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Ferals, nomads, drifters, gypsies, vagrants, blow-ins, thieves, troublemakers, tricksters and terrorists: creative writing, from creative industries to creative ecologies

Abstract
In this paper I consider some issues that I, as a creative writer and academic, find with the concept and current understandings of the term creative industries. The subject of creative industries *is not one that has been adequately teased out in relation to creative writing, even though the creative industries model has been a strong force in cultural policymaking internationally since the late 1990s. It influences policies that in turn may affect writers, especially those applying for state or national funds to resource their writing, and also writers working within the academy and attempting to gain recognition and funding for creative work there. The issues relating to creative industries are also particularly pertinent at this time in Australian universities, as the new system of research quality measurement is negotiated, and creative arts scholars, including those in creative writing, struggle to define their work in terms of those negotiations. I will argue that the recent work of Paul Carter looks towards ways in which creative industries may be more inclusive and useful for the creative arts, including creative writing, and suggest that a reclaimed term, creative ecologies, indicates a good way of taking creative industries into the future.*

In this paper I consider some issues that I, as a creative writer and academic, find with the concept and current understandings of the term *creative industries*. The subject of creative industries is not one that has been adequately teased out in relation to creative writing, even though the creative industries model has been a strong force in cultural policymaking internationally since the late 1990s. It influences policies that in turn may affect writers, especially those applying for state or national funds to resource their writing, and also writers working within the academy and attempting to gain recognition and funding for creative work there. The issues relating to creative industries are also particularly pertinent at this time in Australian universities, as the new system of research quality measurement is negotiated, and creative arts scholars, including those in creative writing, struggle to define their work in terms of those negotiations. I will argue that the recent work of Paul Carter looks towards ways in which creative industries may be more inclusive and useful for the creative arts, including creative writing, and suggest that a reclaimed term, *creative ecologies*, indicates a good way of taking creative industries into the future.

What are the creative industries? To use Richard E Caves' definition, they are industries 'in which the product or service contains a substantial element of artistic or creative endeavour' (Caves 2000: vii). In practice, professional creative writers are quite obviously part of economic systems within the

creative industries. We participate in those systems when we publish our work through publishing companies, for example; when we employ literary agents to represent us; when we take part in other professional activities such as literary festivals, as articulated by Caves (2000). But it seems that today's predominant understandings of creative industries centre upon the definition of the creative industries as 'the generation and exploitation of intellectual property' (Lovink & Rossiter 2007: 12).

Creative industries: development and debates

It is generally recognised that creative industries as a term and a strategic model first gained currency in 1997, the year when the UK's New Labour was elected and the new Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) was created. At that time, the previous term *cultural industries* was changed to *creative industries*, with 'the setting up of a "creative industries task force"' (O'Connor 2007: 41). This, according to Justin O'Connor, was a highly strategic and political move, with the new term intended to take the focus away from the arts as such, by moving on from the contentious word *cultural*, while exploiting what was perhaps perceived as most colourful and marketable about the arts - *creativity*. This links in, too, with Richard Florida's work, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2003), suggesting what could be seen as a mass and inclusive understanding of creativity; creativity, usually most associated with the arts, was now understood to be something much broader and more general than it had before.

Perhaps it is this overt symbiosis between the arts and industry that has come to represent the meaning of the creative industries as a model, internationally, including in Australia. Creative industries means, for many of us working within or at least at the edges of those industries, the nexus of creative arts and industry. This may lead to some concern that it is the nexus itself that has become a stronger focus in understandings of creative industries and thus of the creative arts, than the focus of the arts themselves and all that they may encompass. Andrew Ross notes that in fact:

> the concept of the creative industries was initially introduced in Australia by Paul Keating's government in the early 1990s, but its definite expression, in the founding documents of Blair's DCMS, bore all the breathless hallmarks of New Economy thinking: technological enthusiasm, the cult of youth, branding and monetisation fever, and ceaseless organisational change. (Ross 2007: 17)

