

'What's new?': The rhetoric construction of innovation by ethnically diverse creative entrepreneurs

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Abstract:	<p>Conceptualizing innovation as the 'social and cultural act of ascribing value' (Rehn and Vachhani 2006), this study investigates how ethnically diverse creative entrepreneurs rhetorically construct their work as innovative. Drawing on Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1969) theory of rhetoric, we specifically examine how they deploy rhetorical schemes – frames minimally connecting ideas and concepts – to build claims of aesthetic innovation. From our analysis, three main types of argumentations emerged, each characterized by specific rhetorical schemes. A first type claims innovation by relying on liaisons of coexistence relating one's creative work to one's unique self and biography. A second type uses comparisons and model schemes to claim innovation vis-à-vis other (previously existing) products and traditions. Finally, a third type claims innovation by highlighting the power struggles with 'significant others' to affirm one's creative work relying on personifications and hierarchies. The study contributes to the existing literature by showing how rhetoric schemes link familiar ideas and concepts in ways that turn these into rhetoric resources to claim symbolic value.</p>

Abstract

Conceptualizing innovation as the ‘social and cultural act of ascribing value’ (Rehn and Vachhani 2006), this study investigates how ethnically diverse creative entrepreneurs rhetorically construct their work as innovative. Drawing on Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s (1969) theory of rhetoric, we specifically examine how they deploy rhetorical schemes – frames minimally connecting ideas and concepts – to build claims of aesthetic innovation. From our analysis, three main types of argumentations emerged, each characterized by specific rhetorical schemes. A first type claims innovation by relying on *liaisons of coexistence* relating one’s creative work to one’s unique self and biography. A second type uses *comparisons* and *model schemes* to claim innovation vis-à-vis other (previously existing) products and traditions. Finally, a third type claims innovation by highlighting the power struggles with ‘significant others’ to affirm one’s creative work relying on *personifications* and *hierarchies*. The study contributes to the existing literature by showing how rhetoric schemes link familiar ideas and concepts in ways that turn these into rhetoric resources to claim symbolic value.

Keywords

creative industries, innovation, rhetoric, ethnic minority entrepreneurship

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4 Although novelty is a quintessential and intrinsic characteristic of creative products, the
5 literature studying innovation in the creative industries is rather small (Miles and Green
6 2008). Research on innovation has traditionally dealt with technological and functional
7 issues (e.g. Damanpour 1991; Hotho and Champion 2011; Potts 2009), leaving the
8 creative industries mistakenly as a sector in which hardly any innovation occurred. It is
9 only in the last decade that novelty in aesthetic form and symbolic meaning has started
10 to be conceptualized as ‘soft’ aesthetic and artistic innovation (e.g. Castañer and
11 Campos 2002; Stoneman 2010). For the first time the changes made in the meaning of
12 creative products, as concretized in aesthetic form, cultural programming or symbolic
13 content were accredited as being innovations, and thus generating economic value. This
14 new conceptual perspective promises to recast the creative industries – e.g. advertising,
15 architecture, arts & antiques market, crafts, design, fashion, film, music, performing
16 arts, publishing, software and computer service, computer games, radio & TV (DCMS
17 2001) – as key to understand innovation in contemporary post-industrial economies,
18 where the market value of goods and services increasingly originates in their symbolic
19 meaning rather than mere use-value (Scott 2000; Throsby 2001).

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39 Building on the seminal insight that new symbolic meaning constitutes
40 innovation, this article takes a social constructionist epistemological perspective (Berger
41 and Luckmann 1966) to examine how creative entrepreneurs rhetorically construct their
42 work as innovative. Following Rehn and Vachhani (2006), we do not reify innovation
43 as something objective or ‘given’ but rather approach it as produced through ‘a social
44 and cultural act of ascribing value’ to creative work (Rehn and Vachhani 2006: 312).
45 Specifically, we maintain that, as aesthetic innovation occurs on the plane of meaning, it
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4 does not precede language but is rather constituted by it, warranting the investigation of
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6 such language (see also: Lane and Maxfield 2005).
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9 As one of the many ways to study how language shapes social reality, rhetoric
10 analysis focuses on argumentations used by speakers – conceived as active and creative
11 ‘makers’ of discourse – to persuade their audience (Gill and Whedbee 1997). It assumes
12 that argumentations derive their persuasiveness from their recognizability: the speaker
13 needs to connect ideas in ways that are shared with and thus familiar to the audience
14 (Warnick and Kline 1992). Acknowledging that creative entrepreneurs continuously
15 construct the innovation of their work by addressing their various audiences
16 (Brandellero and Kloosterman 2010), we investigate the claims for innovation from a
17 rhetorical perspective. Our research question hence is: how do creative entrepreneurs
18 rhetorically construct their creative products as innovative?
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31 In this study, we rely on the rhetorical schemes – frames minimally connecting
32 ideas and concepts to build arguments – advanced in Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s
33 *The New Rhetoric* (1969, see also: Warnick 2000) to analyze texts produced for a
34 ‘general’, non-specialized audience (interviews and mass media texts) by ethnically
35 diverse creative entrepreneurs, professionally active in one continental European
36 country. Entrepreneurs have not only been portrayed as the personification of
37 innovation (Schumpeter 1934) but are also seen as highly reliant on their ability to
38 persuade others as they bear the end responsibility over their company’s strategy and
39 image (Suddaby and Greenwood 2005). Building persuasive arguments might be
40 particularly challenging for ethnic minority creative entrepreneurs as they share less the
41 cultural and linguistic background of their general (majority) audience, decreasing their
42 ability to identify combinations of recognizable ideas and schemes. Yet a foreign or
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4 hybrid background might constitute an asset in creative work (Brandellero 2010;
5 NESTA 2006). Cognizant of these possibilities, in this study we avoid a-priori
6 pigeonholing our respondents, integrating ethnic/cultural elements in our interpretation
7 when they are deployed to build rhetorical claims.
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15 **The creative industries and innovation**

