If Its Destructive, Its Not Creative

Chetan Walia

we do know what creativity is

ability to produce ideas that are novel and useful

original
unexpected

appropriate
goal oriented

the dark side of creativity

application of creativity to manipulate other people or to profit at another's expense, without regard to negative consequences

Cropley, D. H., Kaufman, J. C., & Cropley, A. J. (2008)

was 9/11 creative or was it negatively creative

novel
unexpected
goal oriented
useful

the dark side of creativity

application of creativity to manipulate other people or to profit at another's expense, without regard to negative consequences

Cropley, D. H., Kaufman, J. C., & Cropley, A. J. (2008)

When the goal is to exploit individuals, groups, institutions or organisations, the resultant activity is negative creativity

James et al 1999

the debate hinges on the questions

was it original?
was it useful?
was it harmful?
was it intentionally harmful?

creativity is judged in the end

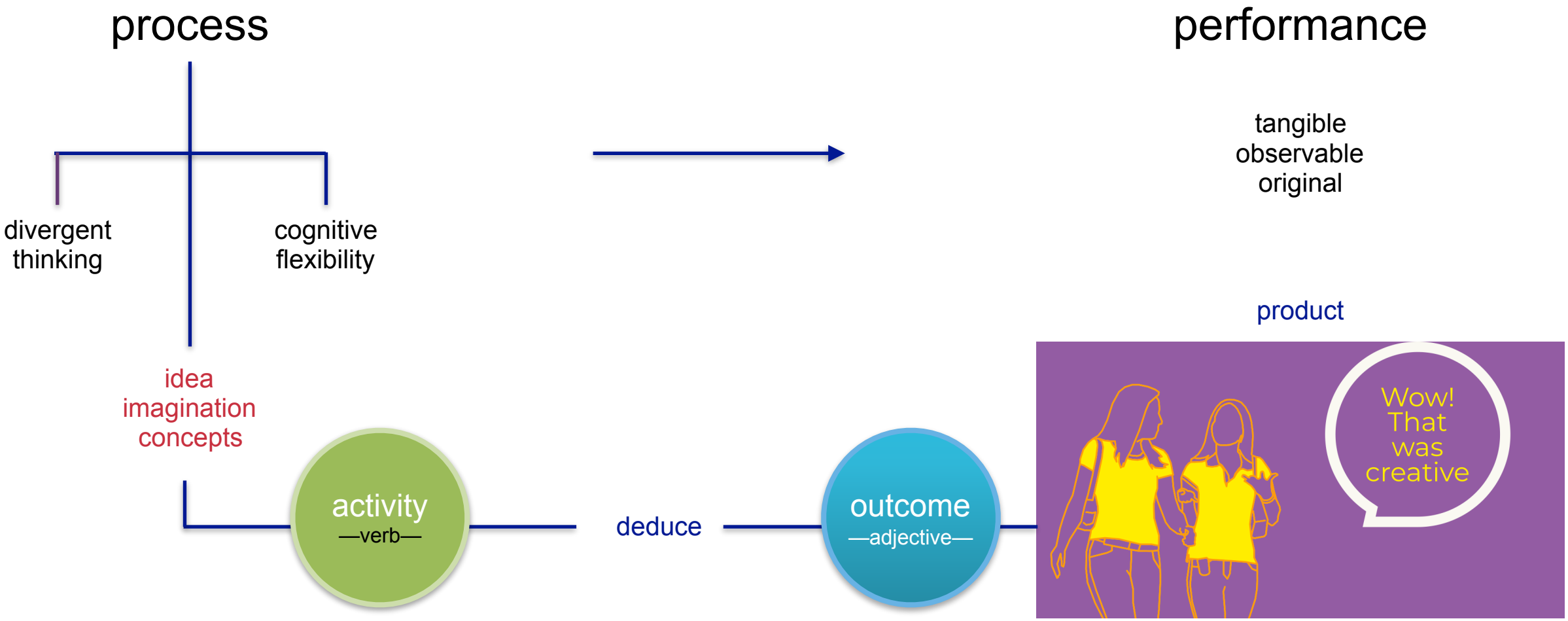
original
useful
harmful

→

end result
CREATION

Walia, C. (2019, July). If it's destructive, it's not creative. Paper presented at The 2019 Creativity Conference at Southern Oregon University, Ashland, United States.