Indeed, Australian cultural policymaking was strongly influenced by the model of creative industries from an early stage, with the introduction of *Creative Nation* in 1994 (Department of Communication & the Arts 1994). And when the model arguably came into its own in the late 1990s in Britain, it quickly became internationally recognised and implemented. Ross indicates that 'In the space of a few years, it [the creative industries model] had been adopted as a viable development strategy by the governments of countries as politically and demographically disparate as Russia, Brazil, Canada and China, to name just a few of the largest' (2007: 18). Also in Australia, there was a further significant development: the creation of Queensland University of Technology's (QUT) Creative Industries Faculty and Research Centre (CIRAC), and a Creative Industries Precinct, supported by the Queensland government (Bullen, Robb & Kenway 2004: 12).

On the ground today, in Australia, how does the current iteration of the concept of creative industries affect us, as creative writers, if it affects us? To take this question to a personal level: do I as a creative writer, and particularly as one working within the academy, want to be part of the creative industries approach to cultural policymaking? Is it strategic for me to do that? Will it serve my creative work well?

I consider the UK's DCMS 2001 definition of creative industries, cited by Chris Bilton:

> those industries which 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. (Bilton 2007: iv)

Looking at it purely from a creative writer's point of view, this seems apt when it comes to publishing my work professionally, and for my academic research work as a writer. Yet it is the emphasis on intellectual property that makes many creative artists, including writers, feel uneasy about creative industries as a model. As Lovink and Rossiter write: 'In all seriousness, how many creative practitioners would call themselves producers, let alone financial beneficiaries, of intellectual property?' (2007: 12). Of course, although most creative writers may not necessarily think of themselves as producers as such, we *do* essentially produce intellectual property - although that may not be all that we do - and then when we publish it in a novel, we exploit that intellectual property, in tandem with a publishing company. And if we work for a university, and that university helps to fund the writing of that novel, then we are also carrying out that exploitation of intellectual property in tandem with the academy.

This latter part of the story is perhaps the most worrying for the creative writer. When a publisher publishes our work, they pay us, although not usually much. The university indirectly pays the creative writing academic, too, via salary, resources, teaching relief. But so far - unlike other types of intellectual property producers in universities, such as scientists or engineers or information technologists - universities have not been especially interested in pursuing the intellectual property of novelists and poets; simply, one would think, because there is not enough money involved to make it worth the effort (Brophy 1998). But the possibility that this may change in the future, even the very near future, is worth keeping in mind, because under the creative industries model of policymaking, intellectual property is pivotal, and there is also much emphasis on collaborative, interdisciplinary work being done by creative 'workers'. Those collaborations may have the potential to generate greater amounts of profits via intellectual property; and it stands to reason that if and when that happens, creative arts intellectual property, including that of creative writers, will come to be of much greater interest to universities.

As I research the concept of creative industries, I want to find the positive in it. I want to see how it could work to make the lives of creative writers better; how it may be capable of bringing greater wealth and resourcing to creative writers. Certainly there are aspects of the model that interest me, even excite me. When it comes to making links between the arts and industry and community, for example, I like the idea of, say, universities funding residential arts studios and being part of developing or contributing to community arts precincts: arts hubs. And my own research into grief and trauma and the creative arts indicates to me that there is room for intellectual exchange between these areas: I do not want to stand in the way of good, sound developments in this area. I can see rich potential in linkages between artists, the creative arts education sectors and industry and government.

But I share concerns about *creative industries* as a concept and a model for cultural policymaking with some theorists and commentators who have drawn attention to issues relating to (a) an over-emphasis on new media and technology; (b) a suggestion that artists who do not support the concept of the creative industries are influenced by dated ideas relating to genius; (c) too great a focus on innovation almost as though this were directly synonymous with creativity; and (d) a too-narrow interpretation of value that does not go far beyond economic value. I will briefly canvass these issues below, and then make mention of a possible antidote to be found in the work of Australian writer-artist-theorist Paul Carter.