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17 The creative industries have been defined as ‘those industries which have their origin in
18 individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job
19 creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property’ (DCMS 2001:
20 0/05) or put differently, as industries producing goods and services with an important
21 aesthetic or semiotic content (Scott 2000; Throsby 2001). Products in the creative
22 industries have been conceptualized as having a double nature: they are not mere
23 physical objects with a use-value but also expressions of an idea (Throsby 2001)
24 producing an experience for the consumer. The market value of creative products is thus
25 highly dependent on these meanings associated to them rather than a pre-given use-
26 value (Scott 2000; Throsby 2001).
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39 Surprisingly however, innovation in the aesthetics of creative products has
40 longtime not been labeled as such. Creative products have rather simply been assumed
41 to be intrinsically original and different from previous works (Brandellero and
42 Kloosterman 2010) because inspired by highly individual experiences and emotions
43 (Caves 2000; Handke 2004a). Conversely, innovation research has typically focused on
44 traditional manufacturing, R&D and high-tech innovation (for a review: Damanpour
45 1991), explaining the long-standing exclusion of the creative industries from this debate
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4 However, a body of research has recently emerged which investigates innovation
5 on an aesthetic level (e.g. Castañer and Campos 2002; Handke 2008; Heilbrun and Gray
6 2001). Aesthetic innovation is defined and conceptualized in various ways including
7 innovation on a non-functional level (e.g. Stoneman 2010), non-conventionality in
8 repertoire (e.g. DiMaggio and Stenberg 1985; Heilbrun and Gray 2001) and ‘content
9 creativity’ (Handke 2008). Interestingly, definitions tend to point to what aesthetic
10 innovation is by referring to what it is not. Indeed, understood as something ‘objective’,
11 aesthetic innovation entails the major theoretical difficulty of identifying a suitable way
12 for measuring novelty, a common referent for determining whether something is new or
13 not (Castañer and Campos 2002; Handke 2004b). Yet the creative industries are
14 characterized by a certain degree of incommensurability, and innovation cannot be fully
15 captured through for example market prices (cf. Miles and Green 2008).
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31 If the value of creative work crucially lies in its aesthetics, an understanding of
32 how this content and form comes into being is warranted to capture the dynamics of
33 innovation. As Rehn and Vachhani (2006) argue, innovation should not be reified but
34 rather deconstructed as a process through which novelty and value are proactively
35 claimed for creative work. Similarly stressing the key role of language, yet from a less
36 radical epistemological perspective, Lane and Maxfield (2005) have theorized the
37 crucial role of ‘attributions’ – interpretations of meaning by an agent to itself, to another
38 agent or to an artifact – in innovation processes. They argue that attributions innovate
39 because they reduce ontological uncertainty by (re)defining entities, actors and the
40 relations between them, creating (new) ‘agent-artifact spaces’ (see also: Lane and
41 Maxfield 1997). Accordingly, in this study, we highlight the rhetorical dimension of
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4 language establishing innovation, conceived as the social process of establishing claims
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6 to the 'truth' (Badiou 1988).
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10 **Rhetorical analysis**

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12 Starting from a social constructionist view of the world in which we live (Berger and
13 Luckmann 1966), we conceptualize aesthetic innovation of creative products as actively
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15 constructed through language. We specifically turn to rhetoric conceived as the 'art of
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17 persuasion through argumentation' (Warnick 2000), to explore the language use of
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19 creative entrepreneurs who persuasively claim the innovative nature of their products
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21 towards a general audience. Rhetoric assumes a dialectical relationship between the
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23 speaker as an active producer of discourse and the audience s/he addresses (Gill and
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25 Whedbee 1997), providing both a theoretical framework and a methodology to analyze
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27 such discourse (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969; Warnick 2000; Warnick and
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29 Kline 1992).
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35 As argumentations are only able to persuade an audience when they are
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37 recognizable (Warnick and Kline 1992) speakers, in order to be persuasive need to draw
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39 in the first place from ideas derived from a shared, recognizable context (Warnick
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41 2000). These ideas must further be linked through rhetorical schemes which are in their
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43 turn recognizable to the audience because of their familiar structure. So, for instance,
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45 schemes developing arguments persuade because they have a logical appearance or
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47 imitate the structure of reality (Warnick and Kline 1992). We elaborate more in detail
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49 on these types and the specific rhetorical schemes within them in the method section, as
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51 they guide the analysis of our empirical material. Rhetoric is thus helpful in capturing
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53 the social shaping of the meaning of innovation as it focuses on the micro-structures of
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4 persuasive language (see also: Green 2004; Mueller, Sillince, Harvey and Howorth
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6 2003; Sillince and Brown 2009).
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9 Similar to other studies in the creative industries, we examine the rhetorical
10 aspects of language (e.g. Cohen, Wilkinson, Arnold and Finn 2005; Jones and Livine-
11 Tarandach 2008). However, while they approach rhetoric as a means to acquire
12 legitimacy in a field constituted by a set of institutional actors and dominant logics, our
13 analysis rather focuses on the content and rhetorical structure of language used by
14 speakers to connect ideas and concepts. Epistemologically, we assume that innovation
15 does not exist outside and independent of language. Methodologically, we do not define
16 beforehand which ideas and concepts – e.g. ‘logics’ – are available to our respondents to
17 craft arguments. We rather assume that those ideas and concepts will need to be
18 connected through commonly accepted ‘rhetorical schemes’ in order to build
19 recognizable, and thus persuasive, claims of aesthetic innovation (Perelman and
20 Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969; Watson 1997).
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37 **Method**

38 *Data sources and data collection*

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40 The empirical data were gathered in the frame of a larger, ongoing research project of
41 self-employed creatives with foreign roots active in one European country. We only
42 selected self-employed individuals because the overlap of the creative company and the
43 individual provides maximal freedom to develop an own rhetoric of their creative work.
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45 Interested in the argumentations of creative entrepreneurs when addressing a general,
46 non-specialized audience, we included entrepreneurs in a wide variety of creative
47 industries. As non-specialized audiences are less familiar with industry-specific ideas
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4 and concepts, we expected creative entrepreneurs in different industries to construct
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6 aesthetic innovation using comparable types of arguments. This approach allows us to
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8 move beyond the sector-specific approach of most current research (see also:
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10 Cunningham and Higgs 2009).
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13 For this article, we included a total of 78 texts including 26 transcripts from in-
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15 depth interviews with creative entrepreneurs conducted in 2010 and 2011, and 52 texts
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17 published in non-specialized mass-media with passages by these entrepreneurs on
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19 innovation (see Table 1. All names are pseudonyms).
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Insert Table 1 about here

Due to the rapid evolution of communication technology, texts on creative work for a broad public have multiplied, are more rapidly available, and also become more important in the communication of creatives entrepreneurs with their public (see also: Jones and Livine-Tarandach 2008; Svejenova 2005). The mass-media texts were integrated with the in-depth interviews in which respondents were provided space to elaborate more at length on themselves and their work.

Although it would be problematic to claim that the interviewer embodied the general audience, as an ethnic majority researcher with no specialized knowledge on, yet a strong interest in the creative industries, and a consumer of creative products, his/her social profile does not substantially differ from the broader non-specialized public interviewees would generally address through their texts. The interviews took

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4 place at the respondents' home, in a bar or at their workplace, and lasted between one
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6 and three hours each. Each interview was fully recorded and transcribed verbatim in the
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8 original language. Respondents were first asked to tell their personal and professional
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10 trajectory. In this way, drawing on the critical incident technique (Flanagan 1954), they
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12 had the opportunity to reflect on particularly salient moments in their lives, and
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14 introduce and contextualize their experiences. They were then asked open questions on
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16 a broad variety of themes including their creative work, their relationship with clients,
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18 management aspects, professional networks, funding, training, as well as about their
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20 personal and family background.
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24 25 26 *Data-analysis* 27

28 In a first step, we identified every available text on our respondents' work published in
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30 national newspapers and magazines, then selected only those in which the creatives'
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32 voice was extensively reported (e.g. interviews, articles with extensive quotes).
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34 Furthermore we included in our sample the text from our respondents' websites. After
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36 this selection, we could count 131 texts including 26 interviews and 105 media texts. Of
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38 these 131 texts, 78 texts included all together 132 fragments on aesthetic innovation
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40 (see Table 1). To identify these relevant fragments, each author read and reread the texts
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42 separately, selecting the excerpts concerning novelty, distinctiveness and specificity of
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44 the speakers' creative work. We then jointly discussed what to include in the analysis.
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48 In a next step, we inductively coded the excerpts based on the content of the
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50 argumentations on innovation. After a few discussion rounds, three main types of
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52 argumentations emerged: those centered on the speakers' own self and biography (39),
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54 those centered on their work (72), and those centered on power struggles with
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4 'significant others' (21). All our excerpts could be subsumed under one of these three
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6 types, although in few instances we had initially coded the excerpts into another type
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8 because the fragments mixed elements of two types. Jointly rereading these fragments,
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10 we identified the main argumentation in each and categorized them accordingly.
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13 In a third step, we analyzed each cluster on the basis of the rhetorical schemes
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15 developed by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969, see also: Warnick 2000; Warnick
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17 and Kline 1992). The use of arguments and rhetorical schemes to build them were
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19 present across all data sources. However, as the arguments built during interviews were
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21 more rich, in the findings section we illustrate the arguments largely through fragments
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23 from interview material, using only a couple of excerpts from media texts.
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27 Throughout the data analysis, we worked in the original language to stay close to
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29 the rhetorical strategies of the speaker. Only when the findings were fully written, we
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31 translated the excerpts into English. We did so as literally as possible and maintaining
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33 the original rhetorical schemes intact.
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36 37 *Rhetorical schemes*

