MyCreativity Reader

A CRITIQUE OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
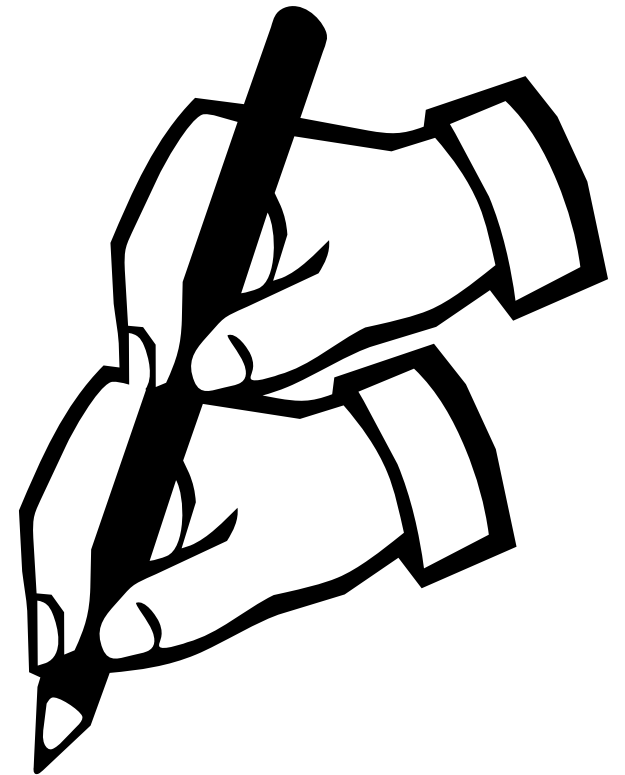
EDITED BY
GEERT LOVINK AND **NED ROSSITER**

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The INC Reader series are derived from conference contributions and produced by the Institute of Network Cultures. They are available in print and pdf form. *The MyCreativity Reader* is the third publication in this series.

Previously published INC Readers:

Katrien Jacobs, Marije Janssen and Matteo Pasquinelli (eds),
C'LICK ME: A Netporn Studies Reader, 2007.
This anthology collects the best material from two years of debate from 'The Art and Politics of Netporn' 2005 conference to the 2007 'C'LICK ME' festival. The C'LICK ME reader opens the field of 'internet pornology', with contributions by academics, artists and activists.
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Geert Lovink and Soenke Zehle (eds),
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HAVE WE BEEN CREATIVE YET?

iTUBE.YOUSPACE.WECREATE.

■ BY GEERT LOVINK & NED ROSSITER
Conferences on 'creative industries' have become a set feature in many countries over the past few years. They usually consist of government policy-makers, arts administrators, a minister or two, a handful of professors, along with representatives from the business community eager to consolidate their government subsidies. What's missing? Forget about analysis or critique. And there's not going to be any creative producers or artists about - the condition of possibility for 'the generation and exploitation of intellectual property'. For students and starters, these conferences cost too much to register. These events are captains-of-industry only. Why bother anyway to mix up with the dressed-up? There are coffee breaks dedicated to 'networking', but the deals appear to have been done elsewhere.

The Tragedy of the Suits
From an anthropological perspective, such policy-meets-business events index the class composition of the creative industries. And in some respects, the endangered species might be those positioned as managerial intermediaries - the policy writers, consultants and arts administrators, government ministers and business representatives. The increasing proliferation of social networks associated with new media technologies is one explanation for this: who needs an intermediary when you're already connected? The consultancy class is in danger of becoming extinct due to Web transparency. The other key reason concerns the disconnect between political architectures of regulation and the ever-elusive transformations of cultural production situated within information economies.

Dream, Yo Bastards
The MyCreativity project, of which this newspaper is a part, is not focussing on the critique of creative industries' hype. It was our intention to go beyond the obvious deconstruction of the Richard Florida agenda. Our interest has always been about setting forth expansive agendas and understandings of the interrelations between culture, the economy and network cultures. Critique should aim to change policies, and define alternative models, instead of merely deconstructing the agenda of today's business politicians. MyCreativity emphasizes re:: and search. Let's formulate questions and new strategies. Neither excitement nor scepticism are sufficient responses. Since policy formation is never about the production of original ideas, but instead is a parasitical function, we have some confidence that eventually the range of activities and concepts generated within MyCreativity and similar events will trickle up the policy food chain of creative industries. No need for extensive lobbying. Copying, after all, is the precondition of TheirCreativity - an activity engaged in concept translation.

Trading the Playful
The scattered and fragmented character of experiencing work and working conditions, in short its postmodern nature, means that young people in particular that enter the labour market are fully exposed to neo-liberal conditions. The rhetoric of deregulation has always been a ruse for ever-increasing stratagems of biopolitical re-regulation.

PROPOSALS FOR CREATIVE RESEARCH
INTRODUCTION TO THE MYCREATIVITY READER

GEERT LOVINK AND **NED ROSSITER**

We are pleased to present the *MyCreativity Reader* on international creative industries research. Our interest in MyCreativity has been to assemble a range of expertise and experiences that signal the diversity of creative industries. It's been clear to us that – within policy and academic circles at least – creative industries operate as a meme that mobilises expectations. The term provokes an interesting range of human responses, from curiosity to outrage and disgust. Creative industries are not simply an empty signifier that grafts on to anything you please. There are contours and forces that guide the creative industries meme in some directions, and not others. We cannot take for granted what 'creative industries' means and consists of.

Creative industries are a contested zone in the making. While policy draws on a set of presuppositions around the borderless nature of cultural and economic flows, situated creativity is anything but global. Concepts are always contextual. The MyCreativity project intends to play an active part in shaping critical trajectories in the field by introducing overlooked aspects to creative practice and research. MyCreativity seeks to articulate creative industries as 'concrete research' (Tronti). This requires active invention but we also need to reply to the invitation. Pressing delete does nothing to rebuild and transform prevailing agendas. In this case the decision to ignore can lead to ignorance.

Creative industries has an ambition to hardwire its concepts into infrastructure. Policy leads to urban development, employment conditions, flows of economic investment, border movements, and so on. The macro dimension operating here is simply too big to set aside. You will be affected whether you like to not. So press that delete button, but do so at your own peril. Policy as a genre isn't exactly bedtime reading. It's all too easy to ignore for that reason. But like any game, rules can always be broken. Where is the cheat-sheet for creative industries policy?

Governments are slowly acknowledging the human dimension to climatic change, but there is still a remarkable indifference by creative workers to connect their own conditions to the shaping effects of ministerial directives. It seems totally bizarre that many seem to have a non-secular version of working life. No matter how alien it appears, policy does not drift down from the heavens.

Yet so often policy seems to have forgotten its own material constitution and reason of existence. Why, for instance, have the experiences and conditions of creative workers been ignored in the policy realm for so long? This is no accident. Policy formation has been notable for its monopoly of expectations. But it's the view of MyCreativity that a threefold shift is happening within the creative industries:

1) a policy environment is slowly being forced to address the non-deliverables of incubator investment and corporate welfarism;

2) variable, not homologous, conditions of creative work exist within specific locations, values and geopolitical forces;

3) methodologies arise out of a will to collaborate, despite the many cultural, economic, geographic and in some cases technological obstacles.

In our view, such developments should be supported and further accelerated through policy measures, which for too long now have resulted in research that holds little correlation to the actually existing changes going on in the creative industries. The question is how to intervene in a policy debate? This is the predicament of militant research. Who is listening beyond the ghetto? Activist research requires its own 2.0 model of concept distribution. This is how the space of policy can be penetrated from the margins. (And, it must be said, this is also how the unpaid masses might do the work of policy formation – in the same way that gamer-geeks voluntarily engage the pleasure of game modification for industrial beneficiaries.[1]) The trick, however, is to speed up the percolation of ideas, issues and politics that inform the practice of not just creative producers but also potential funders, clients, government policy-makers and citizen-consumers. We are not talking about the harmonization of interests among 'stakeholders'. It is a mistake to not recognize conflictual collaboration as the primary means through which ideas and innovation are generated. The challenge is to build relations and points of connection that enable a plurality of research platforms and small business initiatives that can survive beyond the initial consensus model of three month incubators.

Zero Standards and the Policy Parade
The greatest struggle of policy-making within the creative industries has been to address the crisis of old structures associated with the industrial age. While Marx's poetic maxim 'all that is solid melts into air' described a certain power of Modernity, it is not the case that modern institutions and industries rise phoenix like from the ashes of industrial collapse brought about by just-in-time production associated with the global division of labour and the informatisation of social relations. Who, we might ask, are the stakeholders of creative industries? In the Richard Florida approach it all becomes a question of engineering the right bottom-up climate, infrastructure or conditions for revitalising collapsed cities and regions. In this paradigm, creative industries policy is about creating circumstances conducive to the sign of the knowledge or information economy. In the end, the creative industries formula serves to maintain an artificial stability around a workable definition. In this monopoly of the sign we find a great disjuncture with the actual conditions and needs of the real existing creativity.

What if you do not fit into the statistical regime of governance that determines productivity and conformity to policy within the creative industries? Even if you do fit in, are you aware of this? Do hairdressers in Rotterdam know they are included as a creative sector, but if they are in The Hague they are not? This not only brings any sense of a national creative industries policy into disarray, but it also undermines any coherence of the index-mania across the cool

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1. See Julian Kücklich, 'Precarious Playbour: Modders and the Digital Games Industry', *Fibreculture Journal* 5 (2005), http://journal.fibreculture.org/issue5/kucklich.html.

creative cities of the world. Standards simply do not exist. These indices are an attempt to account for local vitality in an age of massive contingency. By making visible the industrial sectors of creativity and their contribution to GDP, policy aims to bootstrap creativity as an economic force in its own right. Creative industries do not follow the multi-national corporate model of locating in places of the cheapest labour. The surplus value of creativity cannot be so easily calculated. Why does Nokia research leave creative Los Angeles for the even more expensive city of London? This is hardly an economic decision. Both are global cities according to Saskia Sassen's definition. But California has suffered from the restrictions on creative imagination as a result of the post-911 fallout and the trickle down effect of the Bush regime. This should be a clear reminder that we do not yet inhabit a post-national world.

The other key factor at work has to do with the proximity of innovation in California to the materiality of failed business models left over from the dotcom era. The quest for a killer-app business model is simply not there. The peer-to-peer formats of production are fantastic, for sure. But there is no redistribution of absent revenues to creative producers. This contradiction inside digital capitalism is only further accelerating and takes us in to unknown territories. There will be no Hegelian synthesis in which the aspiring billions make money through 'friends'. The creative industries policy appeals to the rationality of intellectual property regimes as the primary means of profit generation. But again, this does nothing as far as economic benefits for creative producers. There is an economic model for creative workers but it no longer figures around the exchange value of the commodity object. Instead, it is based on creativity as a service model. You go and perform your concerts, you install a company's IT requirements, you design viral memes, you wait on a restaurant table. There is a logic of equivalence at work here, but it's not going to make you rich fast. If anything, it's going to rapidly sap any creative juices out of you.

Who is the Creative Subject?
How to make visible and furnish discursive legitimacy for subjects hitherto not addressed within the majoritarian language of creative industries policy? This is both an economic and a social-political problem. Much like any power game, creative industries discourse is about who is in and who is out. That much is obvious. What is at stake is whether or not creative industries discourse is able to escape the hype reminiscent of the dotcom era and massively redistribute government support to those undertaking real invention and experimentation. No more handouts for Big Media and mediocre consultants.

Corporations and mainstream media are hardly innovators of creativity, yet they remain the primary recipients of government welfare. Despite the 'victory' of the incubator model, it is not as though there is a shortage of 'best practices' out there. Where is the venture capital for fashion designers? Certainly, biotech holds its attractions on the share-market, but what of the 'long tail' of design economies? In other words, what is required are distributive and flexible systems of funding for creative practitioners. In this way, we would begin to see a synergy between the digital technologies of communication and the technics of cultural production. It is clear to us that there is little chance of sustainability in the current system that continues to think that creative economies can be grafted onto modern systems and institutions of governance.

The current institutional arrangements continue to think the docile dog can learn a new trick. Yes, 'We need to be more creative'. But this agenda is way too convenient. It takes comfort precisely in its refusal to admit disruptive agencies that intervene or

straight out ignore bureaucratic directives. This is why creativity cannot be ordered and very often it cannot be incorporated. Deviation has always been a problem of governance. We need a creative subject who is neither a citizen nor a consumer. Web 2.0 makes loud noises about the false synthesis of the so-called 'prosumer', but this does not get us very far other than reiterating the logic of individualisation.

There is no subject *per se* of creative industries. Rather, there is a diverse and continuously modulating culture of self-valorisation and perhaps auto-denigration. There is a celebration of the multiple identity – you are many, and will never have the security of being one. And this often means you are nobody. We wish to retrieve self-valorisation as a productive concept that grants legitimacy and possible stability to collaborative practice. Such a move is necessary, particularly in an institutional environment that shows few signs of departing from the script of modern governance struggling to engage the complexities of knowledge and information economies. This leads to the difficult question of alternative business models outside of government funding.

Free Culture Costs Money

There is no universal recommendation or model for practitioners in the creative industries. Creative practice consists of what Spivak terms 'irreducible idiomatics' of expression. One size does not fit all, in other words. You wouldn't spot this if you limited your reading list to government policy, however. A universal definition does exist within this realm: creative industries consists of 'the generation and exploitation of intellectual property'. In all seriousness, how many creative practitioners would call themselves producers, let alone financial beneficiaries, of intellectual property? Most probably don't even know what IP means. We must redefine creative industries outside of IP generation. This is the dead-end of policy. When understood as 'the generation and exploitation of intellectual property', creative industries registers the 'banal evil' of policy mentalities, and assumes people only create to produce economic value. There needs to be a balance between alternative business models and the freedom to commit senseless acts of creativity. The tension between these two constituent realities is what needs to be investigated.

There are also severe limits to the 'open cultures' model that stems from libertarian and open sources cults. The free culture model is essentially a North American libertarian view of the world in its own image. European activists are quick to reproduce this and, in avoiding the question of money trails and connections, also avoid engaging key actors and issues that comprise 'the political' of information society and knowledge economies. Taken as a Will to Conformity, free culture serves as a political retreat that parades as radical self-affirmation.

Touching the auto-erotic drive to create without purpose, collaboration and the anarchistic rubric of mutual aid escapes these endless chains of re-appropriation. But they lack suspicion of instrumental intentionalism. These issues were the topic of a recent thread on the MyCreativity mailing list following a posting of a report in *Spiegel* magazine ranking Berlin as the number one 'creative class' city based on classic Floridarian indicators: in this case, what has been termed the '3T's' – Talent, Technology and Tolerance.[2]

The seductive power of such indicators inspires the proliferation of hype-economics, transporting Berlin from a 'poor but sexy' city to an economic nirvana populated by cool creative types. But the problem with such index obsession is that it functions through circumscription and the exclusion of a broader range of economic indicators that contradict such scenarios. In its 2007 city-ranking review, *WirtschaftsWoche* (Economic Weekly) undertook a comparison of 50 German cities according to employment, income, productivity and debt. Berlin came in at number 48.[3] What does this say about Berlin's 3T's of creative economy? You can only conclude that the correspondence between indices and material realities are best left for policy fictions – despite all the groovy building sites along the Spree river.

Indicators never end. Any number of permutations is possible. But government policymakers and corporate beneficiaries are rarely keen to promote a negative future-present. It is precisely these sorts of reasons that necessitate the counter-research advocated by MyCreativity. Media theorist and activist Matteo Pasquinelli proposes an analysis based on a Negative Index:

> Actually what I see is the risk of a 'Barcelonisation' of Berlin, named after the touristic turn of Barcelona that transformed its cultural and political heritage into a theme-park for a young rich global class. The legendary Berlin underground is under the process of a slow gentrification (you can gentrify even 'intangible assets'). 'Barcelonisation' means a parasitic economy and not a productive one, an economy based on real-estate speculation and passive exploitation of natural resources (sun and good food for example): is such an economy 'creative', productive? Is that a model we can apply to Berlin? Still the most affordable capital of Europe (especially East Berlin), some think that the speculative mentality will never conquer Berliners as they are used to [cheap] rent and live on social housing. Will Berlin's cultural industries develop a 'parasitic' economy based on speculation, local consumption and imported capitals or a productive economy based on production of knowledge/cultural and exportation of immaterial products? And what will be the impact of the Media Spree speculation (http://www.mediaspree.de) on the East Berlin cultural ecosystem?[4]

An army of sociologists and cultural researchers is slowly assembling around questions such as these. The creative industries meme dominates research funding calls in the humanities, after all. But don't expect to read the results too easily – they come at a cost as well, with the vast majority of academics happily transferring their results of state-funded research into commercial publishing houses that charge crazy fees for access to their journals. Organization and management researcher Steffen Böhm responded in reflexive style to Pasquinelli: 'I think it would be good to understand the process of how activists (like people on this list) and the communicational economy that this list is part of is the very vehicle that helps to create a speculative bubble around certain issues/places/things/symbols. In other words, how is it that critics of the system become the "driver" of the restructuring and transformation of that

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2.　See 'Berlin Tops Germany for "Creative Class"', *Spiegel*, 10 October, 2007,
　　http://www.spiegel.de/international/business/0,1518,510609,00.html.

