

We're All Creatives Now: Democratized Creativity and Education

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Abstract:

This article draws attention to and lays a critique against the relationship between creativity and neoliberalism within society, art, and education in order to both denaturalize and challenge its progression. I explore the following question: What might the implications be if contemporary education concerns itself with facilitating creativity for economic gain at the expense of other conceptions of creativity? Here I confine myself to charting how creativity acts as a discursive term representing political, educational, artistic, economic, and social processes of our times. I maintain that the notion of creativity is profoundly transforming through processes of colonization and democratization associated with neoliberal economics and entrepreneurial innovation. In response to these changes, this article aims to re-appropriate creativity for education by pushing back against the current business bias with expanded meanings and purposes that do not align with creativity for industry alone.

Keywords: education, art, creativity, innovation, neoliberalism

As of late, creativity has been “reborn, re-conjured, re-branded” (Raunig, Ray, & Wuggenig, 2011) in ways that spark my curiosity and the interest of many others (i.e., Bastos & Zimmerman, 2015; Florida, 2008, 2005, 2002; Harris, 2014; jagodzinski, 2015, 2010; Pink, 2006; Robinson, 2011, 2006). The vast majority of rationales for the necessity of creativity at this time seem to relate back to the economy and its desperate need for innovation and solutions to world problems.

I encountered one example of this rebirth when I was recently called a “creative” by my colleague. This gave me pause. What is this term referring to? Why am I being labeled a creative? What does this have to do with creativity, art, or education? Should I be flattered or insulted? At about the same time, my university launched a national advertising campaign called “Unleash your Creativity at UNT” with a commercial asking, “What is creativity?” The answer as represented within the advert is predominantly interdisciplinary, thinking outside-of-the-box research and innovative activity with the arts playing a stunningly minimal role. While I work in an art school, being called a creative and seeing a creativity recruitment campaign for my university marks, for me, creativity’s accelerated and successful interjection into as-yet-untapped facets of education, disciplinary knowledge, and institutions reflective of broader movements within society at large.

This article will analyze the resurgence of creativity through leveling a critique against its neoliberal takeover. I aim to explore the following question: What might the implications be if contemporary education concerns itself with facilitating creativity for economic good at the expense of other conceptions of creativity? Here I confine myself to charting how creativity acts as a discursive term representing political, educational, artistic, economic, and social processes of our times. I maintain that creativity is profoundly transforming through processes of colonization and democratization associated with neoliberal economics and entrepreneurial innovation. In response to these changes, I consider the critical and subversive modes of creativity we risk losing. I call for a re-appropriation of creativity for education that pushes back against the current business bias with expanded meanings and purposes that do not align with creativity for industry alone.

Creativity Conceptualized

Constructions of creativity change according to the contexts within which they occur. Since the eighteenth century, creativity has been associated with the artist as “an autonomous ‘creator’” that was later “combined with the traditionally male notion of genius to produce the idea of the artist as an ‘exceptional subject’—the owner of an ingenious and exceptional artistic mind” (von Osten, 2011, p. 136). This discursive formation of what it means to be creative has largely “served bourgeois individualism as a . . . general description of activity meant to transcend or elude economic determinants” (von Osten, 2011, p. 136). At the time, creativity remained all but unnoticed by governments and business. This allowed for greater autonomy in the postwar years for the flourishing of creativity in the service of critical art forms. Yet, nowadays, creativity and culture are “of the utmost concern to commercial organizations and art seemingly no longer questions the social” (McRobbie, 2001/2013, p. 59).