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39 Based on a thorough analysis of the basic structure of argumentative language used in
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41 extensive literary, political and philosophical sources, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca
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43 advance in *The New Rhetoric* (1969) a comprehensive classification of rhetorical
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45 schemes. Rhetorical schemes are of two types (for an overview, see Table 2): starting
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47 points for an argument and rhetorical schemes further developing arguments. Starting
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49 points for an argument are made up by the premises that are already accepted by the
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51 audience and specific forms of discourse. Rhetorical schemes further developing
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4 arguments link up technically the already accepted premises and the specific forms of
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6 discourse to the actual claims made by the speaker (Warnick and Kline 1992).
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11 Insert Table 2 about here
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18 The premises that are already accepted by the audience are of two types:
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20 premises that focus on the real (e.g. *facts*, *truths* and *presumptions*) and premises that
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22 focus on the preferable (e.g. *values* and *hierarchies* of values) (Perelman and Olbrechts-
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24 Tyteca 1969). Specific forms of discourse include several rhetorical figures of speech
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26 that can be used by the speaker to frame his words more firmly or to linguistically
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28 aestheticize his argument. An *anaphora* for example – the repetition of the first word or
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30 words of two or more successive sentences – is an empathic figure used to emphasize
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32 certain words or ideas. A *negation* is a powerful reaction to an actual or virtual
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34 affirmation by someone else. A *chiasmus* is a quasi poetical figure, used to create
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36 repetition more indirectly through an A-B-B-A scheme.
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40 The rhetorical schemes that further develop arguments consist of four sub-
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42 categories with specific rhetorical techniques: quasi-logical arguments, arguments based
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44 on the structure of reality, arguments establishing the structure of reality, and the
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46 dissociation and association of concepts. Hereunder, we briefly elaborate the most
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48 common used schemes by our respondents within each sub-category.
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51 Quasi-logical arguments have the rational appearance of formal logic. They
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53 increase awareness of relationships by simplifying arguments and appear therefore quite
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55 persuasive (Warnick and Kline 1992). Three rhetorical schemes of this type were
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4 commonly used: A *contradiction* points at an inconsistency in a certain system, forcing
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6 the audience to choose sides between two or more viewpoints. *Transitivity* exists when
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8 a relationship is established through a middle term; for example when someone
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10 arguments that $a=b$, and $b=c$ than a relationship between a and c is automatically
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12 created, and b functions as the middle term conveying this relationship. *Comparisons*
13
14 are crafted through the relating of two terms and then evaluating them through their
15
16 relation to each other.
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19 Arguments based on the structure of reality build on relations of which the
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21 speaker can assume are already recognized and accepted by the audience. We explain
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23 here the three schemes of this group that often appeared in our sample. *Liaisons of*
24
25 *succession* unite a phenomenon or term to its reasonable consequences or causes.
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27 *Liaisons of coexistence* connect a visible or tangible manifestation to its invisible
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29 essence, such as a person to his/her acts or a group to its members. A specific form
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31 hereof is the *personification*, a figure applied to certain traits of an individual, which
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33 makes it possible to stabilize the boundaries of an essence.
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37 Arguments establishing the structure of reality rely upon connections recognized
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39 by the audience to create new audience perceptions. To this group belong four
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41 commonly used schemes: the argument by *example*, in which a disagreement with a
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43 specific rule is established, aiming to imply another one. *Models* present a person or a
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45 group to be imitated or aim to incite an action inspired by them. An *analogy* is an
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47 extension of thought, mostly by crafting a hypothesis by reasonable induction of a
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49 situation resembling, yet coming out of a different sphere than the subject of the
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51 argument. *Metaphors* are artistic alterations of words or phrases from its own proper
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53 meaning to another, and thus fuse two different spheres in one image.
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4 *Dissociations* finally, disengage notions that were originally unified, where
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6 *associations* unify notions that were not engaged before. Both these schemes often
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8 concern pairs of terms or values that are linked through argumentation.
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10 11 12 13 **Rhetorical constructions of innovation by creative entrepreneurs**

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15 In their narratives, our respondents constructed their creative work as innovative relying
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17 on three types of rhetorical argumentations: argumentations centered on their own
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19 biography as a source of aesthetic innovation, argumentations centered on the difference
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21 of their creative work vis-à-vis other (previously existing) products, and argumentations
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23 centered on the power struggle against ‘significant others’ as representing barriers for
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25 creative field. Table 3 presents an overview of their main characteristics. Each of these
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27 argumentations relied on one or two key rhetorical schemes complemented by other
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29 schemes either reinforcing or counterbalancing the main ones, enhancing the overall
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31 rhetorical effect of the argumentation. Hereunder, we analyze the use of rhetorical
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33 schemes in each type of argumentation through illustrative fragments.
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46 *Rhetorical argumentations centered on oneself and one’s background: innovation*
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48 *claims through liaisons of coexistence*

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50 A first type of rhetorical argumentations constructs aesthetic innovation by referring to
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52 the unique background and biography of the creative entrepreneur through *liaisons of*
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54 *coexistence*, a scheme linking two elements by representing one of them as the
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4 manifestation of the other, its essence. Specifically, our respondents use two types of
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6 liaisons of coexistence to build this kind of argumentations. First, they construct their
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8 work as innovative by portraying it as the manifestation of their unique self, which
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10 stands for the essence of such work. Second, they construct their work as innovative by
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12 portraying it as the manifestation of either the culture of the ethnic group they belong to,
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14 or their mixed cultural background, both of which stand for its essence. These liaisons
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16 of coexistence are sometimes combined to develop an argument including both the
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18 creative work as manifestation of the unique self and this latter's mixed cultural
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20 background. Reference to an essence represents a particularly strong rhetorical means
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22 for winning the approval of the audience because it highlights uniqueness, a highly
23
24 rated value (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 89). This value is also transferred to
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26 the manifestation of the essence, i.e. the speaker's cultural product.
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31 The rhetorical strength of using a *liaison of coexistence* between one's unique
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33 self and one's creative work to claim innovation is well illustrated by the words of
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35 Ammon, an architect with an Egyptian background:
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38 I once took a plane, and I wasn't looking at the movie, but at the Mediterranean
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40 Sea. It was a very nice setting with the sun, and you saw nothing but this. I
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42 realized that this is my land; this is my real identity, this non-identity. That I
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44 don't belong to this or that, and I guess in my work you feel that my architecture
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46 is not from the south and not from the north. It's too much north to be from the
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48 south and there is too much south in it to be really architecture from here, from
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50 the north. This is what I like. [...] You have to admit that your life has to be a
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52 just solitary travel with your boat, and you cross these other cultures. In the end
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54 it is only going to talk about you. You[re] going to see nothing [name of the
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56 country] in my architecture, going to see nothing [name of second European
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58 country], nothing Egyptian –there is no pyramid– it talks about me, and the
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60 people I met.

