable and the recognized; form will never inspire anything but conformities*” (Deleuze, 2004: 170). The dogmatic approach to philosophical thinking, Deleuze argues, is that of recognition. But it is not only the object that is recognized, “*but also the values attached to an object*” (which are linked to good sense) (*ibid*: 171). As a consequence thought “*rediscovers*” the State, the Church, and “*all the current values that it subtly presented in the pure form of an eternally blessed unspecified eternal object*” (*ibid*: 172). Here we can see the politics of Deleuze’s understanding of the limitations of the model of thought as recognition. He argues that our “*struggles*” that occur on the basis of common sense and established values are then forever seeking to achieve the “*current values (honours, wealth and power)*” (*ibid*: 172). “*Newness*” is therefore always limited to being within this form and within these values.



The model of recognition outlined relies upon representation. Deleuze outlines four elements that define representation. Firstly, in order to recognize something we must have a representation in the form of an identity. This is the identity of the concept. Secondly, the determination of the concept requires opposition (something is / is not) for the memory and imagination to re-discover whether something is an instance of a certain type. Thirdly, analogy acts as the basis of judgement, to determine a similarity between the properties. Fourthly it relies upon resemblance and similarity to enable perceptual continuity between the object and the memory of it. Together, these four “*fetters under which only that which is identical, similar, analogous or opposed can be considered different*: difference becomes an object of representation always in relation to a conceived identity, a judged analogy, an imagined opposition or a perceived similitude”. (Deleuze, 2004: 174). As a consequence thought isn’t able to conceive of difference-in-itself, and we are unable to grasp the intensities of creative repetition and pure difference (Williams, 2003).

Recognition, therefore, limits us to what we already know (or recognize), or forces us to reduce our ideas to something that becomes recognisable. The creative potential of innovation is therefore restricted to a form that conforms rather than breaks the mould in unforeseeable ways. The connection with values helps us understand that this is not politically neutral. What we (re) produce is already given to us. Our struggles for new territory are always already territorialized by current values and ways of being – creativity and innovation is captured by capital.

Putting thinking into thought – rethinking problems.

“Thought is primarily trespass and violence, the enemy, and nothing presupposes philosophy: everything begins with misosophy. Do not count upon thought to ensure the relative necessity of what it thinks. Rather, count upon the contingency of an encounter with that which forces thought to raise up and educate the absolute necessity of an act of thought or a passion to think. The conditions of a true critique and a true creation are the same: the destruction of an image of thought which presupposes itself and the genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself.” (Deleuze, 2004: 175-176)

“To think is to create – there is no other creation – but to create is first of all to engender “thinking” in thought.” (Deleuze, 2004: 185)

What forces us to think isn’t the object of recognition but of a fundamental encounter that can only be *sensed*. In this way it is opposed to recognition where the sensible is not only sense but also that which is recalled, imagined, or conceived – the other faculties in a common sense (Deleuze, 2004: 176). Deleuze describes the object of the encounter as a sign, but a sign that is imperceptible in terms of recognition, it can only be sensed. A sign that is imperceptible to these other faculties brings us to a limit. This sensed-only sign “perplexes” – it poses a problem. The problem goes beyond that which may be stored in the memory in terms of past problems, and solutions. There is no ‘ready made’ answer and consequently it forces us to think in new ways. It is transformative and experimental. Deleuze prio-



ritises the sensibility that sets things in motion.

This raises questions, for Deleuze, regarding the nature of a problem. His concern is that problems are currently merely reformulated propositions. Firstly, this leads us to think problems are given ‘ready made’ and that consequently they disappear in the solution. Secondly, this leads to a belief that the activity of thinking, and the search for the ‘truth’, starts with the search for solutions and that solutions are the only concern. Thirdly, it means that the problems are set from outside, or as Deleuze puts it: “*the master sets a problem, our task is to solve it, and the result is accredited true or false by a powerful authority*” (Deleuze, 2004: 197).

Deleuze’s idea of a problem is different to that of Aristotle’s propositions. As Williams (2003) explains, problems are not the cognitive and logical problems of Aristotle. They are not problems to be ‘solved’. Instead they illuminate or give insight into aspects of a problem, but proffer no final answer. The answers to the questions shed light on the problem in particular ways. Instead, rather than solutions being thought of as true or false, it is problems that should be considered as true or false. As Deleuze outlines, a false problem is one that is indeterminate (such that no solution is possible) or overdetermined (such that a true or false solution is possible) (Deleuze, 2004: 198). Non-propositional problems, therefore arise from the act of thought (of the genetic, Deleuzian kind) – they are constructed, not ready made (Deleuze, 2004: 197).