First, in relation to the emphasis on new media and technology in *creative industries*, while the creative industries concept is often lauded as a non-elitist, broad church, it does sometimes appear to have a very narrow focus. For instance, Stuart Cunningham writes:

> The focus has shifted towards the 'digital content and applications' aspect of the creative industries, and raised a greater understanding that creative industries outputs and creative occupations are becoming a more important input into manufacturing and the wider service industries, such as health, education, government and business services. (Cunningham 2006: 11)

Cunningham appears to be so optimistic about new opportunities presented by creative industries that he enthuses:

> Critics of the creative industries idea are fearful that, by introducing into the rationale for supporting culture too great an emphasis on economics, it might marginalise the traditional arts sectors. However, the benefits of mainstreaming culture and media into policy powerhouses of industry development and innovation arguably outweigh the drawbacks. (2006: 16)

Cunningham is director of the aforementioned QUT Creative Industries Faculty and Research Centre (CIRAC). Bullen et al indicate that the particular significance of QUT's initiative is 'in its capacity to respond to the techno-economic imperatives of knowledge economy policy and to the demand for "graduates with creative talent who are trained in content-provision for the new technologies"' (2004: 13). Evidently then, this initiative is strongly connected to new media and technologies, and to the production and exploitation of intellectual property. Bullen et al suggest that the approach taken in relation to the creative industries concept must be cautious, however:

> The creative industries offer a vibrant, future-oriented, relevant, and, therefore, compelling alternative to many of the arguments marshalled in defence of traditional arts and humanities faculties. We argue, however, that the capacity of the creative industries to respond to the push towards the use of new technologies, commercialization, and collaborative partnerships must be approached with caution lest these become the governing imperatives for humanities education and research policy development. (2004: 14-15)

I support this note of caution when it comes to the overvaluing of new media and technology when it comes to understandings of the creative industries, *if* that threatens to come at the expense of other creative arts activities.

Also notable under some understandings of creative industries are what appear to be veiled accusations against creative artists who are critical of the creative industries concept. I challenge the suggestion that artists and other commentators may be suspicious of the *creative industries* concept because they hold Romantic ideals of the artist as genius. It often seems to be used to write artists out of the debate, indicating that they have little relevance to the new and innovative 'producers' or 'workers' who embrace *creative industries*. The suggestion shows little understanding of the creative arts and artists. Most artists are excruciatingly self-critical and self-aware, and are savvy about the work that they do, its material contexts, and its cultural and social contexts.

Further, it could be said that this kind of understanding, or perhaps misunderstanding, of the creative arts and its practitioners fails to value what is unique about the arts. Every field, every discipline of knowledge, has its own attributes, practices and methods. Caves theorises about the particularities of creative artists, and establishes that it is these particularities and peculiarities that constitute the existence of the creative industries and its creative workers. But in the predominant modelling of creative industries in cultural policymaking, the particularities of creative artists sometimes appear to be lost amid a generalist and murky understanding of creativity, and of creative workers, who could be anything from fashion designers to pop stars to computer programmers to hairdressers to game makers. If there is argument from a creative worker who is not necessarily fixated on profit-making through the exploitation of their intellectual property, the simple rejoinder seems to be that this individual is caught up in oldfashioned ideas of artistic genius and is to be disregarded. And thus any deeper analysis of that artist's experience of their creative work is not carried out, and any knowledge that the artist's experience could offer on the complexities of the subject of creativity is not discovered.