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52 Ammon claims here that his creative work is innovative because it represents a
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54 manifestation of himself, a unique individual. This central *liaison of coexistence* is
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56 supported through two powerful *metaphors* firstly of the Mediterranean Sea as his 'non-
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4 identity' and secondly of a boat trip as his solitary search for creativity, stressing his
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6 uniqueness. Despite the extensive reference to his double cultural background, through
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8 the repetition of the terms the north and the south – a double *chiasmus* –, he
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10 simultaneously *disassociates* himself from it, also using the term 'non-identity' and the
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12 repetition of 'going to see nothing' – an *anaphora*. This chiasmus figure functions as a
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14 mirror, in which the first part of an expression is echoed in reverse order by the second,
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16 north-south is copied by south-north, which in its turn is again copied with north-south.
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18 The explicit *negation* of a liaison of coexistence between the speaker's cultural
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20 background on the one hand and his individual self and his work on the other
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22 powerfully stresses his own uniqueness as an individual and thus also of his work.
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26 Abdel, an Algerian advertisement entrepreneur uses an analogous *liaison of*
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28 *coexistence* to highlight the self as the source of his distinctive creative work:
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31 You would be surprised about our very different... Well, I think that because of
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33 me –as I am a man of stories already since my childhood– I carry with me these
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35 horrible stories of war and things. Actually I am a child of stories, and I've
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37 always been. I know all the stories, I can tell you thousands. I have a very
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39 different view on things, my approach on something quite normal can be
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41 completely surprising. When you're dealing with coffee, I can look at coffee in a
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43 complete different way than you yourself. So well, I think I have a surplus,
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45 because I am a kind of funnel where a lot of things were thrown in, that I can
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47 reach a different viewpoint that others don't reach. That's surprising [...] and
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49 sometimes I have to explain what I mean. So well yes, it's a completely different
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51 creative look on things.
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54 Abdel portrays here by using a *liaison of coexistence* his creative work as a
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56 manifestation of his unique self, which he defines as 'a man of stories'. The argument
57
58 centers on his own personal experience of the war as a source of stories, in which he
59
60 however makes no explicit reference to a collective history or culture. This key liaison
is rhetorically supported by numerous other schemes. For instance, a *liaison of*
succession is used to stress that he is a story teller since his childhood, and because of

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4 that still is today. In this excerpt we also see a *dissociation* from other people, who can
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6 allegedly not come to the same creative insights as they do not share his past, pointing
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8 at the advantages of his unique self for aesthetic innovation. Finally, the *metaphor* of
9
10 the funnel is used to visualize his unique background.

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12 Other argumentations are rather built on a *liaison of coexistence* presenting the
13
14 speaker's creative work as innovative by virtue of being the manifestation of his or her
15
16 specific cultural background. The following excerpt from the interview with Kerem, a
17
18 film director with Turkish roots, is exemplary:
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22 I can say that movies like [mine] are distinct because of their makers [...] At
23
24 first [I was] not [differentiating myself]. At first I thought: "I want to be like
25
26 [majority people]". Yet, I noticed that the audience makes a distinction, and then
27
28 I thought: "Well, probably it is like that then somehow, I will probably behave
29
30 differently without knowing" [...] I think I'm different because I've had another
31
32 upbringing. I'm coming from a different kind of home, another culture, even
33
34 another home culture, so I think that makes me different. So, this is why I cannot
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36 make the same kind of movies as some of my [ethnic majority] colleagues.
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38 Where their enrichment comes from their upbringing, my enrichment will come
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40 from mine, I guess [...] I mean, being a director with Turkish roots you bring
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42 with you a complete luggage of things, you know, which could not be discussed
43
44 before, or were discussed in different ways.

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46 Kerem constructs his creative work primarily as the manifestation of his culture specific
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48 upbringing, the essence. This central *liaison of coexistence* is reinforced by various
49
50 *liaisons of succession* establishing cause-effect relations. So his roots cause him to
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52 'automatically' carry a certain 'luggage' – a *metaphor* – and his 'different kind of
53
54 home' cause him to be who he is, stressing his unique self. Later on, a *comparison* with
55
56 ethnic majority film directors is used to stress the difference with them, and the *value* of
57
58 'enrichment' is used not only to suggest the importance of one's background for one's
59
60 creative inspiration but also to affirm the equal status of all backgrounds in providing it.

Yet other respondents built argumentations developing a double *liaison of coexistence* in which both one's self and one's cultural background plays a key role.

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4 This is well illustrated by the following fragment from the interview with Fayza, a
5
6 Moroccan fashion designer:
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8 I mix the Western with the Arabic, and I think that's very interesting. [...] For
9 example, we would never wear a beanie with a scarf. [...] I thought it was so
10 cozy, all these Western ladies wearing a beanie in winter, together with a scarf,
11 and that was something we couldn't. And so I thought, I have to do something
12 with that. [...] Just a headscarf, that isn't so warm in winter [...] So I thought,
13 I'm going to connect the two [...] and then a little flower on the side and that's a
14 success of course. It can be worn by Western ladies and by Muslimas. [...] Also,
15 the materials, like leather, fur etcetera. I don't think that in Morocco you would
16 wear leather and fur, because it's too warm there. [...] Thus, those are things you
17 as Western Muslima make and design and I think in the Arabic world they are
18 actually slowed down to just design Arabically, because they didn't get that
19 Western [influence], and I've got both. [...] That's the most beautiful, that you
20 can mix the two.
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24 In this excerpt, Fayza portrays her innovative headscarves as the manifestation of her
25 unique self – the essence – which is in turn itself the manifestation of two cultures, the
26 Arabic and the Western, again the essence. The main scheme is complemented by
27 various other rhetorical schemes. Through a *liaison of succession* creations are
28 presented as the result of her own insight and specific way to proactively mix the
29 Western and Arabic traditions which she has in herself, highlighting her own agency.
30 Through an *analogy*, in which a warm climate stands to light materials as a cold climate
31 stands to fur and leather, the argument is crafted that new materials should be used for
32 headscarves in the West because the climate is colder, stressing their value due to
33 necessity. Finally, Fayza also *compares* herself to Arab fashion designers to highlight
34 her own advantage of having a double cultural background.
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48 Through this first group of argumentations, creative entrepreneurs rhetorically
49 claim aesthetic innovation by constructing their creative work as the expression of their
50 unique self and, in turn, this self as an expression of their minority or hybrid ethnic
51 background. These liaisons of coexistence echo the close relationship between the
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4 creative product and the creatives' own identity (Hagoort 2005), yet recast the latter as a
5
6 rhetorical device to stress the innovative nature of the former. Our findings illustrate
7
8 that ethnic minority creative entrepreneurs specifically draw on their (hybrid)
9
10 ethnic/cultural background (see also: Kontos 2003), an identity which is easily
11
12 recognizable to a general audience as it represents a strong marker of social identity in
13
14 contemporary societies. However, they do so in ways that carefully avoid overly
15
16 'essentializing' themselves and their work, as it would suggest that any member of the
17
18 ethnic group could be able to perform creatively, downplaying their own uniqueness
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20 and the effort. To highlight these latter, the complementing schemes often convey
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22 agency and intentionality.
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29 *Rhetorical argumentations centered on one's creative work: innovation claims through*
30
31 *comparisons and models*