3.　See 'Die erfolgreichsten Städte Deutschlands', *WirtschaftsWoche*, 2007,
　　http://onwirtschaft.t-online.de/c/83/96/99/8396998,pt=self,si=1.html.
4.　Matteo Pasquinelli, 'Re: [My-ci] Berlin Tops Germany for "Creative Class"', posting to
　　MyCreativity mailing list, 15 October, 2007, http://idash.org/mailman/listinfo/my-ci.

very system, enabling it to capture new forms of re-production?'.[5]

Böhm attributes an influential power to critics and their capacity to shape the creative economies that is debatable. It is less the case of critics becoming drivers of bubble econo-mies as it is the rise of cheap airlines determining markets for easy consumption. But he is correct to observe that critics and activists are agents within what he elegantly terms the 'communicational economy' of creative industries. How, though, to maximise this critical potential in ways that do have concrete impacts on the development of creative industries research and policy formation? As we noted earlier, can there be a 2.0 model for concept generation that goes beyond the easyJet mobility of the commuting class, boozing masses and conference circuits?

MyCreativity is first of all a call for the exchange of ideas, methodologies and collabora-tive constitution. Efforts at transdisciplinary research are really important here. The collec-tive input of artists, designers, academics, policy-makers and activists is crucial. General concept development and detailed case studies are not a contradiction. Empirics inter-penetrates concepts, and vice-versa. Of course we can't take such research collaboration for granted. Not only are there considerable disciplinary and paradigmatic differences to negotiate, but there are also the banal practicalities of assembling people in a particular place in order to meet. Not everything can happen online. Beyond mailing lists and col-laborative blogs, perhaps networked academies and distributed think-tanks are models for accommodating future critical research on creative industries. This reader could become one of many iterations of critical anthologies, just as the MyCreativity event in Amsterdam, November 2006, might register as a node among many similar events.

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NICE WORK IF YOU CAN GET IT
THE MERCURIAL CAREER OF
CREATIVE INDUSTRIES POLICY

ANDREW ROSS

The newfound affection of governments all over the world for boosting their 'creative industries' presents a conundrum. This emerging policy consensus assumes that culture-based enterprise can be promoted as a driver of economic development for cities, regions and nations that want to keep up, catch up, or be left out of the knowledge society. At the very least, then, the policy spotlight ought to present some new, long-term opportunities for cultural workers accustomed to eke a fragile, makeshift living out of art, expression, design, and performance. So far, however, the terms and framework of the kind of development envisaged by policy-makers seem guaranteed merely to elevate this traditionally unstable work profile into an inspirational model to be emulated by employees in related industrial sectors. If the creative industries become the ones to follow, jobs, in short, may well look more and more like gigs; nice work if you can find it.

The shift in nomenclature – from the rusty coinage of 'cultural industries' to the newly minted 'creative industries' – is usually credited to the UK's incoming New Labour administration of 1997, whose zealous modernizers renamed the Department of National Heritage as the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), and promoted, as its bailiwick, a paradigm of self-directed innovation in the arts and knowledge sectors of the economy. In the pages that follow, I will summarise how this policy paradigm has fared in the years since the establishment of the DCMS. Focusing on its career in the UK, the USA and China, I will describe some of the reasons for its enthusiastic reception and will try to assess its model of job creation from a qualitative standpoint. For while statistics about the growth and productivity of the creative sector have been legion, there has been precious little attention to the quality of work life with which it is associated.

The concept of the creative industries was initially introduced in Australia by Paul Keating's government in the early 1990s, but its definitive expression, in the founding documents of Blair's DCMS, bore all the breathless hallmarks of New Economy thinking: technological enthusiasm, the cult of youth, branding and monetisation fever, and ceaseless organisational change.[1] Regardless, the paradigm survived the New Economy burnout, and was further endowed with statistical and fiscal backing from the Treasury and the Department of Trade and Industry. While this renewed interest stemmed, in large part, from

1.   Creative Industry Task Force: Mapping Document, DCMS (Department of Culture, Media and Sport) (1998/2001), London,
http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Publications/archive_2001/ci_mapping_doc_2001.

militantly optimistic estimates of the export trade potential of 'British creativity', few could have predicted that the creative industries model would itself become such a successful export. In the space of a few years, it had been adopted as a viable development strategy by the governments of countries as politically and demographically disparate as Russia, Brazil, Canada and China, to name just a few of the largest. As the global competition for talent heats up, it has been relatively easy to persuade bureaucrats that high-end human capital and intellectual property are the keys to winning a permanent seat in the knowledge-based economy. But those same officials are ever tormented by the task of finding the right kind of industrial strategy to deliver the goods. On the face of it, the carefully packaged policy of the 'creative industries' appears to fit the bill.

It may be too early to predict the ultimate fate of the paradigm. But sceptics have already prepared the way for its demise: it will not generate jobs; it is a recipe for magnifying patterns of class polarisation; its function as a cover for the corporate intellectual property (IP) grab will become all too apparent; its urban development focus will price out the very creatives on whose labour it depends; its reliance on self-promoting rhetoric runs far in advance of its proven impact; its cookie-cutter approach to economic development does violence to regional specificity; its adoption of an instrumental value of creativity will cheapen the true worth of artistic creation.[2] Still others are inclined simply to see the new policy rubric as 'old wine in new bottles' – a glib production of spin-happy New Labourites, hot for naked mar-ketization but mindful of the need for socially acceptable dress. For those who take a longer, more orthodox Marxist view, the turn toward creative industries is surely a further symptom of an accumulation regime at the end of its effective rule, spent as a productive force, awash in financial speculation, and obsessed with imagery, rhetoric and display.[3]

Scholars and activists with ties to the labour movement can ill afford to be quite so cynical or high-minded in their response to these developments. Industrial restructuring over the last three decades has not been kind to the cause of secure, sustainable liveli-hoods, and indeed many of the changes have been aimed directly at destroying the power of trade unions. In OECD countries, the traditional cultural industries have been a relatively significant union stronghold with a long and fruitful history of mutual support between craft-based locals. While capital owners have succeeded in offshoring production wherever possible, the power of organised labour has held on in core sectors, especially those de-pendent on a heavily localised urban supply of skills and resources that cannot be readily duplicated offshore. In some cases, the migration of an industry to new regions has even helped to generate a pioneer union presence. For example, when Walt Disney created Dis-ney World in Central Florida in the 1960s, he had little option but to bring along the unions, instantly making his company the largest union employer in the state.

Certainly, new patterns of investment, rapid technological change, and global produc-tion have all taken their toll on employees' capacity to engage in collective bargaining. But fair labour at union rates and conditions remains an institutional feature of cultural indus-

2. David Hesmondhalgh and Andy Pratt (eds) 'The Cultural Industries and Cultural Policy: Special Issue', *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 11.1 (2005).
3. Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times*, London: Verso, 1994; Giovanni Arrighi, 'Hegemony Unravelling-1', New Left Review 32 (2005): 23-80; Giovanni Arrighi, 'Hegemony Unravelling-2', *New Left Review* 33 (2005): 83-116.

tries (film, radio, TV, theatre, journalism, musical and other performing arts) as they were classically constituted from the 1930s. By contrast, the non-commercial arts have long been a domain of insecurity, underpayment, and disposability, interrupted only by those few who can break through into an often lucrative circuit of fame. Maps of the 'creative industries', as pioneered by the DCMS, include the traditionally unionised commercial sec-tors, but the entrepreneurial paradigm touted by the policy-makers defiantly points away from the fair standards commonly associated with a union job. The preferred labour profile is more typical of the eponymous struggling artist, whose long-abiding vulnerability to oc-cupational neglect is now magically transformed, under the new order of creativity, into a model of enterprising, risk-tolerant pluck. So, too, the quirky, nonconformist qualities once cultivated by artists as a guarantee of quasi-autonomy from market dictates are now cel-ebrated as the key for creative souls with portfolio careers to integrate into the global value chains that are central to the new topography of creative markets.

Even more challenging, from a strict labour perspective, is the rapid flourishing of activities tied to self-publication or amateur content promotion. The most admired arte-facts on the new information landscape are websites like YouTube, Flickr, YourGallery and MySpace, which, along with the exponentially expanding blogosphere, attest to the rise of amateurism as a serious source of public expression. Hailed as a refreshing break from the filtering of editorial gatekeepers, they are also sources of free, or cut-price content – a clear threat to the livelihoods of professional creatives whose prices are driven down by, or who simply cannot compete with, the commercial mining of these burgeoning, discount alternatives. The physical construction of the World Wide Web has itself been a mammoth enterprise of free, or under-compensated labour;[4] its adoption as a commercial delivery model (based on the principle of 'disintermediation') has taken its toll on jobs and small businesses in the brick-and-mortar world of sales, distribution and retail; and its use for un-authorised file-sharing has been legally opposed by all the entertainment unions as a threat to their industries' workforce. The rapid flowering of these networked media channels has hastened on the process – initiated with the onset of the consumer society in the early twentieth century – by which the burden of productive labour is increasingly transferred on to the user or consumer.

Nor is the web-enabled 'liberation' of individual creators an easy escape from corporate capture. Self-generated Internet buzz has been hailed as a viable avenue for artists looking to market their work independently of the entertainment majors. Recent examples include: the musical careers of Sandi Thom, the Arctic Monkeys, Lily Allen, and Gorillaz; films like The Blair Witch Project, and Snakes on a Plane; and a variety of Chinese Internet celebri-ties, including brazen bloggers (Muzi Mei, Sister Hibiscus, Zhu Ying Qing Tong), lip-syncing bands (Hou She Boys) and more exotic, provincial commodities like the Sichuanese moun-tain girl known as Tianxian MM. Arguably, the largest beneficiaries of these innovations are the corporate majors, for whom the profitable cooption of amateur strategies has long been a studied preoccupation: as in 'cool hunting', the adoption of 'indie' aesthetics and attitudes, the manufacture of micro-beers, and the tactic of viral marketing among col-

4. Tiziana Terranova, 'Free Labor: Producing Culture for the Digital Economy', *Social Text* 18.2 (2000): 33-58.

lege students. In traditional media enclaves, the allied discount practice of reality-based programming is by now an indispensable principle of profit. Nothing has more radically undermined union efforts to preserve the integrity of pay scales for talent in the media industries than the use, in TV and radio, of amateurs on reality (and talk) shows of every genre and description.

Where unions side with corporate employers – in the IP clampdown against file-sharing, for example – there is every justification for lamenting the conservative character and outcome of 'business unionism'. But in non-unionised industries like IT and software design, the labour implications of non-proprietary activities waged against the big corporate powers are equally fraught. For example, the cooperative labour ethos of the FLOSS (Free/Libre Open Source Software) networks of engineers and programmers has been lauded as a noble model of mutual aid in the public service.[5] But FLOSS has been much less useful as a model for sustainable employment. Seduced by the prospect of utilising unpaid, expert labour, tech multinationals have increasingly adopted open source software like Linux, reinforcing concerns that the ethical principle of free software for the people equals free labour for corporations.

Like corporations in pursuit of non-proprietary public goods, national economic managers are keen to discover fresh and inexpensive sources of value – hidden in off-the-chart places or unexploited cross-industry connections – that can be readily quantified as GNP. The biggest returns are in high-tech industries, of course, and so it is not surprising that the creativity bandwagon is being driven by the much lionised experience of lucrative fields like software design. The original inclusion of this sector in the DCMS map of the creative industries helps to explain why governments have been so willing to promote the new policies.[6]

But what if the newfound interest of states and corporations were a genuine opportunity for creative labour? After all, creatives, in any field, yearn for attention and recognition, and habitually bemoan neglect on the part of institutional authorities. So, too, wasn't the demand for creative, meaningful work in factories and offices a rallying cry of the 1970s 'refusal of work'? Calls to humanise the workplace by introducing mentally challenging tasks and employee innovation have long been pushed as an alternative to the humdrum routines of standard industrial employment. Could some of those hopes be realised through the elevation of creativity to a keystone of industrial policy? Critics of the new policy paradigm have an obligation to look for emerging profiles of a 'good job' that might stand the test of time in an economic environment where the ground now shifts underneath workers with disturbing frequency. At the very least, and from a purely pragmatic perspective, as long as

policy-makers are open to information and ideas they can turn into a rising index then they are likely to be attentive to such qualitative input. But the higher goal must be not simply to generate GNP but to build livelihoods worth writing home about, and to fully realise the loose rhetoric about the creativity of ordinary people.

A Very UnBritish Coup
At the dawn of the post-war Labour government, its policy architect, Aneurin Bevan, depicted Britain as 'an island of coal surrounded by a sea of fish'. It was a memorable image of the nation's natural assets, and it captured his own party's mid-century appetite for nationalising them. Fifty years later, in the wake of de-nationalisation, film honcho David Putnam offered an update: Britain had become 'an island of creativity surrounded by a sea of understanding'.[7] Not a winning phrase, for sure, but Putnam's characterisation was an equally faithful reflection of the temper of the New Labour government he would shortly join as an advisor on science and culture. More than a touch of Hollywood glitz attended the proceedings. From the outset, Tony Blair's Cool Britannia would be a massive PR campaign to persuade the world that the country Napoleon once mocked as a nation of shopkeepers was now a nation of artists and designers, with the future in their enterprising bones. 'Creative Britain' was rolled out under the kleig-light scrutiny of the tabloid media, and, for several years, resembled one never-ending launch party, with artists and arts grandees playing front-page Eurostar roles ordinarily reserved for sports and movie celebrities.

The real story behind Creative Britain was much more prosaic, of course. By the 1990s, the nation's economy was no longer driven by high-volume manufacturing, fuelled by the extractive resources that Bevan had extolled. Like their competitors, Britain's managers were on the lookout for service industries that would 'add value' in a distinctive way. In the bowels of Whitehall, an ambitious civil servant came up with a useful statistic. If you lumped all the economic activities of arts and culture professionals together with those in software to create a sector known as the 'creative industries', you would have, on paper at least, a revenue powerhouse that generated £60 billion a year (in 2000, revised and improved estimates put the figure at £112 billion). Even more illustrative, the sector was growing at twice the rate of growth of the economy as a whole. For an incoming government, looking to make its mark on the sclerotic post-Thatcher scene, the recent performance and future potential of the creative industries were a godsend. Britain could have its hot new self-image, and Blair's ministers would have the GNP numbers to back it up. Unlike Bevan's coal and fish, or Thatcher's North Sea oil, creativity was a renewable energy resource, mostly untapped; every citizen had some of it, the cost of extraction was minimal, and it would never run out.

As far as cultural policy went, almost every feature of the old dispensation was now subject to a makeover. When the Arts Council was established in 1945, its first chair, the serenely mischievous John Maynard Keynes, described the evolution of its famous 'arms-length' funding principle as having 'happened in a very English, informal, unostentatious way – half-baked, if you like'.[8] Keynes would have us believe that Britain acquired its arts policy, like its empire, in a fit of absent-mindedness. In truth, it was simply falling in line

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5.   Richard M. Stallman, *Free Software, Free Society: Selected Essays of Richard M. Stallman*, intro. Lawrence Lessig, Joshua Gay (ed.) Boston: GNU Press/Free Software Foundation, 2002; Steven Weber, *The Success of Open Source*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004.

6.   The DCMS boosted employment by 500,000 and income by £36.4bn by adding in the UK's software sector. Even so, influential DCMS consultant John Howkins, author of *The Creative Economy*, regrets that the majority of science-based industries were left out of the DCMS definition, seeing no justification for excluding them from the rubric of creativity other than the administrative claim of another government department, Trade and Industry. See John Howkins, 'The Mayor's Commission on the Creative Industries', in John Hartley (ed.) *Creative Industries*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2004: pp. 117-125.

7.   Mark Ryan, in Mark Wallinger and Mary Warnock (eds) *Art for All?: Their Policies and Our Culture*, London: Peer, 2000, p. 16.

