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Cultural Translation and East Asia: Film, Literature and Art. Is Creativity Lost in Translation? A discussion of the cultural underpinnings of creativity

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Abstract

In the interrelated knowledge economy the fostering of creativity is key and as such is the focus of many government initiatives internationally. But is an international definition of creativity achievable or even desirable? Comparisons of different cultures' propensities for creativity are problematic when we consider that most creativity research has taken place in Western cultures, with Western measures; and when creativity is defined as revolutionary this has often presented a dichotomous view of creativity that equates Westernisation with modernity. As a form of communication, creativity is open to mis-translation across cultures and despite some consensus between the West and Confucian heritage cultures on the desirable attributes to facilitate creativity, misunderstandings of creative practice based on cultural general tendencies such as individualism and collectivism remain. This paper reviews the literature on the development of concepts of creativity in Western and Confucian heritage cultures as well as reporting on a qualitative research study into the understandings and practice of creativity in a London art and design college in order to comment on the existence of a cross-cultural creativity divide and suggest that rather than be set against each other, creativity is enhanced by cultural creativity exchange and cross-cultural collaboration.

Contributor Note

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'When we walk out of our country, we cannot walk out of that absolute mode of thinking' (Qian 2002: 91)

'All art is unstable… There is no authoritative voice. There are only multiple readings'. (David Bowie 2013)

Asked to name a creative person, whom would you choose? Do your thoughts turn automatically to the arts or is your chosen creator a scientist or engineer? Think of how you evaluate creative work. What are the criteria on which this evaluation is based and how are these criteria determined? Are your creator's talents recognised internationally or is there something culturally specific about them? Is their creativity limited to one domain or is it wide-ranging, encompassing various fields? If we were to compare your choice with others' how do you think your creator would rank? Extending the argument to the wider population, do you consider creativity as all-or-nothing – is one's creativity level fixed? A trait one either possesses or lacks. Is there a threshold level for creativity? Or do you consider creativity a continuous variable, a skill that can be taught and developed? Can we usefully define creativity at a national level? Are some cultures more creative than others?

So who are the gatekeepers of creativity, who decides that a culture be judged to be creative or not creative, and to what extent are current definitions of creativity applicable globally? Cross-cultural research argues that cultures can inhibit or facilitate creativity (Lubart 1999; Zha et al 2006). North America and Western Europe's cultures are not homogenous but their shared history continues to influence societal norms and behaviours. Similarly China's influence on Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan (Chou & Ho 2007; Postiglione & Tan 2007) does not make these Confucian heritage cultures (CHCs)[1] homogenous (Rudowicz 2004) but does distinguish them from those of the West (Ng 2001). This paper traces the development of the notion of creativity in CHC and Western cultures and explores how understandings of creativity are culturally situated. Recent research on creativity in the United States, Europe, and Asia is presented and a dialogue developed around the fundamental attributes of creativity.

At the outset of this discussion, it should be emphasised that whilst all societies share a belief in some universal core characteristics of creativity including originality, imagination, intelligence and individuality (Niu & Sternberg 2002), there is in fact no internationally agreed definition of creativity. Within the UK researchers have found multiple working definitions of creativity ranging from the extraordinary creative genius to ubiquitous creativity (Banaji, Burn & Buckingham 2006). Much creativity research has been undertaken in Western cultures and has focused on identifying creativity at the individual, not cultural level (Csikszentmihalyi 1999). Cross-cultural creativity measures seek to identify the creative advantage of various geographic locations without necessarily acknowledging the role of cultural norms in determining where creative ideas and products arise and how they are judged. The sparse cross-cultural creativity research that exists has often utilised measures developed in the West and has tended to focus on determining whether Western or non-Western cultures are more creative than each other, with mixed results (Rudowicz

[1] CHC is D.Y.F. Ho's 1991 term for the cultures of China, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan and Korea, (in Biggs 1996).