In Harris’ (2014) analysis of current conceptualizations of creativity she found that most align with Robinson’s (2006) definition “as the process of having original ideas that have value” (n.p.) with the designation of value being determined by industrial and

productivity-related notions of creativity (Harris, 2014, p. 19). This echoes the US-based Partnership for 21st Century Skills' priorities for creativity as articulated in the following passage from the research brief titled *What We Know About Creativity*:

From creating works of art, producing abundant inexpensive water, developing non-invasive health devices or net zero energy homes, finding medical cures, restoring and improving urban infrastructure, generating new energy sources, and preventing nuclear terror, to developing sustainable ways to solve complex geopolitical problems, the ability to produce and implement new, useful ideas is rapidly becoming a critical attribute for leveraging knowledge success and increasing quality of life. (Plucker, Kaufman, & Beghetto, n.d., p. 1)

Colonized Creativity

While the manufacturing and public service sectors lose their former standing as life-long employers, the current late-capitalist economy has increasingly become a cultural economy amid the widespread appropriation of culture for industry along with incredible economic growth in the area of culture (McRobbie, 2001/2013, p. 58). "Post-industrial capitalist economies bent on permanent growth want both more creative industries and more entrepreneurial innovation and risk-taking; the perfect hybrid of these requirements is entrepreneurial creative industry practitioners, or, entrepreneurial artists" (Harvie, 2013, p. 66). The creative industries force artists to be more business-like, while concurrently requiring the usefulness of creativity for innovation in the design of viable products and services leaving the notion of creativity focused on the politics of freedom behind as insubstantial (Heskett, 2009).

Under this creative turn in capitalism happening since the 1970s, there has been a movement to harness creative capital for commodification and profit (Harris, 2014, p. 153). In order to achieve this, neoliberalism has undertaken the process of hollowing out and colonizing creativity into acts "dependent on a mutable, reproducible and eventually dispensable content" (Adams & Owens, 2016, p. 7). This co-option of creativity disregards very specific, political, socially engaged, critical, and context-dependent forms of creativity that are less transferable or replicable across sites and disciplines, making them the antithesis of neoliberalism's predacious demands for creativity (Adams & Owens, 2016, p. 7).

Quite incongruously, creativity is presently under crisis in the US (Bronson & Merryman, 2010) and elsewhere as indicated through creativity scores on standardized tests dropping since the 1990s. Given this predicament, Meyers Foley (2014) rings an urgent call for creativity in the following dire warning: "Today, our nation, our society, our businesses, our families, and our children all run the risk of failure unless we once again prioritize creative thinking" (p. 144). One curious explanation for this trend is found in Runco's (2007) claim that creativity has suffered from a pervasive "art bias" that effectively misunderstands creativity as referring to artistic talent alone—"The result: only individuals with artistic talent are labeled creative" (p. 384). The entitlement the arts once held over creativity is currently considered "unfounded" (Bronson & Merryman, 2010, para. 11). Correspondingly, the response to this crisis in creativity has largely been for other areas to take ownership over creativity, effectively decoupling it from the arts in order to more efficiently commodify creativity and conflate it with market-driven innovation and

productivity so that creativity is now more akin to “creative capital”—the value of creative productivity in the marketplace (Harris, 2014, p. 154). Just as in the opening vignette of my university’s self-promotion as a creativity destination, the arts no longer reign over creativity education.

Democratized Creativity

German artist Joseph Beuys’ (1974) assertion that “EVERY HUMAN BEING IS AN ARTIST [upper case in original]” (p. 48) is being transformed into a (seemingly democratic) creative obligation of every worker as in the Tony Blair government’s declaration that “[e]veryone is creative” (the opening words of a Green Paper from April 2001 titled “Culture and Creativity: The Next Ten Years”, p. 5). While Beuys was heralding art into daily life as forms of social sculpture, Blair was announcing the equality of creativity in daily life. We are witnessing a semantic and social recoding of “outdated” notions of art and creativity as they are absorbed by the demands and desires of creative industry (Raunig, Ray, & Wuggenig, 2011, p. 1).

To further illustrate this, Adams and Owens (2016) make a helpful distinction between democratic and high creativity—the latter being “associated with elitism and notions of the exceptional and the gifted” and the former including “the imaginative events and productions of ordinary people, the masses of the populace” (p. 6). As creativity is democratized and applicable to anyone and everyday practices, its ubiquity has diminished its currency (Adams & Owens, 2016, p. 5). With creativity’s increased accessibility and necessity, individuals are more convinced than ever that they have the means to create and something unique to express (Deresiewicz, 2015b).