duality of contexts



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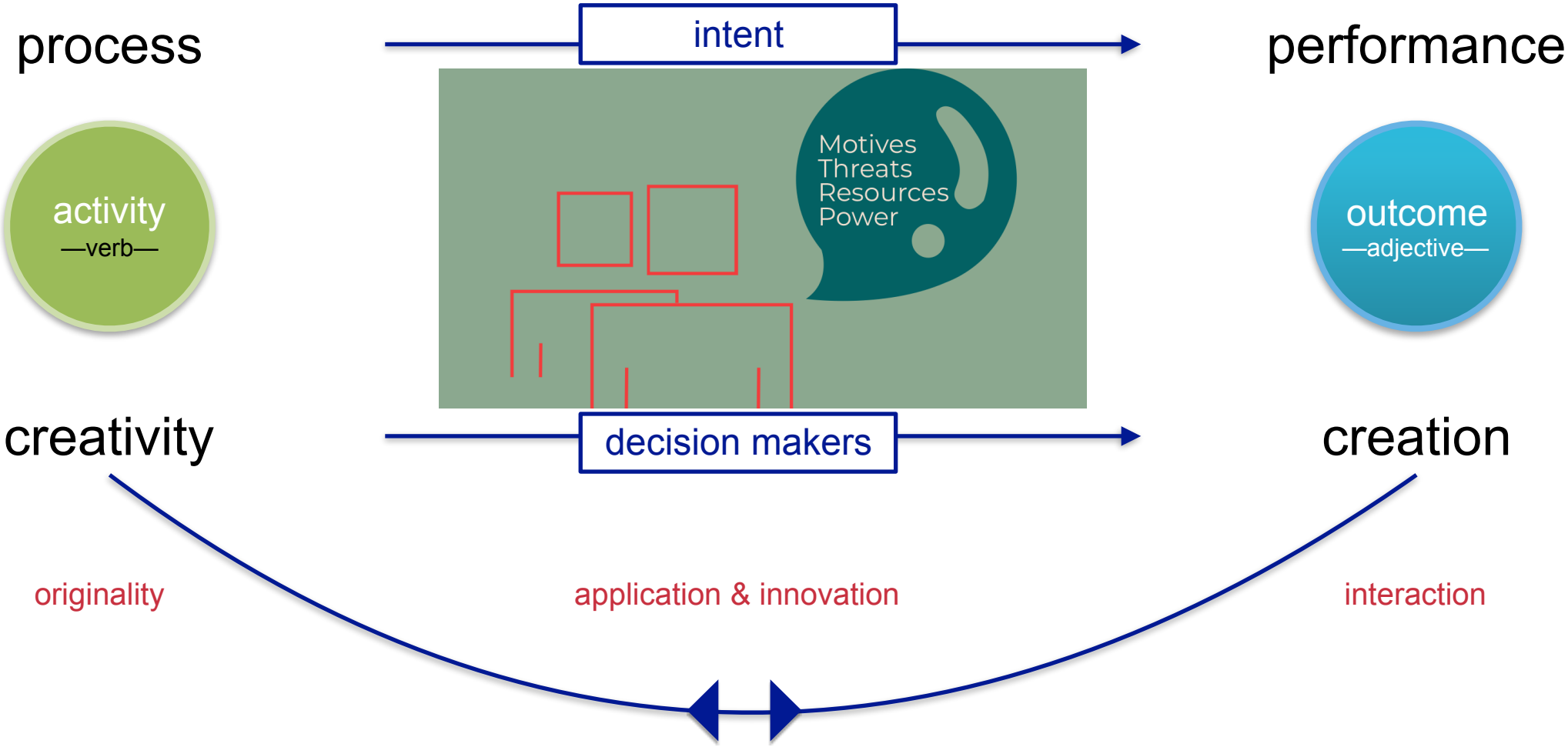

