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Lineages of the Creative City

Charles Landry (Comedia)

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Ⅰ. Creativity is like a rash

Everyone is now in the creativity game. Creativity has become a mantra of our age endowed almost exclusively with positive virtues. Twenty British cities at the last count call themselves creative. From Creative Manchester to Bristol to Plymouth to Norwich and of course Creative London. And ditto Canada. Toronto with its Culture Plan for the Creative City; Vancouver and the Creative City Task Force; or London, Ontario's similar task force and Ottawa's plan to be a creative city. In the States there is Creative Cincinnati, Creative Tampa Bay and the welter of creative regions such as Creative New England. In Australia we find the Brisbane Creative City strategy, there is Creative Auckland. Partners for Livable Communities launched a Creative Cities Initiative in 2001 and Osaka set up a Graduate School for Creative Cities in 2003 and launched a Japanese Creative Cities Network in 2005. Even the somewhat lumbering UNESCO through its Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity launched its Creative Cities Network in 2004 anointing Edinburgh as the first for its literary creativity.

On closer examination most of the strategies and plans are in fact concerned with strengthening the arts and cultural fabric, such as support for the arts and artists and the institutional infrastructure to match. In addition they focus on fostering the creative industries comprising those industries that "have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property," such as advertising, architecture, art, crafts, design, designer fashion, television, radio, film and video, interactive leisure software, music, the performing arts, publishing and software creation. However, this is not what the 'creative city' is exclusively concerned with - it is merely an important aspect.

Ⅱ. The original idea

The idea of the Creative City emerged from the late 1980's onwards along a number of trajectories, which both enrich what the creative city means today, yet also confuse because of its diversity. When introduced in the early 1990's[1] it was seen as aspirational; a clarion call to encourage open-mindedness and imagination. This has a dramatic impact on organizational culture. The philosophy is that there is always more potential in any place than any of us would think at first sight, even though very few cities, perhaps London, New York or Amsterdam are comprehensively creative. It posits that conditions need to be created for people to think, plan and act with imagination in harnessing opportunities or addressing seemingly intractable urban problems. These might range from addressing homelessness, to creating wealth or enhancing the visual environment. It is a positive concept, its assumption is that ordinary people can make the extra-ordinary happen if given the chance. Creativity in this context is applied imagination using qualities like intelligence, inventiveness and learning along the way. In the 'Creative City' it is not only artists and those involved in the creative economy that are creative, although they play an important role. Creativity can come from any source including anyone who addresses issues in an inventive way be it a social worker, a business person, a scientist or public servant. Yet creativity is legitimized in the arts and the organization of artistic creativity has specific qualities that chime well with the needs of the ideas driven economy.

It advocates the need for a culture of creativity to be embedded into how the urban stakeholders operate. By encouraging creativity and legitimising the use of imagination within the public, private and community spheres the ideasbank of possibilities and potential solutions to any urban problem will be broadened. This is the divergent thinking that generates multiple options, which needs to been aligned to convergent thinking that narrows down possibilities from which then urban innovations can emerge once they have passed the reality checker.

This requires infrastructures beyond the hardware - buildings, roads or sewage. Creative infrastructure is a combination of the hard and the soft including too the mental infrastructure, the way a city approaches opportunities and problems; the environmental conditions it creates to generate an atmosphere and the enabling devices it fosters generated through its incentives and regulatory structures.

To be a creative city the soft infrastructure needs to include: A highly skilled and flexible labour force; dynamic thinkers, creators and implementers as creativity is not only about having ideas; a large formal and informal intellectual infrastructure and the old-fashioned, empire building tendencies of universities that are more like production factories does not always help; being able to give maverick personalities space; strong communication linkages internally and with the external world and an overall culture of entrepreneurship whether this is applied to social or economic ends. This establishes a creative rub as the imaginative city stands at the cusp of a dynamic and tense equilibrium.