To facilitate its spread, creativity’s complexity is exceedingly under attack “in the name of democracy, constituted through valorization of the lowest common denominator, i.e., equality, sameness” (Peers, 2011, p. 421). According to McRobbie (2001/2013), in relation to art,

[w]hile creativity has traditionally been nurtured in interiorised, slow and quiet mental and physical spaces, in the new cultural economy it is encouraged to be increasingly populist, noisy, easy, thin: in the words of Scott Lash, “flattened out”. Where there is little or no time for thinking, the art-work itself can hardly be thoughtful. (p. 60)

Art, like creativity, is being funneled into the accessible, reproducible, controllable, and instrumentalized.

With the advent of universal creative potential and innovation, it then presumably follows that society should be well-poised to feed insatiable market needs. For this is not only indicating a shift in access to creativity, it is also reflective of post-Fordist labor demands. This conviction is echoed in business CEOs recently identifying “creativity as the No. 1 ‘leadership competency’ of the future” (Bronson & Merryman, 2010, para. 7). Moreover, as signaled by such mandates as the 21st Century Skills (see Plucker, Kaufman, & Beghetto, n.d.), everyone is now considered creative and—even if they do not end up working in the creative industries—students across the globe should be trained for their creative potential for the globalized economy.

The Creative

Creatives—as a new professional categorization—generally busy themselves by perpetuating the status quo through appropriating creativity for innovation within capitalist production instead of fostering critical or disruptive creativity that might confront inequality and hegemony (Adams & Owens, 2016; Jagodzinski, 2010). The creative economy is based on continual innovation, therefore creatives have to act as “paradigms of entrepreneurial selfhood” (Gill & Pratt, 2013, p. 33). In a business view, creatives are disruptive innovators whose practices are cheap and highly adaptive through innovatively using old things in new ways (Vodanovic, 2013).

Curiously, Relyea (2013) claims that the term creative emanates from artists as subjects being ardently “against the stereotype of the artist as lone genius or heroic individual, instead outward-going and context-dependent, embracing the intersubjective and performed determinations of the self” (p. 81) that conveniently aligns with both the democratization of creativity and entrepreneurial selfhood. Democratized creativity might appear to enact a principle of equality wherein amateur practice is on par with more seasoned artists, but this is only on the plane relegated to novelty and newness. As Jagodzinski (2015) shares, the biopolitics of creativity (“bio-creativity”) channels its energy into a manageable labor force that amounts to an “active passivity” perpetuating “the deception that one is free to make choices within an already structured, complex environment where the only possibilities are pre-given” (p. 61). In yet another illogical twist, this form of creativity is fundamentally undemocratic.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the democratization of creativity is connected to amateur and participatory practices more broadly within horizontalist and decentralized models of cultural production. For example, the Maker Movement—made up of largely self-taught independent designers, tinkerers, and inventors who create things instead of just consuming them (Bajarin, 2014)—would fall into this form of cultural production. In addition, DIYers with their “entrepreneurial agency and networked sociality” (Relyea, 2013, p. 5) would also qualify as creatives.

Innovative Creativity

Creativity is now driven by innovation, especially in the context of business, but—as my opening vignette about my university’s recent recruitment campaign might attest—this new normal is rapidly progressing into unfamiliar arenas such as art and its education. Harris (2014) makes the case that innovation is distinct from creativity in its market-focus, economic contextualization, and overriding imperative for use-value (p. 124). Yet, through the relocating of creativity away from art and aesthetics towards economic productivity and innovation,

creativity’s ability to morph and change to the demands of a productivity culture signals its reframing as ‘innovation’, a core skill and disposition of 21st century learners and workers, but one that is increasingly inseparable from capital. (Harris, 2014, p. 13)