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33 A second type of rhetorical argumentations deals with the speakers' creative work itself,
34
35 claiming its innovative character by means of *comparisons* and *models*. To construct
36
37 innovation, our respondents often evaluate their own work by comparing it to products
38
39 that were on the market before – rhetorically constructed as *facts* – or to whole
40
41 traditions of products in which they inscribe it. In other instances, they rather put their
42
43 own innovation up front through a *model* scheme, claiming their work to be pioneering
44
45 in their field and thus to be a model for others to follow. These two key rhetorical
46
47 schemes are complemented by a variety of other ones to strengthen the argumentation.
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51 The rhetorical power of *comparisons* to build claims of aesthetic innovation is
52
53 well illustrated by this fragment from our interview with Altan, a film maker of Turkish
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55 origin:
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4 That's why I made a [country name] vampire movie. Why, I mean, it has
5 nothing to do with my origins or something like that. It's just a [country name]
6 vampire movie, and that's never been done before. Well [...] I couldn't think of
7 a title and I thought: "A [country name] vampire movie, that sounds like fun!"
8 So I started writing the script and some three years later it gets played in [largest
9 cinema theater chain in the country]. I mean, for me it was: "Wow!". And no,
10 it's not a high budget movie, definitely not, it's a niche film. It's a movie dealing
11 with a lot of different subjects than a commercial one would do. [...] I wanted a
12 theatrical movie, a theatrical vampire movie, which is something you absolutely
13 should not do [commercially]. That's why certain sequences in the film are
14 really theatrical, and that's what I wanted to make. Well, and that is something
15 that commercially doesn't work at any point, theater.
16
17

18 In this excerpt, Altan relies on two related *comparisons*. The movie is first compared to
19 other movies produced in the country in terms of genre, highlighting the absence of
20 'local' vampire movies. It is then compared to other movies with higher budgets and
21 more 'commercial' subjects, highlighting the speaker's theatrical *l'art pour l'art*
22 approach to script writing and filming. The stress on the artistic aspects avoids the
23 audience's possible association of the creative work with commercial movies due to its
24 theme – vampires – which is commonly seen as commercial. Together, these two
25 comparisons build Altan's argument that nobody has done what he does before,
26 stressing the innovation of his work. These comparisons are then complemented by
27 additional schemes that establish at once the symbolic and the economic value of his
28 work. A *hierarchy* is used to construct theatrical, non-commercial movies such as his
29 more superior than commercial ones. The use of the terms 'theatrical', 'low-budget' and
30 'niche' *associate* the movie to a non-commercial scene, highlighting again its
31 uniqueness in genre versus approach.
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49 The key role of *comparisons* is also clear in the excerpt from a published
50 interview with Saaim, a choreographer with Moroccan roots who runs his own
51 internationally renowned dancing company:
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4 I want to engage the public in my performance [...] This means I have to make
5 sure they can enter my imaginary world. I'm not from a generation like [names
6 of two well-known choreographers in the country]. I'm not a shocking rebel.
7 Who offends the public leaves only little space for communication. I don't work
8 like that. [...] In my performances I do not try to show the heaviness of dance,
9 the effort. I want them to seem light, except when I want to say something about
10 suffering.
11

12
13 Here Saaim *compares* his creative work with the work of the previous generation of
14 choreographers. By so doing he contrasts his approach centered on involving and
15 dialoguing with the audience with his predecessors' heavy, shocking approach,
16 excluding communication. To strengthen the effect of this *comparison*, a
17 *personification* of the negative term is used, in which non-communication and shocking
18 content is made tangible through two well-known and accepted choreographers.
19 Conversely, Saaim *associates* his style with the positive values of dialogue and
20 communication towards the public, which is rhetorically deployed to craft a powerful
21 claim of innovation as resistance to 'old' norms and values of the tradition.
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33 In the following fragment from the website of Iulia, an architect with Romanian
34 origins, a claim for innovation is rather rhetorically built through a *comparison* and a
35 *model* scheme:
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39 [We] deliberately choose not to have a typical architectural style but we do have
40 a consistent approach. [...] We aim for quality at every scale, accept change and
41 include - next to space - 'time' as the main context of a project. Over the 20th
42 century, the history of architecture has evolved from a 'Beaux Arts' approach
43 towards a rational, autonomous, problem solving one. We claim the necessity to
44 push this approach to the next level and aim for an architecture that dares to let
45 go of its autonomy and that is meaningful in today's society.
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48 By locating Iulia's creative work in the broader history of architecture, this text
49 inscribes the former within the latter and *compares* it to the last step in the evolution of
50 the discipline, rational architecture. At the same time, her creative work is portrayed as
51 a *model* for the future of the field, pushing it to a 'next stage' of development. By using
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4 these two schemes, a sense of innovation due to a unique approach on architecture is
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6 crafted. Furthermore, the multiple references to time and development constitute a
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8 *hierarchy* scheme in which the value of the new is constructed as preferable to the value
9
10 of the old. This is further reinforced by reference to the necessity of change, which is
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12 here used as a *value* assumed to be already shared by the audience.
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15 An even stronger emphasis on the pioneering role of his creative work is present
16
17 in words of Robert, a musician and music producer with Congolese roots. In his
18
19 interview with us, he explained:
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22 I'm quite an adventurer actually, I mean, I started singing in [local language],
23 and I did not consult anyone about that. I thought, well, all that English, all those
24 dictionaries, those texts.... My girl-friend is a native English speaker, she speaks
25 real English. We cannot fool ourselves, that's real English she speaks, what I try
26 to write is school English, it's never real, what an Englishman would say. I
27 thought, you know what, I start in [local language], I can do that, it's my
28 language, I think in [local language], I dream in it, so I can sing in it too. But for
29 the media that was like: "Wow, what's that?". There's nothing hard about it, just
30 doing. But a lot of artists are asking me like: "Tell me, how did you do that?".
31 So I notice like, yes, I have pioneered in things. [...] I remember that we started
32 playing acoustic, I think about seven years ago now, and we were on tour with a
33 string quartet that we had put together ourselves, just a guitar, that string quartet,
34 some local venues. And three years after that [a famous band] had one like that
35 too, and everybody started using the same quartet we did. Yet, and this was the
36 funny thing, we selected it. There were four ladies that we specifically chose,
37 and immediately they had to work everywhere. Yet we were the pioneers.
38
39