But in the image of thought, problems are judged through common opinion “*accepted by all men*”

(Deleuze, 2004: 199). They are therefore the propositions of common sense, and remain evaluated by their ability to provide a solution. Consequently they miss the internal character of the problem, which are “*the differential elements in thought*” (*ibid*: 201). This differential element of problems “*connects things to their conditions, both actual and virtual. It creates new concepts that allow for the conditions to be expressed with as much intensity as possible*” (Williams, 2003: 132). Problems are fluid, and each solution changes the nature of the problem. Underlying which is the idea of difference-in-itself found in repetition.

More practically, Deleuze reflects on what this means for learning. For Deleuze, learning isn’t about the acquisition of knowledge but is about an engagement with problems. For Deleuze, the goal of learning is learning. By contrast, the image of thought trains thinkers through ‘method’ leading to the manifestation of common sense. Instead, Deleuze argues, we require an experimental approach to learning, one that doesn’t have the collection of a stock of knowledge as its aim (even though we will, of course, learn something in the process). This treatment of knowledge as a by-product, rather than a goal stands in sharp contrast to most of our ambitions for knowledge building.

In essence, Deleuze challenges the premise of our mode of thinking by demonstrating its limitations and presuppositions. He clearly recognizes why this image of thought is compelling, and thus how it has territorialized our thinking. His ‘untimely’ philosophy recognizes that he stands outside the dominant way of thinking. But his approach raises



considerable challenges for our understanding and approach to creativity and innovation. In recognizing creativity we lose the very creativeness it claims for itself; its very recognisability means that it is something known, given to us in good and common sense. It eschews a transformative or experimental mode of becoming; it even bypasses the radical change assumed by the classic notions of creativity and innovation, such as those of Schumpeter. This change may, in part, be due to the hyperinflation of the meaning of creativity (in which anything can be considered creative) but also to a sense that we have mistaken or require a more critical engagement with what it means to be creative.

Creativity and its (destructive) consequences

For Deleuze, both creativity and its destructive effects are inevitable. The impossibility of repeating the same moment and the inevitability of repetition giving rise to difference attests to this. In repetition we have the possibility of reinvention – it is inherently transformative – but in producing the new we are also then destroying what was. This affords us interesting, transformative potentiality. We are not fixed but evolve – we are in constant flux. Crucially this creative potential is one of immanence; it is not imposed from outside. This becomes particularly important when we recognize that Deleuze’s concerns are not just abstract philosophical thoughts but fundamentally political. Deleuze does not seek to understand the identity and limits of things, but seeks to understand their evolution. He proposes a notion of creativity that is not limited to that what we already know, and he frees us from struggles based on common sense and accepted values. In

short it is a creativity that isn’t territorialized by the State or capital.

The discourse around creativity with which we are most familiar is different in kind to that conceived of by Deleuze. It operates precisely on the representation of an idea of creativity and what it can achieve. Furthermore it works for a particular order (the economic elite) and consequently its destructive nature is ethically problematic. For example, our creative imperative is largely to sustain our capitalist societies, to facilitate production, to enable the lives of many to continue much as they have been or to see them ‘improved’ in such ways that these ‘improvements’ accord with capitalism. Underlying our idea of creativity is a representation of what it is, what (or who) it is for and how to go about it. These “representations” are precisely the concern of Deleuze in his critique of the image of thought.

Of course, on the one hand we can argue that – ultimately – not much really changes. As Jacques (1996) points out, we’ve been talking about the ever-quickenning pace of change for over a hundred years. Yet on the other we can look at the local effects of this creative imperative, its association with the young rather than the old, and certain cultures to the exclusion of others. When industries change their working practices in fundamental ways many find themselves obsolete because they lack the skills or are simply surplus to requirements (Eagleton, 2004). Creativity and innovation is therefore not without its victims. As Bogue (2004: 35), taking a Deleuzian stance, notes: “*Everywhere capitalism develops it undermines traditional social codes – kinship systems, religious beliefs, class hierarchies,*



taboos, ritual trade relations and so on...” The link to capitalism is no accident. The current mantra for creativity is a concern of capitalism; creativity has been territorialised by capital. The dominant understanding of creativity is one of wealth creating change and innovation; its value is economic. This means that our problems (and solutions) are defined within this commonsensical understanding, and their consequences often fall outside of this logic.

Schumpeter’s gales of creative destruction in the economy, and their adoption by neoliberal economists as a means to explain processes of industry change, have become accepted ways of understanding the inevitability and necessity for innovation. But these developments – even if they are to be seen in a positive light – do not benefit the many at whose expense they are achieved (Harvey, 2004). The dominant mode of creativity is one that renews capitalism in different forms, but does not pay heed to those who are damaged along the way (though of course this was not Schumpeter’s assumption, who believed that capitalism would be destroyed by its own success). And this drive is celebrated in the form of entrepreneurs, who are seen as the heroes and heroines of capitalism. The very people who maintain the capitalist machine are those who are celebrated as being deviant from it – the ‘creative’ thinkers. Yet here we might challenge that theirs are creative credentials.