The conflation of creativity with innovation is pervasively present in educational discourses that have infiltrated education mandates for schooling. Case in point, the actual rationale for

a creativity focus within the 21st Century Skills' (Plucker, Kaufman, & Beghetto, n.d.) education mandate fuses creativity with innovation as in the following creativity research brief excerpt:

The well-documented, shifting global paradigm from manufacturing to knowledge-based to innovation economies makes the ability to solve problems creatively a necessary skill for educational and workforce success. In an age when much of the world's information can be quickly accessed on a smartphone, a premium is placed on the ability to use that knowledge in creative ways to produce valuable outcomes and solve complex problems. The ability to innovate, both alone and in groups, leads to positive outcomes in the workplace, the playing field, and the family room. (p. 1)

Nonetheless it bears considering that this marriage of innovation with creativity

is a form of ideological gentrification, in that while appearing to value the arts and creative endeavour it is really redirecting and narrowing the discourse of creativity into productive innovation and marketplace measures of value. And this more than anything signals the death knell of 'arts education,' which remains tainted by its relationship to risk, un-productivity (time-wasting, daydreaming) and 'failure'—all of which are increasingly impossible in a marketplace economy. (Harris, 2014, p. 19)

Marketable creativity in the guise "of innovation in schools and industry is hostile to the notion of creative exploration in its very definition of seeking to 'sell' rather than 'interpret' culture to the masses" (Harris, 2014, p. 20). Innovation threatens to subsume and narrow creativity into processes that are "market- and product-driven, characterized by product development, industry expansion and marketability" (Harris, 2014, p. 18). I agree with Harris (2014) that we need to be aware of the colonization of creative practices by the marketplace in order to retain and extend alternate forms of creativity for other purposes. This colonization of creativity under the pretense of a marketized and capitalized endeavor could be placing our abilities to explore other modes of creativity at risk.

Destructive Creativity

Paradoxically, perhaps, creativity and innovation are embraced by business for their disruptive and destructive potentials (Holmes, 2013) related to the economy. Early 20th century, Austrian-American economist Joseph Schumpeter's (1943/2003) often-borrowed capitalist concept of creative destruction refers to a process that sees entrepreneurial opportunity in any economic setback or catastrophe—the logic goes that times of great struggle are also times of great creativity because we are forced to innovate in order to survive (see Florida, 2005). Key to creativity in this disruptive mode is that despite its name, destructive creativity only intensifies dominant structures—such as neoliberalism's progress—and hence its endorsement by neoliberalism itself. While in the wake of innovation for innovation's sake through creative destruction we may well find economic, social, and cultural benefits, alongside these advantages we also find increased levels of risk, inequality, instability, and crisis (Harvie, 2013).

Although, as Vishmidt (2013) recently pointed out, "artists have behaved entrepreneurially more or less for the whole recorded history of art" (p. 46), the escalation of art and creativity's collusion within the manufacturing of novelty for capitalism alone, is startling. In Harvie's (2013) view, art is being conscripted into neoliberal entrepreneurialism and as a result, artistic creativity is being used towards developing new innovations that

facilitate the forces of creative destruction—the processes of rendering something redundant by innovation. This “crisis-as-opportunity” (Vishmidt, 2013, p. 50) embraces destruction and the phasing out of the old with the new as required components for economic growth, hence creativity is essential to innovative solution-development. Bauman (2001) has termed this urge for creative destruction “destructive creativity” that aims “to 'clear the site' in the name of 'new and improved' design; to 'dismantle', 'cut out', 'phase out', 'downsize' for the sake of greater productivity or competitiveness” (pp. 103-04).