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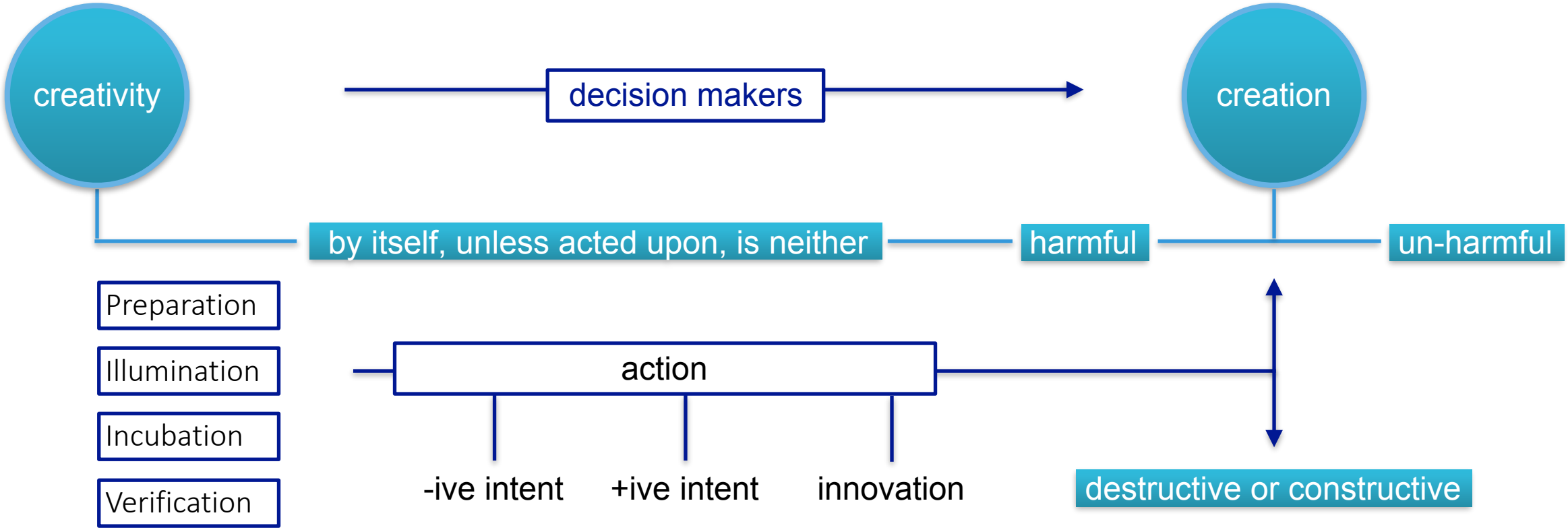
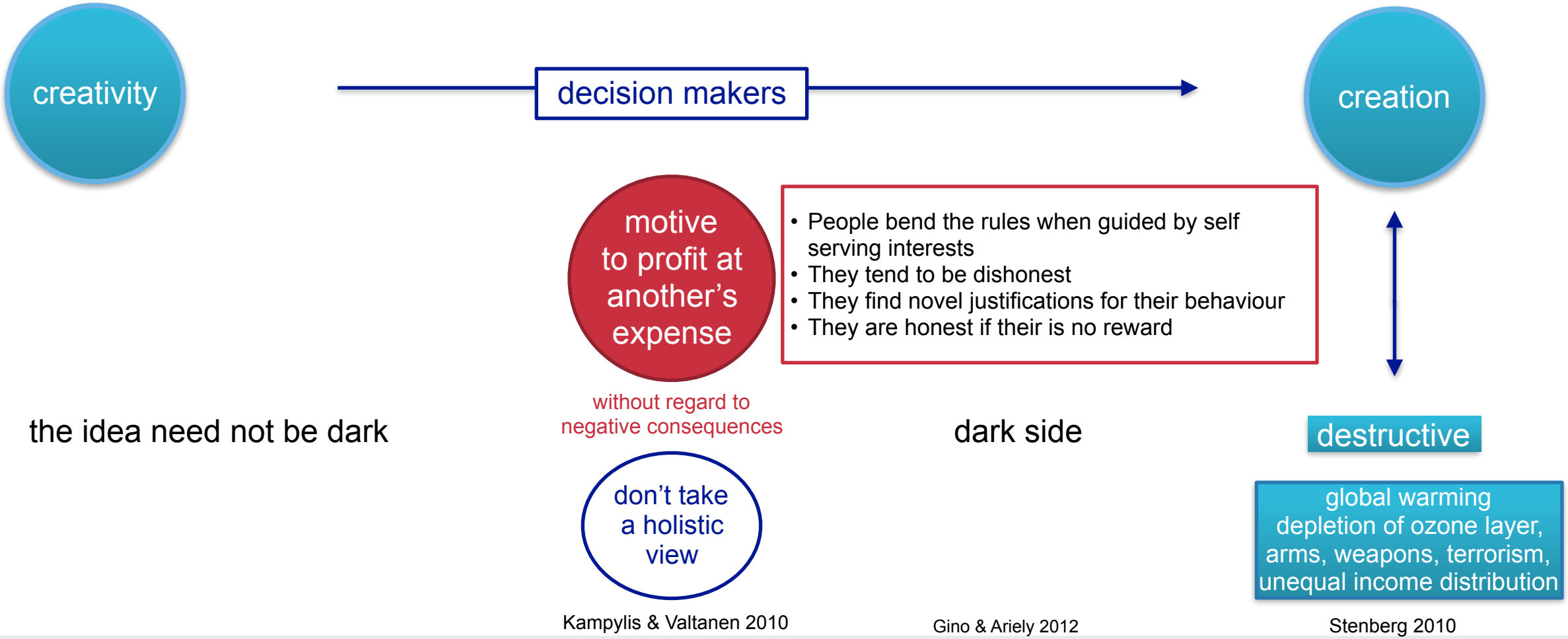


