

Book Review

Jan W. Wiktor¹

Kreatywność w biznesie. Czego możemy się nauczyć od artystów?

[*Creativity in Business. What Can We Learn from Artists?*]

Author: Prof. Lechosław Garbarski

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I consider the monograph in question valuable in several essential aspects. It is an original combination of knowledge from the fields of business and art. I elaborate on this originality further considering two dimensions: the content-related dimension and the methodological dimension. In this first dimension, I emphasise the structure of the objectives of the monograph. They are significant in terms of content – and are expressed by:

- a demonstration of the nature of creativity and “breaking” of certain myths and stereotypes that have grown up around this category,
- a presentation of the modus operandi of people of art and science based on meetings and interviews,
- a certain – albeit cautious – generalisation of the individual experiences of the artists interviewed by the author, and a formulation of a set of rules and recommendations based on those experiences for the domain of business, but also for each reader and the various social and professional roles they take on.

In terms of its content, the monograph is a serious study of creativity in business. From the cognitive and methodological point of view, it is a creative and attractive combination of business and art. Their common denominator is the author’s aspiration to discover the nature of creativity, the core and essential component of art. The category of creativity is an area of academic and practical interest. In the case of the former,

¹ Cracow University of Economics, Department of Marketing, 27 Rakowicka St., 31-510 Cracow, Poland; e-mail: jan.wiktor@uek.krakow.pl; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6353-7620>.

the narrative takes place on the grounds of psychology (cognitive, personality, social), sociology, economics, management, marketing, cultural sciences, art sciences, education, and other. When it comes to the latter, in turn, creativity becomes an important and fundamental question – how to achieve success on an individual, personal, as well as social, professional scale? What is the role of creativity in the management of an institution? What is the nature of ingenuity and creativity? What are their specific conditions and prerequisites for creativity to bloom? Is it an inborn trait of every human being, or is it rather an acquired attribute that can be shaped and developed in the process of education? Do ingenuity and creativity belong only to “creative sectors”, or do they exist beyond the boundaries of sectors, professionals groups, countries? Professor L. Garbarski offers his answer to each of these questions in six chapters of the monograph. The author has managed to accomplish “a rare thing”. To write a valuable work on creativity in business – but not from the perspective of a silent observer, detached from reality, hiding behind the walls of a university, but through field research. The latter has taken the form of interviews conducted by the author with 26 artists, eminent figures from the world of art and science. These interviews made it possible for Professor L. Garbarski to identify the realm of creativity in the domain of art and implement it successfully in the world of business. This is a highly original methodological approach, which I will address later in the review.

The book consists of 6 chapters, an introduction, a bibliography, two important appendices (including creativity tests), a remarkable “conclusion”, and a just as remarkable “A to T” anthology containing original CVs of 26 artists interviewed, sharing their understanding of creativity and ingenuity, identifying the sources of their creative inspiration. The author presents his main concept in an outline in the introduction. On the one hand, it acts as a model for discussion, and on the other hand, it is a “guide” to reading the individual chapters. This outline, highly precise in its content-related dimension, conceptualizes the author’s intentions, and is cited at the beginning of each chapter – presenting a specific problem and its solution. This model is extremely useful in reading each chapter – it allows the reader to follow the narrative, the main line of thought of the author, drawing the attention to the individual components of the whole – the title problem the monograph deals with.

In chapter 1, the author discusses the basic conditions of modern business and economic development (pp. 19–59). It is a serious, profound synthesis – if only to refer to the author’s description of the environment, or basically – the characteristics of the modern world, encapsulated under the idea of VUCA, the compression of time, digital transformation, the power of authority, communication, and social and business relations. To the limits and the opportunities to break those limits available to an indivi-

dual, an enterprise, an institution. This background lays the foundation for an important reflection on change (*panta rhei*), on the role of innovation and identification of the significance of creativity in this area. The author's musings on professions and creative sectors, on the social dimension of their perception, are profound. This is what I view as a clear, unambiguous declaration regarding the *theoretical framework* of the monograph – it is formed of management and business sciences. And this declaration is a meaningful one – it formulates the profile of the monograph and determines the line of argumentation. The author seeks the sources and nature of creativity – the idea, the behaviour, individual, personal, and team strategies – in the domain of art. And rightly so. What is success in business? What is creative achievement? What is the nature and what are the elements of human creativity? Which factors trigger creativity and which inhibit it? Professor L. Garbarski offers his answer to these questions in all 6 chapters.