Creativism: Creativity as a Fundamentalism

According to Gielen (2013), the current societal hysteria around creativity marks the end of critical and political creativity at the hands of neoliberalism, with creativity undergoing transformation into a fetishized representative of its former functions (p. 103). Gielen (2013) calls this creativity “stripped of its critical potential” and “substance” *creativism* (p. 96). This form of creativity embodies a fundamentalism as “[t]he obsession with creativity for the sake of creativity suppresses the ideological parameters involved. It obscures the fact that in this creativity society is being shaped in a specific way” (Gielen, 2013, p. 96) as it bends to neoliberal tenets.

Creativity associated with cultural expressions and goods is being reshaped for commercial trade in the marketplace within processes of creative industrialization. As creatives form innovative objects and ideas made to pre-established market measures, they also “keep the risks of their own creations within acceptable parameters” (Gielen, 2013, p. 101). Gielen (2013) goes on to claim, “creativistic individuals can't do anything but push and pull a little within the boundaries of their—neoliberal—culture without being truly creative, revolutionary or vertical” (p. 96). This is creative capitalism. The constant need for innovation depoliticizes creativity leaving little time to reflect on what should matter (Gielen, 2013, pp. 95-96). This is what jagodzinski (2015) has termed the “terror of creativity” (p. 60).

For Creativity's Sake

Neoliberalism “demands creativity for the sake of creativity, mobility for the sake of mobility, fluidity for the sake of fluidity, change for the sake of change” (Gielen, 2013, p. 52). As Harris (2014) notes, creativity is “being advanced most rapidly at the present moment by economists, not artists or educators” (p. 78) as a useful component of an entrepreneur's skill set so that creativity is further “conflated with 'innovation', and shunted away from notions of 'art'” (p. 80). Standardizing creativity across schooling implies that creativity can be emptied of its critical modes, domesticated through measurement, and ultimately contained by neomanagement as an orderly, predictable, and apolitical process.

Free or irrational creativity that escapes the controls of neomanagement is dangerous, surprising, and largely discouraged (if not classified as a hobby and banned to whatever leisure time is left [Gielen, 2013, p. 68]). Baldacchino (2013) terms the economic demand for creativity as sustaining a “productivist paradigm” (p. 348) wherein art's “productive ambiguity” (p. 354) is eliminated—the only productive productivity being in line with neoliberal measures and rationality. The reasoning here is that if creativity isn't realist,

rational, or productive, then creativity is elitist and superfluous, lacking value for the time and money invested. Gielen's (2013) counter to this reasoning is that only irrational or productively ambiguous creativity can keep creative mediocrity and stagnation at bay (p. 68).

Throwing out art's elitist and exclusive connotations democratizes and makes more comprehensible its creative practices beyond the domain of specialists, unnecessarily trained in the depth of a medium or discipline. As the democratization of creativity continues, interdisciplinarity is one key strategy that favors the de-disciplining of disciplines so that creativity, flexibility, and adaptability are highly prized goods in their own right without the disciplinary depth associated with professional expertise (Gielen, 2013). For, "[i]f they are truly creative, creative entrepreneurs will after all easily exchange older ideas for new ones" (Gielen, 2013, pp. 51-52). With less roots, it is easier to morph as required by the market. As Virno (2012) states, the democratization and capitalization of creativity for economic growth belittles technical requirements and professional expertise in favor of "the ability to anticipate unexpected opportunities and coincidences, to seize chances that present themselves, to move with the world" (p. 33).

Understandably then, creativity for a neoliberal entrepreneurialism translates most frequently to makeshift, fragmentary, and temporary solutions in which supreme value is placed on flexibility, on the ability to improvise identities and relationships, to relentlessly search and capture, to connect and extend, to point-and-click things in and out of existence—in short, to cast the widest informational net possible and ad lib the most novel conjunctions out of whatever happens to wash up in the mesh. (Relyea, 2013, p. 200)

