

四維系列大師講座：專業演講

社會網絡與文化創造力

SOCIAL NETWORKS AND CULTURAL CREATIVITY

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*Abstract*

Creativity in intellectual and artistic worlds takes place in social networks. Two patterns are typical for persons who attain high reputations for creativity in fields such as philosophy, mathematics, science, scholarship, and also in art, music, and architecture. First: Vertical lineages connecting eminent teachers or masters to their eminent students. Second: horizontal circles of the younger generation who come together intensely early in their careers before they do their creative work that later makes them famous. Since creativity is innovation, the younger generation cannot simply imitate the culture capital which has been passed along to them from the successes of the past. Instead, the center of these networks is passing along a social technique for innovating, which includes negating and recombining cultural capital into new patterns; finding new problems and new materials to work on at the same time as solving them. Although large numbers of persons can begin near the center of the network, the numbers of persons who become creative leaders is always small. That is because the field is a social attention space, divided into distinctive positions that become famous in opposition to each other. In the world history of philosophy, in the East as well as the West, famous philosophers always appear in rival lineages, never as isolated individuals; it is their opposition that creates their distinctive issues. The law of small numbers holds that major innovators take up 3 to 6 famous positions simultaneously; when the upper limit is passed, the extra individuals fail to get much fame or attract pupils, and their network lineage dies out. Although famous individuals are given credit for these innovations, the content of what individuals think and produce is shaped by their location in these networks, which is internalized inside individual minds. The network rather than the individual is the actor on the stage of cultural history.