Wallas 1926 (Sadler-Smith, E (2016)

West 2002

Cropley, D. H., Kaufman, J. C., & Cropley, A. J. (2008)

creativity need not be dark



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lets shift the context just a little bit

creativity is the ability to produce ideas that are novel + useful + harmless

original
unexpected

appropriate
goal oriented

absolutely
harmless

the creation is either harmless or harmful; the degree may differ

how many creations can now be regarded as creative?

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suggestions

- creativity, (the act) is neither positive, nor negative, by itself
- the actors shape the creative asset into a product, based on their motives
- the product is either destructive or constructive; depending upon the perspective
- the perspective is a matter of convenience

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observation

- much of what has been studied as ‘creativity’ is in the context of the end result, that is creation (novel and useful)

  the end result, is not merely a creative performance, it is influenced by actors (decision makers) intent and motives

  in firm dynamics for e.g. the intent is to profit, at the expense of competition, therefore the resulting outcomes may always have some negative components

- if it’s destructive then it is destructive (outcome)

the definitional paradox

- Could it be that the world has looked at things that are

  economically profitable and useful, *(for e.g. wireless technology)*
  novel and original, *(for e.g. smart phone)*

  and concluded that because the definition of creativity is met, lets study it in context of creative performance

  but ignored that the outcome is also harmful or destructive, *(for e.g. radiation)*

- If we apply the 'destructive (harmful to anyone)' lens, are we left with a creative performance or a destructive one?

is the destructive end the result of creative process or the affect of not having one?

