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THE EVOLVING CREATIVE INDUSTRIES:
from original assumptions to contemporary interpretations

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This is a set of thoughts about where Creative Industries has gone as a research and policy idea since its inception in 1997. I would like to thank and acknowledge all those people who are working in this area here at QUT and elsewhere in the city and broader, because I have certainly learnt a lot of what I am going to talk about today from them, and from the collaborative research and learning environment that we have got here.

I am going to talk a little about the origins, then talk about the idea of creative industries, its wide dissemination in different parts around the world and thirdly I am going to look at where the research and policy agenda is heading six years on from its inception.

1.0 Origins

The term in only really six years old. It was developed for the first time by the Creative Industries Taskforce in the UK in 1997. The incoming Blair Government developed a task force of inter-departmental and industry representation to develop this idea. The inception was 1997, their first report was delivered in 1998 and then a revision/update of that report in 2001. The definition which many of you will be well familiar with: ‘activities which have their origin in individual creativity skill and talent and which have the potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property’ - is a definition of the creative industries which has remained remarkably accepted as the idea has developed and disseminated around the world.

There were thirteen industry sectors and what’s impressive I suppose about this definition, is that it is so ambitious, it runs the risk of being so broad as to be incoherent while insisting that there is a connection between these thirteen sectors, and that the connection is that they all have their origin in individual skill, creativity and talent. They all have the potential for wealth and job creation through the exploitation of intellectual property. So does that definition connect all those in a productive and coherent way? What about the ambitiousness of this definition?

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport template, this definition and this aggregation of these 13 sectors is worth thinking a little bit about. When Blair came in, he restructured the Department of Heritage to a Department of Culture, Media and Sport and this was seen as very much a sign of change after the long duree, the long period in power of the Conservatives in the UK under Margaret Thatcher and John Major. Keep in mind that the definition is very much about the national, rather than the sub-national, that is the regional, or the super-national. It’s very much a national definition, it’s about national branding. The third point is that it was a branding exercise of what was already was well-established. It’s not first and foremost a developmental exercise - which it is in most other countries that have adopted the term. It was not first and foremost about growing from a low base a set of emergent industry sectors. It was more about branding what was already pre-eminent in the UK Creative economy. And its purposes were therefore principally about the repositioning of the UK as 'cool Britannia' for trade and its pre-eminent positioning as a creative industries powerhouse in the world.

So this template that I've mentioned, has remarkable resilience as it has gone around the world, has some upsides and has some downsides, and I have already alluded to that to some extent. I think the key upsides are that it mainstreams creativity. For the first time it brings those industry sectors, those enterprises and those people who are creative in this broad sense, right in to that mainstream of economic calculation and activity. Secondly, that it brings about a wide convergence of sectors, which have not typically been seen as having a lot to do with each other in most policy frameworks. So a wide convergence of sectors. Thirdly, there is a continuum that establishes a connection from non-commercial arts through to highly commercial software, ICT, games sectors. This continuum from the non-commercial to the commercial is a crucial achievement of this template. The downsides. The economists have accused it of being incoherent, that this 13-sector definition mixes inputs and products and services so it mixes inputs and outputs in ways that make it 'uneconomical' from a traditional economics point of view, a rather incoherent definition. More controversially, I suppose from a political point of view, there has been a lot of criticism of it for excluding that which should be included, such as say, the heritage sector, or cultural tourism, and including such sectors such as software, straight ICT software development which might not need to be there because it is not arguably a creative industry. There have been some downsides to this definition as well as upsides. I would like to refer to it as a dynamic, but potentially incoherent definition of the creative industries because of its breadth and because of its ambitiousness.