8.   John Maynard Keynes, 'The Arts Council: Its Policy and Hopes', in *Art for All?*, p. 142.

with every other Western social democracy by acknowledging that the market failure of the arts should be counteracted through state subsidies. Keynes's batty boosterism – 'Let every part of Merry England be merry in its own way. Death to Hollywood' – was a far cry from the regimen of requirements demanded fifty years later by Chris Smith, the first DCMS minister, who declared ex officio that he did not believe in 'grants for grants' sake'.[9] Wherever possible, the 13 industries included in the government's 1998 mapping document (film, television and radio, publishing, music, performing arts, arts and antiques, crafts, video and computer games, architecture, design, fashion, software and computer services, advertising) had to be treated like any other industry with a core business model. While it was acknowledged that some institutions and individuals would still require public support to produce their work, this would be spoken of as an investment with an anticipated return, rather than a subsidy offered to some supplicant, grant-dependent entity. Moreover, much of the arts funding would come through a source – the National Lottery – widely viewed as a form of regressive taxation.

To qualify for public funding under Smith's department, artists had to show a demonstrable return on investment; they had to prove that their work furthered public goods like diversity, access, relevance, civic pride, community innovation, and social inclusion. DCMS policies asked artists to play directly functional roles in society: assisting in the improvement of public health, race relations, urban blight, special education, welfare to work programs, and of course, economic development.[10] Politicians began to recount visits to homeless shelters or hospitals where the introduction of some worthy arts program had transformed the lives of residents. Soon, they were speculating on how a savvy application of arts skills could help reduce crime, truancy, teenage pregnancy, poverty, and neighbourhood degradation. Naturally, most working artists, suspicious of their newly designated role as instruments of social policy, saw these functions as more appropriate to glorified social workers than to traditional creative practitioners. For those who had never hewed to the principle of arts autonomy, and who subscribed instead to the more progressive ethos of service to political ideals, New Labour was demanding that artists be socially conscious in passive and complicit ways, and to eschew any real opposition to the state. Harold Rosenberg spearheaded a similar complaint in the 1930s, when he declared that the New Deal's WPA programs, offering a government wage in return for socially useful art, heralded the death of the bohemian avant-garde, as a radical force, at least.[11]

But to see the policy changes simply as a way of reining in, and exploiting, artists' often-wayward citizenly energies is to miss much of the rationale for the shift in government focus. Nicholas Garnham has argued that the new policy paradigm was driven, in large part, by innovation fever around IT development, and therefore should be seen primarily as an extension of information society policy.[12] The key creatives and the highest economic performers in this scenario were the engineers and technologists whose entrepreneurial ef-

forts as change-agents in New Economy start-ups rode the trend of business management away from the stifling, cumbersome domains of the large hierarchical corporation. The IT industry buzz around creativity caught the imagination of British politicians who saw a convenient bridge to other sectors that were potentially rich in IP exploitation. Indeed, by 2003 the figures for software, computer games, and electronic publishing clearly dominated (at 36.5%) the revenue statistics for the creative industries as a whole.[13]

With the Creative Industries Task Force lighting the way, every region of Britain soon had its own Cultural Consortium, along with designated 'creative hubs' and 'cultural quarters'. Development of the sector has been recently acknowledged by Gordon Brown, Blair's heir apparent, as the vital spark of the future national economy. Pushed as an all-purpose panacea, the development formula was even embraced as common sense by left-leaning academics weaned on critical cultural policy studies.[14] Most conspicuously, the triumph of the paradigm was achieved in the absence of any substantive data or evidence to support the case for culturally-led regeneration.[15] After all, what quantitative measures are useful in assessing the impact of cultural activity, in any given community, on reducing crime, binge-drinking, adult illiteracy or sexual intolerance? Common sense observation tells us that these results are much more likely to be offshoots of the gentrified demographic changes typically associated with cultural quartering.

Despite the lip service paid to supporting independent artistic initiatives, which are liable to evolve in unforeseen shapes and sizes, the preferred framework for business development in this sector remains some version of the New Economy start-up, a micro-business or SME structured to achieve a public listing, or geared, in the short-term, to generating a significant chunk of IP by 'bringing ideas to the market'. Thus, in the Creative Economy program, the latest DCMS productivity initiative 'to make Britain the world's creative hub', the government offers its services as a broker between creative entrepreneurs and potential investors in the understanding that creators are not always the best placed to exploit their ideas. Though they might win awards, they will remain commercially weak, incapable of breaking through to the market, unless they are incubated and groomed for growth or for hitting the jackpot.

While creative work can surely be organised and channelled in this enterprising way, and to patently profitable ends, it has yet to be shown that the nature of the enterprise produces good work, never mind good jobs. The productivity statistics that orbit, halo-like, around creative industry policy, do not measure such things, nor has there been any DCMS effort to date that assesses the quality of work life associated with its policies. This omission is all the more remarkable if we consider the high status that governments, historically, have accorded cultural creativity when it comes to maintaining a nation's quality of life in general. Imagine how much less powerful the self-image of the British nation would be without its Shakespeare, Burns, Byron, Yeats, Locke, Darwin, Dickens, Brontes, Shaw, Lennon and McCartney, Bowie, Olivier, Pinter, Beckham, Kureishi, Rowling, Dench, or Banksy to promote.

The Creative Economy Program was launched in the last year of the Blair administra-

9.   Chris Smith, 'Government and the Arts', in *Art for All?*.
10. Chris Smith, *Creative Britain*, London: Faber & Faber, 1998.
11. Harold Rosenberg, 'The Profession of Art: The WPA Art Project', in *Art on the Edge*: Creators and Situations, New York: Macmillan, 1975: pp. 195-205.
12. Nicolas Garnham, 'From Cultural to Creative Industries: An Analysis of the Implications of the "Creative Industries" Approach to Arts and Media Policy-Making in the United Kingdom', *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 11.1 (2005): 15-29.

13. Michael Prowse, 'Creation Myths?', *The Quarter 2* (2006): 6-11.
14. John Hartley (ed.) *Creative Industries*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.
15. Kate Oakley, 'Not So Cool Britannia: The Role of the Creative Industries in Economic Development', *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 7.1 (2004): 67-77.

tion to ensure that his policies carried over into his successors term. The day before Blair stepped down, the Work Foundation (top consultants to the DCMS) released a report that boosted the UK sector as the largest and most productive in the EU--though it was by no means clear how the productivity of arts practitioners can or should be measured. In the preface, outgoing DCMS Minister Tessa Jowell noted that the size of the 13 creative industries, at 7.3% of the economy, was equivalent in volume to financial services, and that it employed 1.8 million people, if those working in related creative occupations were included. In his years as Blair's heir apparent, Gordon Brown dutifully acknowledged that the creative sector was the vital spark of the future national economy, but there was widespread scepticism that the over-hyped creative economy would fare so well under a new leader who so prudently promised financial reality over things like breathless celebrations of the value of entertainment.

The Great American Bootstrap

In the British case, as I have shown, the state has taken a more active role in cultural policy, elbowing aside the 'arm's length' tradition, but only to ensure that reliance on state assistance will diminish as rapidly as possible. Government action, in the creative industries model, is aimed at stimulating and liberating the latent, or untutored, entrepreneurial energies that lie in reserve in every pocket of cultural activity; a hand up, in other words, rather than a handout.

The American case history is complicated, from the outset, by the selective lip service paid to the First Amendment. As Toby Miller and George Yúdice have argued, the widely accepted claim that the US does not dabble in cultural policy because it strives to maintain a strict constitutional separation between the state and cultural expression is somewhat disingenuous. The state, for example, has long nurtured the entertainment industries – especially Hollywood – through tax credits, a range of other subsidies, and lavish trade promotion.[16] These myriad forms of market protection have been extended, more recently, to the US-based media Goliaths – General Electric, Disney, Time Warner, Viacom, Liberty Media, NBC, News Corporation – whose conglomerate operations and properties dominate almost every sector of cultural expression in the US. Their ability to secure government-granted monopoly franchises brings untold wealth and power.[17] Who could maintain that this long-established reliance on government largesse does not amount to cultural policy in all but name? Nor is the practice limited to domestic operations. Though the US took the best part of two centuries to become a net IP exporter, its strong-arm overseas efforts to enforce the IP rights of Hollywood and other content exporters through international agreements such as TRIPS (Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights) along with those brokered by the WTO (World Trade Organisation) has been a driving preoccupation of US trade policy since the 1960s. Indeed, from the perspective of many developing countries, IP protection vies, currently, with the projection of pre-emptive military force as the dominant face of US power abroad. In the case of the conflict in Iraq, for example, State Department plans to privatise that country's economy gave undue prominence to the sanctity of IP rights.

While the state's market protections for these industries are not necessarily content-specific, cultural content has long been an active component of US foreign policy. This was especially the case during the era of the 'Good Neighbor' policy in Latin America, when Nelson Rockefeller headed up the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs.[18] It would be impossible, moreover, to ignore the explicit use of targeted cultural policy in the Cold War in the staggering range of activities sponsored by CIA fronts like the Congress for Cultural Freedom.[19] While more formally abstract, the profile of free artistic expression promoted by government agencies like the USIA (United States Information Agency) to highlight the virtues of living in the 'free world' was no less ideological. With the end of the Cold War, the propaganda value of the autonomous artist evaporated overnight; the spectacle of American artists strenuously exercising their freedoms was no longer serviceable. In 1997, the same year as the New Labour turnaround, the National Endowment for the Art's policy document, *American Canvas*, laid out a remarkably similar template for applicants to follow, applying their work to socially useful ends, 'from youth programs and crime prevention to job training and race relations'.[20] Just as in the British case, the artist was reconceived as the model citizen-worker – a self-motivated entrepreneur who is able to work, in a highly flexible manner, with a wide range of clients, partners and sponsors.

While American fine arts policy, strictly speaking, has been mired in the moralism of the Culture Wars, the commercial cultural industries have been consumed with the gold rush to secure ownership of IP rights in every domain of expression. For the most part, they have enjoyed a 'first mover' advantage in global markets, and so there has been little need for the change in nomenclature that New Labour initiated, or for institutional authorities to view creativity as a development strategy for 'catching up'. Instead, in the US, the creative industries are more routinely, and bluntly, referred to as copyright or IP industries.

By contrast, it is in urban policy that the US has witnessed the most visible expression of the turn to creativity. Urban renovation anchored by sites of cultural consumption had been pioneered in the 1970s by the Rouse Company in the form of festival marketplace (Baltimore's Harborplace, Boston's Faneuil Hall, New York's South Street Seaport), while the arty retrofit of vacant industrial buildings was more and more incorporated into the real estate industrial cycle. The 'creative cluster' was pioneered in the 1990s as a development strategy for cities that had lost their industrial job and tax base.[21] These often involved costly investments in museums or heritage centres, in the hope of attracting a steady tourist stream, if not the kind of destination pay dirt eventually achieved by the Bilbao Guggenheim. In the US, this strategy dovetailed with the fiscally disastrous policy of building downtown stadia, mostly at taxpayer expense, for major league sports teams.[22] In the world of

16. Toby Miller and George Yúdice, *Cultural Policy*, London: Sage, 2002.
17. Robert McChesney, *The Problem of the Media: US Communications Politics in the 21st Century*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 2004.

18. George Yúdice, *The Expediency of Culture: Uses of Culture in the Global Era*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.
19. Frances Stonor Sauders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*, New York: New Press, 2000.
20. Gary Larson, *American Canvas: An Arts Legacy for Our Communities*, Washington D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts, 1997.
21. Charles Landry, *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*, London: Earthscan, 2000.
22. Mark Rosentraub, *Major League Losers: The Real Cost of Sports and Who's Paying for It*, New York: Basic Books, 1997.

inter-urban competition, managers of second and third tier cities were persuaded that they had no alternative but to enter into this beggar-thy-neighbour game of attracting prestige.[23] Unlike the sports teams, the museums and heritage centres were not nomadic franchises of a monopoly cartel, but they were often a harder sell in provincial cities.

Richard Florida's 2002 book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, gave city managers a new rationale for upgrading their competitive status. Urban fortunes, he argued, depend on the ability to attract and retain the creative workers whose capacity to innovate is increasingly vital to economic development. Since these cherished souls are highly mobile, they are choosy about their live/work locations, and the cities they tend to patronise are rich in the kind of amenities that make them feel comfortable. Tolerance of ethnic and sexual diversity, for example, rates high on Florida's indices of liveability. Though Florida estimated the Creative Class in the US to be 38 million strong (lawyers and financiers are lumped along with artists, entertainers and architects) its demographic was unevenly distributed, and heavily skewed toward liberal enclaves in the blue states.[24] Aspiring cities in pursuit of better regional leverage in the 'creative economy' would need to become eligible suitors by submitting to a makeover, somewhat along the lines of the television program *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*.

Civic leaders rushed to embrace Florida's vision, express-ordering a 'creative strategy' from Catalytix, his private consultancy group. Announcing that Detroit, Dearborn, and Grand Rapids would soon be 'so cool you'll have to wear shades', Michigan governor Jennifer Granholm commanded her state's mayors to adopt hipsterisation strategies that were part of a new 'Cool Cities' commission.[25] A hundred signatories from almost 50 cities gathered in Tennessee to agree on the Memphis Manifesto, a blueprint for turnaround communities willing to compete for creative talent.[26] In 2004, the US Mayors' annual conference passed a resolution on the role that creative industries could play in revitalisation. Jobs in these sectors, it was agreed, were unlikely to be outsourced to other countries, and could prove more sustainable than the high-tech employment that cities had spent so much money trying to attract in the previous decade. Aside from the domestic impact, the mayors also acknowledged the potential for global export: overseas sales of creative products were estimated at $30 billion.[27]

The zeal for jumping on to the creativity bandwagon was also inspired by some supporting data. A 2004 mapping of the country's creative industries by the non-profit body Americans for the Arts showed almost three million people working for 548,000 arts-centric businesses (2.2 per cent and 4.3 per cent, respectively, of US employment and businesses). One in 24 US businesses was estimated to be arts-centric – and these belonged to the fastest growing sector of the economy.[28] The World Bank reported that more than

half of consumer spending was on outputs from creative industries in G7 countries, and that, globally, creative industries accounted for 7 per cent of world GDP.[29] The export data encouraged the view that the competition for creative talent was being waged on a global scale. In 2005, Florida published his alarmist sequel, *The Flight of the Creative Class*, warning that the Bush administration's domestic and foreign policies were driving the best and the brightest overseas.[30] City officials in Europe and East Asia responded by rolling out the red carpet for Florida's consultancy. In tune with the hapless efforts of Midwestern mayors to attract gay college graduates, the government of Singapore relaxed the city-state's prescriptions against homosexuality, furthering its ham-fisted effort to sex up a culture long associated with a rigid observance of the morally censorious side of Asian values.[31] Today, it is more likely to be known as the gay, rather than the creative, capital of Asia.

The solutions being prescribed for strivers hoping to move up in the creativity rankings are easy to satirise: Jamie Peck has described them as 'another variant of the Papua New Guinean cargo cults, in which airstrips were laid out in the jungle in the forlorn hope of luring a passing aircraft to earth'.[32] Nonetheless, the cures are advertised as low-cost, and almost pain-free, often consisting of little more than image regeneration around public amenities, such as the creation of bike paths, the makeover of some centre-city ex-industrial warehouses or the stimulation of hip entertainment and consumption zones. Compared to the lavish tax exemptions and infrastructural outlays used to attract large corporations, creativity initiatives are soft budget items, requiring minimal government intervention with little risk of long-term commitments from the public purse. Moreover, traditional Chamber of Commerce businesses can rest easy that no significant public resources will be diverted away from serving their interests. As Peck observes,

> For the average mayor, there are few downsides to making the city safe for the creative class – a creativity strategy can quite easily be bolted on to business-as-usual urban-development policies. The reality is that city leaders from San Diego to Baltimore, from Toronto to Albuquerque, are embracing creativity strategies not as alternatives to extant market-, consumption- and property-led development strategies, but as low-cost, feel-good complements to them.[33]

Left wing critics of these development strategies have pointed out that cities high in the creativity rankings also top out on indexes of class polarisation and social inequality; that the gentrification of creative neighbourhoods drives out those most likely to innovate; and that Potemkin cultural zones which are too obviously staged for consumption scare away the pre-

23. Joanna Cagan and Neil deMause, *Field of Schemes: How the Great Stadium Swindle Turns Public Money into Private Profit*, Monroe, Me.: Common Courage Press, 1998.
24. Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*, New York: Basic Books, 2002.
25. Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, *Cool Cities*, Langsing: State of Michigan, 2004.
26. Creative 100, *The Memphis Manifesto*, Memphis: Memphis Tomorrow and Mpact, 2003.
27. US Mayors, Adopted Resolution on the Creative Industries Index, Boston: 72nd Annual Meeting, 2004.
28. American for the Arts, *Creative Industries: Business & Employment in the Arts*, 2004, http://www.artsusa.org/information_resources/research_information/services/creative_industries.