2004). This type of interpretation of creativity as being the sole realm of one culture has been particularly evident in the area of art, design and fashion, where the dominant global aesthetic is a Western one and non-Western productions are often 'exoticised' and cast as 'other' (Kondo 2010).

Any definition of creativity is problematic when we consider that creativity as a form of communication involves both construction and interpretation in verbal and non-verbal forms, where meaning is not static but rather open to translation (Radclyffe-Thomas 2007). In our contemporary globalised society, making cross-cultural comparisons of creativity is further subject to the risk of reinforcing colonialist hierarchical notions of culture and identity which equate Westernisation with modernity (Weinbaum et al 2008) and 'exoticise' non-Western cultures. In language learning, an increased awareness of miscommunication across cultures has resulted in the development of theories of 'intercultural communication' that stress the importance of gaining knowledge of other cultures and adopting the practice of decentring, of questioning one's own perceptions, and the assumptions on which they are based (Byram, Nichols & Stevens 2001). Translating creativity across cultures is not value free; borrowing from the literature on literary translation, the power imbalance 'between the cultures being studied and those doing the studying' (Dingwaney 1995: 4) has often resulted in static, impartial cultural translations of non-Western products and artistic interpretative inventions of non-Western cultures as evidenced in design styles such as Chinoiserie and Japonisme.

My own research into implicit understandings of creativity was undertaken in a multicultural UK University and amongst other things sought to answer a question posed by Banaji, Burn & Buckingham (2006) as to what extent creativity is an internal cognitive function or an external social and cultural phenomenon. Through this research I was able to explore my own experiences of teaching multicultural student cohorts in London, Hong Kong and the US, and to reflect upon my classroom observations and staffroom attributions, where colleagues sometimes conflated cultural heritage with learning styles and propensity for creativity. Counter to finding cultural differences between understandings of creative personalities, practice and products, a series of qualitative research interviews with students and staff revealed that Western and CHC staff and students generally share a belief in the creative personality (encompassing the traits of individuality, originality and open-mindedness) whose optimum level of creativity is enabled by working in a diverse, supportive student-centred environment (Radclyffe-Thomas 2011). Rather than favouring one or other culture, both staff and students appreciated working with people from diverse cultures and the insights they gained from observing a variety of approaches to creative work. The literature also supports the mixing of aspects of Western and CHC approaches to creativity in order to provide benefits to all (Radclyffe-Thomas 2011; Rudowicz 2004); combining the skills-based CHC system (Co, Perera & Fan 1999) with the Western emphasis on freedom, spontaneity, innovation and risk-taking (Zha et al 2006).

A fashion design lecturer interviewed as part of my research suggests how the combination of East and West creative practice could provide an optimal model:

'We do a lot of work in Britain about mixing things up, making a mess and then kind of picking out… but there's also something about honing things down and making things very beautiful, or technically evolving ideas… being quite patient and building up something that's amazing in a technical way' (Radclyffe-Thomas 2011: 93). Many of the students I spoke with, from all cultural backgrounds, echoed this sentiment and endorsed the translating of cultures through fashion design: 'I can combine with the East and then West… make a little project from the Taiwan's traditional wear… they will have very different colour from now' (78).

These findings are supported by a new generation of fashion designers educated across cultures such as Huishan Zhang whose work has been described as a 'balance between Chinese aesthetic and pattern-cutting, and Western levels of quality and craftsmanship' (Amed 2011). Zhang's work reflects his personal experience of the East-West binary as explored through fashion and includes many pieces 'based on the cut and shape of the Chinese cheongsam, all made in China, something of which he is very proud' (Blanchard 2012). Zhang himself states, 'the whole brand is like a presentation of myself. The Chinese part is from my blood and the European/Western influence is from what I'm experiencing, what I say, what I feel, so they balance together' (Blanchard 2012).

Why Global Creativity?