2.0 Wide dissemination

The second part of the talk is about its wide dissemination around the world. The first thing to say about it, is that there has been a remarkable uptake of this term in many jurisdictions around the world. It has really surprised me. I had thought that it may well remain a kind of 'British dominion' phenomenon. Something that the Australians, New Zealanders, and maybe the Canadians and few others might pick up. But that has not been the case. In the UK itself, over this six year period there has been – if we can just characterise it very briefly – there has been a devolution of policy concern and interest in the creative industries from the national level to the regional level. This is not unrelated to the general devolutionary trends in political structure in the United Kingdom. The Scottish have a clear set of priorities here and the 16 Regional Development Authorities in England have all been tasked by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to come up with their own sub-national creative industry strategies. This has produced (and here I am scanning over a lot of detail), criticisms from local councils, from arts bodies, and indeed from academics that this is a kind of template imposition of 'everyone's going to have a creative industries strategy, go out and get one whether you want one or not'. There has been quite a lot of criticism growing around the creative industries idea in the UK itself. The actual originator of the idea!

In Europe, it would be true to say that creative industries is not a term that is widely used. This could be in part because it is seen as being associated so strongly with British branding. In the policy literature in Europe you see more of an emphasis on broader issues of creativity as an input into innovation systems. You hear the term 'content industries' used, and also these rather funny acronyms and neologisms like digi-cult, digital cultural industries and the acronym TIMES, which stands for telecommunications, information, media, entertainment and software, which is certainly a very broad series of sectors - broader than the creative industries. Again, in the policy discussions and literature you get a wide range of terminology, but not really a focussing in on creative industries *per se*.

The creative industries idea is broken out, as I have said, of the UK and the UK dominion frame. I think that has been rapid and interesting. One of the most interesting aspects of it. In running through the non-UK dominion areas, I am going to leave the PRC - mainland China - out, because there are people here who are far more expert than me at tracking its policy developments and we could have a discussion about it later.

The following are some of the jurisdictions in East Asia that I have visited recently or have looked at fairly closely.

Firstly, Korea. Korea is a country that has built its economy on very strong corporative linkages between government and big business. It's not unsurprising that its approach to creative industries has seen major investment in big infrastructure. The creative city development in Seoul is an attempt to bring together very large government and corporate infrastructure development and to construct a large cluster of related creative industries in a new precinct in and around Seoul. This follows the so-call Asian melt-down of 1997/98, the Koreans have gone through a re-think of that close corporatism that has seen the untoward degree influence of the chaebol – the big industry, the big corporations. In following a corrected corporatist approach, it is still characterised by this emphasis on rather large companies leading the way. I stress that point because in so many discussions about the creative industries, there is an emphasis on small and medium size enterprise, and indeed micro business that this is somewhat different.

The other thing to say about Korea that is really terrifically interesting is that beyond policy, there is a whole range of renewed creativity that is flowing through the economy in Korea. Its world-leading level of broadband connectivity - 70% or more to the home - means that Korea is so far ahead of any other country in broadband connectivity that it's not funny. There is daylight between Korea and the rest of the world, and that is a story in itself which I won't go into, but it's meant that on that basis massive multi-player game development is occurring at pace in Korea. The Korean originated game Lineage is massively popular in both the country and the region. Its animation industry which was organised and set up originally as a US low-cost sweatshop for Hollywood animation is now growing its own indigenous content and indeed film that is happening in the same way. It should be noted in passing for the regulationists among us that Korea has one of the very few film exhibition quotas in the world which has meant the stimulus to the local film industry has been supported at a regulatory as well at a creative infrastructure and technical infrastructure level. So in general Korea exhibits all the characteristics at both a policy and at a practice level of going well beyond the way in which they have been criticised in the past by political economists as being a client state of the US.

In Hong Kong, there is a focus down away from the 13-sector approach, this broad sectoral approach that the UK template established. A focussing down on a specific set of strengths; advertising, design, publishing, conventional – that is analogue film and television - as well as digital entertainment. There are particular strategies in place in Hong Kong to attempt to maintain the slipping eminence of its film and television industries and in general, again skipping over much detail, I would want to characterise the Hong Kong policy work in this area as somewhat driven by the UK template without an enormous amount of new insight at this stage.