This creative city of imagination must identify, nurture, attract and sustain talent so it is able mobilize ideas, talents and creative organizations in order to keep their young and gifted. Being creative as an individual or organization is relatively easy, yet to be creative as a city is a different proposition given the amalgam of cultures and interests involved. The characteristics tend to include: Taking measured risks, wide-spread leadership, a sense of going somewhere, being determined but not deterministic, having the strength to go beyond the political cycle and crucially being strategically principled and tactically flexible. To maximize this requires a change in mindset, perception, ambition and will. It requires too an understanding of the new competitive urban tools such as a city's networking capacity, its cultural depth and

richness, the quality of its governance, design awareness and understanding of how to use the symbolic and perceptual understanding and eco-awareness This transformation has a strong impact on organizational culture and will not be achieved within a business as usual approach.

It requires thousands of changes in mindset, creating the conditions for people to become agents of change rather than victims of change, seeing transformation as a lived experience not a one off event. It demands invigorated leadership.

The built environment - the stage, the setting, the container - is crucial for establishing a milieu. It provides the physical pre-conditions or platform upon which the activity base or atmosphere of a city can develop. A creative milieu is a place that contains the necessary requirements in terms of 'hard' and 'soft' infrastructure to generate a flow of ideas and inventions. A milieu can be a building, a street or an area, such as the Truman's Brewery in Brick Lane; Rundle Street East in Adelaide or Queen Street in Toronto; and Soho in New York an example of the last. Can we create such a milieu? Interestingly the instances usually cited work with the grain of the old inserting the new within it.

Ⅲ. The need for creativity

Why did the popularity of creativity come about? There had been from the late 1980's onwards increased recognition that the world is changing dramatically that feels like a paradigm shift for those at the various receiving ends. Industries in the developed world already had to restructure from the mid-1970's onwards. The movement has taken time to unfold in its fullness, but its momentum has moved apace with the shift in the global terms of trade now apparent. This was eased and driven by new information technologies and the so-called internet based 'new economy' where we move from a focus on brawn to brain and value added is generated by ideas that are turned into innovations, inventions and copyrights.

This left many countries and cities flailing as they searched for new answers to creating a purpose for themselves and jobs, whilst their cities were physically locked into their past. This led to soul searching at different levels and many concluded that the old way of doing things did not work sufficiently well, including: Education which did not seem to prepare students for the demands of the 'new' world; organization, management and leadership which with its control ethos and hierarchical focus did not provide the flexibility, adaptability and resilience to cope in the emerging competitive environment; cities whose atmosphere, look and feel were seen as coming from the industrialized factory age and where quality of design was viewed as an add-on rather than as the core of what makes a city attractive and competitive.

Coping with these changes required a re-assessment of cities' resources and potential and a process of necessary re-invention on all fronts. This is an act of imagination and creation. Being creative thus seemed like the answer and the battle for greater creativity occurred on several fronts. First for example, the educational system with its then more rigid curriculum and tendency to rote like learning did not sufficiently prepare young people who were being asked to learn more subjects, but perhaps understood them less. Critics instead argued that students should acquire higher order skills such as learning how to learn, to create, to discover, innovate, problem solve and self-assess. This would trigger and activate wider ranges of intelligences; foster openness, exploration and adaptability and allow the transfer of knowledge between different contexts as students would learn how to understand the essence of arguments rather than recall out of context facts. Second, harnessing the motivation, talent and skills increasingly could not happen in top down organizational structures. Interesting people, often mavericks, increasingly were not willing to work within traditional structures. This led to new forms of managing and governance with titles such as matrix man-

agement or stakeholder democracy, whose purpose was to unleash creativity and bring greater fulfilment. The drive for innovations required working environments where people wanted to share and collaborate for mutual advantage. This was necessary outside the workplace and increasingly the notion of the creative milieu came into play, which is a physical urban setting where people feel encouraged to engage, communicate and share. Often these milieu were centred around redundant warehouses which had been turned into incubators for new companies.