International collaborations between East and West are an increasing feature of twenty-first century life; brands and companies expand their reach, and many more of us live, study and work across cultures. Universities worldwide are recognising the benefits of cultural creativity exchange and forging international collaborations. NYU has opened a Shanghai campus with the aim of exploring cross-cultural dialogue, recruiting 50% US and Chinese students respectively. In 2011, the Times Higher Education Awards nominated the British Council Connect Project by the London College of Fashion and the Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology for the International Collaboration of the Year. The project focuses on employability and entrepreneurship in fashion education. Student and staff exchanges are also fostering creative collaborations and understandings: the 2003 *Through the Surface* project at the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) saw Japanese and UK textile students and artists collaborating and reflecting on the 'points of difference and similarity within the cultures of Japan and Britain. Exchange of ideas, techniques and an understanding of cultural and personal sensibilities'.

Undoubtedly by being exposed to alternative ways of working, one can become conscious of one's own cultural assumptions and behaviours and whilst these examples of cross-cultural collaborations are clearly fostered in order to engage participants in explorations of identity, Byram warns that 'the experience of interculturality – an encounter with otherness – does not necessarily lead to someone "being intercultural"' (2009: 211).

In order to work effectively across cultures, we must understand the values, language and choices made within different systems (Becker 1982; Lubart 1999; Niu 2006), as the absence of cultural understanding forms a barrier to successful international practice and the

role of translating across cultures becomes ever more crucial. These translations however must acknowledge the existing power imbalance between cultures and cultural translators must be constantly alert to the context and audience of their translations (Dingwaney 1995; Maier 1995).

In an increasingly globalised world and with the importance of the interrelated knowledge economy, creativity is seen as a vital economic imperative; the creative industries account for a substantial proportion of GDP and with creativity at the forefront of many governments' policies, questions about different countries' propensity for creativity are highly significant. Traditional cross-cultural creativity research has presented a dichotomous view of Western and Asian cultures' propensity to creativity (Gardner 1989a, 1989b), utilising Western measures and often relying on static understandings of how Western individualist and Eastern collective societies operate at both societal and individual levels (Rudowicz 2004).

Divergent cultural underpinnings of these societies have led to present day understandings about creativity in and of Western and CHC societies. So does the translation and interpretation of creativity rely too heavily on cultural general tendencies and their extrapolation to every situation, and are they a fair reflection of 21st century creative practice? Recent international research findings on creativity in the US, Europe and Asia are presented with the aim of expanding understandings of contemporary creativity before engaging in a discussion of what 21st century intercultural creativity might look like.

Creativity Mistranslated?

Niu and Sternberg (2001, 2002) argue that reading international reviews of creative products such as award-winning films *The Last Emperor* and *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon* reveals implicit understandings of creativity and the polarities of opinion expressed by Western and CHC audiences. In critiquing these films, Chinese critics rejected what Western reviewers found to be worthy of best-picture accolades. Chinese viewers deemed the lush interpretation of Chinese history, which captivated Western audiences of The Last Emperor, inaccurate and too American. Similarly, whilst Western critics enthused about the poetic beauty of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, Chinese critics deemed it dull and posited that it would have limited appeal to either Chinese or Western audiences. Thus cross-cultural comparisons of creativity reflect cultural beliefs and behaviours as much as abilities (Sternberg 2006), and whilst it is important to avoid stereotyping and cultural essentialism (Radclyffe-Thomas 2011), it is useful for this discussion to review the development of the divergent ideas of creativity in Western and CHCs.

Cross-cultural definitions of creativity in the West and CHCs have often relied on characterisations of these cultures as individualist and collectivist respectively. Since the majority of Western definitions of creativity include individuality as a key feature of the creative personality (Gardner 1989a, 1989b; Lubart 1999), comparisons have often favoured Western Ptolemaic individualistic cultures over Eastern Galilean collective societies (Ng 2001). Comparing the London and Beijing Olympic opening ceremonies, Ai Weiwei (2012) wrote, 'the difference is that this was about

individuals and humanity and true feelings… In London there were more close-ups – it didn't show the big formations. It had the human touch'.