29. Kaoru Nabeshima and Shahid Yusuf, 'Urban Development Needs Creativity: How Creative Industries Can Affect Urban Areas', *Development Outreach - Unknown Cities*, World Bank, 2003, http://www1.worldbank.org/devoutreach/nov03/article.asp?id=221.
30. Richard Florida, *The Flight of the Creative Class: The New Global Competition for Talent*, New York: HarperCollins, 2005.
31. *The Economist*, 'The Geography of Cool', 3 April, 2000.
32. Jamie Peck, 'Struggling with the Creative Class', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29.4 (2005): 762.
33. Peck, 'Struggling with the Creative Class', p. 763.

cious recruits.[34] Moreover, those unlucky enough to be designated as uncreative have little to look forward to but trickle-down leavings since they will almost certainly be performing the low-wage service jobs that support their lifestyling superiors. Right-wingers have been even harder on the Florida cult, seeing nothing but a policy to elevate liberal havens as models of growth.[35] In fact, they argue, Republican cities that don't rate as particularly creative – low-tax, business-friendly suburban cities, like Phoenix, Houston or Orlando – are the ones with the best performance on job and population growth.

If the creative city is a liberal plot, it is a far cry from the liberal city of the post-war economy, which relied on federal block grants to oversee the basic welfare of its citizens. With budgets cut to the bone, and the citizenry increasingly cut off from institutional protections, American urban policy-makers have all but embraced the accepted neoliberal wisdom that self-sufficient entrepreneurial activity is the best, if not the most just, stimulant to growth. The individual career portfolio of the young, freelancing creative is a perfect candidate for this profile of self-reliant productivity. Whether the policies will generate employment remains to be seen. They cannot do worse than their stadium-based predecessor. Surveys over the last three decades have shown that the presence of professional sports teams or their facilities failed to register any significant impact on employment or city revenue.[36] Indeed, one Chicago economist estimated that if the public money expended on a typical stadium project were dropped out of a helicopter over the city in question, it would probably create eight to ten times as many jobs.

But, unlike the helicopter drop, the creative jobs in question will not be scattered over a wide area. They have a tendency to cluster, and in zones that become socially exclusive in a short space of time. If the creative cities campaigns do result in more jobs, and if they prove to be economic accelerators, they will almost certainly intensify the polarisation of city life between affluent cores and low-income margins; any significant spoils will be captured in the zones of growth, and by a minority of creative workers at that, since most of the profit in a winner-takes-all IP-driven economy is extracted by intermediaries in the value chain and not by those who are the original innovators. In this context, Florida's nostrum, that creativity is everyone's natural asset to exploit, is difficult to distinguish from any other warmed-over version of American bootstrap ideology. From the individual creatives standpoint, it appeals to the ideology of the self-reliant, small producer – the mainstay of the nineteenth-century work ethic – who is promised just rewards for his or her artisanal toil. The recipe on offer to city managers is more like a get-rich-quick scheme: high rates of return from minimal investments with little risk involved.

China's Leap Forward
Newly industrialised countries in the global South have not been slow to try out the creative industries policy model. Some of the more advanced ones are fast losing their manufacturing sector jobs to mainland China and Southeast Asia, and they need higher-skill services to add value to their economies. But such is the heady economic growth of the PRC itself that its Communist Party policy-makers are already competing in the creativity stakes, hoping to drive the national economy towards the most prized IP fruit at the top of the value chain by maximising its claims on the extensive Chinese language market, both at home and overseas. In the surest sign that the PRC had joined the ranks of such nations, creative industry policy was introduced into the 11th Five-Year Plan of several cities in the course of 2006: Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, Nanjing, Shentzen, Qingdao and Tianjin. Michael Keane has shown how, in the space of only a few years of hothouse consideration, the party bureaucracy had accepted, albeit cautiously, the concept of creative industries, and had fashioned policies to support its development.[37]

The British Council (an unabashed leader in the policy export field) defines a state in 'transition' to full exploitation of its creative economy as 'one which has moved beyond the development stage but is still unable to protect intellectual property rights in creative goods and services'. To say the least, leading IP exporters like the UK have a vested interest in seeing Chinese authorities enforce IP rights protection in their 'transition' to fully-fledged capitalism. They are more ambivalent about the prospect of aiding the transition from a labour-intensive 'Made in China' economy to an innovation-based 'Designed in China' economy with domestic control over patents and IP rights. Nonetheless, this is the direction of the PRC's breakneck growth, and it is fully backed by a powerful, state-driven economy in the lock of a long-term policy of techno-nationalism that has its origins, well before the reform era, in Mao's nation-building decades.

Up until recently, this nationalist drive has been fully apparent in high-tech sectors. National innovation campaigns saw the establishment of a wave of science and technology parks: companies, with large-scale capitalisation, both state and privately financed by overseas investors, were offered generous aid and tax protection to locate there; and foreign expertise and knowledge was assiduously courted. Now that party officials have given the green light to the softer creative domains, it remains to be seen whether the smaller, free-spirited enterprises that are the crucible of idea innovation will flourish in the same settings, or indeed whether they will be allowed to operate with the kind of independent verve we associate with liberal polities that have a fully developed civil society. Innovation in technology is one thing, but the spirit of cultural invention is a different beast entirely in a country where tight control is exercised over expressive content in general. Indeed, after the slow but sure liberalisation of the Zemin era, the first few years of Hu Jintao's leadership has seen a marked clampdown on the range of open expression permitted in the PRC's public sphere. For many party bureaucrats, unleashing such unpredictable energies is tantamount to opening Pandora's Box.

As long as the creative industries behave like other industries, then Beijing's rulers have

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34. Peter Marcuse, 'Review of *The Rise of the Creative Class', Urban Land* 62 (2003): 40-1; Paul Maliszewski, 'Flexibility and its Discontents', *The Baffler* 16: 69-79; Peck, 'Struggling with the Creative Class'.

35. Malanga, Steven. 'The Curse of the Creative Class', *City Journal* 14.1 (2004): 36-45; Joel Kotkin, 'On Uncool Cities', *Prospect* 115 (2005), http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/article_details. php?id=7072; Joel Kotkin and Fred Siegel, 'Too Much Froth', *Blueprint* 6 (2004): 16-18.

36. Roger Noll, *Sports, Jobs, and Taxes: The Economic Impact of Sports Teams and Stadiums*, Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1997.

37. Michael Keane, 'Brave New World: Understanding China's Creative Vision', International Journal of Cultural Policy 10.3 (2004): 265-279.

nothing to worry about. They can be groomed and promoted, in tried and true fashion, to absorb FDI and foreign ideas, and to exploit low production costs, in order to incubate and develop national champions in the export field. Because of the Chinese language markets jumbo size and because national and regional economic managers are experienced in overseeing a broad spread of industrial operations, from low-level assembly chains to skill-intensive R&D, it is likely that the creative sector will be offered the same treatment as the high-tech sector. It may well achieve similar records of growth on the basis of a cheap labour supply and business-friendly incentives. If those are the outcomes, they will surely affect livelihoods everywhere, further destabilising the already precarious world of creative jobs. We have seen this in the case of manufacturing and white-collar services. Is there any reason to think that creative occupations will be different?

The answer to that question is not entirely resolved. For the gingerly approach of China's policy cadres to creative industries policy reflects a complex understanding of the political role of culture and creative expression. In the PRC, arguably more than in any other country where creative industries policy has been developed, the debate among elites about this area of development draws on conflicting experiences and histories of the post-1949 period. In the reform era, the watchful officials who oversee all media content have been accustomed to subordinate cultural policy to the goals of developing a market economy. The Cultural Revolution, by contrast, was officially remembered at least as a period when too much primacy was given to culture, and the economy was in the passengers seat. Most of China's leadership cadre since the philosophically colourful rule of Mao have been sober engineers, sworn to uphold the techno-nationalist project. The pro-democracy movement that precipitated the Tiananmen Square crackdown was understood to have been fomented by the explosion of culture fever (*wenhua re*) in the mid-1980s, when the status of intellectuals was rehabilitated, publication outlets broadened, and a new openness in the range of expression appeared. These consequences served to remind party elites of the volatile power that could be unleashed by shifts in cultural policy. As a result, the more conservative tendency has been to restrict, and thereby relegate, policy about culture to the traditional domain of heritage arts and crafts.

Notwithstanding the impact of the Tiananmen crackdown, market fever had already encroached on cultural domains, and official calls for reform were sure to follow. Beginning in the 1990s, and in tandem with the push for managerial efficiency and accountability, the state-owned media, publishing, and other information institutions were encouraged to reform themselves along industrial lines. Select media organs were told to prepare themselves for the withdrawal of state subsidies. Ultimately, all but the most vital propaganda organs would have to stand on their own feet. In 2001, the 4th session of the 9th People's Congress ratified the concept of cultural industries (*wenhua chanye*) almost a decade after the term began to appear in internal party documents.[38] Since then, the ongoing partial commercialisation of state-owned media and the Internet sector has been a politically fraught endeavour, with the government playing a highly visible game of cat-and-mouse with commentators who push the envelope of permissible expression in regional newspapers or on the Web.

Compared to the Internet's porous universe of information and opinion, the prospect of project teams of entrepreneurial individuals chasing the dragon of commercial success is a source of comfort to party officials. After all, the individual appetite for self-expression is widely tolerated as long as it avoids politically sensitive topics. Indeed, if this appetite can be steered into well-regulated industrial channels, then government elites can well imagine that they will have contained an otherwise volatile source of public dissidence. This utilitarian view differs sharply from the post-Liberation CCP view of culture as a pedagogical tool, and even more so from the induction of culture into a revolutionary political program of the kind that flourished in late Maoism.

But political expediency is not the primary reason for jumping on the creativity bandwagon. The push for creative industry (*chuangyi gongye*) policy could not have arrived at a more relevant time for the Asian giant's economic development. China's march forward cannot be sustained unless it proves it can generate its own intellectual property by jump-starting home-grown innovation rather than imitating or adapting foreign inventions. Speaking at a national conference on innovation in January 2006, Premier Wen Jiabao declared that 'independent innovation' (*zizhu chuangxin*) would be at the core of the country's development strategy over the next 15 years. Nothing less than the honour of the nation was at stake. Accordingly, leading brokers in the creative industries field lobbied hard to have the concept fully incorporated into the nation's 11th Five-Year Plan.[39]

The government can point to fledgling industrial design achievements in hard technology such as automobiles, white goods, and semiconductors, while global firms in a whole range of advanced industries have rushed to set up offshore R&D centres, employing local talent, in Shanghai and Beijing's free trade zones. It is highly likely that officials will continue to incubate design-based enterprises in the high-skill manufacturing of hardware and software while channelling knowledge transfers from the global corporations into the path of native start-ups.

But these initiatives are all in catch-up industries, where foreign producers are accustomed to using China as a cheap offshore base. While this model pertains to old media sectors like TV, film, and animation, where Korean, Japanese, and Taiwanese product is shot and assembled cheaply on the mainland, new media presents a cleaner slate. The creative sectors where the country's designers are expected to enjoy a running start are in video games, animation, advanced computer graphics and multimedia communications – fields directly relevant to consumer electronics and digital media. Online gaming (officially recognised as a 'competitive sport' by the state's sports agency) and mobile-media (in a country with several hundred million cell phone users) are already proven as dynamic sectors, and government backing in these areas is readily available. Moreover, the potential for promoting cultural nationalism, and limiting foreign content, through the use of Chinese theming is bottomless. Producers of multimedia genres can draw on a reservoir of several centuries of myth and legend as well as courtly and folk narratives that are well-known elements of the national patrimony. The popular appetite for costume historical drama, in PRC and in East Asian countries generally, more or less guarantees a vast market to monopolise,

38. Michael Keane, *Created in China: The Great New Leap Forward*, London: Routledge, 2007.

39. Ned Rossiter, 'Interview with Su Tong: "Created in China"', trans. Du Ping, posting to nettime mailing list, 26 May, 2005, http://www.nettime.org.

while the successes of Chinese film epics in the West may prove substantial enough in the long term to work their way into the DNA of Hollywood. Indeed, Disney is only the first of the entertainment majors to recognise the potential of selling Chinese-themed product back to the China market. *The Secret of the Magic Gourd*, its first venture into localised Chinese content, and its first non-Hollywood film ever, was released in the PRC in May 2007. The company plans to develop a series of Chinese Disney characters to build on the impact of 'Magic Gourd', which was based on a famous Chinese children's story.

Whether or not foreign producers succeed, efforts like Disney's highlight the vast commercial appeal of Chinese theming. The economic significance of the cultural heritage is now also being fully realised in China's tourism industry, where sites from the feudal past are marketed as spiritual anchors of the national culture. This emphasis has a marked political dimension and is largely the legacy of the Deng and Jiang eras, when socialist spiritual civilisation was promoted to offset the drive toward money-making, and to distinguish the new cultural policies from those of the Maoist era, when such monuments to the feudal past were ignored or destroyed. Restoring the peoples access to China's rich traditions was endowed with a nationalist stamp that had also been applied, albeit with more zeal, to the Cultural Revolutions anti-feudalist goal of creating modern traditions. The development of such tourist sites, along with the investments in costume drama theming, fulfils a number of government needs; growth in GDP, foreign exchange earnings, and domestic consumerism, but also a mode of citizen-formation steeped in neo-Confucian sentiment.

Traditional stories, reworked as commentary on contemporary politics, are a relatively stable commodity, easy to drop into an industrial product cycle and serve up for consumer demand. If IPR regulation can ever be properly implemented, then this heritage domain of CI policy may have a sustainable future in the public and private sector, offering dependable employment. But what about the more idiosyncratic and unpredictable initiatives that are characteristic of the Western creative paradigm of originality? Can China's policy-makers afford to accommodate, let alone stimulate offbeat expression that is out of step with Beijing-approved content?

The evidence suggest that the PRC's foreboding bureaucracy stands in the way of creative producers, who depend on permits from a range of different industry regulators (the Ministry of Culture, State Administration of Industry and Commerce, State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television, Ministry of Information Industry, and the General Administration of Press and Publication), each with its own prescriptions for a cultural field or genre.[40] This licensing system, which also functions as an instrument of content surveillance, is particularly fraught for new (or cross-) media production which customarily straddles several of these traditional industries. The more high-tech the activity, the more chance producers have of falling under the rubric of the Ministry of Science and Technology whose top-level mandate to back innovation generates the most fast-track results.[41] Even so, the focus

there is on getting big companies publicly listed. This policy of 'securing the big and letting go the small', as Jing Wang observes, is a 'vision contrary to that of the creative industries', and so the preferred PRC policy is to push the creativity initiatives in Hong Kong with the mainland export market in mind.[42]

It took two decades of liberalisation to wean China's state-owned enterprises off the state subsidy system of non-performing bank loans. Many of the new creative industries post-date state ownership and are being developed with a minimal number of public purse-strings attached in the full expectation that start-ups will become self-sufficient in the short term. If they fail to reach the threshold for market entry, or if they cannot secure the necessary licenses, creative producers will take their chances in the unauthorised grey economy where precariousness and uncertainty are a way of life. For new entrants who successfully navigate the ministerial agencies, government support is short-term, and highly conditional not only on the commercialisation of products but also on finding private investors or sponsors as soon as possible. The resulting imposition of entrepreneurial enterprise often results in unorthodox forms of investment that flout legality and transparency, exposing producers to chronic risk.

Though it is the world's most unionised economy (the national labour federation claims as many as 150 million members), China's trade unions are ineffective (mostly providing social services), and have only a weak foothold in the commercialised sectors where the new creativity initiatives are being launched. Mainland enforcement of labour laws and standards is notoriously feeble, and the labour markets that have formed in the most dynamic sectors of the economy are the most volatile and unstable, prone to high turnover and a chronic workplace culture of disloyalty, both on the part of employers and employees. Job-hopping has become a national pastime in a country where, only yesterday, livelihoods were guaranteed by an 'iron rice bowl', and fewer and fewer workers, whether skilled or unskilled, expect their current employer to be around for very long. Moreover, it is in the high skill sectors, where contracts include no stipulations on maximum working hours, that seventy-hour workweeks are increasingly an expectation on the job.[43] The new focus on creative industries is being developed in the heart of this superflex work environment, where pressures from market exposure and project deadline crunches combine to inject extra anxiety into the perennially immature labour markets that plague cultural production.