Today we can talk of a creativity and even Creative City Movement, but back in the late 1980's when most of the constituent ideas were developed the key terms discussed were: culture, the arts, cultural planning, cultural resources, the cultural industries. Creativity as a broad based attribute only came into common, as distinct from specialist, currency, in the mid-1990's. For example Australia's 'Creative Nation' instigated in 1992 by Paul Keating spelt out the country's cultural policy. In the UK by contrast it was the publication of Ken Robinson's a national commission on creativity, education and the economy for the UK Government 'All Our Future: Creativity, Culture and Education'[2] that put creativity onto the political agenda. Later some of the phraseology changed. The cultural industries became the creative industries and the creative economy and the notion of the creative class then emerged in 2002. The publication of Richard Florida's book 'The rise of the Creative Class'[3] gave the 'movement' a dramatic lift with the danger of hyping the concept out of favour.

Ⅳ. Stepping back in time

Let's step back in time. In terms of appearance the main thinkers associated with seeing the city as a potential creative resource are: Robert McNulty, president of Partners for Livable Places (later Communities) founded in 1977 after a consortium was formed at the encouragement of the US National Endowment for the Arts. Partners initially focused on design and culture as resources for livability. In 1979 Harvey Perloff encouraged by Partners launched a programme to document the economic value of design and cultural amenities calculating initially in Los Angeles the value of cultural activities, excluding the film industry. Avoiding the word 'culture' the 'Economics of Amenity' programme illustrated how cultural amenities and the quality of life in a community are linked to economic development and job creation. It involved managing the social and physical changes that affect every community.

This started a significant array of economic impact studies of the arts. From the early 1980's onwards the arts community starting in the US began to justify their economic worth[4], a short while later similar comprehensive studies were followed up in the UK[5] and Australia[6]. This work created a link between the arts and the city exemplified by conferences organized by the British American Arts Association such 'Arts and the Changing City: An Agenda for Urban Regeneration' (1988). The continuing underlying theme from then on was that arts and cultural activities are creative and the creativity of artists contributes to the vitality of cities making them more interesting and desirable. This includes public artists, street performers or those activities performed inside buildings. At the outset this rarely embraced artists working in modern media.

Over time Partners launched three programmes: Cities in Transition, The New Civics, and Celebrate the American City and during the early 1990s continued to broaden its definition of livability. 'The Shaping Growth in America' programme added a human dimension that involved social equity, children and families, minorities and the poor. Partners' core belief that social equity and human potential are the most important elements of a livable community understandably connected to its Creative City programme

launched in 2001.

V. Cultural planning and cultural resources

Core concepts used by Partners were the idea of cultural planning and cultural resources, which they saw as the planning of urban resources including design, architecture, parks, the natural environment, animation and especially arts activity within that and tourism. The terms were introduced into Europe by Franco Bianchini in 1990, who coming from Italy was acquainted with their notion of 'resorsi culturali' and into Australia by Colin Mercer in 1991. Bianchini based his notions on Wolf von Eckhardt, the architecture correspondent of the Washington Post who in 1980 in 'The Arts & City Planning'[7] noted that 'effective cultural planning involves all the arts, the art of urban design, the art of winning community support, the art of transportation planning and mastering the dynamics of community development', to which Bianchini added 'the art of forming partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sectors and ensuring the fair distribution of economic, social and cultural resources'.[8] Mercer[9] added cultural planning has to be "the strategic and integral use of cultural resources in urban and community development.' And in particular focused on the idea of cultural mapping. Bianchini also elaborated on the term cultural resources which over time were refined in collaborative work with Landry.