From my experiences, I would argue that International students could suffer from mistranslations of both educational context and their creative work. In my own research into intercultural creativity, I found London-based academics in the field of art and design defined this as a product-process dichotomy: 'there's very often a mismatch between the work they've done in Beijing or Shanghai… It's a different point of view, a different focus… we would be more *process* and ideas-based, and generally the work that I see that comes out of China is much more product-based' (Radclyffe-Thomas 2011: 102). Speaking about the non-Western and Western approaches to and evaluations of creativity, Huishan Zhang[2], a fashion designer from Qingdao who studied at London's prestigious Central Saint Martins art school, shares the same understanding, saying 'The Chinese and Western ways are very different. The Chinese want to see the result, they don't care what the process is. The West, they care about the result but they want to see the whole process of research and inspiration' (Blanchard 2012).

Development of the Western Concept of Creativity

It should be emphasised that there is no single Western view of creativity; in fact so many definitions exist that codifying creativity has been likened to the parable of the blind men and the elephant (Csikszentmihalyi 1999). However, it is useful for our discussion to trace the development of Western ideas about creativity from their roots in Ancient Greek and Judeo-Christian ideas of genius, and the combined notions of the artisan channelling inspiration from a mystical muse and the idea of ex nihilo creation (Albert & Runco 1999; Niu & Sternberg 2002: Weiner 2000). Although the idea of the creative individual emerged during the Middle Ages, creative abilities were still understood as the manifestation of an outside spirit (Albert & Runco 1999). This sense of a mystical aspect of creativity was maintained up until the Renaissance when scientific developments and Enlightenment philosophies meant creativity separated from divine inspiration, and the existence of individuals with their own creative abilities was recognised (Albert & Runco 1999). As a defining characteristic of Western cultures, the idea of individualism remains a central tenet of Western creativity (Lubart 1999), exemplified by the focus on creativity as an expression of self (Radclyffe-Thomas 2011) as seen in Western artworks such as Albrecht Durer's iconic self portraits.

Eighteenth century debates on the distinguishing factors between talent and original genius describe creativity in ways repeated in modern discussions of creativity, with the Kantian notion of the rarity of original genius set in opposition to a belief in ubiquitous creativity (Banaji, Burn & Buckingham 2006). By this time, creativity has separated from mysticism, a belief in ubiquitous creativity endorsed with genius is considered a rare creative phenomenon. Additionally, local context is identified as an important influence on both the potential and the exercise of creativity; Charles Darwin's nineteenth century Theory of Evolution impacted views of creativity, linking creativity with

[2] Zhang's first collection featured in the windows of iconic London fashion boutique *Browns* during London Fashion Week in September 2011 and sold out.

adaptability and problem solving, both of which remain at the foundation of many modern conceptions of creativity (Albert & Runco 1999).

The widespread study of creativity is a fairly recent phenomenon initiated by Guilford's (1950) APA presidential address in which he called for a research focus on the psychology of creativity. Influenced by the psychometric methods of intelligence testing, Guilford developed a series of psychometric tests designed to quantify individuals' creative potential through a series of divergent thinking tests (Policastro & Gardner 1999). Torrance built on Guilford's Structure of the Intellect model and developed the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking in 1974 which utilise figural and semantic tests to calculate divergent thinking (Plucker & Renzulli 1999). These tests remain the most widely used creativity tests internationally, and divergent thinking and problem solving underpin contemporary Western linear notions of creative practice (Dillon & Howe 2003; Lubart 1999; Radclyffe-Thomas 2008, 2011; Weiner, 2000). More recent creativity research has argued convincingly that in the absence of an objective evaluation of creativity, judgements about creativity should not depend solely on individuals or their products but rather on the effect they produce in others; thus creativity is re-imagined as a socially-situated construct (Csikszentmihalyi 1999).