O'Connor, too, comments that understandings of creativity under the creative industries model take away what is most often associated with the creative arts 'in a way that leaves a scarred landscape of discarded artistic practices' (2007: 53-54). And this leads to another facet of criticism of creative industries: its emphasis on innovation, as opposed to other understandings of creativity. This emphasis is discussed by Australian researchers Gahan, Minahan and Glow, who write:

> As Ford (1996: 1112) asserts creativity is not innovation and yet the management theorists continue to confuse the two to the extent that 'Creativity and innovation are so closely linked in people's minds that some use the terms interchangeably and others view them as symbiotically related phenomena necessary for the development of new systems, products and technologies'. (Gahan, Minahan & Glow 2007: 50)

Innovation and novelty are intrinsically part of the creative industries as a concept and a model for cultural policymaking. As O'Connor writes, 'the creativity mobilised in the new spirit of capitalism is one based on a particular modernist artistic tradition, of rule-breaking innovation, of the shock of the new' (2007: 53). Caves also notes the complications associated with focusing too singularly on innovation when it comes to understanding creativity, pointing out that 'The nature of innovation in creative activities is also blurred by the fact that any creative product that does not just replicate can be defined as an innovation' (2000: 202). Creativity in the arts is complex, and will differ from discipline to discipline, artist to artist, artwork to artwork; and what constitutes innovation within the creative process will also be subject to great variance.

O'Connor introduces a further complication to the creative industries' focus on innovation, related to ecology and sustainability, and the relationship between those and this demand for the new and ever-changing (ever-evolving?):

> we might look to the ecological challenge to accumulation, which sees constant innovation as a form of waste - to what extent is cultural innovation, at unprecedented, and accelerating speed, constantly searching through past, marginal, indigenous and experimental cultures alike for the next big hit. (2007: 53-54)

This brings a sobering aspect to the consideration of innovation, and perhaps this ecological dimension to the discourses about creative industries brings to the fore more than ever that creative industries is not just about creativity. As discussed above, it is about the economic exploitation of creativity, and that comes with other kinds of exploitations associated with capitalism, including the exploitation of natural resources. Everyone takes part in this exploitation to varying extents, but it is perhaps discomforting for a creative artist, a creative writer, to realise that when opportunities for linkage between the creative arts and industry emerge, costs of various kinds come with those opportunities - and this may be something that contributes to the discontent that some creative artists feel in response to the concept of creative industries.

O'Connor's thoughts here seem to connect with the work of leading Australian creative arts thinker Paul Carter. Carter carries out and writes about what he calls *creative research* (this is what some may call *practice-led research*: research that is produced in the process of creating artwork). He also develops projects that are intended to encourage the development of *relationships*. (An example of this can be seen in his work on *placemaking* and community-building: 'Placemaking is about drawing on the power of story to create places that are meaningful, valued and sustainable' [Carter 2009a]). Carter can be seen to offering fresh perspective on ways of conceiving creative industries, and beyond. Like O'Connor, Carter too considers the issue of sustainability - and the relationships of that concept to creative research. Carter suggests that the creative arts are in a unique position to change social perceptions through creative artwork projects that are enabled and resourced by community, government and industry partnerships (Carter 2009b; 2009c). The difference between what seems to be the current dominant understanding of creative industries - the production and exploitation of intellectual property - and Carter's ideas on creative research are that in Carter's vision there is a very strong valuing of what the creative arts have to offer intellectually; poetically; or, in Carter's terms, *mythopoetically*, to understandings of the world and contribution to social good. Intellectual property is certainly being produced and exploited, but the unique offerings to knowledge from the creative arts are much more highly valued in currency other than, or as well as, the economic. Ideally, of course, creative industries always indicates a symbiotic relationship that allows valuing of both creativity and industry, but the unyielding emphasis on intellectual property and its production and exploitation, that is bound up with current understandings of creative industries, belies true symbiosis because it does not allow for broader interpretations of value beyond the economic. In terms of creative research that is conducted collaboratively with industry, government or community, Carter speaks in terms of relationships, which can perhaps be viewed as rhizomic rather than hierarchical. In Carter's terms, these relations are much more equal than in current understandings of creative industries, because they rely on a renewed sense of valuing what it is that the creative arts have to offer, intellectually, creatively, *mythopoetically*, to the world.