In chapter 2 (pp. 61–105), the author seeks to explain the essence of success in the world of art. He leaves the idea of success in business for consideration – it is not the typical business measures and indicators, related to market achievements and financial results, which are the subject of the fundamental considerations (apart from item 2.1). These fundamental considerations focus on – according to the declared objectives of the monograph – the vision and nature of success in the world of art, the success of artists, the analysis of their opinions, and the reflections formulated in the course of meetings and conversations with said artists. Highlighting the essence of success – the way it is defined, how it is approached objectively, subjectively, and relationally, how it is understood and perceived in the world of theatre, film, art, and science, and success of particular individuals, which is all very specific and yet fundamental to the work reviewed. What are the measures of success in this world? How can these measures be implemented in the world of business? These questions mark an important direction of L. Garbarski's creative search. The direction in question involves an emphasis on the transience of success, its relativity and complexity. Success is not, or doesn't have to be a lasting achievement – this is mentioned by artists, but is also proven the experience of every person, every business. The specific responses of the author's interviewees contribute many valuable comments, insights, and reflections.

So what are the sources of inspiration and creative achievement? (chapter 3. pp. 107–143). Professor L. Garbarski identifies them in the context of the interviewed artists' specific declarations, their experiences, their perception of the environment, and both the favourable and the absolutely adverse circumstances they have faced. The reading of declarations themselves (including those of a metaphysical nature) is important – because it is of great cognitive significance. It identifies and organizes these declarations not

only in a formally correct narrative sequence, but sets and presents them in a clear “project management” perspective. According to the author’s concept, the elements of this process include the identification of sources of idea generation, the mechanism of collecting ideas, expansion, and final results. In structuring chapter 3 in this way, one can clearly see a subtle reference to the brainstorming stages that the author writes about in chapter 6.4. The emphasis placed on the four groups of factors – luck, work, talent, and courage (with quantification of the relationships), which are all crucial in the world of art, and the identification of their role in success in business is inspiring. The experience of reading them gives much food for thought about work, luck, and courage in creative pursuits. The outcome of the reading has provided Professor L. Garbarski also with a platform and solid grounds for entering the “world of creativity” (chapter 4, pp. 145–187).

Chapter 4 offers an original recognition of the category of creativity. The chapter is broad in its perspective of outlook and assessment. The author’s narrative covers both the very natural plane of creativity of a person and creativity in the social dimension – of groups and societies (nations, “creative classes”). This first dimension offers valuable deliberations concerning the measurement of creativity, including a description of creativity tests (two of which are included in the appendices – encouraging each reader to get to know their creative side). In the second dimension, the author, following the literature, presents the basic, aptly chosen determinants of creativity, emphasising the role of talent and intellectual capital, technology, and tolerance for other social groups. I find the presentation of the Global Creativity Index (p. 160) with concrete empirical data (Tables 4.2 and 4.3) and the considerations showing the importance of individual and team creativity in the construction of social capital a highly valuable part of the analysis. The said social capital, as the author rightly stresses when discussing G. Ekvall’s Climate of Creativity model (p. 165), is a factor determining the success of a country in the global competition of the contemporary world. A competition to which each one of us, each company and each organization, can contribute. It is in this perspective that L. Garbarski shows the importance of organizational culture (hierarchical and adhocracy, pp. 167–168), autonomy, constraints, and competence structure for revealing the creativity mechanism. I consider the presentation of the particular opinions of artists in this area to be a very important message of chapter four.

This message is continued in chapter 5 – *Postawy, pasje i cechy twórców* [*Attitudes, Passions, and Qualities of Artists*] (pp. 189–219). It corresponds aptly with the description of the nature of creativity. The author puts emphasis here on the description and characteristics of creative behaviours, identifying their basic traits: curiosity about the world,

openness to the world, to people, sensitivity, etc. These traits are not an “academic set” of characteristics of creative people, but an authentic narrative by the artists participating in the author’s project. Each of the statements exudes authenticity. Each one is a deep reflection revealing the artist’s own “self”, shared intimately with the readers of the book. It is a reflection set against the requirements of business – like in the previous chapters (and the next one), it is presented in a synthetic formula of “challenges and dilemmas for business”, and, more broadly, for every social initiative and activity. The author raises an important and general question about the relationship between a leader and their leader’s work style in the context of stimulating creative behaviour in their teams. How to instil passion in team members, colleagues, and business partners? These are questions faced by every person who acts as a manager in a team. In the light of Professor L. Garbarski’s deliberations, they may be regarded as the key – even organic – question every manager should ask themselves. This is an important point, so interestingly derived from the quoted transcriptions of interviews and conversations with artists. In the introduction, I have already stressed the importance of professional passions. I would like to emphasise this issue here again because of its significance and – echoing the author – intrinsic value. A passion not related to one’s profession is a factor that acts in two directions. On the one hand, it is, as research shows, a stimulant of creative and imaginative thinking, performing significant predictive functions of creativity (p. 202). On the other hand, it acts as the foundation for stabilising and harmonising the life of an artist, a scientist, but also of a manager, subjected to multiple challenges and operating in the “VUCA world” (chapter 1). The reflection on “non-time”, i.e. time devoted to thinking from the right perspective, in the right dimension, and with the natural psycho-physical needs of the organism satisfied (attributed to A. Einstein), seems to fit this context very well (p. 215). The said needs are part of a self-defence mechanism against loneliness and introverted behaviours – and their consequences.