In their reflection of marketplace imperatives, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (n.d.) also aims to produce creative thinkers with transferable skills that can work among and beyond disciplines. This mandate (Plucker, Kaufman, & Beghetto, n.d.) goes so far as to recommend that creativity be taught on its own as an entity divorced from disciplinary application but of value in its own right—"The question, what and why and for whom something can be done with these abilities, thus appears to be of no relevance" (von Osten, 2011, p. 134). Instead, creativity as a stand-alone skill, divorced from art's specificity for example, is trainable and exploitable as creativity without the ties of a field is more readily flexed and transferred to a variety of domains in response to changing market conditions. While discipline-based creativity may be less susceptible to pleasing the ever-shifting market forces as it is based on depth of insight and craft, innovative creativity compels artists and others to "inevitably spend a lot more time looking over their shoulder, trying to figure out what the customer wants rather than what they themselves are seeking to say" (Deresiewicz, 2015a, n.p.).

As creativity has been released from the exclusive purview of the arts it risks becoming decontextualized and formulaic so much so that it becomes "devoid of any ardent belief, ideology or conviction. The creative deed must be depoliticized, in other words" (Gielen, 2013, p. 52). Creativity devoid of political opposition or social critique is also more readily appropriated (Adams & Owens, 2016, p. 16), which may be the ultimate goal here.

Creative Education

While creativity is desperately needed, it is sorely lacking in schooling. Education's role in the economy as a generator of creativity and innovation is hard to establish within current structures of public schooling. Even though employers claim to desire flexibility and creativity in their future workforce, these characteristics are largely alien to the standardized contexts of schooling that devalue the teacher's creative engagement with students, sites, and knowledge. At present, education

diminishes the teacher's labor by transforming his/her work from having the potential to be intellectual, civically engaged, and dialogic and to foster curiosity, questioning, and dissent into being anti-intellectual, depoliticized, dogmatic, transmissional, curiosity-deadening, and creativity-stifling. In the process, neoliberal schooling erodes not only the public and civic dimensions of schooling but also schooling as an economic and productive force. (De Lissovoy, Means, & Saltman, 2015, p. 50)

In general, standardization works against dynamic innovation, disciplinary depth, context-specific pedagogy and curriculum, along with both political and intellectual educational practices, effectively making education uncreative and non-experimental—creativity boiled down to the replicable and teachable leaves little to be inspired by (see Robinson, 2011). As a consequence of the neoliberal take over of education, creativity is kept controllable, predictable, and measurable so that its criticality and freedom—if these were ever prioritized in classrooms—are now repressed through performance-based teaching and technical conceptions of creativity.

Jagodzinski (2015) cautions that there are "serious consequences for art educators who are latching onto the 'creative' bandwagon to justify their existence for teaching art in today's global designer economy" (p. 57). Under the circumstances, even if we were to cease undermining the creative crux of education through opening up schooling practices to more multiplicity, lack of resolution, and undirected experimentation within less regimented spaces, educators under neoliberalism will most likely be coerced to teach students "that the only productive creative endeavour is a profitable one" (Harris, 2014, p. 27). For some it is incredibly difficult to even conceive of contesting power within education today. Yet, the neoliberal economization of every quarter of life, including creativity education, is seamless and largely unquestioned. It is ironic that the very capacities to contest or limit the reach of neoliberal economization such as critical thinking and creativity are the very skills that have been co-opted to accelerate economization through the vocationalization of education. Under neoliberal management, while creativity is highly valued, education as a platform for critique, politics, and democratic aspirations, is invalidated since this isn't necessary for employment in post-Fordism labor and doesn't help produce innovation for the market.

Critical and Subversive Creativity

Forms of education where creativity is oppressively conformist seem like an incongruous coupling to me. Through emptying out its critical modes of creativity, it appears education has fallen victim to neoliberalism's debilitation of democratic practices and cultures that do not extend the market order. Here, creativity education as public/political

good becomes nonexistent since it is outside of creativity education for economic good. Moreover, the so-called democratization of creativity subsumes creative activity under an anti-elitist foil. The thinking goes that creativity as a form of politics, social activism, or subversion is no longer necessitated since creativity itself has been democratized.