In Singapore, again people here would know more than I about this so I won't go into a great amount of detail. I would characterise the Singapore policy environment as being one where arts, culture and audiovisual content is (and I apologise for the ugly neologism there) to 'creativise' its ICT pre-eminence. In other words, it's recognised in Singapore that its investment in information and communications technology has brought it to a very pre-eminent position in the region, if not in the world. What they now need to do is to move towards content and creativity to really push the next wave of development. Very interestingly as well, there is as much if not more emphasis on education as a delivery vehicle for this enhanced creativity as there is in anything else. Education is the crucial delivery vehicle and in doing that, there is a recognition that long-term investments are need to embed creativity and to slowly, and it may well be a generational thing, to slowly embed the importance of creativity through education - as with so many things we can learn from the Singapore policy environment.

In Taiwan, very distinct from Korea, the economy is very much characterised by small and medium size enterprise base. Taiwan likes to compare itself regularly to Korea and often these two countries Taiwan looks at Korea and says 'if only we had more large corporations' and Korea looks at Taiwan and says 'if only we had more dynamic, small and medium enterprises'. Such is life in the world of international comparisons!

In Taiwan it is very much characterised by small and medium sized base. The creative industries are being looked at as a way forward in the light of a contracting and narrow export industry base. The semi-conductor industry in Taiwan - which is the major export sector and is based largely in one area of one city in Taiwan - is being considered to be too narrow an export base, particularly in the world of ICT downturn at the moment and what's been around for the last couple of years. In looking to diversify the economy, as well as responding to a range of needs to create a broader field of cultural assertion within the country, there is a focus on creative industries. This is interpreted in Taiwan as being as much about arts and craft as it is about games. They are just as interested in the arts and crafts sector as a cultural tourism enhancement as they are about the higher tech ICT end of the creative industries, the development of the games sector. This is particularly around issues of indigenous cultural expression. I would say that there has been a very high level of public sector coordination in Taiwan, some very sophisticated policy thinking, but it is more at the arts end than at the other end at this stage. The other observation that is interesting and we could certainly look at that in relation to many of these other jurisdictions - whether the higher education sector is contributing, leading or indeed inhibiting the development of this kind of thinking. My impression of Taiwan is that the higher education sector is quite conservative about this idea of the creative industries.

Moving out of the non-UK dominion area and talking now briefly about New Zealand and Australia. There is a growth innovation strategy in New Zealand that is framing the whole strategic new economy area of the country. There are three sectors that have been identified in New Zealand: bio-technology, ICT and the creative industries. It is a very focussed strategy on three areas that can with appropriate government policy intervention be developed and within the creative industries sector in New Zealand it is a very focussed concentration on screen production and design. Those two sectors, screen production and design, and there is some thinking about whether music and interactive media should be put in, but they are very much scoping exercises only at this stage. Interestingly as well, from the point of view of how focussed the New Zealand policy environment is, because it is such a small country, is that it is just not design as a general sector, it is design as an enabler of other sectors, so design inputs into health or business services, not as a sector in itself. That is where the policy focus is and funding is being based. In New Zealand the industry development frame around creative industries has two objectives: grow export income or foreign exchange and arrest the slide down the OECD ladder. While there is a very sharp focus at the industry development end in New Zealand, there are still inevitable overlaps and blurred edges between the Arts Body Creative New Zealand and Industry New Zealand.

Briefly on Australia, I think that what we are seeing in Australia is a movement towards the digital content and applications end of the creative industries and a greater focus - again this is at national policy level - on the creative industries as it inputs into the wider service industries, such as health, education, government and business services. Key policy documents around at the moment such as *Australia's broadband connectivity* from the National Office for the Information Economy and DCITA. There is their Creative Industries Cluster Study which is now into its third stage, focussing more and more on these aspects of the creative industries rather than on the sector broadly as a whole. Remember what I am saying here is this is only about the national level. You could compare instructively and I'll say a few things in a minute about Arts Queensland's Creative Queensland strategy, the Department of State Development's Queensland's Creative Industry strategy which is in development at the moment, and of course the Brisbane City Council's cluster groups and its approach to creative industries development. All of which have their own 'take' on this, and are not necessarily mappable onto the nationa level.

