

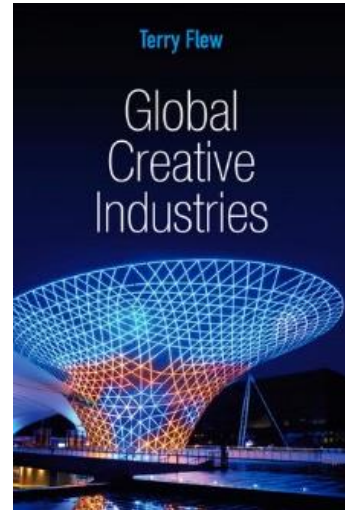
Terry Flew, *Global Creative Industries*, Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2013, 216 pp., \$69.95 (hardcover), \$24.95 (paperback).

Reviewed by

Lik Sam Chan

University of Southern California, USA

Since the notion of creative industries was first articulated in the United Kingdom in 1997, the term has caught on and experienced a global rise. Scholars from different geographical regions have theorized this old industry in new languages, such as creative class, cultural industries, and creative clusters and cities (Florida, 2002; Lash & Lury, 2007; Pratt, 2004), as well as from the perspectives of management and creative laborers (Bilton, 2007; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011). However, author Terry Flew notes, “[F]ewer attempts have been made to situate this discussion in a global context” (p. vii). That is why *Global Creative Industries* explores the contradictions, traditions, and challenges of this vibrant economic sector both within and outside the West.



The book is divided into six chapters. Each chapter focuses on one aspect of the following—industries, production, consumption, markets, places, and policies. Across these six aspects, Flew not only reports the latest research but also juxtaposes similar and sometimes contradictory models or findings. Chapter 1 introduces the morphology of contemporary global creative industries. Flew summarizes six current models of creative industries that national and transnational agencies employ. The complexity of modeling reflects the evolving nature of the creative industries “that def[ies] simple definitions and classificatory schemes” (p. 3). The difference in these models lies with the breadth and depth. The breadth question includes which industries are considered creative. It also concerns to what extent a shift toward a creative economy is reflected by the growth of these creative sectors. The depth question, on the other hand, asks about the interconnectedness among the various vertically connected activities. For example, music is considered a creative industry, but is the production of musical instruments also part of the creative industry?

Apart from the macro-level debate of what counts as a creative industry, Flew also points out the ambiguities in the global, creative, and economic natures of these so-called global creative industries. First of all, while multinational companies dominate the world economy, the world’s three largest media and communications companies in terms of revenue (AT&T, Verizon, and NTT) derive most of their revenue from their home countries. The importance of national media corporations and the fact that imported contents are often localized based on the local audience also suggest the global has not yet totally replaced the local.

Second, Flew discusses several characteristics that mark the uniqueness of the production of creative industries: immateriality, need for novelty, diverse product lifecycles, quasipublic good nature, and nearly zero marginal costs in producing subsequent copies. Among these features, Flew suggests that “analyses of innovation and creativity as the central and defining features of the rise of the creative industries raise as many questions as they answer” (p. 35). This is because the different creative industries face different expectations of innovation (e.g., fine arts vs. video games). Incremental innovations that can fit into the existing genre are usually preferred over radical innovations that transform the industry. Besides, treating innovation as the defining feature of creative industries may conflate creative industries with manufacturing industries, where innovations are also continuously researched and implemented.

Third, in chapter 3, Flew indicates that “in analysing consumption, its economic dimensions are not the only consideration” (p. 64). Three issues are pertinent: Consumption of cultural products is closely related to one’s class and status; consumption is a means for the powerful to manipulate and influence the powerless; and consumption is a site where people express and construct their identities and maintain social relationships. Treating the creative industry purely as an economic sector thus misses its cultural, ideological, and political dimensions.

Throughout the book, Flew highlights various theoretical traditions that scholars have used to examine creative industries. For example, looking at the consumption aspect (chapter 3), he contrasts Herbert Schiller’s (1976) cultural imperialism thesis with the “glocalization” thesis. The former sees the global spread of Western cultural products as economic, political, and cultural domination of the rest of the world, thus global culture is in fact Westernized culture. The latter thesis underscores both that local audiences have the power to interpret Western media products and that a significant amount of imported content must be refined and adapted according to the local taste. In the “Markets” chapter, Flew introduces the neoclassical economics viewpoint, which underscores the analysis of “market failure” of the cultural and media markets, and then presents two other perspectives—political economy and new institutional economics. Political economy stresses the social, power, and ethical relations behind the production, distribution, and consumption of cultural products, whereas new institutional economics incorporates various institutional arrangements, such as the market, corporations, and networks, into the analysis of the cultural market. These theoretical perspectives allow readers to approach creative industries from diverse angles.