40 This argumentation claims the innovativeness of the speaker's creative work through a
41
42 *model* scheme. Robert constructs his aesthetic innovation – to sing in the local language
43
44 and to perform acoustically with an all-female, self assembled string quartet – as
45
46 desirable by pointing to the fact that he was the first and they were later adopted by
47
48 others. In this way, he casts them as the starting point of a tradition.
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51 This main rhetorical scheme is supported by others. The causal relation between
52
53 the speaker's own innovation and the behavior of other colleagues following his
54
55 example is underlined by a *liaison of succession*. Robert's stylistic choice and selection
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4 of artists is constructed as positive by mentioning the later success of the quartet,
5 referring to the fact that it was later asked to perform together everywhere. To buttress
6 the choice to change the language of his songs, ‘real’ English – which is *personified* by
7 Robert’s partner – is *compared* to ‘school’ English, the English of non-native speakers –
8 *personified* by himself. Finally, the artistic and market value of the aesthetic innovation
9 is enhanced by *association* to a very successful band, which later adopted it, and which
10 is cast as the speaker’s follower.
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19 Through the second type of argumentations, creative entrepreneurs claim
20 aesthetic innovation by rhetorically relating their creative work to other products and
21 traditions. One’s creative work is associated and contrasted with others, which
22 rhetorically function as a point of reference to ‘benchmark’ it. As the creative industries
23 are characterized by an absence of universal aesthetic standards (see also: Castañer and
24 Campos 2002; Handke 2004b), our analysis shows that creative entrepreneurs
25 proactively select reference products or traditions in function of their claim of
26 innovation, highlighting certain characteristics of their work and downplaying others.
27 These touchstones are however always selected from those deemed to be familiar to a
28 general (ethnic majority) audience – such as local or internationally renowned creative
29 entrepreneurs or western traditions – as to reconnect one’s innovation to a tradition
30 despite its distinctiveness. The main schemes used in this argumentation, *comparisons*
31 and *models*, highlight the temporal structure of innovation. On the one hand, innovation
32 can only be established when comparing with already existing touchstones which thus
33 need to be located in the past. On the other, the value of one’s innovation is through
34 model schemes established by referring to its durability and subsequent replication by
35 others (see also: Rehn and Vachhani 2006).
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4 *Rhetorical argumentations centered on power struggles: innovation claims through*
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6 *personifications and hierarchies*
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9 Our last type of argumentation claims innovation by reference to the power struggle
10 with ‘significant others’, including teachers, clients, gatekeepers, experts, critics,
11 funders and even colleagues to affirm one’s creative work. These argumentations
12 typically rely on *personifications* and/or *hierarchies*, whereby the values of their work
13 are set higher than those of gatekeepers’ preferences and selection criteria and/or as
14 better reflecting the public’s demand. They are further always reinforced by various
15 other rhetorical schemes. In his interview with us, Ergin, a photographer with Turkish
16 roots, explained:
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26 I’m open for new techniques. I’ve even had troubles with my teacher for those
27 portraits I made. In the beginning, he was not supportive at all [...] he was
28 against it because I used certain techniques to create those effects. It’s actually
29 an effect you create, but actually it is just a means to reach the end. In the
30 beginning there were teachers that were very strict: “You cannot do this, it has to
31 pure, and such”. So I had some troubles with that. Yet, in the end, well, it turned
32 out to be my thing anyway, and I was really happy with it too. I do experiment a
33 lot. Also new techniques and such, digital, analog, it doesn’t matter. I’ve seen
34 the evolution of the digital camera, at first all the teachers were against, and the
35 next day they bought one themselves.
36
37

38 In this excerpt, Ergin rhetorically constructs his photographic work as innovative
39 because it is opposed by the old generation. This main argument crafts acceptance by
40 means of two *hierarchies*, a first one placing the new above the traditional and the
41 habitual; and a second one placing experiments above proven methods. These
42 *hierarchies* are moreover related by two *liaisons of coexistence* whereby experiments
43 are manifestations of the new (the essence) and proven methods are manifestations of
44 the old (the essence). This *hierarchy* is supported through a number of other rhetorical
45 schemes. The negative value in the hierarchy – the old – is further stressed through a
46 *personification* in the teacher, evoking the power of the established norm. By
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4 constructing the teacher as a gatekeeper personifying the old, the innovation of the
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6 ‘unaccepted’ creative products can be highlighted. This personification is further
7
8 stressed by the progressive embracement of the new by the opponent – a *contradictory*
9
10 argument, as the teacher personifies the old – showing the gradual adoption of the
11
12 ‘rejected’ by the ‘rejecter’, stressing further the quality of the innovation.
13
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15 The combination of a *hierarchy* and a *personification* featured frequently in this
16
17 type of argumentation. Consider the words by Onat, a Turkish rooted publisher:
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19

20 My focus is on immigrants who don’t write on migrant themes. So it gets a lot of
21 attention, it’s something new, they don’t know it. Have you ever seen an
22 immigrant publishing a thriller? No way! A Mohammed who is a new [famous
23 crime-scene writer]? No way! Science fiction? Those writers nevertheless do
24 exist! I mean, when you put some effort in finding them [...] Yet the publishers
25 never give anyone a chance if it means too much risk. [They say:]“Yes, this is
26 not tremendous, but it is fine, we’ll publish it. [We want] no risks. We do need
27 to get a return on investment”, you know. That’s the attitude here [...] and in the
28 end I thought: “I’m going to do it by myself!”. But I’m not bragging about it. I
29 have to do it like that because all that *ancien régime* clowns don’t value it [my
30 work]. [...] I was a bit inspired by... Well, you also see this in music and film.
31 Low budget films you know, all those palls saying: “Fuck off, I’m recording
32 what I like myself, I have talent anyway”. And that’s one of the reasons why all
33 the record companies are collapsing. [...] And the recording industry thinks:
34 “Fuck it, we can’t produce anymore”. [...] Yet, in literature it’s not like that yet
35 [...] So I’ve applied myself that ‘do it yourself’ – some say the punk attitude – to
36 literature.
37
38

39 In this excerpt, the speaker constructs his aesthetic innovations as the outcome of his
40 power struggle with gatekeepers. He does so through several *hierarchies*, placing value
41 chain innovation above more traditional production forms and more risk above less risk.
42
43 These hierarchies are all used to rhetorically contest the gatekeepers’ approach to
44 publishing, highlighting one’s own innovative products and way of working. This
45
46 central scheme is complemented by a *personification* of the old in the ‘*ancien régime*
47 clowns’. Also an *example* – ‘a Mohammed who is the new [famous crime-scene writer]’
48
49 is used to show disagreement with the traditional stereotypical norms and rules
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4 personified in ethnic majority gatekeepers, which relegate ethnic minority creatives to
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6 'ethnic minority literature'. Finally, the two central schemes are complemented by a
7
8 powerful *analogy* between literature and other creative sectors, like music and film, in
9
10 which a 'punk attitude' already exists. By doing so firstly the desirability and
11
12 inevitability of innovation in the literary production process is highlighted, and secondly
13
14 the possibility for innovation when resisting the gatekeepers is stressed.
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18 The ethnic dimension of the *hierarchy* and *personification* is central in the
19
20 following excerpt from a documentary interview with Hamdi, a theater maker with
21
22 Turkish origins:
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25 In the definitive evaluation of the commission [evaluating theater makers
26
27 receiving subsidies] – it's still hanging above my bed – they wrote something
28
29 like: "Being a Turkish theater maker in [name of the local country], you want to
30
31 perform a piece of [two names], who are both European writers. We had
32
33 expected that you would follow your roots and would use material from there
34
35 [Turkey]. We don't find your project interesting enough to support you because
36
37 you don't want to work with Turkish material and language here."
38