And even in the US where you would expect there to be certainly resistance to adoption of a Euro and dominion set of definitions, we know that Harvard economist Richard Caves book *Creative Industries* has been around a few years. But interestingly Jack Valenti, the Motion Picture Distributors Association boss who is the *eminence grise* I suppose of the entertainment industries worldwide, has started to use the term creative industries, basically to mean the same as the entertainment industries, but his adoption of the term is interesting from the point of view of its international portability. There is also an interesting report called 'Beyond Productivity' for the National Academy of Sciences which also goes into some detail on the term and investigates the terms' applicability to the US policy scene.

There has been this remarkable uptake, and it is the reason I posed the rhetorical question earlier, why this surprisingly rapid uptake outside the UK dominion areas in particular. I think this somewhat gives a lie to a lot of thinking that's been around for three or four years that says the creative industries are the same as the cultural industries, which are the same as the content industries, which are the same as the entertainment industries, which are the same as this and that and the next thing. They are all basically just terms we can use in all sorts of overlapping ways and not worry too much about it. I think that is emerging as being not so tenable any longer. It's not merely a convenient umbrella brand I am suggesting. I give you one example of this. In an extremely careful run-through of the terms, David Hesmondhalgh in his text *Cultural Industries* settles on cultural industries because it is a more coherent term for his purposes focussing in on the major entertainment sectors (film, broadcast, music, games etc). This is a more coherent definition for Hesmondhalgh than the creative industries, but what he misses or what is missed if you focussed in only on that kind of definition, is that you miss the whole dynamic of the non-commercial to commercial continuum that creative industries as a term captures, and it seems to me particularly if we are engaged - as inevitably we are if we are doing this sort of work from a place like Brisbane, and Queensland - if we are interested in that range, that continuum from the non-commercial through to the pre-commercial through to the commercialisable, through to the thoroughly commercial – if that connection I started with has been one of the strengths of the term is to be maintained, then the Hesmondhalgh exercise, you can't follow it because it actually closes off a whole range of connections that may be productive in a research and policy and industry development sense. I suggest in replace of that, that the reason creative industries has been taken up in this way is that it actually connects two key contemporary policy clusters. On the one hand high-growth ICT and R & D based sectors, so *production in the new economy* and the experience economy - cultural identity and social empowerment - *consumption in the new economy*. It's that ability to bring those two together that I think the creative industries has got the legs it has.

3.0 Research and policy agenda

The third and last part of the talk is where is the research and policy agenda heading? I am going to divide this part of the talk into critical responses, implications of increasing sub-sectoral focus. That is the kind of exercise I have just gone through. More and more the policy frame is on certain parts of this continuum, rather than the continuum as a whole. Then I'll look at the Creative Industries as a R & D sector as a cutting edge research agenda, and a few things about the challenges of mapping the Creative Industries.

3.1 Critical responses

A quick run-through some of the critical responses to this term that have occurred. There is obviously a general query that arises from any attempt to place a very close relationship between the creative industries and the claims about the new economy. There is a range of criticisms and critiques of claims about the new economy which we could rehearse in discussion. The general critiques can also apply to this sub-sector of the new economy, i.e. creative industries.

The second point is something about the social dimensions of the creative industries. There is interesting data emerging on those who are participating in the creative industries in the UK. There is a concern emerging that at the ICT or high tech end of the creative industries, it is a very white sector. If you have social dimensions to your policies about inclusivity, then there are some concerns that would be typical of the ICT in general that the creative industries, the ICT end of it is looking like the ICT sector in general. This is reinforced to some extent by Richard Florida's work on the creative class where he identifies a loosened sense of social community amongst the creative class. The creative class look like most other parts of highly mobile capital. Highly skilled knowledge workers on high rates of pay and highly mobile employment. Florida points to the fact that these are not necessarily the kind of people and these kinds of clusters are not necessarily characterised by high level of social identification, social capital and so on. So there is that kind of worry about the potential disjunction between the social and the economic.