Ferals

I will now briefly discuss a creative work-in-progress, an interdisciplinary work incorporating writing and installation, on the subject of *feralness*. I can't help seeing myself, the writer, as a feral within academia. And in a sense the metaphor could be stretched further and we could see creative artists, including writers, as ferals lurking on the margins of creative industries modelling. The concept of the feral also links in nicely with the environment-influenced language of O'Connor, speaking of ecology, and Carter, speaking of sustainability.

My project begins with a novel based on a family I know: two adults in their 30s and two young children. At the time we met, they lived in a house near where I live in Victoria, Australia. I'd first been tempted to write about them when I heard of their vintage luggage collection. Their house was stacked from floor to ceiling with old suitcases and trunks. But when I went there, they'd packed their possessions into the enormous hold of an old schoolbus and were preparing for an adventure. They would drive slowly north through three states, stopping when they felt like it, living in the bus. The adults are talented at handcrafts and would sell their wares at markets and craft shops, as well as picking up itinerant work. I was intrigued to learn that the suitcases and trunks had been packed into the hold. My friends were taking their *baggage* with them. I suspected that the baggage contained a lot of interesting stories.

In Australian slang the word *feral* is 'used in the Australian media to describe a distinct subculture which combined elements of the punk and hippie counter-cultural movements' (Wikipedia 2007). Further:

> The feral movement adopted the disparaging moniker 'feral' in a similar way that the counter-culture of a decade earlier had adopted the punk label. The typical image of a feral as a person with dreadlocks and dirty homemade clothes came out of the movement's association with the hardcore environmental movement. … Early feral fashion was also influenced by post-apocalyptic depictions of the future current at the time [1990s], particularly the *Mad Max* films. (Wikipedia 2007)

So, the kind of *feral* I am referring to is generally unkempt but colourful, rabble-rousing and anarchic, often highly principled, and may go to extremes to express their interests and concerns. In Australia, *ferals* are marginalised: they stand out from the mainstream in their dress and alternative lifestyles. They are often derided, and face explicit or implicit hostility. Or they're ignored and alienated. But they also attract intrigue, interest, and admiration. They take their place among the characters of my title: *ferals, nomads, drifters, gypsies, vagrants, blow-ins, thieves, troublemakers, tricksters and terrorists*. Some of these descriptors also sound a whole lot like some creative arts academics that I know!

I am not sure if my friends use the term *feral* or find it insulting, but many in Australia would describe them as such, and I know they see themselves as living on the margins. They live quietly, keeping to themselves or moving within tightly-entwined communities; their speaking voices are soft; they appear to enjoy living their lives peacefully and creatively. My own life is different from theirs, and yet I identify with their marginality and envy their approach to life: doing what they do, regardless of whether mainstream society

accepts and supports them, or even notices or acknowledges their existence except in punitive ways.

As I drafted my novel, I envisaged a visual artwork too: an installation. I want to place the bus, complete with trailer and car and canoe, in the city business district of my hometown, Melbourne, a city that prides itself on secrets. It is lattice-worked, with laneways of intimate cafes, hole-in-the-wall shops, bars heralded only by plain, unsigned doors, and old, decrepit buildings full of artists' studios, galleries and rooftop cinemas. It has a strong, vibrant, alternative scene under its surface, and if you venture there, you find that the scene thrives regardless and sometimes in spite of mainstream society's acceptance and recognition. The city's tourism promoters have started trying to use the alternative scene to their advantage, only leading the scene to move further underground and to create new secrets beneath the exposed ones. I decided, as I researched my novel and installation, to place the bus in one of these underground establishments, perhaps a newly gutted building with a tattered, grand façade, or one of the graffiti'd laneways that you would easily walk by if you did not know its doors opened on to all kinds of strange sub-terrains.