39
40 This argument is built on two *hierarchies*, one subordinating the value of creative
41
42 freedom of the speaker to the stereotypical values of the ethnic majority – *personified* in
43
44 the evaluation commission. Another *hierarchy* places a sense of homogeneity (a Turk
45
46 using Turkish resources) above hybridity. To support this view, the creative
47
48 entrepreneur is here constructed by the commission as the manifestation of his ethnic
49
50 background through a *liaison of coexistence* similar to the ones featuring in the first
51
52 type of argumentation. However, as such *liaison* is used by majority individuals in a
53
54 power position; it is in this cluster used to show how (innovative) creative freedom is
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56 hampered by gatekeepers.
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4 In some cases, respondents rather use *hierarchies* not to highlight the struggles
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6 with gatekeepers, yet to talk about their professional relations within colleagues in the
7
8 field, as in the following excerpt from the interview with Ammon, who told us:
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10
11 I work a in a very dynamic way, and I like it a lot. I don't like the classic way of
12 working. For sure I will never associate. [...] It [architecture] becomes more and
13 more complex and then architects associate and you can become stronger. You
14 can build up the biggest projects etcetera. But I don't like this way of working.
15 [...] I only like this for certain projects, like I said for the project in [name
16 European city] I was associated with [name]. I was also associated with an
17 architect in [name European city] to do a project in Niger, in Africa. From time
18 to time, to associate for one specific project, yes, that's what I like, but [I don't
19 like] to be married to someone. I try to escape the frame. I try to be always out
20 of the frame, to go away and not to follow the track. This is what it is to be
21 innovative. You try to have the maximum of freedom.
22
23

24 Ammon rhetorically crafts his innovation by relying on a *hierarchy* scheme placing
25 creative freedom above commercial values, such as having access to large projects. To
26 stress this freedom several *metaphors* such as the frame, marriage and the track are
27 used. Finally an *association* between associated architects and large scale, constraining
28 projects highlights the possible benefits of working alone on a small scale leaving open
29 all options on freedom and innovation.
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37 Through this third group of argumentations, creative entrepreneurs claim
38 innovation by rhetorically affirming their innovative products as embodying higher
39 values than those dominant in the creative field, highlighting the struggle with
40 significant others. In addressing their general audience, they deploy *hierarchies* in
41 which negative values are often *personified* in 'gatekeepers' posing barriers to aesthetic
42 innovation which, they however have been able to overcome. Different from the
43 previous two, this argumentation is thus centered on the power dynamics which are at
44 the core of the creative industries (see also: Entwistle and Rocamora 2006; Hirsch 1972;
45 Jones, Anand and Alvarez 2005; Negus 2002). Hereby, gatekeepers' majority ethnic
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4 background is used by some respondents to further qualify the power struggle and to
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6 strengthen their claims. Dominant aesthetic norms are then cast as the norms of the
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8 *ethnic majority* gatekeepers enforced to exclude them as *ethnic minority* creatives, and
9
10 as discrimination hampering their innovative creative work.
11

12 13 14 15 **Discussion and conclusion**

16
17 The innovator is in the common narrative of economic development a heroic
18 figure, one who opposes old regimes and creates a rift in the weave of economic
19 time, ushering in the new. In the chasm between the old and the new, standing
20 there in the ‘gales of creative destruction’, the innovator is a herald and the
21 creator without a primogenitor (cf. Elliott, 1980). [...] However, implicit in this
22 view of innovation and economy is a notion of the original as being
23 ontologically secure, stable in its position as a value-creating event (Rehn and
24 Vachhani 2006: 310-311).
25
26

27 Taking stock of Rehn and Vachhani’s (2006) critique of dominant notions of
28 innovation, this study conceptualizes aesthetic innovation as a social and cultural act of
29 ascribing value through truth claims (see also: Badiou 1988; Haugaard 1997). From our
30 analysis, three argumentations used to establish such claims emerged. A first
31 argumentation establishes a ‘foundational’ claim centered on the speaker’s self.
32 Drawing on a unique self and biography, aesthetic innovation for a creative product is
33 claimed by constructing the product as the expression of the self. Often, this latter is
34 further constructed itself as the expression of one’s ethnicity/culture. Value is here
35 claimed by establishing an ontology of creative innovation, thus on the creative’s own
36 terms. The second argumentation crafts innovation by inscribing the creative product
37 within a broader creative context of the tradition and/or coeval competitors’ work.
38 Value is here claimed by virtue of the alleged original ‘contribution’ the product makes
39 to the creative tradition understood as developing in time. The third argumentation
40 finally embeds the creative in a power struggle with rhetorically established ‘significant
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4 others'. Value is here claimed by virtue of the creative's engagement in the political act
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6 of affirming innovation.
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9 Taken together, these argumentations skillfully deploy various combinations of
10 schemes to define entities (e.g. the creative product, the tradition), actors (e.g. the self,
11 the ethnic community, gatekeepers, consumers, competitors), and the relations between
12 them (e.g. imitation, expression, difference, power struggle), rhetorically constructing
13 innovation as a specific "agent-artifact space", as argued by Lane and Maxfield (1997;
14
15 2005).
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24 *Claims of value through the (ethnically defined) self*

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26 That our texts often rely on the unique self as a key rhetorical resource to construct
27 innovation is unsurprising in the light of the common perception of creative work – also
28 by a non-specialized public – as the result of an individual's creative act expressing his
29 or her own identity (Hagoort 2005). The relation between the two has been at the core
30 of the literature examining the social construction of authenticity in creative work
31 (Jones et al. 2005; Peterson 2005; Svejenova 2005). Our respondents however also
32 connect the self – to various degrees – to either a minority ethnic/cultural group or an
33 ethnically/culturally hybrid group of which it is itself the expression.
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44 As a key "marker of identity" in contemporary western societies, ethnicity is
45 indeed highly recognizable for a general audience. The commonly accepted association
46 of ethnicity and creativity further makes it particularly attractive for ethnic minority
47 creative entrepreneurs to build claims (Brandellero 2010; NESTA 2006). Other social
48 identities such as gender and class may rhetorically be used in analogous ways, as they
49 do in our texts, albeit to a more limited extent. The possibility of self-expression and
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4 'authenticity' – albeit in socially negotiated forms – offered by creative work is of
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6 particular significance for members of social groups such as ethnic minorities, who are
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8 more often in materially and symbolically subordinated professional positions. The
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10 reliance on a unique self as a rhetorical resource for claiming innovation however is not
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12 void of the risk of essentialization.
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17 *Claiming value through the tradition and competitors*
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20 Claims of innovation centered on reference products or traditions highlight the possible
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22 differences, and thus originality, vis-à-vis the own creative work. In this sense, these
23
24 argumentations both reflect and reproduce dominant understandings of innovation as a
25
26 break from the past. Drawing on the work of Walther Benjamin, Rehn and Vachani
27
28 (2006) argue that, so conceptualized, originality is functional to constituting a relation
29
30 of ownership between the creative and his or her creative work, legitimizing a property
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32 claim. It is namely the clear-cut distinction between the original and subsequent copies
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34 that allows the attribution of value to the former by denying the value of the latter.
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38 The rhetorical opportunities posed by the lack of given points of reference to
39
40 assess aesthetic innovation are well illustrated by the skillful argumentations in our
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42 excerpts. Points of reference are constructed by mentioning 'great' creative traditions,
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44 which confer value to one's work by the mere fact that this latter is compared to them,
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46 as the comparison assumes that they can be place on the same plane (Perelman and
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48 Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969). In models, competitors' work is clearly cast as a "copy", which
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50 implies that it is less valuable than the speaker's work. Yet there is no explicit
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52 denigration of the copy, as the value of the own work is paradoxically itself contingent
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54 on the copy.
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4 *Claiming value through 'significant others' and the public*
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6 Parallel to inscribing the creative work in a tradition, innovation claims rhetorically
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8 inscribe the creative in a field constituted by 'significant others', powerful actors
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10 hampering innovation. This inscription casts the creative as a 'hero' facing adversities
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12 to affirm the value of his or her creative work, fully in line with broader discursive
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14 representations of the entrepreneur (Ogbor 2000). Rhetorically, this argument claims
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16 value by stressing the power struggle involved in affirming one's work, an effort that in
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18 itself hints the value of the latter (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969). These
19
20 fragments suggest a rhetorical re-appropriation by creative entrepreneurs of the
21
22 experienced tension between creative work as an individual act expressing the self (see
23
24 above) and as reliant on powerful others for its production and selling (cf. Wilson and
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26 Stokes 2005). Yet at the same time they do not reproduce the clear-cut opposition
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28 between creative and commercial logics in the creative literature (cf. Hagoort 2005).
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30 Our findings rather show a skillful rhetorical distinction of the public, representing the
31
32 'real' market awaiting the creative's aesthetic innovation, from gatekeepers such as
33
34 publishers and funders, who are concerned only with managing risks and securing the
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36 own profit. In this way, speakers portray their work as meeting the public's needs and
37
38 desires, at once creating connection with their general audience and buttressing its
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40 value.
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46 The political nature of the struggle on claims of innovations is rhetorically
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48 supported by qualifying power relations in ethnic terms. Whereas in the first type of
49
50 argumentation ethnicity is self ascribed and portrayed as a source of innovation, here it
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52 is on the contrary imposed by ethnic majority individuals in powerful positions. This is
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54 achieved by pointing to essentialization, the reduction of the ethnic minority creative to
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4 his or her own culture, denying individual subjectivity and thus creativity, as well as the
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6 structuring of the creative field in ways that materially enforce that essentialization.
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11 *Concluding thoughts: On 'hidden innovation', economic value and the creative's*
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13 *identity*