Cultural resources are embodied in peoples' creativity, skills and talents. They are not only 'things' like buildings, but also symbols, activities and the repertoire of local products in crafts, manufacturing and services, like the intricate skills of violin makers in Cremona in Italy, the wood carvers of the Cracow region or the makers of ice sculptures in Northern Finland. Urban cultural resources include the historical, industrial and artistic heritage representing assets including architecture, urban landscapes or landmarks. Local and indigenous traditions of public life, festivals, rituals or stories as well as hobbies and enthusiasms. Amateur cultural activities can exist simply for enjoyment, but they can also be rethought to generate new products or services. Resources like language, food and cooking, leisure activities, clothing and subcultures or intellectual traditions that exist everywhere are often neglected, but can be used to express the specialness of a location. And, of course, cultural resources are the range and quality of skills in the performing and visual arts and the creative industries'. They added "Cultural resources are the raw materials of the city and its value base; its assets replacing coal, steel or gold. Creativity is the method of exploiting these resources and helping them grow. The task of urban planners is to recognize, manage and exploit these resources responsibly. An appreciation of culture should shape the technicalities of urban planning and development rather than being seen as a marginal add-on to be considered once the important planning questions like housing, transport and land-use have been dealt with. So a culturally informed perspective should condition how planning as well as economic development or social affairs should be addressed." Cultural resources reflect where a place is, why it is like it is and where its potential might lead it. This focus draws attention to the distinctive, the unique and the special in any place.

VI. From cultural industries to creative industries and the creative economy

From the late 1970's onwards UNESCO[10] and the Council of Europe began to investigate the cultural industries. From the perspective of cities, however, it was Nick Garnham, later professor of communications at the University of Westminster, who when seconded to the Greater London Council in 1983/4 set up a cultural industries unit put the cultural industries on the agenda. Drawing on, re-reading and adapting the

original work by Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin in the 1930's which had seen 'the culture industry' as a kind of monster and influenced too by Hans Magnus Enzensberger[11] he saw the cultural industries as a potentially liberating force. Garnham felt that whilst the alternative media movement, which had been a strong oppositional force in the 1970's, was important it tended to marginalize itself and speak to itself. Furthermore he was concerned that many of these activities were based on sweated labour and self-exploitation or reliant on grant funding. Instead he argued that focusing on commercial viability, the market and real audiences had positive benefits and potentially would have far greater impact on changing the media landscape. Coming from the left Garnham was concerned that it had some measure of control over its messages. The Cultural industries unit initiated some of the first studies of the creative industries and its two of its employers Ken Worpole, later to work with Comedia, and Geoff Mulgan[12], later to become the founder of Demos and Tony Blair's strategy advisor, in 1986 wrote the influential 'Saturday Night or Sunday Morning: from Arts to Industry'. This shifted thinking showing how the cultural industries could be both economic and political forces, by providing jobs and giving a voice to under-represented views.

Over time as cities such as Liverpool, Sheffield, Manchester or Birmingham struggle with industrial restructuring the cultural industries seemed a possible answer to a mixed conundrum of problems, such as the need for new jobs, how to anchor identity in a changing world, how to foster social inclusion. Thus throughout the 1980's and into the 1990's increasingly the industrial cities in the Midlands and North of Britain developed cultural industries strategies as part of their attempt to get into the new economy seeing it as part of their economic regeneration goals. This created the link between arts and regeneration. A few cities such as Sheffield, Birmingham or Manchester in addition tried to centre the cultural industries into the heart of the physical development of cities focusing on one area such as Digbeth Media Zone (designated in 1985) in Birmingham now called Eastside; the Sheffield Cultural Industries Quarter, the Manchester Northern Quarter or Glasgow' Merchant City programme.

When the Labour government returned in 1997 the Department of Culture, Media and Sports renamed the cultural industries the creative industries, perhaps trying to avoid is political connotations, and set up a Creative Industries Task Force. Meanwhile within European cities similar developments began to take place although with a time lapse that has now been overcome. Equally the recognition of the importance of the sector came late to the European Union with the first comprehensive assessment of the sector in 2001 called 'Exploitation and Development of the Job Potential in the Cultural Sector in the Age of Digitalisation'