When I decided to create the installation as well as the novel *about* the installation, the novel began to exist on a further level. It would be a kind of catalogue: a text to accompany the installation. I envisage the bus parked diagonally in the space. Perhaps you hear faint strains of music: music made by the instruments that the man of the bus-dwelling family creates out of found objects. There is a clothesline loosely strung from one side of the bus, hung with the family's beautiful, handcrafted garments and dress-ups (like the son's wool shirt with the wings of a Thai eagle kite loosely stitched to its back). A few of the cases and trunks are stacked against one side of the bus. The old, rubber-lipped, concertinaed door is open. You go up the squeezy steps, and inside you see the polished floorboards; the oiled timber of the ceiling; the built-in wooden cupboards; the bed piled with knitted blankets. You note the feathers and leaves delicately placed around the walls, strung in the windows. You lean in close to the driver's seat, and along the dash you see screens showing these films and images. These are the stories of the bus's other life, its life on the road, in the forest, when it is *lived-in*. When you leave, you may pick up the catalogue, and in it you will find more stories of the bus and its dwellers.

On the surface, it may seem as though this project would link in effectively with the concept and model of creative industries. It involves creative work. The installation could involve a linkage with a gallery, or perhaps it would involve another type of industry partnership, such as collaboration with a large corporation whose space and other resources I could use in staging the installation, or with a community or government organisation. Perhaps the bus installation would take place in public space that required collaboration to take place in order for me to use that space. It could go further than that, and industry or other types of partnership could be brought in to link with themes treated in the work.

Possible themes that could be articulated as research areas are place and community; ecology and sustainability; marginalised people; alternative living practices, just to name a few. I could then identify corporations or other organisations that have an interest in problems related to those themes. A government department or local council could have an interest in articulating how it is that people value and care about their communities. A green community organisation could be interested in how this installation may help them to address the problem of making individuals and communities care more

about ecology and sustainability. An aid organisation may see the installation as helping to articulate a problem relating to marginalised people. A museum may be interested in seeing how this installation could engagingly express information about alternative living practices. These all indicate ways this project could be carried out within a creative industries model: the content provided by the installation serves a purpose to industry, government or community; and the industry, government or community facilitates the creation and presentation of the artwork through funding and other enabling resources such as providing space, promotion and marketing. Furthermore, there is the work of creative writing itself: the novel. This could be published by a commercial publisher, thus making it clearly part of the economic systems that Caves described (2000).

It's hard to deny that such a project could be made an example, even an exemplar, of how the creative industries can benefit a creative artist, in this case primarily a creative writer. But I want to take this scenario apart a little.

As an artist, as a creative writer, I find that my temptation, my urge, is often to undermine the status quo: to question; to challenge; to play. I was attracted to the story to be found in the family living in the bus because of the way they seemed to opt out of grand narratives when and how they could. What if, in creating this work, I want not to be part of the creative industries rubric? Perhaps I want to stage this installation guerrilla fashion: having it suddenly appear, uncommissioned, unpermissioned, unannounced. Maybe I want to plonk it somewhere that is provocative because it's not allowed to be there. So often, my friends who live in the bus are asked to move on, because they don't have permission to be where they are -- even if they are parked in what is ostensibly public space. In reflection of that, perhaps it suits this work to have it in public space but without permits or fees or sponsors or approvals or arrangements. And when it comes to the 'novel', maybe it suits this work not to be 'published'. Maybe it's written on the bus. Or on a projection in which each page disappears as you read it. Maybe it's on recycled, thrown-away office paper, strewn around, strung around. Maybe it's on the web, and I leave you clues as to how to find it. Maybe I write it, just once, and make it into a beautiful, hand-crafted book, one copy only, and leave it somewhere on a seat or a train or a step or a rooftop.

It would be a simple enough response to say: well, if you choose to do that, then that's up to you. Don't be part of creative industries. Nobody's forcing you. That's true enough, except that this response overlooks what may be most interesting and sometimes *innovative* in the creative arts: that what is provocative, revealing and telling about a particular artwork actually relates to its being done outside of official auspices; official models.