Creative people are indispensable for successful twenty-first century post-industrial economies; local context and the geography of creativity are key factors in more recent creativity research. Florida's (2002) creative capital theory maintains that geographic regions that successfully combine the 3Ts of talent, technology and tolerance, are conducive for the accumulation of creative capital. They become centres for the creative classes, attracting workers from a broad base of jobs defined as creative and adding to the creative economy of that area. Florida's additive Creativity Index scores different locations across a range of socio-cultural measures, enabling cities' creative potential to be quantified and compared. Florida's original analysis was carried out in the US[3] and has been extended in later work to create European[4] (Florida & Tinagli 2004) and Global[5] Creativity indices (Martin Prosperity Institute 2011), and has inspired others to quantify creativity in Europe (KEA 2009) and Asia (Home Affairs Bureau 2005).

Developed along similar geography of creativity lines to Florida's work, the European Creativity Index measures creative capital as a combination of human capital (knowledge, skills, competences and attributes), openness and diversity, the cultural environment (museums and galleries), technology, and the institutional environment (transparency, accountability and the resilience of regulatory institutions, research and development). Innovation is seen as a necessity for European countries to retain global competitiveness and, creativity enhancement is central to policies that see European economies vie for primacy on the global stage (KEA 2009). European-designed measures of creativity cite the multiculturalism, diverse cultures, history and

[3] 268 regions in the US are ranked on the 3Ts: San Francisco has the highest overall CI.
[4] 14 European, Scandinavian & Nordic countries are compared with the US on 7 dimensions. Sweden has the highest overall CI.
[5] 82 nations are scored on the 3Ts. Sweden ranks number 1 in 2004 and 2010. The US ranks number 2 (from number 4 in 2004).

geography of the region as the key to its creative and economic advantage and express the desire to establish a creative ecology through art and culture. Creativity is recognised as a dynamic cultural concept with temporal and geographic factors, and as such there is an argument that creativity be conceived as 'an approach rather than a solution' (31).

Development of the CHC Concept of Creativity

Chinese policymakers' recent focus on Chuangyi 创意 (creative/ity) as China aspires to move from 'Made in China' to 'Created in China' (Keane 2006), has brought a new focus to CHCs' creativity and it is helpful for our discussion to trace the development of CHC models of creativity, although at the outset it should be stated that there is far less research into creativity in non-Western cultures (Radclyffe-Thomas 2011).

The Chinese creation myth describes how the world was created through the interaction of *yin* (negative force) and *yang* (positive force) (Niu & Sternberg 2006) and Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism have all influenced the concept of creativity in CHCs, where creativity involves an emphasis on natural cycles, harmony, and balance (Albert & Runco 1999). Thus creativity is evolutionary, there is nothing new to create (Rudowicz 2004); the CHC creative process is characterised as a circular movement and creativity is manifested in small alterations to establish patterns (Gardner 1989a) and reconfigurations of inner truths (Lubart 1999), as exemplified in artworks in the calligraphy tradition such as those by Qi Baishi, form part of a centuries-long continuum of method and aesthetic.

By dismissing the possibility of ex nihilo creation, CHCs differ from Western cultures in their understanding of the objectives of creativity and the individuals' role in the creative process (Albert & Runco 1999). Collectivist cultures define the self within a social context (Lubart 1999) and CHCs are characterised as hierarchical, with strong in-group ties. CHCs have focused on the creative product (Clem 2008; Gardner 1989a; Sovic 2008b; Tsui 2009) valuing technical mastery over experimentation and rule-breaking (Dineen & Collins 2005; Fung & Choi 2001; Gardner 1989a). Rote learning is the pedagogy that underpins every CHC craft and discipline (Gardner 1989a); basic steps are practiced repeatedly (Kim 2005; Lau & Yeung 1996), as exemplified in the learning of calligraphy (Gardner, 1989a), part of the Confucian tradition of memorising prior to understanding, reflecting and questioning (Biggs 1996; Lee 1996). Thus creativity is exercised within a mimetic system that emphasises the preservation of academic tradition and the moral and social influence of creative individuals, a factor not evident in Western definitions of creativity (Bo 1991; Lim & Plucker 2001; Niu & Sternberg 2002; Rudowicz & Hui 1997 in Niu & Sternberg, 2002; Yue 2003; Gardner 1989a, 1989b). The CHC concept of creativity does allow for a focus on the individual but with an emphasis on inner development and self-discovery (Lubart 1999), rather than revolutionary concepts (Gardner 1989a).