An important player in this development was Comedia, founded in 1978 by Charles Landry, who are now associated with the idea of 'The Creative City'. The first detailed study of the concept was called 'Glasgow: The Creative City and its Cultural Economy' in 1990, this was followed in 1994 by a meeting in Glasgow of 5 German and 5 British cities (Cologne, Dresden, Unna, Essen, Karlsruhe and Bristol, Glasgow, Huddersfield, Leicester and Milton Keynes) to explore urban creativity, resulting in 'The Creative City in Britain and Germany'[13], followed up a short version of 'The Creative City' in 1995 and a far longer one called 'The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators' in 2000, which popularized the concept. Unknown to the author at the time in fact the first mention of the 'Creative City' as a concept was in a seminar of that title organized by the Australia Council, the City of Melbourne, the Ministry of Planning and Environment of Victoria and many other partners held between the 5th -7th September 1988. Its focus was how arts and cultural concerns could be better integrated into the planning process for city development. Whilst several speakers were arts practitioners the spread was broad including planners and architects. A keynote speech by David Yencken former Secretary for Planning and Environment for

Victoria spelt out a broader agenda stating that whilst we give firm attention to the efficiency of cities and some focus on equity we should stress that the city is more. 'It should be emotionally satisfying and stimulate creativity amongst its citizens'. The city can trigger this given its complexity and variety especially when seen as an interconnected, whole and viewed holistically. This ecological perspective is reflected in Yencken later appointment as chairman of the Australian Conservation Foundation. This prefigured some of the key themes of the Creative City and how cities can make the most of their possibilities. "Creative planning is based on the idea of cultural resources and the holistic notion that every problem is merely an opportunity in disguise; every weakness has a potential strength and that even the seemingly 'invisible' can be made into something positive - that is something can be made out of nothing. These phrases might sound like trite sloganeering, but when full-heartedly believed can be powerful planning and ideas generating tools"[14].

Ⅶ. The emergence of the Creative Class

The USA which had been so influential in getting the idea of the economic impact of the arts off the agenda had been very slow in seeing the link between the creative industries and the creative city. That in spite of the fact that renowned researchers such as Allen Scott[15] and Michael Storper[16] had been describing their dynamics and the popularity of books such as as well as publications such as John Howkins[17] 'The Creative Economy: How people make money from ideas'. One of the first studies similar to those being undertaken in Europe was the 'Blueprint for investment in New England's creative economy' of 2001. Then a combination of factors occurred: A recognition of restructuring was hitting deep into the US as global terms of trade shifted production to South East Asia and the appearance of Richard Florida's 'The Rise of the Creative Class' in 2002. Its timing hit a nerve with its clever slogans such as 'talent, technology, tolerance - the 3T's' and interesting sounding indicators like the 'gay index', that could give numbers to ideas. Importantly it connected the three areas: a creative class - a novel idea, the creative economy and what conditions in cities attract the creative class. At the time writing his book he had not been aware of the creative city debate. At its core he argues that a new sector has emerged in communities - the 'creative class' - those employed in coming up with new ideas and better ways of doing things that represents some 38.3 million Americans, roughly 30 percent of the entire U.S. workforce up from less than 20 percent in 1980, whose income was nearly double the average norm. Places with large numbers of creative class members were also affluent and growing. To support his theory, Florida identified occupations he considered to be in the creative class, and measure their size and composition. Companies are attracted to places where creative people reside argued Florida and he found a strong correlation between places that are tolerant and diverse, as measured his Gay and Bohemian indices, and economic growth.

He concluded that economic development is driven in large measure by lifestyle factors, such as tolerance and diversity, urban infrastructure and entertainment. His core includes people in science, engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music and entertainment representing around 12% of employed people in the US. Around this core of the Creative Class is a broader group of creative professionals in business and finance, law, health care and related fields another 18% making 30% in total.

Florida developed a series of indices to compare regions and cities, such as: Creative Class index, which measures the percentage of people employed in Creative Class; the High Tech Index—based on the percentage of national high-tech output and percentage of region's output that comes from high-tech; the Innovation Index measured as patents granted per capita; the Talent Index measured as percentage of peo-

ple with a higher degree or above: the Gay Index, a measure of over- or under- representation of coupled gay people relative to nation as a whole; the Bohemian Index calculated similarly to the Gay Index based on occupations such as authors, designers, musicians, composers, actors, directors, painters, sculptors, artist printmakers, photographers, dancers, artists and performers; the Melting Pot Index, which measures the relative percentage of foreign-born people in region; the Composite Diversity Index, which combines the Gay, Bohemian and Melting Pot Index and finally the Creativity Index a composite measure based on the Innovation , High-Tech, Gay Index, and the Creative Class.