Unlike 'British creativity', for example, which is a recognisable global commodity with a proven historical track record, the Chinese counterpart must be laboured into being in a media environment where content is still largely a state monopoly, and it must do so in the teeth of longstanding Orientalist stereotypes about the static and derivative nature of Chinese society. How creative can Chinese people be in the PRC? The anxiety of national elites about native constraints on dynamic thinking has tended to focus on perceived deficiencies in an education system heavily imbued with the Confucian ethos of learning through copying. Traditional learning in the form of repetitive drills and rote memorisation is deemed conducive to an obedient citizenry and a disciplined workforce capable or following orders or replicating other cultures, but is recognised as inadequate for stimulating original acts of

40. Michael Keane, Mark Ryan and Stuart Cunningham, 'World's Apart? Finance and Investment in Creative Industries in the People's Republic of China and Latin America', *Telematics and Informatics* 22.4 (2005): 309-331.

41. Claydon Gescher Associates, *Changing China – The Creative Industry Perspective: A Market Perspective*, A Market Research Report for UK Trade and Investment (2004), http://www.britishdesign.co.uk/der/Design%20Report%20China.pdf.

42. Jing Wang, 'The Global Reach of a New Discourse: How Far Can "Creative Industries" Travel?', *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 7.1 (2004): 9-19.

43. Andrew Ross, *Fast Boat to China: Corporate Flight and the Consequences of Free Trade; Lessons from Shanghai*, New York: Pantheon, 2006.

creativity. Efforts to reform the system will not take effective hold until the retirement of at least one generation of teachers trained in the traditional mode, and even then are likely to focus on select fields at elite schools. This is a far cry from the Blairite creative industries' easy populist truisms that everybody is creative. For sure, there are Chinese equivalents of the working-class characters in the film, *The Full Monty* (a feelgood allegory of New Labour's policy), laid off and down on their luck, but tapping into their latent creativity to stage their own entrepreneurial comeback. Yet they are unlikely to be lionised as 'model workers', unless they produce some credible IP; nor is a one-party government obliged to sell the creativity paradigm to socially marginal and underemployed populations, as is the case in a democratic polity like the UK.

To ensure the market capture of IP, most of this activity is being placed in designated locations, mostly in industrial spaces vacated by factories that have been moved out of the cities to improve air quality. This is not just in line with the international creative industries script of establishing creative clusters, the creative industries equivalent of the business district. Clustering is the model followed by the science and technology parks established in the 1980s and 1990s, and to some degree is continuous with the large-scale industrial compounds created during the era of collectivisation. More important, it is a decision that allows officials to keep a close eye on the often maverick activities of creative workers. The first, and most significant of these creative clusters was established, organically, by artists who took up residence in the late 1990s in Factory 798 compound (a disused arm of the Cold War military-industrial complex) in Dashanzi, an outlying neighbourhood of Beijing's Chaoyang District. Dashanzi has since flourished as a cultural district in its own right, though its proximity to the Olympic zone has put its continued existence in peril. Creative industries compounds in other cities were more consciously engineered with state funding: Tianzifang, Tonglefang, Bridge 8, Media Industry Park, M50, and Fashion Industry Park in Shanghai; Loft 49 and Tangshang 433 in Hanghzhou; and the Tank Loft in Chongqing.

By 2005, centres and institutes had been established in Shanghai (the Shanghai Creative Industry Center and, at Jiaotong University, the Cultural Industries Research and Innovation Centre) and Beijing (State Cultural Industries Innovation and Development Research Institute). In 2006, the government approved the construction of creative industry zones in select cities with proven talent pools: a constellation of creative districts in Beijing; multiple centres in Shanghai developed under the auspices of the Creative Industries Association; the Window of the World zone in Nanjing, 'Creation 100' in Qingdao; and further-flung outposts in technology-driven urban economies like Xian and Chengdu.[44] Investors who set up in these locations will enjoy the same kind of trade, tax, and operational incentives as in the export-processing and high-tech zones familiar from earlier phases of the reform era. Overseas investors with unrealistic expectations of fast profit will doubtless enter into the same kind of informal agreements as before, conceding technology transfers in return for the promise of government, or market, access. In the case of the new sectors, however, the proximity to fresh IP will render the transfers ever more sensitive to the foreign owners, and ever more attractive to home-grown entrepreneurs and the officials who back them.

44. Mercy Sun, 'Creative Industry, New Force in Beijing's Economy', *Beijing This Month*, 14 June, 2006, http://www.btmbeijing.com/contents/en/business/2006-06/coverstory/ci.

As is the case in the high-tech manufacturing sector, the labour market for industry creatives is a tight one. In New York, an estimated 12 per cent of workers are from the creative sector, with the figure reaching 14 per cent and 15 per cent in London and Tokyo respectively, but in Shanghai, it stands at only one per cent.[45] To ease the bottleneck, in 2004, Beijing announced a massive training and recruitment scheme to produce more than a million additional 'grey-collar' employees; the category includes software engineers, architects, graphic artists, and industrial designers.[46] If the government succeeds, then the current labour shortage, and the accompanying wage spiral, may come to be short-lived. But the cause of the instability does not lie simply in the lack of supply. Workers are now as footloose as global corporations, and less likely to commit to employers beyond the short term. In stunning contrast to their parents, Chinese youth who are entering the urban labour markets have been weaned in a socio-economic environment where loyalty to anything other than the family is either an anachronism or a liability. Having witnessed the shredding of securities in all aspects of their lives, Chinese of a certain age have truly seen all that was solid melt into air, and their children have been raised to believe they must be authors of their own lives.

The advent of the creative industries sector as a tentative object of state attention comes at a moment well before the maturing of the requisite labour market. Will this sector produce its own version of the exploitation endemic to the low-wage, labour intensive sweatshops of South China's export-processing and assembly zones? Will we see the same ominous combination of demographic pressure, sky-high turnover, lax regulation, and cut-price bidding emerge in the micro-businesses and SMEs of the creative economy? If so, then China's pivotal position in the global economy means that its creative sector, like its other industries, could set norms that will affect wages and working conditions in other parts of the world. The 'China price', so feared by domestic producers in OECD countries, may well come to be associated with 'Designed in China' just as it has been the overseas hallmark of 'Made in China'.

Foreign producers of digital products and services already use China's cheap labour pool for offshore operations that include rendering, animation, and modelling, along with a host of other CAD applications. This kind of contracting extends from video game producers to architectural and software firms, where the quality of the work being outsourced to mainland China is leaping up the value chain. The downward pressure felt on employees will not just be felt onshore. For most young Chinese, the pristine opportunity to work at a creative craft under their own initiative is likely to come at the cost of a high-stress worklife dictated by chronic uncertainty, where self-direction morphs into self-exploitation, and voluntary mobility is a fast path to disposability.

Conclusion

The conditions for the emergence of creative industries policy differ from state to state, as do the resources available in any country to fit the policy requirements. At the very least, the

45. These figures were cited by Li Wuwei, chairperson of Shanghai's Creative Industry Association, at a January 2006 session of the Shanghai People's Congress (SPC), http://www.designtaxi.com/news.jsp?id=1807& monthview=1&month=1&year=2006.

46. Xinhua News Agency, 'China Badly Needs "Gray-Collars" for Manufacturing', *China Daily*, 21 March, 2004, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-03/21/content_316703.htm.

quicksilver adoption of the concept can be taken as evidence of the ready globalisation of ideas about governance. But there are other, more tangible reasons for its mercurial career: its core relationship with the exploitation of intellectual property; its connection, in urban development, with property revaluation; its potential for drawing marginal cultural labour into the formal, high-value economy; and the opportunity to link dynamic IT sectors with the prestige of the arts. Most mundane of all, the creative policy requisites are generally cheap to implement, involving relatively small investments on infrastructure and programs, and even smaller outlays on human capital, since the latter rely mostly on stimulating the already proven self-entrepreneurial instincts of creative workers, or on mining the latent reserves of ordinary people's creativity. The returns on these slight investments, if they are realised, promise to be substantial. In sum, it is fair to observe that all of the above-mentioned at- tributes are familiar features of global capital formation, whose managers and investors are ever on the lookout for fresh sources of value, labour, and markets.

While the rage for creative industries policy has sparked no end of scepticism, and even contempt, from radically-minded artists and artist groups, mainstream organisations have gone along with it in general, seeing the potential for greater economic leverage, more direct access to patronage, and an expanded range of partners and clients. To the degree to which the policy returns are envisaged as a high-stakes lottery – with hot tickets in the hands of those quickest to go to market – there are indeed likely to be some handsome winners, reinforcing the residual Romantic concept that creativity resides in select gen- iuses (albeit a genius for business). The single, big hit, as Angela McRobbie has pointed out, is the breakthrough project that lifts prospects above the exhausting micro-world of multi-tasking and social networking and into the attention economy of key global circuits.[47] Yet, for most of the players, the lottery climate of sharpened risk will only accentuate the precarious nature of creative work, with its endemic cycles of feast and famine, and gen- erally reinforce the income polarisation that is by now a familiar hallmark of neoliberal policy-making.

So, too, the rhetoric about taking creativity seriously has won admirers in unlikely plac- es. For one thing, it feeds into longstanding demands for humanising the workplace. Who would pass up the promise of inventive, mentally stimulating alternatives to the repetitive routines of assembly lines or data entry pools of the recent past, not to mention the dark Satanic mills of yore? A self-managed worklife free from rigid supervision and conformity, where independent initiative was prized above all? But business owners can also take heart from the proposition that such workplace permissiveness is not so much a concession to pushy employees as a proven source of profit in and of itself. Indeed, the record of work restructuring shows how easily the original worker demands for liberation from boredom – dating to the 1970s 'refusal of work' – have been interpreted as opportunities to increase productivity and shed 'surplus' employees. Managerial innovations in the last three dec- ades have been devoted to freeing up the workplace in ways somewhat different from the employees' Utopia – by stripping away layers of security, protection, and accountability. So, too, technological innovations have also made it possible to prise work away from its fixed

anchoring in a single job with a single job-holder; work tasks can now be broken down, reassigned all over the world, and the results recombined into a new whole through the use of work-flow platforms.

Consequently, wherever work has become more feelgood and free, it has also become less just, and this formula has perilous consequences for an industry that takes creativity as its watchword.[48] Job gratification, for creatives, has always come at a sacrificial cost – longer hours in pursuit of the satisfying finish, price discounts in return for prestige, and disposability in exchange for mobility and autonomy. Yet there is nary a shred of attention to these downsides in the statements and reports of the creative industries policy-makers; only a passing concern that the 'instrumentalising' of culture might bring undue harm to the cause of aesthetics, as evinced by Tessa Jowell, Blair's successor to Chris Smith as DCMS Minister in the UK.[49]

If sustainable job creation is to be a true goal of the new policy-making, then it would be best to acknowledge from the outset the well-known perils of precariousness that afflict creative work, and then build in some guarantees of income and opportunity to protect those who won't ever win the IP jackpot prizes. There is no shortage of documentation on these perils, dating back to the rise of culture markets in the late eighteenth century. Policy-makers would do us all a favour if they put aside the productivity statistics and so- licited some hard analysis about what it takes to make a 'good' creative job as opposed to generating opportunities for finding occasionally 'nice work'.

On the more radical edge lies the prospect that the creative industries might offer a base for genuinely progressive political initiatives. If that were to occur – and the proletari- anisation of the 'independently-minded' certainly can be radicalising – then it ought to be able to draw on labour power to provide heft and volume. Michael Denning has shown this was the case with the entertainment industries in the 1930s, whose newly unionised members became an indispensable component of the Popular Front. But employment in the new creative economy is being intentionally imagined and structured in neoliberal ways that are antipathetic to traditional organisation. Indeed, this sector can be said, with good reason, to be actively disorganised, and so the strategies for organising will have to be ever more ingenious. Some autonomous thinkers see this disorganisation as an advantage, with the potential of positioning creative labour outside of the control of capital (and labour un- ions, for that matter). Either way, there is no substitute for the power of numbers.

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47. Angela McRobbie 'The Los Angelisation of London: Three Short-waves of Young People's
      Micro-economies of Culture and Creativity in the UK', *Transversal* (January 2007),
      http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0207/mcrobbie/en.

48. Andrew Ross, *No-Collar: The Humane Workplace and its Hidden Costs*,
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49. Tessa Jowell, 'Government and the Value of Culture', DCMS (Department of Culture, Media and
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CAN NATURAL LUDDITES MAKE THINGS EXPLODE OR TRAVEL FASTER?

TOBY MILLER

A hundred, fifty, even twenty years ago, a tradition of culture, based on the Classics, on Scripture, on History and Literature, bound the governing classes together and projected the image of a gentleman.[1]

[C]reative class ideas have generated headlines like 'Cities Need Gays To Thrive' and 'Be Creative or Die'. They have also been slated, attacked and written off by a mob of angry academics, wonks and other pundits.[2]

Many of us stand ready to smite the discourse of creative industries, to reveal that it is intellectually *un*formed, politically *mis*informed, and economically *de*formed. It seems high time that the high priests of creative industries learn a lesson or two. This re-education is necessary whether the prelates are Floridians in Pittsburgh, riding around on their bicycles to spy on ballet-loving, gay-friendly, multicultural computer geeks who want to move to de-industrialised, freezing rust/rusting freeze belts; true-believer creationists in Australia who find even cultural policy studies too residually socialistic and textual for their taste; or endlessly sprouting Brussels bureaucrats offering blueprints to cities eager to be made over by culture and tolerance in search of affluence.

These reactionaries do not focus on the precariat/immaterial labour, high-tech pollution, cultural imperialism, or even defining industries adequately. They offer neoliberal prescriptions for change as they wander the globe seeking a new public role for the arts and humanities, snobbily promoting tertiary industry against agriculture and manufacturing. Prone to cybertarianism, they are subscribers to digital capitalism and the technological sublime. Simultaneously knowing and unknowing subjects, these carpet-bagging consultants peddling naïveté to snake-oil consumers are neither solid scholars nor social-movement activists. They have failed the historic tasks laid out for critical intellectuals, striving instead to become organic intellectuals of the so-called creative class.

I think there are elements of truth in all of the above. They are charges I have made in the past, often to those accused, many of whom are friends and fellow-travellers. They ad-

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1. J. H. Plumb, 'Introduction', in J. H. Plumb (ed.) *Crisis in the Humanities*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964, p. 7.
2. Max Nathan, *The Wrong Stuff: Creative Class Theory, Diversity and City Performance*, Centre for Cities, Institute for Public Policy Research Discussion Paper 1, September, 2005, http://www.ippr.org.uk/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=448.

mit that such accusations are at least partially true, but rightly feel that the humanities must change to survive by showing relevance to ordinary peoples' concerns. My own research is dedicated to a much more critical perspective, and I draw on work from Latin America and India for my guide, rather than the Global North and its current obsession, China (cf. successive obsessions about the economies of the Soviet Union in the 1950s, Western Europe in the 1970s, and Japan in the 1980s for similar panics/excitations). But I also admire much that cultural-policy people are doing when it articulates to social movements through what Stefano Harney calls 'state work', as per the examples of Néstor Garcia Canclini and George Yúdice.[3] Or rather, I see it as an inevitable response to the search of the humanities for influence encountering the search of post-industrial economies for innovation. I am not arguing that the carpet-bagging consultants from Bullshit U are politically right or intellectually acute. I *am* saying that their moves are strategically astute ones for the survival of the humanities as an academic site.

To make this point I want to go back to that period between the mid-1950s and 1960s that is often now thought of in terms of decolonisation and the Cold War. And indeed those momentous experiences did characterise the times. But so did a set of anxieties about science, technology, and organisations and their impact on everyday life and aesthetic pursuits. I shall focus on the expression of those concerns, especially in *anglo-parlante* contexts, then match them to the discourse of the creative industries today. I think the humanities both prefigured the coming crisis of deindustrialisation and was the last academic domain to adapt to it; and that the Floridians, creationists, and culturecrats are responding to the end of the grand bifurcation between the arts and the sciences that is occasioned by digital commerce and culture.