Traditionally, CHCs have described creative individuals as loners but more recent research finds that creators are now perceived as successful leaders (Choe 2006) and in common with governments in Western countries,

contemporary CHC governments have embraced the strategy of creativity enhancement in order to increase competitive economic advantage. At a time of government focus on creativity, cross-cultural research has shown that the behaviours associated with creativity are not necessarily culturally supported (Ng & Smith 2004); despite its current economic advances, China does not make the top 50 of Florida's 2010 Creative Countries Index (Martin Prosperity Institute 2011). As Asian industries seek to move beyond the Hong Kong model, (wherein R&D represents replication and duplication) (Dilnot 2003: 12), governments have turned their focus towards developing creative economies (Choe 2006; KEA 2009; Niu 2006). In response to the popularity of Florida's creative class concept and seeking to leverage its regional economic advantage, Hong Kong has established its own Hong Kong Creativity Index (HKCI) (Home Affairs Bureau 2005) to be used as a measure for local and international comparison. The HKCI acknowledges that the relationship between economic development and creativity may be different in the Asian context but still has Florida's theories at its core.

Creativity Divide?

Culture forms both the lens through which we view the world and a template for our actions (Ng & Smith 2004) and as we have seen cross-cultural creativity literature reveals fundamental differences rooted in the development of the philosophy of creativity in the East and West; Western understandings of creativity see creative production as a transformative process that expresses the self, rejecting tradition and endorsing innovation and individuality; in contrast CHCs view creativity as manifest in modest alterations of existing practice (Gardner 1989a). When judging creativity from a Western perspective, where individualism and novelty are key, collectivist CHCs do not rank highly. CHC's mimetic system and the emphasis placed on the maintenance of tradition have led some commentators to warn that Confucian heritage cultural conditions can stifle creativity (Gardner 1989a; Qian 2002; Zha et al 2006); leading to replication rather than innovation (Buchanan 2004; Gardner 1989a; Nickerson 1999; Tsui 2009). A creativity divide has been highlighted in cross-cultural work that attempts to quantify and compare Western and CHCs' propensity to creativity and is the foundation for arguments that Western individualist cultures have creative advantage over CHCs (Ng 2001). This attitude and the underlying divergent implicit definitions of creativity are illustrated in the evaluation of artists such as Picasso whose work is lauded as revolutionary, and thus highly creative. In the world of fashion design, rule breakers such as Vivienne Westwood and John Galliano[6] scour the globe for exotic inspirations and are hailed as creative forces, whereas the work of non-Western designers is often excluded from the contemporary. When designers such as Issey Miyake, Yohji Yamamoto and Rei Kawakubo presented their collections in Paris in the 1980s, their unfamiliar design aesthetics were conceptualised as merely the natural result of their cultural heritage, the nationality of the designers being the focus of reviews, rather than the quality of the individual creative work (Kondo 2010).

[6] Vivienne Westwood has won British Designer of the Year three times, John Galliano four times.

As an aid to working internationally, Hofstede developed a theory of dimensions of culture, which sought to ease international collaborative working through understandings of cultural general beliefs and behaviours (Hofstede 2012). Hofstede's dimensions have been utilised to explain individual and organisational behaviours that result from shared cultural values and how they impact propensity to creativity in Western societies and CHCs (Radclyffe-Thomas 2008). Cultural priorities shape both learning environments and creative practices (Wong 2004) and Western cultures' low scores on the power-distance dimension (meaning the culture is less hierarchical) and high scores on the individualism dimension are in contrast to CHCs that score high on power-distance and low on individualism (Hofstede 2012). Many comparisons between Western and CHC cultures are based on assumptions about individual and collective societies arguing that as creative behaviour requires rule-breaking, individuality and originality, CHC societies are less likely to be creative than Western ones (Ng 2001; Rudowicz 2000). When viewed through a Western lens CHC creativity is often diminished; superior technical skills are not recognised as the result of focused effort but dismissed as the somehow inevitable result of CHC pedagogic practices (Radclyffe-Thomas 2011).