Andy Pratt, economic geographer from London School of Economics, regularly issues 'health warnings' as he calls them, health warnings about the faddishness of cluster theory, and he worries in quite some detail about template-driven policies: everyone has got to have a creative industry strategy. Well, what does that mean really in a country like the UK? He's got a lot of worries about that, so *caveat emptor*, buyer beware, about fads and about template driven policies.

There are a bunch of people in Australia who have expressed concerns about either the creative industries impoverishing accounts of art and artistic creativity, or being historically blind to the innovations much like creative industries claims in the history of art. As many of you would know, Andrew McNamara has criticised John Hartley and I for a sense of historical blindness about the innovativeness of art history in our claims about creative industries. Scott McGuire at Melbourne University has written interestingly on this topic and Louise Adler, who is now in charge of MUP, and was the Deputy Director of the Victorian College of the Arts, when she directed a few broadsides on what she regarded as the untoward economism of creative industries claims. Of course Tom O'Regan (who is here today) has written a detailed and nuanced account of trends in cultural and creative industries policy where he tracks a tendency towards a focus on too much culture and on the other hand too little culture and has suggested that the Creative Industries idea is at that other end – too little culture end of things. Again I am just really doing all those dot points on this at the moment, but you should be aware of that range of critical response.

3.2 Sub-sectoral focus/relations between cultural, industry development policies and R&D approaches

What are the implications of this increasing sub-sectoral focus that I have tried to trace in these various jurisdictions? What it is throwing up is that there are a series of tensions between cultural policies, industry development policies and emerging R&D policies. They don't necessarily map onto each other terribly readily, but of course in the policy environment they have got to be made to work together so that there isn't redundancy, double counting, and competition.

Briefly on each of these areas:

3.2.1 Cultural policy

The cultural policy area there are great opportunities, but also great challenges it seems to me and I want to very briefly give you a little case study on this by comparing Creative Nation, the Keating Government's major cultural policy statement in 1994, with Creative Queensland delivered last year as state-of-the-art thinking in this state about cultural policy. Before I do, if you sat through 35 minutes of my going on so far, you should at least have a little break and have a look at that nice cartoon, which is a Nicholson cartoon around the time of Creative Nation, and I hope you can pick out that the Arts and Culture are calling out for their Romeo to come and save them, and instead of Romeo with a rose, Romeo is driving around the corner in an industrial strength tractor, and that's Keating of course driving it, so industry and art draws attention to the great tension between them.

Creative Nation delivered a very substantial amount of money - $290m of extra funding - into the sector in 1994 and the point I want to make about Creative Nation, firstly, everyone knew exactly what it wanted to fund. It funded arts and media sectors silos. It had money for film, money for broadcasting, for arts, dance, and money for theatre, and so on. It funded into the sectorial silos and it funded reasonably big time. When you compare that to Creative Queensland, the latter is a whole-of-government policy. While it has been run out of Arts Queensland, it's meant to be a whole of government policy, so it is not about sectors within the arts and media, it's about how culture can be supported across all the departments, all the portfolios, and so in an accompanying document called Creative Government, which went out at the same time as Creative Queensland, you have an alphabetical list of all the portfolios in the Queensland Government and how they are each contributing to cultural objectives and as I read through those, I was struck by a few. One, the Police Department is cultural because it has a Pipe Band, and perhaps more scarily it's also got a statement that says its contribution to indigenous cultural policy is that it will seek to return indigenous remains to their rightful owners. Where did the remains come from and how did they get deposited in the Police Department is something that it doesn't talk about. Treasury is also cultural because it administers a gaming fund that has been accessed by some arts organisations.

What I am trying to allude to is the point is a serious one, it's not to ridicule so much as to say: a greater set of opportunities in a whole-of-government approach, also go along with greater challenges. How you can make coherent whole-of-government policy around cultural development, it's a brave attempt, but it does have some rough edges. Another thing to say about Creative Queensland is that it's quite radical in its cross-sectoral approach to funding. The themes in the paper are not about dance or drama or multimedia but about place, traditions, heritage, creative enterprise. So it's cross-sectoral and whole-of-government. One commentator has suggested that this means that it's a policy developer's dream but a service deliverer's nightmare, because how do you gather up those huge claims of whole-of-government and actually deliver them in programmes that can be tracked and implemented?