In 1956, C. P. Snow coined the term 'Two Cultures' as he sought to understand the two parts of himself: 'by training... a scientist: by vocation... a writer'.[4] Snow was the inventor of that fine phrase 'the corridors of power' to describe the work of politics and lobby groups, and he was particularly adept at moving between different formations in just the way that social movements, consultants, bureaucrats, and politicians are. Fearing that 'the whole of western society is increasingly being split into two polar groups' (3), Snow perceived the 'Two Cultures' as those who could quote Shakespeare versus those who could quote the laws of thermodynamics (15), i.e. people who were fated to repeat the past versus people who were making the future. He could move from South Kensington to Greenwich Village and encounter the same artistic discourse, with each site 'having about as communication with MIT as though the scientists spoke nothing but Tibetan' (2). Arts and humanities people strolled through their lives 'as if the natural order didn't exist' (14). But there was the opportunity, in the best dialectical style, for the 'clashing point' of these discourses 'to produce creative chances', despite the fact that 'very little of twentieth-century science has been assimilated into twentieth-century art' because 'literary intellectuals, are natural Luddites' (16, 22).

Snow's provocation drew a banally irritated response from that *auteur* of *hauteur* F. R. Leavis, whose publishers feared Snow would sue after reading that 'Not only is he not a genius, he is intellectually as undistinguished as it is possible to be'[5]; and a sorrowful response from the noted historian J. H. Plumb, who lamented that 'Quips from Cicero are uncommon in the engineers' lab' and 'Ahab and Jael rarely provide a parable for biologists'.[6] The rather arch but perspicacious social anthropologist Ernest Gellner saw the controversy as a threat because humanists were opposed to adding science 'as one of the crucial "cultures"'. Their 'equation of humanism with being the *compleat man*' would collapse.[7]

The humanities in Britain had long been 'the core of the educational system and were believed to have peculiar virtues in producing politicians, civil servants, Imperial administrators and legislators', because they supposedly incarnated and indexed 'the arcane wisdom of the Establishment'. This was service to the state. But 'the rising tide of scientific and industrial societies, combined with the battering of two World Wars' had 'shattered the confidence of humanists in their capacity to lead'. Plumb saw just two options, as per Snow: adaptation 'to the needs of a society dominated by science and technology, or retreat into social triviality'.[8] Snow realised that imperialism had disfigured the humanities by perpetuating this class of worker as administrators who were disarticulated from agricultural and industrial change.[9] For Graham Hough, either the humanities must embrace 'a world dominated by industry and science and large organisations', or be consigned to 'the never-never-land of the organic society with those happy peasants Dr Leavis [and] Richard Hoggart' due to the irrelevance of disciplines that 'do not make anything explode or travel faster'.[10] No wonder Hough embraced the visuality of the young in his endorsement of 'the portable concert hall and the imaginary museum' (104).

Forty years after Snow, popular knowledge of basic science is still minimal, despite extraordinary transformations in knowledge generated through quantum physics, relativity theory, and molecular biology.[11] But at an applied level, things are different, with computing technology and its applications to narrative and art well-known to people in every corner of campus other than the dismal social sciences. Young computer scientists are playing in the same virtual environments as young literary critics. Each one knows narrative, each one knows code, and their avatars talk, just as they do in person. As Thomas Pynchon said, looking back on the Two Cultures a quarter of a century later, 'all the cats are jumping out of the bag and even beginning to mingle'.[12]

Efforts to cross borders have become something of a *cliché* within the humanities and

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3.   Stefano Harney, *State Work: Public Administration and Mass Intellectuality*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.

4.   C. P. Snow, *The Two Cultures and a Second Look: An Expanded Version of the Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 1. Subsequent page numbers cited in text.

5.   F. R. Leavis, *Nor Shall My Sword: Discourses on Pluralism, Compassion and Social Hope*, New York: Barnes and Noble, 1972.

6.   Plumb, Crisis in the Humanities, p. 7.

7.   Ernest Gellner, 'The Crisis in the Humanities and the Mainstream of Philosophy', in *Plumb, Crisis in the Humanities*, p. 63n.

8.   *Plumb, Crisis in the Humanities*, p. 23.

9.   Snow, *The Two Cultures and a Second Look*, p. 23.

10. Graham Hough, 'Crisis in Literary Education', in Plumb, *Crisis in the Humanities*, p. 96.

11. Takashi Tachibana, 'Closing the Knowledge Gap Between Scientist and Nonscientist', *Science* 281.5378 (1998): 778-79.

12. Thomas Pynchon, 'Is it O.K. to be a Luddite?', *New York Times Book Review*, 28 October, 1984, p. 1.

the 'soft' social sciences. But it's interesting to note the efficacy of interdisciplinarity as a rallying-cry elsewhere, too, specifically in the US Academy. Study after study, from the Association of American Universities, the American Council on Education, the Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy, the National Research Council (NRC), the Sloan Foundation, the Association of American Colleges and Universities, and the Council of Graduate Schools underscores the need for interdisciplinarity at the core of doctoral studies, as embodied in the NRC's panels on national doctoral education, which specify the importance of interdisciplinarity via the incorporation of a committee dedicated to the topic. For its part, the Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship scheme of the National Science Foundation (NSF) is designed to obviate the limits of 19th and early-mid-20th century disciplines by permitting scientists and engineers to undertake interdisciplinary doctorates, 'stimulating collaborative research that transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries' to create a 'diverse, globally-engaged, science and engineering workforce'.[13] And the Floridian's UK Creativity Index puts Snow's birthplace, Leicester, equal second in the country with London, behind Manchester. The human sciences try to join this discourse at a pragmatic level, an example being the Australian Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences' submission to its national Productivity Commission, which pleads (rather winsomely) to be at the table for Floridian/creationist reasons articulated to what is erroneously[14] described as 'the new post-smokestack era of industry'. The key findings of such investigations, as summarised by the University of Washington's team on this subject, and supported by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts, and Atlantic Philanthropies, are that the academy and society are not well-served by the existing disciplinary norms of research, and need new paradigms and practices; sustained supervision of students is lacking, and attrition is high.[15] When people emerge from graduate study, most of them suddenly have to write for, and speak with, audiences and colleagues who are quite different from those they encounter within single disciplines or sub-disciplines – audiences who are 'curious about everything'.[16] Elderly disciplinary narrowness is quickly brought into question. As the director of the NSF recently put it, 'the easy work is finished and ambitious scholars are confronted with problems that not only defy the specialisation of disciplinary skills, theories, and methods but actually demand their collaboration'.[17]

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13. National Science Foundation, *Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship Program Solicitation* NSF 04-550, 2004.
14. Consider the horrendous environmental consequences of the culture industries, from computing to golf and everywhere in between.
15. See Jody Nyquist and Donald H. Wulff, 'Recommendations from National Studies on Doctoral Education', *Re-Envisioning the PhD*, University of Washington, 2000. See also Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, *Responsive PhD*, 2004; National Research Council, *Assessing Research-Doctorate Programs: A Methodology Study*, 2003; Max Nathan, *The Wrong Stuff*, 2005, p. 3; CHASS, *CHASS Submission: Productivity Commission Study on Science and Innovation*, 2006.
16. Ian Hacking, 'The Complacent Disciplinarian', *Interdisciplines.org*, 2004, http://www.interdisciplines.org/interdisciplinarity/papers/7.
17. Rita Colwell, 'The Changing Context for Graduate Education and Training', Welcoming Remarks to NSF Integrative Graduate Education and Research Training Principal Investigators' Meeting, 2003.

This is just the interdisciplinarity that Snow called for; but he also had a social mission, that all this must be done to counter the way that ordinary people were 'lost in the great anonymous sludge of history' where life, he said (troping Thomas Hobbes) 'has always been nasty, brutish and short', much like the experience of his artisanal forebears.[18] In riding the wave of post-industrialism and interdisciplinarity, the great test that the Floridians, creationists, and bureaucrats must sit and pass is their contribution to that sludge and that quality of life. They may be showing that Luddites can indeed reform themselves and make things explode and go faster. But what have they done to question everyday inequality? It's worth noting that Pynchon defends Luddites. He explains that they were not protesting new technology at all. Rather, they were opposed to well-established technology, because it had resulted in job losses over two centuries. Ned Lud (like Snow, a child of Leicestershire[19]) was no 'technophobic crazy'. Lud and his followers recognised that men who did not work controlled machines, which controlled the lives of those who did work. Lord Byron sought the death penalty for opponents of machines in his maiden speech in the Lords, just months after summering with the Shelleys as the first Luddite piece of science fiction was being created.

The new humanities, the creative-industries humanities, respond to a great appeal, a grand passion, of the age, where 'even the most unreconstructed of Luddites can be charmed into laying down the old sledgehammer and stroking a few keys instead' and lining up with technocrats, while 'average poor bastards' are left with no one to speak for them against a self-perpetuating techno-elite.[20]

If we are to evaluate the humanities' latest fixation, we have to contemplate its efficacy. In 2008 Liverpool will be officially a City of Culture, expending £3 billion in public funds on an arts program, a museum, galleries, a convention centre, a retail outlet, renewed transportation, rebuilt waterfront, and every good thing. This is premised on regeneration through culture, but sceptics ask 'is that a foundation strong enough to sustain a lasting economy? Or is it the equivalent of pyramid selling – a fragile structure… concealing a hollow emptiness at its heart?' The European Commission's evaluation of 29 Cities of Culture discloses that their principal goal – economic growth stimulated by the public subvention of culture to renew failed cities – has itself failed. The successes are cities that were doing very nicely, thank you, without the designation. Glasgow, for instance, has been hailed as an exemplar, but 14 years after the rhetoric, no sustained growth was in evidence.[21]

There is minimal evidence for the existence of a creative class in Britain, for example, nor for the assertion that 'creative cities' outperform their drab brethren economically. Companies seek skills when deciding where to locate their businesses, but skill also seeks out work. City centres only attract workers while they are young and prior to breeding. The centrality of gay culture in the Floridian calculus derives from assuming that all same-sex households are queer (pardon me for pointing this out, but sexually-segregated university dormitories and sorority/fraternity houses are not quite there, at least not necessarily). The idea of urbanism incipient in US demographic statistics, including his, incorporates the

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18. Snow, *The Two Cultures and a Second Look*, pp. 26-27, 42.
19. And me. Go Foxes.
20. Pynchon, 'Is it O.K. to be a Luddite?', p. 41.
21. Magnus Linklater, 'I Don't Want to Spoil the Party…', *The Times*, 8 November, 2006.

suburbs (which now hold more US residents than do cities) so that, too, is a suspect figure in terms of the importance of downtown lofts to economies. And there is no evidence of an overlap of tastes, values, living arrangements, and locations between artists on the one hand and accountants on the other, despite their being bundled together in the creative concept; nor is it sensible to assume other countries replicate the massive internal mobility of the US population. Finally, other surveys pour scorn on the claim that quality of life is central to selecting business campuses next to low costs, good communications technology, proximity to markets, and adequate transportation systems.[22]

And beyond countries with wealthy post-humanities support systems? Each year, Rwanda hosts a Festival of Pan-African dance, which is designed to celebrate collective and individual identity. In 2006, it convened a global conference on the Creative Economy to accompany festivities. The declared intent was to take the social healing engendered by the experience of culture and commodify it in the interest of growth, whilst drawing on non-Western ideas of creativity and development. Brazil is a centre for discussion of the creative industries and will house the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the United Nations Development Program's International Forum for Creative Industries. India's venerable last gasp of Nehruvianism, its Planning Commission, has a committee for creative industries. The audit up to now from the left in the Global South, other than those who participate in these adventures, is to query whether this amounts to 'recycling audio-visual cultural material created by the grassroots genius, exploiting their intellectual property and generating a standardised business sector that excludes, and even distorts, its very source of business', to quote *The Hindu*.[23]

Whether we're speaking of Liverpool or Delhi, expenditure will breed externalities alright – but if directing public money towards culture does not generate additional cultural growth or utilisation of cultural facilities, why not simply hand the money out to people and urge them to spend it as they wish? Otherwise, the creationists will merely have shown that they can run with the people who know how to make things explode and travel faster. And their point will be?

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22. Nathan, *The Wrong Stuff*, 2005.
23. Sharada Ramanathan, 'The Creativity Mantra', *The Hindu,* 29 October, 2006.

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UNPREDICTABLE OUTCOMES
A REFLECTION AFTER SOME YEARS OF DEBATES ON CREATIVITY AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

MARION VON OSTEN

How does the hegemonic discourse of creativity, creative industries and the artist as a role model for the new economy correspond or conflict with the actual field of cultural producers and cultural activists? To reflect this set of contradictions I would first of all question whether the creative industries, and the issues we are researching and contesting, are already in existence or if we face an emerging field of political visions that aim to privatise the cultural sector in general. Can we even speak of a creative industry as such? Has an *industry* been realised in any concrete fashion? Indeed, it is difficult to identify any coherent formation in either the UK, where the discourse on creative industries originally developed, or in Germany, where Chancellor Schröder established with different outcomes a transformative shift towards a culturalisation of the economy, as well as an economisation of culture. Are we at a stage where social interactions and autonomous forms of work generate self-organised ways of living, which at the same time can be exploited by capital as an immaterial labour? Or are we caught up in a transformative process where the outcomes of diverse interactions in the cultural field are to some extent industrially produced and are increasingly dominated by capital interests? Or alternatively, is it the case that the industrialisation of cultural production is itself contradictory, as many critics since Adorno have argued, so that 'creativity' has nothing to do with the sphere of economy? My interest in this paper is to reflect the ideologies of the protagonists of the creative industries as well as our discourse – the discourse of activist researchers, for lack of a better term. I do not think we are immune to the dominant discourse on creative industries, indeed I believe we are *immersed* within it. And this means there is still space to influence and change the discourse, even our own. In other words, I do not think there is such a thing as the 'creative industries' yet, but rather a discourse around culture and the economy based on an international desire to realise the creative industries as an actuality.

I would, therefore, like to discuss 'creativity' as a discursive term that occupies a central role in contemporary capitalist society, with a genealogy in processes of secularisation and the emergence of a modern subjectivity. In relation to the term 'industry', it can be observed in our use of language that the social and cultural might be transformed partially by industrialisation processes and technologies, if we are not willing to critically intervene. This is apparent in current debates on cognitive abilities or capabilities, or issues surrounding social competency, creativity and intelligence, which are increasingly represented as separate abstract units and understood as being learnt or already possessed by post-Fordist workers. Broader questions of what is achieved through these abilities, or why and for whom they are directed, seem to be of no relevance. Abilities are treated as a value and a source in themselves, a source that could be generated and improved by training methods, or exploited by capital. But that can only happen when they are discussed as non-relational

and segregated from each other, when they are highlighted and represented from scientific and popular viewpoints as entities. For instance, with the requirement of 'life long learning' as a process isolated as a value in itself, as a concept not concerned with what to learn or why, but with the ongoing process of learning itself, whatever it is, as something valued positively as beneficial.

This new conception of the worker is simultaneously linked to a fragmentation of cognitive processes into 'packages' capable of being treated by industry at some future moment. Such methods of abstraction, and the establishment of technologies to improve and optimise cognitive capacities, can be linked to the key processes and technologies of early industrialisation. Here, physical movements were abstracted and fragmented, and the body of the worker was synchronised with machines, with only one or a limited number of actions being necessary for the machinery's operational sequences. Courses of movements, therefore, were trained and researched upon. After the Body-Machine-Management of Taylorism was fully realised and the newly composed relation between body, machine, management and sciences was internationally standardised, mass production flourished in the Industrial Age. However, this was a time when labour struggles became more successful. The Marxian analysis of capital and the relation to the labour force was translated into everyday contexts along with the experience of the workplace, of organisations and parties.

Considering these processes of industrialisation, one could also think about the creative industries discourse as a technology with implications beyond specific cultural sectors. What goes mostly forgotten in these debates is that statements about creativity and cultural labour have an impact on the understanding and conceptualising of labour, subjectivity and society as a whole. The vocabulary of creativity, 'bohemian life' and career employment enacts a social transformation, which affects policy-making along with the field of politics and cultural critique.

The Creator as a Hegemonic Figure
Artist-subjects, intellectuals and bohemians are specifically European constructs. Since the 16th century, the capacity for creative production, for the creation of 'worlds', is something no longer regarded as strictly divine, but also as a human capacity to relate intellectual and manual abilities to one another in a specific mode of production, distinguished from activities that are purely a matter of craft. In this sense, the concept of 'creativity' was understood as encapsulating reflexivity, technical knowledge and an awareness of the contingency inherent to the creative process. During the 18th century, creativity was defined as being a central characteristic of the artist, who was said to perpetually conjure the world anew as an autonomous 'creator'. Within this emerging capitalist social structure, the concepts of aptitude and property were conjoined with the traditionally male notion of genius to produce an *exceptional subject*.

'Being creative' has since served bourgeois individualism as a generic description for activity meant to transcend or elude economic determinants. Within this general context of Eurocentric discourses on 'creation', the culturalisation of labour and production also emerges from forms of image production that refer to a particular regime of the gaze. These develop from the institutional settings or frameworks have been established in museums and galleries as well as related discourses and ideologies of the 19th nation-state.