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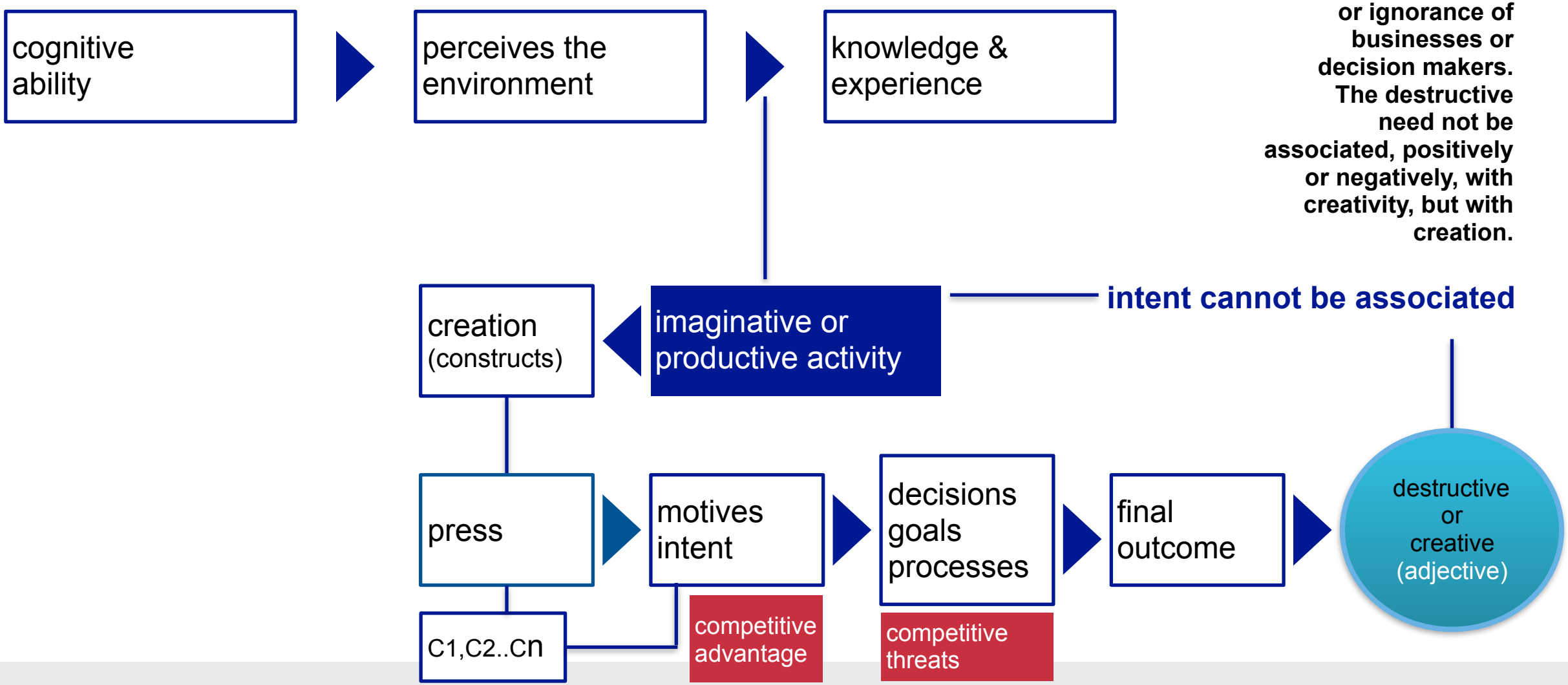
summarising

if its destructive, its not to say that the creative process (act) is negative. Its a reflection of intent, or ignorance of businesses or decision makers. The destructive need not be associated, positively or negatively, with creativity, but with creation.



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