To try and get to some issues about cultural policy, you might like to take account of some of these factors on this slide (trends that are being addressed by the creative industries arguments): diminished role for state patronage, cheaper technology makes art easier, the 'experiencers' become as important as the producers, and so on. We should also keep in mind - this slide comes from a UK presentation from Simon Caves – the differences between the industrial economy structure and the creative industries structure. In the latter, there is a lot more originators, quite a few more producers or organisers, still very much an oligopolistic distribution, but consumption becomes more and more important. And really, those two diagrams don't really capture at all, they are still rather linear, but they don't capture the dynamics of consumption coming more and more into play. The consumer becomes as important potentially as the producer.

3.2.2 Industry development

That's some things about cultural policy. Quickly now on industry development. The first thing to say on industry development strategies is that they are really only applicable to some sectors of this 13 sector field. They are not necessarily appropriate to all and so to the extent that there is more and more focus on industry development strategies, the more inevitably it becomes sub-sectoral. So the two go together, the dynamics of industry development taking a greater and greater share of focus over cultural development and the idea of sub-sectoral focus. I have summarised in this slide a range of ways in which industry development could occur in some of these sectors, and many of them are not germane or usually associated with cultural policy.

3.2.3 R&D

Thirdly, the creative industries as an R&D sector. Again there is a history to this and I won't go into very much detail right now, but it's really written out of 'new growth' theory in economics which has placed much more emphasis than neoclassical economics on the role of human capital development which is delivered through education, training and that embedding of a culture of change that I referred to in relation to Singapore's education strategies. This emphasis on human capital, on the knowledge worker and the development of the knowledge worker and entrepreneur, means that we have seen a big shift toward a renewed role for government after two decades of neoliberalism which has really been the dominant discourse in most Western economies over a couple of decades. So Canada, New Zealand and Australia is seeing evidence of creative industries being though through as an R&D sector and the principles for R&D intervention are interestingly to be compared with and are not mappable onto cultural and industry intervention principles. That assertion we can come back to because I am running out of time. So in Canada, there is some interesting work on stimulating Canada's broadband content industry through R&D strategies. In New Zealand, the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology is promulgating a policy in this area. In Australia, many of you will be familiar with the National Research Priorities against which all university, CSIRO, defence R&D and the nuclear science people - all the major research facilities and infrastructure at a national level - have to take account of these priorities and one of them is 'Frontier technologies for building and transforming Australian industries'. In there you will find some key statements such as 'research is needed to exploit the huge potential of the digital media industry', and a number of examples of content applications like e-commerce, multimedia, content generation and imaging are mentioned for priority R&D development. It is really in that framework that its arguable that the CRC Interaction Design (now renamed ACID, Australasian Centre for Interaction Design, with QUT Creative Industries as the lead site) won last year and which is starting soon.

3.3 Mapping the creative industries

Thirdly, mapping the creative industries. There are real issues in trying to do contemporary quantitative as well as qualitative work in mapping the creative industries. You have a question of the coherence of the definition and its appropriateness - I have already rehearsed the inclusions and exclusions in the list. There is a big distinction in output from these sectors: there's artistic output, there's informational output (such as journalistic output), and there's IP development. The original CI definition which talks about the generation and exploitation of intellectual property captures these, but it doesn't really go to the question of how you exploit across these very different domains of the artistic, the informational and of original IP which may lead to, say, designs, trademarks and patents.

You have questions of how to track both the subsidised and the commercial sectors, you've got issues of outputs as well as firm, that is looking at industry structure as well as products and services, and you have got the biggest challenge of all which is how you track this claim about the creative industries as an increasing input into the broader services sector. To do that you would have to engage in a clarification process of all these different terms and there have been various attempts at that and you would have to go through a range of questions of engaging with how the official statistics stack up.

That's it!