The figure of the artist as exceptional, as the creator of innovations in modes of production, concepts of authorship and forms of living, is one that circulates throughout vari-

ous contemporary discourses on social transformation. Moreover, the classical exceptional subjects of modernity – artists, musicians, non-conformists and bohemians – also function as role models in European Union debates on labour and social politics, in Germany, Switzerland and most prevalently in the UK. As Angela McRobbie observes in her influential text, '"Everyone is Creative": Artists as Pioneers of the New Economy?':

> One way to clarify the issue is to examine the arguments presented by this self-consciously 'modern' government, which since 1997 has attempted to champion the new ways of working as embodying the rise of a progressive and even liberating cultural economy of autonomous individuals – the perfect social correlative of post-socialist 'third way' politics.[1]

In these political debates, the figure of the artist – or cultural-preneur, as Anthony Davies once named it – seems to embody that above mentioned successful combination of an unlimited variety of ideas, creativity-on-call and clever self-marketing, which today is demanded of everyone. These subject positions outside the mainstream labour force are presented as self-motivated, and celebrated as 'creators of new subversive ideas' and innovative life-/workstyles (to which they are passionately committed). One reason for this change in values is the deregulation of once stable institutional and organisational specifications and the erosion of the stereotypically male long-term career. Because of this it becomes – from the perspective of groups orientated around long-term employment like civil or labour parties – it becomes difficult to determine how, why and when to differentiate between 'work' and 'non-work'. The artist seems to be a key figure in comprehending this situation, operating as a touchstone for mediating this new understanding of living and working to a broader audience.

Within the general political context of the UK and Germany, support for the employed or unemployed now depends on his or her willingness to balance work and leisure 'productively' as required. Activities once experienced as private are evaluated by their economic function. The 'labour-entrepreneur' must simultaneously become the artist of her or his own life. It is precisely this mystification of exceptional subjectivities – the 'artist' whose way of working is based on self-responsibility, creativity and spontaneity – which grounds the slogans of today's discourse on labour. This is apparent in the rhetoric of the Hartz Commission in Germany, where the unemployed are presented as 'the professionals of the nation', as self-motivated 'freelancers', artists, journalists and temporary workers.

The classical subject of exception, including his or her precarious employment situation, has been transformed by recent economic discourse into a model economic actor. In managerial discourse, assessments, training, consultation and its related literature, creative action and thinking are no longer merely expected of artists, curators and designers. New flexible, contract-based employees are the customers of a growing advertising market that promotes creativity, and is equipped with the appropriate advice-brochures, seminars, software, etc. These educational programs, learning techniques and tools supply applicable methods that suggest new potential forms of being. Their aim is to make 'optimising'

1. Angela McRobbie, '"Everyone is Creative": Artists as Pioneers of the New Economy?', in Tony Bennett and Elizabeth Silva (eds) *Contemporary Culture and Everyday Life*, London: Routledge, 2004.

the self seem desirable. Creativity training demands and supports a liberation of creative potential without addressing any existing social conditions that might pose an impediment. On the one hand, creativity emerges as the democratic variant of genius: the ability to be creative is bestowed on everyone. On the other hand, everyone is required to develop his or her creative potential. The call for self-determination and participation no longer solely designates an emancipated utopia, but also a social obligation. The individual apparently complies with these new power relations freely. In Nikolas Rose's terms, they are 'obliged to be free', urged to be mature, autonomous and responsible for themselves. Their behaviour is not regulated by a disciplinary power, but by 'governmental' techniques grounded in the neo-liberal idea of a 'self-regulating' market. This regime is intended to mobilise and stimulate, rather than discipline and punish. The new labour subjects should be as contingent and flexible as the 'market' itself.

The requirement or imperative to be creative, and to adjust to the dynamics of the market, is closely related to a very traditional understanding of artistic production, namely, that the only possible income for an artist results from selling products to a marketplace (a myth which seems to be increasingly valued today). In this regard, however, there is an important distinction with the field of managerial discourse, since economic failure is evaluated differently in the artistic field. The unsuccessful artist can still assert other subjectivities in order to transform the financial loss. The figure of the unrecognised artist can be mobilised at every stage, since the loss can be legitimated with assumptions like 'the time is not ready for it', but 'quality will win out in the end' or 'recognition can come late' (at the latest, after death). But this myth of the unrecognised, unsuccessful though talented and misunderstood artist cannot be easily integrated into managerial discourse. I guess we'll be waiting some time for enterprises to become objects of appreciation years after their death/ bankruptcy. Or that a super-engaged, motivated, flexible and mobile individual, who didn't get a job in the current labour market, would get a retrospective from MOMA with a coffee table book publication and a place in the 'Hall of Fame' after his or her death.

Even so, this subjectivity of non-recognition is generally integrated into many immaterial workers' self-description. For instance, the artist as a role model for the new flexible labourer can be found in several studies from media, business and IT sectors. One report by T-Mobile Germany found that, for many employees, the time constraints of overwork and the humiliation of being underpaid, was interpreted as being a passage, as a transitory situation that would soon be overcome and eventually flow into a better job; the way to get it might be hard, but your goal is clear. In these cases, forms of contingent subjectivity embody the failure of the free market as positive experiences, while the impact of privatisation and structural changes in social, political and economical fields are treated as a personal challenge.

The mythology of artistic production today, moreover, implies an image of metropolitan lifestyle, where living and working are done in the same place – at a café, on the street – which is then associated with the illusory possibility of added enjoyment or 'leisure'. Historically, these notions of flexibility and mobility originate precisely from the traditions of the countercultural dropout and, as Elisabeth Wilson has shown in her book *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts*, with those the generations of artists that sought to resist modernism's dictums of discipline and rationalisation. The contemporary social status and cultural capital attached to the image of the 'artist', therefore, refers to a higher, more ethical form

of work, which has discarded the coercion of disciplinary regimes and is destined for something 'better'.

Here, the artist's studio or 'loft' has become synonymous with such a combination of work and leisure, with innovation and a diversity of ideas. In this way, neoliberal ideology is fully realised with an aesthetic dimension, which goes on to influence office and apartment design as 'habitats'. Subjects are placed in new environments; associated lifestyle opportunities proliferate. Shared aesthetic experiences, then, become an instrument of initiation. The style of living and working originally attributed to the artist promises a new 'urban living experience' throughout Europe. Today, a loft no longer refers only to an artist's studio in an abandoned warehouse or factory, but is applied more generally to almost any attic conversion and building extension that might have occurred, for example, in Switzerland and Germany during the late 90s. In the European competition for local advantages in a global market, city districts have been rejuvenated and labour markets revamped with a culturalised vocabulary. At the same time, budget cuts have been justified under a paradigm that sees cultural producers as 'self-reliant' and 'self-organising' entrepreneurs – the core concept of the creative industries ideology based on an economy of 'talent' and self-initiative.

The Artist as Resistant Figure
The above mentioned discourses are not marginal. Rather, they have consequences for the whole of society, since they obscure the actual conditions of production in the surviving remnants of industrial manufacturing, along with the precarious employer-employee relationships in the service industry and the fields of art and design.

Despite their economic crash, the IT and media industries (both of which refer constantly to the image of the 'artist') have become as influential a model of labour as the Taylorist and Fordist automobile industry once was. As demonstrated by the spurious emulation of bohemian lifestyles throughout the IT industry, among others, much remains to be learned about a discourse on labour suffused with 'the language of the cultural'; in particular, the everyday circulation of this discourse, its effects on the formation of subjectivity and the relation between adjustment, failure and resistance. Until now, the erosion of the old paradigms of production and the emergence of 'artistic practice' in these new working conditions has almost exclusively been analysed through the logic of 'industrialisation' and stable regimes of employment, which only addresses white males as dominant 'breadwinners' in Western societies. Apart from a few exceptions, there has been little attempt to address these phenomena in terms of their cultural rationale and effects. The actual relations of production that constitute 'creative' production (self-employed artists, media workers, designers of multimedia, sound, and graphics, etc.) are neglected and/or idealised in the above-mentioned optimistic discourses. Almost no attention has been paid to the different actors involved, their motivations and desires.

With this in mind, since 2003, I have initiated a series of studies or projects in which interviews with cultural producers from various backgrounds have played a crucial role. My research was originally based at the Institut für Theorie der Gestaltung und Kunst in Zurich, and was focussed on cultural labour in the area of independent multimedia and design. The study approached the political discourse on labour from a reflexive angle. In order to develop a theory of social constitution clearly distinct from notions of 'accumulative production' in the materialist tradition, this approach seemed necessary to me: instead of 'proving'

an economisation of everyday life, I concentrated on how actors in a specific location try to establish tactics or strategies to resist this dominant discourse.

The project began with conversations about the current relations of production in 'studio/office blocks', where hybrid forms of cultural production between art, graphic design, journalism, photography, multimedia and music production is the norm. The building I focused on belonged to Swisscom AG before being sublet in the late 90s to different groups of cultural producers. The floor in the building, where most conversations took place, was collectively leased to several artists, journalists and electronic musicians that gave themselves the name k3000, an appropriation of a former supermarket chain in Switzerland that no longer existed, but was known for providing cheap goods. The k3000 group additionally sublet the floor to other producers, from social scientists to graphic designers, and sound and visual artists. One office space was called 'Lab k3000', where multimedia equipment was made available and knowledge concerning its use was shared collectively. Lab k3000 (of which I am a member) has been active as a group in critical artistic practices and cultural production since 1997.

In 1998, when the rooms in the former Swisscom office complex were first partitioned, the separation between artists, multimedia and graphic-arts design channels was still quite obvious. While shared interests in fashion, electronic music genres and styles were prevalent (particularly via the dance culture of the 90s), both groups differed in their political positioning and relationship to theory. Only in the last five years did it become more and more common for critical artists, activists and theorists to produce web-projects, mailing-lists, newspapers, videos, project exhibitions, activities and events. This was only possible in any tangible way because of the spatial and social fabric of the Schoeneggstrassse office building that included friends and colleagues from the other fields of production who could introduce their ideas and respective skills (for instance, in the conception of projects such as MoneyNations, Be Creative, Transit Migration, MigMap, etc.).[2]

My research and involvement, therefore, led me to revise several of my earlier assumptions about the changing relations of production, in which I took the position that the fields of multimedia and design would fit perfectly in the 'culturalisation of the economy', more so than critical art practices. But I had to correct myself in this respect, as many people working in design already demonstrated a significant diversity of experience as freelance and self-employed creatives. And these transformations, moreover, could not be solely attributed to the economic situation in the wake of the dotcom crash.

First of all, it surprised me that the perceptions or imaginaries of office and studio spaces were already mixed up to such an extent after 20 years of personal computer culture that in Zurich's graphic design and art scene, it was primarily the studio, rather than the office, that survived as a model of independent production. The people I spoke with have all been very active in multimedia applications for multinational companies or branding enterprises in the mid to late 90s. It was astonishing to observe that this situation shifted a few years later to working in shared or open spaces (such as the 'floor'), trying to avoid corporate production work in general and believing that clients, who ever they are, should not be invited in the building for arranging contracts, etc. While multimedia producers and

graphic designers tended towards the studio, artists conversely used terms like 'laboratory' or 'office' in their attempts to describe a more collective and multimedia-oriented mode of production. As both groups shared the same building, these descriptions seemed to operate strategically for each faction.

Remarkably, my conversations with producers also revealed that temporary, collective networks were increasingly uncommon in the production of corporate multimedia and design. The activity on the 'floor' did not resemble a 'factory' at all, contrary to what Maurizio Lazzarato claims, for example, in his canonical text on 'immaterial labour'. In his assessment, there are clear continuities between the new production conditions under post-Fordism and artistic-cultural work in general. Lazzarato, however, presumes that the characteristics of the so-called post-industrial economy, both in terms of its mode of production and social conditions as a whole, can be singularly expressed through the form of 'immaterial' production. Even if areas such as audio-visual industries, advertising and marketing, fashion, computer software programming, photography, and artistic-cultural work seem to function as fully realised expressions of such 'immaterial labour', I would emphasize, after having finished the study, the potential for actors to resist processes of commodification through everyday tactics.

The self-employed designers of the Zurich scene, for instance, functioned more like a 'niche economy', depending on alternative cultural spaces, where they received a limited, but still decent income. They presented themselves in conversation as enclosed studio monads that consciously resisted collaboration with the 'branding' and 'marketing' systems, or cooperated only when in urgent need of money – doing a 'job', working for the rent or a holiday. Significantly, this group had no political strategy: they did not discuss trade unions, employer-employee relations or changing social conditions, but invented a way to make their living through self-organised and freelance arrangements.

In the interviews, almost all of them stressed that they did not refuse working 9-to-5 solely because such a regime seemed paternalistic, but because they could not bear either business culture and its social dynamics, or the idea of being subordinated to a hierarchical working relationship. Multimedia and graphic design jobs, as I discovered in conversation, additionally provided an opportunity for (mostly) young men to become upwardly mobile. However, these positions did not seem capable of enacting any significant changes in terms of gender dynamics, even if this is an assumption repeatedly postulated in labour market policy. This could have something to do with traditional relationships of women and men toward technology, or might be influenced by an anachronistic belief about the 'artist' as solitary male genius. In any case, the graphic-designer's self-image increasingly resembled that of an artist (as single author). This approach allowed them to discard the image of being a small business or a success-orientated craftsperson following the demands of the client. This is comparable to the art-scene, as many dramatic actors do not appropriate the image of the artist in the hope of economic gain, but in terms of social status, as a possibility of social mobility that is not bound solely to monetary exchange. Similarly, within the graphic arts scene, this gesture draws from the opposite of economic success, on the tradition of the failed and misunderstood artistic subject and its subcultural variations, with little reference to that subject's desirability to capital.

The aspiration for a bohemian lifestyle does not exclusively emerge in the discourse of labour market policies and economic success as a result, but also in this field of applied

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2.   See http://www.k3000.ch.

art, where it is used as a method of differentiation from regular employers and business. Among these 'young creatives', precarious working conditions are not strictly an expression of economic relations, but are based on a choice for a particular lifestyle. Independent freelance work, in other words, is considered an enjoyable life, corresponding with a desire to be unstructured by others, rather than gain permanent employment. This is not only a precarious life, but also on that will never lead to significant wealth; social status might be a convenient way to make an income, but it is not directed at becoming internationally famous. This seems a high privilege that most of the people in the world do not share, from which even overstressed cultural theorists are excluded.

This niche economy only exists because of a still existing alternative cultural scene, networks of institutions that have been established through social unrest in Zurich or other cities. It exists because unemployment benefits for young people who have just finished their education are still available in Switzerland, and because of a network of cultural producers that relate this alternative world of cultural spaces, bars and clubs to political initiatives, temporal teaching jobs, self-initiated projects; always finding opportunities for small incomes and involving people on the floor, or in the building in their existing money flow. Here, niche-economies become a key question of cultural policy and local specificity.

Conclusion

Even if the self-described and organised 'artist-subject' seems to correspond with the fantasies of labour market-redevelopers and creative industries apologists, the success of this conjunction, of making this form of subjectivity 'productive' for economic processes, is questionable in both theoretical and epistemological terms. Artistic ways of living and working contain forces that cannot fully be controlled, because they not only engender but also always take part in the dissolution of their own conditions. Furthermore, the myths of artistic lifestyles are not exclusively at the human resource managers' disposal. Social groups that would otherwise be silenced within existing power relations can similarly take up these mythologies. The historical constitution of artistic subjectivities and aesthetic modes of living cannot supply the measurable data required by economic rationalism, since the production of a unified context between the economic and everyday life is a reduction of their inherent complexities and antagonisms. In its functioning as ideology, however, the creative industries discourse effectively obscures this shortcoming.

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CREATIVE LABOUR AS A BASIS FOR A CRITIQUE OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES POLICY

DAVID HESMONDHALGH

What does the recent boom in interest in 'creativity' and the creative industries tell us about the relations between culture, society and economy at the beginning of the twenty first century? One way of critiquing these developments has been to focus on the question of creative or artistic labour (not the only way but there is limited space here). One problem with such critique is that very often claims are made about the conditions of creative labour with very little supporting evidence – and this is an issue that I will return to in this paper. In actuality, there has been a great deal of analysis regarding artistic labour markets. For instance, Pierre-Michel Menger has offered a very useful survey and the economist Ruth Towse has provided a neat summary of the findings of a wide range of studies.[1] For Towse, these have the following features: artists tend to hold multiple jobs; there is a predominance of self-employed or freelance workers, work is irregular, contracts are shorter-term, and there is little job protection; career prospects are uncertain; earnings are very unequal; artists are younger then other workers; and the workforce appears to be growing. By 'artistic', Towse means the subsidised arts sector, but these features would seem also to apply very much to artistic (and informational) labour in the cultural and creative industries. If that is so, then policies that argue for a radical expansion of these industries under present conditions, without attention to the conditions of creative labour, risk fuelling labour markets marked by irregular, insecure and unprotected work. This in turn suggests that cultural labour might indeed be one important way in which creative industries policy (and theory) might be criticised, and in which activism might be informed.