A natural extension of the discussion in question is chapter 6, offering an analysis of “school life”, or the search for a “school of life” (pp. 221–270). It is the finalization and closure of the book’s creative concept. In editorial terms, this can be seen in the contents of the last last free space in the outline, the model of the book’s architecture – *Wzmacnianie i osłabianie kreatywności* [*Enhancing and Undermining Creativity*] (p. 221). Just as chapter 1 introduces the issues of creativity in the world of business and shows the mutual challenges and determinants, chapter 6 is a kind of closure of the presented considerations. It addresses the issues involved in shaping creativity. The author captures these issues in the form of an intriguing question about teaching – or releasing – creativity. The above is accompanied by questions about the development of creative attitudes, about the formulation of a set of features characterising the

identity of creative individuals, about the role of leaders, and methods of letting creativity flow. The latter include references both to classical heuristic methods described in the management sciences and to unconventional methods – such as creative training, artistic initiatives, and workshops run at Kozminski University within the framework of the Kozminski Advanced Management Program (KAMP).

The conclusion of the book is very original and highly valuable. It consists of two sets, containing a synthesis of the author's arguments, thoughts, and observations. I have mentioned them before. The first set contains 31 synthetic "Challenges and Dilemmas of Business" that stem from the analysis of artists' statements. These are challenges that are generalised in their own way and offer a broader formula of recommendations regarding various elements of the configuration of creativity in business (pp. 271–277). The second set contains the author's presentation of the "Dominant Logic in the Activity of Artists" (pp. 279–313). It comprises 38 reflections based on the analysis of interviews and conversations between the author and the artists invited to the project. It is a structure that offers attractive content and which is methodologically well-founded. One that brings out the essence from the statements by the interviewed artists, the essence showing what has been the most important aspect of a given element of creativity, and what will remain the most important element of the dominant logic. I draw the attention to – and strongly emphasize – the methodological aspects of both the entire book and the conclusion. Indeed, methodology is a great strength of Professor L. Garbarski's monograph. The identification of creative, original features and behaviours in the reviewed monograph is supported by a very solid methodological expertise. Each of the 69 elements of both sets, covered synthetically in the conclusion and present in the individual chapters of the book, is set on very solid grounds – theoretical, methodological, and empirical alike. This makes L. Garbarski's book highly valuable all the more.

As expected of a book on creativity, its ending is surely creative. It is an anthology ranging from A (Bassem Akiki) to T (Stanisław Aleksy Tym). This "collection" features the names of 26 creators – 24 from the world of art and two from the world of science – who have agreed to participate in Professor L. Garbarski's project, to be interviewed, to engage in an in-depth conversation, to be recorded, to have their statements published in the form of a transcript of the interview and its synthesis in the form of "dominant logic". The author offers short biographical notes of the featured creators. A total of 33 pages of text, which are a colourful, vivid snapshot of the life, success, achievements, and diverse experiences of the presented figures on their path of creativity. In their own way, the interviewed creators – without diminishing the extraordinary contribution of Professor L. Garbarski – are the co-authors of this excellent

and noteworthy book, at least to some extent. In fact, each page of the book provides evidence that the author's collaboration with the 26 artists and scientists involved in the project. And this – next to the careful editing and lively and dynamic language – is what makes it so relevant, valuable, and able to inspire the reader to read it over and over.

To conclude, I would like to state that Professor Lechosław Garbarski's book is a highly original and extremely valuable work. It makes for an attractive contribution to the field of research on creativity in business, on the features and conditions of creative attitudes, and on the ways of releasing and developing them. It is an interesting monograph, written on the basis of extensive studies of the latest world literature, excellent, original sources of empirical knowledge, the author's own rich scientific and teaching experience, as well his passions from outside the domain of his profession – including artistic passions. The said sources of empirical knowledge are the author's interviews with 26 artists from the realms of film, radio, television, cabaret, graphic design, advertising, and science. For it is in this realm that the sources and conditions of creativity, artistic passion, and creative behaviour should be sought. I would like to emphasize that the reviewed work offers not only cognitive significance but also remarkable teaching value. It reveals the possible paths and areas of teaching and – at the same time – learning creativity. Teaching and learning creativity is a continuous, lifelong process. Anyone wishing to embark on this journey will surely appreciate the guidance offered by Professor Lechosław Garbarski's monograph *Kreatywność w biznesie. Czego możemy się nauczyć od artystów?*

Searching for an own, original answer to the question of what we can learn from artists is an interesting expedition of the author along the roads and paths where the reader may find their own answer too. Let the lyrics of a beautiful ballad by B. Dylan set the direction for this search: *How many roads must a man walk down [...] – the answer is blowin' in the wind...*