For example, the funneling of visual arts into education for economic advantage under the creative industries all but eliminates “the radical democratic character by which the arts resist functionality” (Baldacchino, 2013, p. 354). Gielen (2013) reminds us that art is feared and distrusted because it exists outside of that which can be measured and predicted, while “[a]rt within the marketable measure” only ever amounts to “mediocre art” (p. 80). Indeed, more often than not, creativity in a neoliberal world is “equated with ‘problem-solving,’ which is something else entirely than causing problems or, rather, problematizing issues, a task that was until recently reserved for the artist or dabbler” (Gielen, 2013, p. 38). Lest we forget, as Gielen (2013) points out,

creativity can only originate from a critical distance. The type of creation that we have been calling 'art' since the modern age depends to a large degree on the possibility of taking a critical stance in one's own society and culture. (p. 72)

At this impasse, I find myself asking: What if art education, despite all of these pressures and foils, conceived creativity education as having an “antithetical relationship to global capitalism and neoliberalism” (Adams & Owens, 2016, p. 6)? The creative industries and neoliberalism don’t grip all of art’s autonomy; there always remains some relative autonomy that can be used as a form of resistance. Baldacchino (2013) maintains that only critical and provisional forms of creativity might “counter productivism and instrumentalism in the name of art’s autonomy” (p. 350).

In Harris’ (2014) view, “creativity and innovation (even in centralized educational contexts) bring with them a degree of social critique” (p. 58) so as to ensure that the status quo is not reproduced, for “[d]issent is innovation” (p. 22). However, “today’s creativity is *only* acceptable if it has limited newness, and very limited to no negativity” (Harris, 2014, p. 114) (*italics from original*), which doesn’t bode well for capitalist growth economies dependent on innovation. Furthermore, within the creative industries, creativity “must not be dangerous, threatening, critical or negative of cultural ethics, or—when it is—must be neutralized quickly to harvest its maximum market potential” (Harris, 2014, p. 114). This circumstance all but silences the political potential of art and creativity, but it doesn’t have to.

Forms of creativity such as transgressive, subversive, and critical varieties introduce a cognitive, aesthetic, formal, or affective dis-measure invalidating old standards (Virno, 2012). Art holds the potential to deviate from common sense and traditional measures of culture leading to debate and dissent (Gielen, 2011, pp. 7-8). For example, “[a]vant-garde art proved the impotence, the inadequacy, the disproportion of the old standards through a formal investigation” (Virno, 2012, p. 21).

Correspondingly, Adams and Owens (2016) offer *critical creativity* to juxtapose creativity with democracy in its intersection between the imagination, political action, agency, and notions of citizenship that do not stifle conflicting perspectives (pp. 19-20). Again, such modes borrow from the avant-garde tradition in art (instead of business priorities) while championing the unorthodox and antagonizing conformity through imaginative and disobedient processes that express tensions apparent within society and its institutions (Adams & Owens, 2016, pp. 16-18) that wrestle creativity back to its political

potency for democratic education and away from its more neoliberal forms.

Closing

In review, this article has articulated the current parameters and constraints of a business bias associated with creativity. I focused on a selection of issues apparent in education's tacit endorsement of creativity for innovation. Business' embrace of creativity sets terms for the demise of creativity's unproductive, critical, and activist forms. In light of my preceding analysis, it would be a misnomer to label me a creative just as it would be a devaluation of creativity education to only endorse depoliticized, capitalized, and industrialized forms of itself.

At this juncture, formal education across contexts might consider what to retain in regards to creativity related to learning and what it might also risk resisting in the democratization of creativity and its expansion away from arts-related fields. I have proposed that we exert diverse modes of creativity while enlarging the myopic range of creative processes beyond neoliberal productive iterations so that creativity in education might serve roles yet to be determined. As both the 21st Century Skills (Plucker, Kaufman, & Beghetto, n.d., p. 7) and Harris (2014) remind us, creativity thrives under constraint and conservatism. How will educators creatively respond?

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