Finally, Flew pinpoints the challenges faced by creative practitioners and, in the latter half of the book, policy makers. In the “Production” chapter, the author discusses the issue of managing creative laborers. He agrees with Pierre Menger (1999) that the labor market of creative industries is similar to the secondary market because short-term contracts are prevalent; at the same time, it also resembles the primary market because it consists of highly educated laborers. The creative nature of the workplace also encourages a “soft control” that emphasizes one’s reputation in the organization and the industry rather than economic rewards. In discussing the market (chapter 4), Flew draws on Albert Hirschman’s (1970) notions of “exit” and “voice” of customers. Both exit (quitting the market) and voice (communicating with producers) allow the cultural producers to improve the quality of their products or services. However, exit

may not work if customers leave the market before producers can respond. Likewise, voice depends on the presence of mechanisms that allow complaints to be communicated effectively and economically.

Jumping from the industrial level to the policy level, chapter 5 looks at creative cities and creative clusters. Flew reports on studies in this chapter that aim to discover the underlying commonalities of creative cities. Peter Hall (2000) points out, from a historical perspective, that major creative cities in the past were cities with rapid economic and social transformations, a considerable number of wealthy people, a strong presence of high culture, a diverse population, and widespread counter-conservative sentiments. Richard Florida (2002) claims that technology, talent, and tolerance are the key factors in attracting the creative class. His efforts in devising a golden formula for creative cities, however, have critics, who argue that his approach ignores urban planning, gentrification, and social inequality. On the other hand, the discussion of creative clusters is less debated. It is generally agreed that a cluster can promote productivity and innovation due to knowledge-sharing among companies and talents in the same location. The important question is, how can public policy produce “the embedded social networks and knowledge transfer” (Flew, 2013, p. 120) underlying creative clusters?

Chapter 6, the final chapter, addresses national policies. Flew reports a widening in the scope of cultural policies, from a “patron” model, which focuses solely on funding the arts, to an “architect” model, which regards cultural policy as a way to develop not only national culture but also social welfare. This new, more holistic approach to *governance*, defined as “the totality of institutions and instruments that shape and organize a policy system” (p. 135), involves discarding the bureaucratic thinking that dichotomizes the market and the state. Under this paradigm, states not only subsidize their arts and regulate the commercial creative sectors, but also cultivate an environment that facilitates the growth of existing cultural and creative industries and the development of new ones. This requires a “whole-of-government approach” (p. 146) that includes investing human capital, providing technological infrastructure, developing cultural management strategies, supporting small and medium-sized cultural organizations, setting up creative clusters, and gathering data about the national creative industries. Flew distinguishes among five approaches of cultural and creative policies that a state can adopt, which are different in their: (1) goals, (2) actions required, (3) indicators of success, (4) levels of policy (local vs. national), and (5) forms of interaction with cultural producers (direct vs. indirect). Finally, Flew highlights the importance of strengthening intellectual property rights protections in developing regions because this can attract businesses from developed regions and bolster the creative industries in the developing regions..

Through presenting the industries’ contradictions, traditions, and challenges, *Global Creative Industries* offers a comprehensive introduction to the subject. The book effectively covers perspectives from political economy and organizational studies, two of the three major paradigms in researching creative industries (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011). The book is well-suited for readers—including students, creative practitioners, and policy makers—who want a holistic understanding of the industries.

Two weaknesses of the book must be noted. First, the voice from cultural studies is barely heard. Cultural studies is the third major paradigm in the study of creative industries, according to Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011). There is a potential of developing this theme in the chapters on

consumption and markets. In this light, this book and Scott Lash and Celia Lury's *Global Culture Industry* (2007) would be a perfect dyad. Second, although nine case studies are included in the book to "illustrat[e] some of the complexities and nuances of creative industries in practice" (p. vii), half of them read more like a general discussion than a case study. For instance, in the case study of global advertising, instead of merely laying out the dilemma of the global versus the local, a concrete localization example of a global campaign or an international agency would help to illuminate the point.

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