Focusing on the necessity and inevitability of this *representational* form of creativity without questioning it is what Deleuze calls us to question. That is not to argue that we should be against creativity – that would be foolish, and

as Deleuze makes evident, in vain – but that we should consider the effects of what happens in the name of creativity, and to what extent this creative imperative is really about creativity at all. The Deleuzian approach to creativity enables possibilities and potentialities, it does not presuppose a creative machine that serves to occupy and maintain the territory of capital.

Common sense? Or “be the artist!”

“The conditions of a true critique and a true creation are the same: the destruction of an image of thought which presupposes itself and the genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself.” (Deleuze, 2004: 175-176)

All of this leads towards his critique of the image of thought and its reliance on representation. Representation is essentially captured in the notion of common sense but this, Deleuze argues, is a limited philosophy as it restricts our understanding and limits us to certain ways of thinking. This is best exemplified – by way of contrast – in his description of the artist. The artist, he argues (both in *Difference and Repetition*, and with Guattari in *What is Philosophy?*) seeks the new, rather than seeks to represent. In creating, the artist will be destructive, will affirm difference, and will exist in chaos. They will reach into the unknown and produce what is unrecognizable³. Art is not the means, Deleuze argues, of representing our experiences. It captures the prioritization of the senses: *“We paint, sculpt, compose, and write with sensations”* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 166). This affirmation of difference is against order and against established and recognised ways of working or method; it becomes nomadic. *“Art*



undoes the triple organization of perceptions, affections, and opinions in order to substitute a monument composed of percepts, affects, and blocs of sensations that take the place of language. The writer uses words, but by creating a syntax that makes time pass into sensation that makes the standard language stammer, tremble, cry or even sing: this is the style, the “tone,” the language of sensations...” (ibid: 176).

Instead of the hackneyed phrase “be the change” Deleuze might instead suggest that we “be the artist”. But our tendency is to stick with habits, representations and what we know and Deleuze recognizes the challenges in shifting from this mode of thinking. Deleuze doesn’t suggest that his nomadic, minor science should exist at the expense of royal science. Indeed he sees royal science drawing from it. In this way he doesn’t look beyond capitalism, but sees potentiality within it, by being affected by nomadic thought. But he doesn’t present us with an easy route to follow.

So, what does this mean for creativity and innovation? It doesn’t mean that our current ways of working become redundant, but that we should appreciate their limitations by giving time to the untimely Deleuzian.

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N · O · T · E · S

1. See the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index: <http://index.gain.org>

2. All italics in quotations are faithful to the original.

3. Though, as I have noted elsewhere, what is 'different' can become a recognisable form – when it is captured and imitated it loses its creative potentiality (Jeanes, 2006).



R · É · S · U · M · É

Cet article s'appuie sur les travaux de Gilles Deleuze afin de remettre en cause le discours sur la créativité. Il a son origine dans l'attention toujours croissante portée à la recherche de solutions créatives et innovantes pour satisfaire les besoins et les désirs de la société, un récit devenu si omniprésent et un tel lieu commun qu'il risque d'être accepté sans discussion. On approfondit les idées de Deleuze qui indiquent que nous avons besoin de repenser ce que signifie être créatif et innovant, et on interroge la territorialisation habituelle de ce discours. On examine les conséquences de cette rhétorique et de cette activité, en les reliant plus particulièrement à la politique et au capitalisme. Bien que Deleuze ne propose pas de réponse simple, sa critique de ce qu'il appelle l'image problématique (mais dogmatique) de la pensée met à mal nos hypothèses et insiste sur la nécessité de considérer la genèse de notre pensée. En soulevant nous-mêmes la question de savoir d'où vient cette pensée, nous comprenons que bon nombre des problèmes que l'on essaye de résoudre et des valeurs en fonction desquelles nous travaillons, nous sont donnés « tout faits », ce qui nous conduit à travailler en fonction de ce que l'on sait et de ce que l'on reconnaît. Ce qui inhibe notre véritable potentiel créatif et d'innovation.

Abstract

This paper draws on the work of Gilles Deleuze to question the discourse of creativity. Its motivation lies in the ever-growing focus on the need for creative and innovative solutions to address the needs and wants of society, a narrative that has become a ubiquitous and taken-for-granted 'common-sense' such that it risks an unquestioning acceptance of it. The paper explores the ideas of Deleuze to suggest we need to 'rethink'

our understanding of what it means to be creative and innovative and to question the current territorialisation of this discourse. It reflects on the consequences of this rhetoric and activity, particularly relating it to the realm of the political and capitalism especially. Whilst Deleuze doesn't offer any easy answers, his critique of what he calls the problematic (but dogmatic) image of thought poses challenges to our assumptions and stresses the need to consider the genesis of our thinking. By asking ourselves "*from whence does this thought come?*" we learn that many of the problems we seek to answer, and values for which we work are given to us 'ready made' and limit us to working for what we know and recognise. This inhibits our true creative and innovative potential.