Understandings of identity and society are reflected in learning cultures that replicate the dominant cultures in which they exist (Bourdieu 1989; Fleming 2006), and different beliefs about the relationship between self and society may underpin mistranslations of creativity in Western and CHCs. So whilst theories such as Hofstede's dimensions of culture are useful for awareness raising, giving insights into the behaviour of those from other cultures, if regarded as fixed universal cultural characteristics, there is a risk of stereotyping both Western and CHCs, which may undermine the understanding and development of creativity (Radclyffe-Thomas 2011). At the same time, recent research challenges the notion of the all-encompassing effects of cultural orientations of individuality and collectivism (Rudowicz 2004) and new generations contradict traditional depictions of CHC behaviour (Arimoto 2007; Lau 1996; Lau & Yeung 1996; Matsumoto 1999; Takano 1999; Tsui 2009).

So does a creative divide exist? And if so how can we bridge it? The majority of creativity research has taken place in Western cultures and with Western measures, yet creativity does not exist in a vacuum (Lubart 1999); cultural norms determine where creative ideas and products arise and how they are judged (Csikszentmihalyi 1999; Lubart 1999). Critics of Florida's work argue against adopting Western creativity measures and creativity enhancing methods in non-Western sites as they may not be applicable to CHCs with their differing definitions of creativity and divergent socio-cultural norms and beliefs (Mok 2009). Byram, Nichols and Stevens critiqued the traditional and widespread approach to language teaching of using the native speaker as a model for learners. Their introduction of the concept of the *intercultural speaker,* someone who has an ability to 'interact with 'others', to accept other perspectives and perceptions of the world, to mediate between different perspectives, to be conscious of their evaluations of difference' (2001: 5), is paralleled in contemporary translation theories that 'work to redefine expectations for translation by coming

up with approaches that will show it as the humbling, disconcerting experience translation can be' (Maier 1995: 28).

Differing evaluations of creative products in Western and non-Western systems exemplify the cultural nature of creativity (Lubart 1999); the East-West binary is reflected in much cross-cultural creativity research which places creativity and tradition in permanent discord (Weiner 2000). The twenty-first century is witness to both the development of global cultures and local ones (Cowen 2002) and the globalisation of media access makes it increasingly difficult to separate out cultural influences on creativity in order to measure creativity in diverse settings (Lubart 1999). Internationalisation and globalisation offer the prospect of cross-cultural creative collaborations, yet without cultural fluency there is a risk of mistranslations of creativity between East and West. In the same manner that formalist translation practice overlooked the 'textual and extratextual constraints upon the translator' (Bassnet 1998: 123), creativity research often implies that an objective quality 'creativity' exists that those judging can recognize (Csikszentmihalyi 1999). Just as translation does not occur in a vacuum but is always a 'highly paradoxical activity' (Maier 1995:21), defining something as *creative* necessitates evaluation and judgements that may vary across time and place (Weiner 2000).

Maier's call for translation to be defined 'not as product but as… practice' (1995: 31) mirrors the intercultural communicators' desire that empathy and mindfulness be fostered (Radclyffe-Thomas 2007). By adopting a mindful attitude to the assessment of creativity across cultures, we can work towards more cross-cultural understanding and creative collaborations. Whilst creativity, especially cross-cultural creativity, remains a largely intangible idea, we should not fail to question who is defining creativity and ensure that their definitions are based on interculturally-informed opinion to ensure that creativity is not *Lost in Translation*.

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