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15 Highlighting the problematic nature of aesthetic innovation in the creative industries,
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17 Miles and Green (2008) write about 'hidden innovation'. This term well expresses the
18
19 near absence of the word 'innovation' in our creative entrepreneurs' narratives, who
20
21 tend to rather build claims of innovation through alternative vocabularies. Innovation is
22
23 not only absent in scientific literature, often in the creative entrepreneurs' own rhetoric
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25 no references to the term are being made, suggesting its rhetorical impossibility from
26
27 their own perspective. This absence is likely due to the 'business' connotation of the
28
29 term, which would associate creativity too directly to economic motives (e.g.
30
31 Hagedoorn 1996), likely detracting from its intrinsic value. As we have discussed
32
33 above, in our claims, the closest we find to the (potential) economic value of innovative
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35 creative work are mere 'echoes' thereof: the imitation of elements of one's work by
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37 competitors and references to the public's (alleged) preferences. Economic value is thus
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39 established in highly indirect ways.
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45 As much as the language of economics is conspicuously absent from our data, as
46
47 much as the language of the self and authorship is pervading in them. To the extent that
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49 speakers' rhetoric, while persuading an audience, also persuades the self (Carranza
50
51 1999; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969; Watson 1997), the claims of innovation of
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53 our creative entrepreneurs represent identity work continuously reconstructing their
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55 professional (and social) identities (see Svejenova 2005 for a similar argument on
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4 authenticity). In other words, the rhetoric of innovation does not only establish claims
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6 on innovation but by doing so, at once reaffirms the speakers' right to authoritatively
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8 speak as creative entrepreneurs (Fairclough 1992). By stressing the political dimension
9
10 of individuals' own rhetoric of innovation as identity work, our agent-centered approach
11
12 complements and counterbalances accounts that highlight discursive structures and their
13
14 disciplinary effects in the creative industries either through identity regulation (Brown,
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16 Kornberger, Clegg and Carter 2010; Cohen et al. 2005) or gatekeeping (Bielby and
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18 Bielby 1994; Glynn and Lounsbury 2005).
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	Name	Industry	Origins	Gender	Source of innovation rhetoric
1	Robert	Music	Congo	M	Interview, Newspaper article, Magazine article
2	Onan	Publishing	Turkey	M	Interview, Company website, Newspaper article, Radio sound clip
3	Malika	(graphic) Design	Morocco	F	Interview
4	Khalid	(interior) Design	Tunisia/Algeria	M	Interview, Newspaper article (2), Magazine article
5	Murad	Film	Morocco	M	Interview, Internet article, Magazine article
6	Saida	(silver) Design	Palestine	F	Interview, Company website, Newspaper article, Magazine article
7	Altan	Film	Turkey	M	Interview, Newspaper article
8	Abdel	Advertising	Algeria	M	Interview, Newspaper article
9	Hamdi	Theater	Turkey	M	Interview, Company website, Magazine article, Documentary film fragment
10	Fayza	Fashion	Morocco	F	Interview, Internet article, National television interview, Newspaper article
11	Iulia	Architecture	Romania	F	Interview, Documentary film fragment, Company website
12	Michael	Media	Hungary	M	Interview, Magazine article (3), Documentary film Fragment, Newspaper article, Company website, National television interview
13	Saaim	Dance	Morocco	M	Interview, Company website, Newspaper article (2)
14	Kerem	Film	Turkey	M	Interview, Newspaper article
15	Ammon	Architecture	Egypt	M	Interview, Magazine article
16	Metin	Music	Turkey	M	Interview, Internet article (2), Magazine article, Newspaper article
17	Ali	Theater	Morocco	M	Interview, Company website, National television interview, Newspaper article
18	Tina	Journalism	Rwanda	F	Interview
19	Ergin	Photography	Turkey	M	Interview, Company website
20	Adinda	Theater	Congo	F	Interview
21	Najiba	Publishing	Morocco	F	Interview, Internet article, Magazine article, Newspaper article
22	Fourad	Theater	Tunisia	M	Interview, Internet article (2), Newspaper article Radio sound clip
23	Alisha	(jewelry) Design	India	F	Interview, Company website
24	Charif	Architecture	Morocco	M	Interview
25	Heydar	(interior) Design	Iran	M	Interview
26	Johanna	Film	Poland	F	Interview, Newspaper article

Table 1. Overview of respondents and sources of innovation rhetoric

Starting points of arguments	Schemes further developing arguments
Premises already accepted by audience	Quasi-logical
Focus on the real	Contradiction
Facts	Transitivity
Truths	Comparison
Presumptions	Arguments based on structure of reality
Focus on the preferable	Liaison of succession
Values	Liaison of coexistence
Hierarchies	Personification
Specific forms of discourse	Arguments establishing structure of reality
Anaphora	Example
Negation	Model
Chiasmus	Analogy
	Metaphor
	Dissociations / Associations

Table 2. Overview of used rhetoric schemes

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Key characteristics	Arguments		
Innovation as	Expression of the self and one's biography	Distinct creative work	Engaging in a power struggle to affirm one's work
Core points of reference	None (self-reference, on 'own terms')	Creative tradition and competitors	'Significant others' in positions of power
Rhetorical schemes	Liaisons of coexistence	Comparisons and models	Hierarchies and personifications
Role of ethnicity	Constructed as resource	Absent	Qualifying the encountered barriers as discriminatory
Role of the public/customers	Limited role	Occasional role/ customers as appreciating innovation	Prominent role/customers as 'real market' benefitting from innovation

Table 3. Overview of rhetoric schemes used by creative entrepreneurs to craft aesthetic innovation

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