And this latter point is where Carter's work on and in creative research comes to the fore for me. If there are indeed ways to build relationships between the creative arts and industry, government and community that are truly enabling for the creative arts, because they strive to value what is unique to those creative arts (artist by artist, discipline by discipline, moment by moment) in creative and intellectual terms, then that is something of which I want to be part. Carter's work in creative research appears, indeed, to shift the focus from intellectual property and purely economic valuing to an understanding that a more true symbiosis between communities, governments, and industries and the creative arts - including creative writing - can be recognised and developed. This more inclusively encompasses the unique creative, intellectual dimensions that the creative arts have to offer to the world. And this, to me as a creative writer and also as a creative writing academic, is truly exciting and rich with promise.

A way of thinking about this, reconceptualising creative industries, could be to view them instead as *creative ecologies*. As it happens, creative economy theorist John Howkins recently published a book titled *Creative Ecologies* (2009). However, the content of this book suggests a model that is still very closely aligned with an economic-value-heavy understanding of creativity. Howkins' work here does not suggest creative and intellectual valuing of the creative artist's practice, and rather appears to hark back to the generalist creativity theories such as those posed in Florida's work (2003). For example, Howkins writes:

> This short book is an attempt to identify an ecology of thinking and learning. We need to escape from old, industrial ways and become more attuned to how people actually borrow, develop and share ideas. The assumption that everyone should be a full-time employee is old-fashioned industrialist ideology. Creative ecologies should allow everybody to have a go. (Howkins 2009: 3)

And:

> The creative ecology is part of the evolution of open societies. It is marked by the recognition that everyone has their own creative characteristics and that these characteristics need freedom and markets if they are to be expressed, shared and acted on. (2009: 135)

Howkins demonstrates one way of understanding a creative ecology, but appears to be falling into a trap that seems common to many current understandings of creativity. By broadening (flattening?) definitions of creativity, forever aligning them with economic value, other values that may be of great social good are undermined or ignored. The creative and intellectual work done by creative artists is also undermined or ignored - everyone is creative; everyone should be able *to have a go* - the creativity of the artist is not recognised as being in any way different to other kinds of creativity. What the artist may have to offer, uniquely, to knowledge, to the social good, is not allowed any purchase in Howkins' conception of creativity.

Howkins writes:

> Ecology is the study of organisms and their environment, asking 'Why this?' 'Why here?' It tells us how organisms relate to each other through mimicry, symbiosis, collaboration and competition. It is holistic and radical and provocative, summoning evidence from human behaviour in cities, beetles in the desert and swarming bees to illustrate general rules on diversity, change, learning and adaptation. (2009: 2)

I say that a good and viable way forward *does* indeed lie in the metaphor of ecologies. I agree with Howkins that *creative ecologies* may be an excellent name and model for the future of what we now call the creative economy, but I also believe it's an even better way of viewing what we now call creative industries. However, my understanding of what creative ecologies could mean is much more aligned with Emily Potter's notion of ecologies, in a closely related discussion about *knowledge* economies/ecologies:

> What happens, for example, if instead of a knowledge economy we consider a knowledge ecology? We have a system of complex relationships that by necessity accords equal value to the productive and the wasteful. Indeed in an ecology these

distinctions refer only to stages of a process. The identities of the two are interdependent: both are each other in different stages of becoming. In a knowledge ecology, humanities knowledge is no more or less wasteful than techno-scientific knowledge. To consider the higher education environment in these terms enables the realization of a different view of disciplines, fields of research, and knowledge itself - not in competition or autonomously individualized, but as inter-implicated in a space of knowledge-becoming. It is this necessary and mutual coexistence of differences that thinking ecologically allows us to explore. (Potter 2004: 101)

In Potter's work we see a true notion of symbiotic inter-relationships.

It is with Potter's understanding of ecologies here, in mind, that I suggest that what Paul Carter is developing through his work in creative research is a creative ecology model for the creative arts and its existence within the world. I am, then, reclaiming the term *creative ecologies* from Howkins, because it is a good and useful term, but I believe that for it to work for the creative artists, including creative writers, it needs to encompass a less hierarchical and economically-driven understanding of ecology that allows value to be measured in terms beyond the economic, while still existing within necessary economic systems.

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