Ⅷ. Where next?

The Creative City has now become catch all phrase in danger of losing its bite and obliterating the reasons why the idea emerged in the first place which are essentially about unleashing, harnessing, empowering potential from whatever source. Cities instead tend to restrict its meaning to the arts and activities within the creative economy professions calling any cultural plan a 'creative city' plan, when this is only an aspect of a community's creativity. Overuse, hype and the tendency for cities to adopt the term without thinking through its real consequences could mean that the notion becomes hollowed out, chewed up and thrown out until the next big slogan comes along. The creative city notion is about a journey of becoming not a fixed state of affairs. It is a challenge, when taken seriously, to existing organizational structures, habitual ways of doing things and power configurations. It is concerned with enabling potential and creation to unfold so unleashing the ideas, imagination and implementation and delivery capacities of individuals and communities. It means overcoming some more deeply entrenched obstacles many of which are in the mind and mindset, including thinking and operating within silos and operating hierarchically in departmental ghettoes or preferring to think in reductionist ways that break opportunities and problems into fragments rather than seeing the holistic more interconnected picture. A pre-condition for good city making. The creativity of the creative city is about lateral and horizontal thinking, the capacity to see parts and the whole simultaneously as well as the woods and the trees at once.

1) See Landry Charles [1990] "*Glasgow: The Creative City & its cultural economy*", Glasgow Development Agency. Landry and Bianchini [1995] "*The Creative City*", Demos, London. Landry, Charles [2000] "*The creative city—a toolkit for urban innovators*". London: Earthscan Publications.

2) Ken Robinson [1999] "*All Our Future: Creativity, Culture and Education*" DfES.

3) Florida, R. [2002] "*The rise of the creative class—and how it is transforming leisure, community and everyday life*". New York: Basic Books.

4) Port Authority of NY & NJ [1983] "*The Arts as an Industry: Their Economic Importance to the New-York-New Jersey Metropolitan Region*".

5) Myerscough John [1988] "*The Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain*", Policy Studies Institute, London.

6) Throsby David and Withers Glenn [1979] "*The Economics of the Performing Arts*", Edward Arnold, London Reissued in 1993. His most recent book is "*Economics and Culture*" [2001] Cambridge University Press.

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8) Franco Bianchini [1990] 'Urban renaissance?' "*The arts and the urban regeneration process - tackling the inner cities*" ed. by Susanne Macgregor & Ben Pimlott , OUP.

9) Colin Mercer, [1991] "*What is cultural planning?*" Community Arts Network SA. This was elaborated more systematically in "*The Cultural Planning Handbook: An essential Australian guide*" by David Grogan and

Colin Mercer [1995] with David Engwicht pub. Allen Unwin. Mercer was a director of Griffith University's Institute for Cultural Policy Studies from 1991-1995

10) UNESCO [1982] "*Cultural Industries: A challenge for the future of culture*", UNESCO, Paris.

11) Enzensberger Hans Magnus [1976] "*Raids and Reconstructions*", Pluto Press, London.

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13) Landry Charles, Bianchini Franco, Ebert Ralph, Gnad Fritz, Kunzmann Klaus [1996] "*The Creative City in Britain and Germany*", Anglo-German Foundation.

14) Landry Charles, [2001] "*Helsinki Towards a Creative City*", Helsinki Urban Facts.

15) Scott Allen, [1999] "*The Cultural Economy of Cities (Theory, Culture and Society Series)*", Sage.

16) Storper Michael [1997] "*The Regional World: Territorial Development in a Global Economy*" The Guildford Press, New York.

17) Howkins John [2001] "*The Creative Economy: How people make money from ideas*", Penguin.