In this brief piece, though, my aim is not so much to scrutinise such quantitative evidence in detail, but instead to focus on how critical analysis might adequately *theorise* creative labour. I concentrate on three significant contributions to understanding creative labour: the idea of a 'new international division of cultural labour'; the focus on creative work in autonomist Marxism and the related notion of 'precarity'; and (for want of a better term) a sociological approach to creative labour by the Australian writer Bill Ryan, based on fieldwork interviews and observations, as well as theory. All of these contributions are useful, but all I feel have their problems and lacks.[2]

1. Pierre-Michel Menger, 'Artistic Labor Markets and Careers', Annual Review of Sociology 25.1 (1999): 541-74; Ruth Towse, 'The Labour Market for Artists', *Richerce Economiche* 46 (1992): 55-74.
2. This paper is an adaptation of an earlier paper and my presentation at the MyCreativity conference in Amsterdam, see David Hesmondhalgh, 'Cultural and Creative Industries', forthcoming in Tony Bennett and John Frow (eds) *The SAGE Handbook of Cultural Analysis*, London: Sage, 2008. My thanks to Brett Neilson and Ned Rossiter for their comments on the earlier paper.

A New International Division of Cultural Labour?

In numerous publications since the early 1990s, the US-based academic Toby Miller, sometimes with collaborators, has developed the idea of a new international division of cultural labour, which he abbreviates to NICL. This concept is adapted from the Marxian idea of a New International Division of Labour (or NIDL).[3] This purported to analyse the emergence of a new capitalist world economy, involving massive movements of capital from developed countries to low-cost production sites in developing countries, exploiting a huge global reserve of labour. Such mobility of capital clearly had implications not only for the power of labour, but also for the capacity of national democratic governments to act in the interests of its populations. Controversies over the idea of the NIDL rest on the degree to which such movements of capital really represent a new feature of contemporary capitalism. But how does this idea get translated into the cultural domain? In the latest version of the NICL idea, which appears in the book *Global Hollywood 2*, there seem to be four main manifestations of the phenomenon: the purchase of, or partnership with, non-US firms by US corporations and financial institutions; the use of cheaper sites overseas for animation; the harmonisation of copyright law and practice; and runaway production – the practice of shooting Hollywood films overseas.[4] Miller and his co-authors on the chapter on NICL (Wang and Govil) concentrate overwhelmingly on the latter, outlining the ways in which various national governments seek to attract such runaway productions (all the more so, under the creative industries policy that is now spreading through various countries). They do so not only for the local employment that location shooting provides, but also for the potential secondary effects of tourism. The implication is that state policies are failing to set up their own dynamic bourgeoisies, but instead remain 'locked in a dependent underdevelopment that is vulnerable to disinvestment'.[5] Miller, Wang and Govil recognise that responses from US-based cultural workers to the loss of income and benefits involved in such offshoring of audio-visual production can sometimes descend into a chauvinistic Yanqui cultural nationalism. But they argue that there is also some justification for the sentiments of US cultural workers: the threat to their livelihoods, the loss of local US culture (as legitimate a concern as the arguments made in support of national cinemas, say Miller et al., though this may be arguable) and the massive control of corporations over their destinies.

Miller, Wang and Govil's treatment helps expose ways in which policies aimed at boosting national creative industries can affect workers elsewhere. It shows how nationalism can feed exploitation, insecurity and casualisation. These seem to me to be important issues for any analyst concerned with questions of equality and social justice with regard to culture. And yet somehow the concept of the NICL does not seem to add much theoretical value to a consideration of cultural labour. What, for example, distinguishes the division of cultural labour from divisions of other types of labour? To what extent is this 'new' division of labour really new? And if it is really new enough to merit that epithet, what dynamics drove it? When and under what conditions did it emerge? The NICL seems to work more as a rhetorical device intended to draw attention to exploitation and injustice, rather than as a theoretical concept addressing complex dynamics and contradictions. While such rhetorical devices can be useful, for a theoretical understanding of cultural work adequate for grounding critique of creative industries policy, we will need to look elsewhere.

Autonomist Marxism and 'Precarity'

In recent years, an attractive option for many intellectuals seeking theoretically-informed critique of developments in contemporary capitalism has been autonomist Marxism, most famously the work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, in their books *Empire* and *Multitude*.[6] These books offer an ambitious and very sweeping account of economic, political and social change. This includes, in *Empire*, considerations of changes in work, including reflections on the concept of immaterial labour – 'labor that produces an immaterial good, such as a service, a cultural product, knowledge, or communication'[7] – drawing upon the earlier work of Maurizio Lazzarato. For some analysts, the concept of immaterial labour, directed as it is towards the production of culture, knowledge and communication, offers promising terrain for a critical analysis of forms of work associated with the cultural and creative industries.

For Hardt and Negri, the introduction of the computer has radically transformed work. Even where direct contact with computers is not involved, they say, the manipulation of symbols and information 'along the model of computer operation' is extremely widespread. Workers used to act like machines, now they increasingly think like computers. They modify their operations through use, and this continual interactivity characterises a wide range of contemporary production. The computer and communication revolution of production has transformed labouring practices in such a way that they all tend toward the model of information and communication technologies. This means a homogenisation of labouring processes. In this respect, Hardt and Negri are pessimistic about the 'informationalisation' of the economy. But they also discern another face of immaterial labour, involving the affective labour of human contact and interaction. Here they seem to have in mind caring and health work, heavily gendered, and much analysed by feminists. Such affective labour, they claim, produces social networks and communities, and cooperation is immanent to such labouring activity (and also, it seems, in a typical moment of incoherence, to other more computer-driven forms of immaterial labour). Because wealth creation takes place through such cooperative interactivity, 'immaterial labor thus seems to provide the potential for a kind of spontaneous and elementary communism'.[8]

It is this combination of rampantly optimistic Marxism, combined with a post-struc-

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3. For the best-known formulation of this idea, see Folker Fröbel, Jurgen Heinrichs and Otto Kreye, *The New International Division of Labour: Structural Unemployment in Industrialised Countries and Industrialisation in Developing Countries*, trans. Pete Burgess, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

4. Toby Miller, Nitin Govil, John McMurria, Richard Maxwell and Ting Wang, *Global Hollywood 2*, London: British Film Institute, 2005.

5. Miller, et al., *Global Hollywood 2*, p. 140.

6. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Empire, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire, New York: Penguin Press, 2004.

7. Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p. 290.

8. Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p. 294.

turalist concern with questions of subjectivity and affect, that has helped to make Hardt and Negri's work so popular amongst contemporary left intellectuals. On the basis of their work alone, the notion of immaterial labour could not be the foundation of any serious critique of the creative industries. But the autonomist Marxian tradition they have both drawn upon and radically popularised does have the advantage of drawing attention to some important ambivalences in the growth of creative or cultural labour encouraged (or demanded) by creative industries policy. Hardt and Negri's ambivalence seems too polarised, founded on an opposition between the potential for commonality in networked forms of communication, and the insecurity of workers undertaking immaterial labour. These ambivalences are explored tentatively, but with more regard for the specifics of policy institutions, in an article by Brett Neilson and Ned Rossiter on the concepts of precarity and precariousness. For Neilson and Rossiter, immaterial labour (and variants upon it) contain 'potentialities that spring from workers' own refusal of labour and sub-jective demands for flexibility – demands that in many ways precipitate capital's own accession to interminable restructuring and rescaling'.[9] The term they use for this state is precarity, 'an inelegant neologism coined by English speakers to translate the French *pre-carité*'. The term refers to many different forms of 'flexible exploitation', including illegal, seasonal, and temporary employment; homeworking, subcontracting and freelancing; so-called self-employment. But the sense of the term extends beyond work to encompass other aspects of life including housing, debt and social relations. Importantly, precarity is not a term used exclusively by academics, it has been used widely by social movements as the basis of events and campaigns directed against the insecurity and casualisation characteristic of modern forms of work – including the decline of welfare provision. Neil-son and Rossiter in effect accuse creative industries policy of neglecting and effacing both sides of this precarity. One side is the precarious and insecure conditions faced by most workers, and absent from government policy. The other is the complexity and promiscuity of actual networks of cultural production, reduced in 'mapping documents' to value-chains and clusters.

This and other work in the autonomist Marxist tradition (or perhaps more accurately, in dialogue with this tradition) have the very great benefit of engaging with, and indeed constituting a significant part of, networks of activism that have formed around resistance to some of the downsides of the conditions of modern labour, including creative labour.[10] Such activism, I believe, is important. From my perspective in this paper, though, the theoretical work on precarity associated with it tends to suffer from an insufficient clarity about the relations between 'creative' work, the creative industries and so on, on the one hand, and other forms of immaterial labour, and labour more generally, on the other. As I explained above, too many different kinds of work are being lumped together in the same category. And the problem is that ultimately this may well undermine the coherence of the critique being presented. Another related problem is that assertions are often made without much evidence to back them up, either of the quantitative kind that I referred to

at the beginning of this paper (Menger, Towse and so on) or more qualitative work (such as interviews with workers in different industries, participant observation and so on).[11] For example, assertions are often made about the nature of sociability and subjectivity amongst 'immaterial workers' under conditions of 'precarity', but there is little explanation of what forms these subjectivities take in everyday life, through actual instances, or through hearing the voices of a range of 'immaterial workers'. At times, it seems that we are simply meant to take it on trust that these workers' subjectivities are how they are purported to be.[12]

One response to these objections about insufficient clarity of definitions and lack of evi-dence might be that those involved in writing and activism about precarity are themselves immaterial workers, because they are themselves cultural producers. But in that respect, any intellectual is a cultural producer, and no-one would ever need to talk to anyone else involved in very different forms of cultural production or 'immaterial work' in order to make assertions about the subjectivities of cultural producers or immaterial workers as a whole. While I hope it is clear from the approach in this paper that I am not calling for a positivist approach to questions of creative labour, it would be good sometimes to read a little more substantive evidence.[13] This is not to denigrate any individuals involved in the production of this kind of work. Sometimes it is interesting to read speculative work. But there is a strong sense of certainty in much of the writing in this tradition. In such cases, a little more acknowledgement that a certain amount of speculation is taking place might be in order. Of course I am not saying either that writers and activists working in dialogue with this tradition of precarity activism and thinking are uninterested in statistical or qualitative evidence – it is just that it is hard to find much of this kind of evidence in the many publications and websites around this topic.

A Sociology of Creative Labour
It might be thought that sociologies of cultural production might fill this gap. The problem is that, while there have been many studies of individual industries, there have been very few sociologically-informed attempts to understand cultural production as a whole.[14] The most

9. Brett Neilson and Ned Rossiter, 'From Precarity to Precariousness and Back Again: Labour, Life and Unstable Networks', *Fibreculture Journal* 5 (2005), http://journal.fibreculture.org/issue5/neilson_rossiter.html.
10. For example, see the network described on the 'Precarity Map', http://www.precarity-map.net.

11. My colleague Sarah Baker and I are currently carrying out such work as part of a project on Crea-tive Work in the Cultural Industries, but we are still collecting and analysing the data, and it is too early to present it. Of course such detailed evidence need not be contemporary and interview/ ethnography-based in this way. For an excellent set of historical and contemporary case studies, focusing on the question of musical labour, see Matthew Wheelock Stahl, 'Reinventing Certain-ties: American Popular Music and Social Reproduction', PhD thesis, University of California, San Diego, 2006.
12. See, for example, Vassilis Tsianos and Dimitris Papadopoulos, 'Precarity: A Savage Journey to the Heart of Embodied Capitalism', Immaterial Labour, Multitudes and New Social Subjects: Class Composition in Cognitive Capitalism, Cambridge UK, 29-30 April, 2006, http://www.geocities.com/immateriallabour/tsianospapadopaper2006.html.
13. Obviously there are many epistemological and methodological problems surrounding the produc-tion of such 'evidence'. That doesn't mean to say that we can give up on the idea that evidence is desirable.
14. For a survey, see David Hesmondhalgh, 'The Production of Media Entertainment', in James Curran and Michael Gurevitch (eds) *Mass Media and Society*, London: Hodder Arnold, 2005: pp. 153-172.

in-depth study of work in the cultural industries (as opposed to studies of working in a particular industry, such as television) is provided by Bill Ryan, in his book *Making Capital from Culture*.[15] Ryan bases his approach on Marxian and Weberian theory, but also on interviews and observations in a range of different cultural industries. The great advantage of Ryan's book vis-à-vis the two other strands of critique outlined above is that he pays really serious attention to the specificity of creative or cultural labour as opposed to other kinds of work.

Ryan's perspective here is strongly influenced by the cultural industries version of political economy,[16] but he uses a Weberian framework to analyse organisational dynamics in far greater detail than most other writers in this tradition.[17] A Marxian influence is apparent, however, in the way that Ryan bases his account on a historical understanding of the relations between artistic creativity and capital. For Ryan, capital cannot make the artist completely subservient to the drive for accumulation. Because art is centred on the expressive individual artist, artistic objects 'must' appear as the product of recognisable persons; the concrete and named labour of the artist is paramount and must be preserved. Artists appear to capital as the antithesis of labour power, antagonistic to incorporation as abstract labour (which, in Ryan's Marxian framing, is the capitalists' prime concern because this determines exchange-value). Capitalists lengthen the working day or intensify the work process to achieve a relative increase in the unpaid component of abstract value (surplus value). Abstract and concrete labour are, therefore, in contradiction. Technology generalises the concrete labour in the work process in many industries, but not in cultural industries. For Ryan, therefore, the artist, as historically and ideologically constituted, 'represents a special case of concrete labour which is ultimately irreducible to abstract value'.[18] Art must always appear as unique, and so 'artistic workers... cannot be made to appear in the labour process as generalised, undifferentiated artists'.[19] More than that, artistic labour demands an even more identifiable specificity. They must be engaged as 'named, concrete labour'.

For Ryan, the consequence of this contradiction is a certain relative autonomy for creative workers, with stars getting considerable freedom. In his view, this also helps fuel the irrationality, or at least the a-rationality, of the creative process. For capitalists, artists represent an investment in variable capital in a way that consistently threatens to undermine profitability. This also leads, according to Ryan, to contradictions in the cultural commodity itself, whereby 'commoditisation of cultural objects erodes the qualities and properties which constitute them as cultural objects, as use-values, in the first place', because it undermines the quest for originality and novelty that gives the art product its aura of uniqueness. For Ryan, capital's response is to *rationalise* cultural production, both at the creative stage and the circulation stage. Indeed, most of his book is framed as an examination of the extent to which capital has succeeded in achieving such rationalisation. This is achieved at the creative stage through 'formatting', and at the circulation stage through the institutionalisation of marketing within corporate production, in order to produce a more

controllable sequence of stars and styles.

Ryan's account of methods of rationalisation provides a helpful way to explain certain recurring strategies of capitalists in the cultural sector, and he offers an impressive examination of these strategies across different industries. However, I want to be clear that I am not offering Ryan's work, or 'sociology of cultural production' as a whole, as answering all the problems that are raised by the issue of contemporary creative labour. Ryan's strong emphasis on rationalisation as a response by capitalists to the irrationality produced by the art/capital contradiction leads to some limitations in his approach. Relatively autonomous work, generated by the art-capital contradiction, is implicitly portrayed as a progressive force, and rationalisation is seen as something imposed by capitalists upon this freedom. But what if creative autonomy is itself a significant mechanism of power within certain forms of work – including much creative work in the cultural industries? This would have significant implications for considering the way creative industries policy seems to offer a certain freedom and self-realisation for workers, but in fact offers this freedom under certain power-laden conditions. And it is a question raised not only by the cultural industries, but by developments in a wide range of work in contemporary capitalism. While relentless, physically exhausting and highly routinised work remains a feature of a great deal of work, an important and growing stratum of jobs purports to offer what Andrew Ross has called a 'humane workplace' and self-realisation through more autonomous forms of labour.[20] Writing about work in the IT sector (a form of work which is often unhelpfully blurred with artistic labour in the notion of the creative industries),[21] Ross claims that, in the eyes of a new generation of business analysts in the 1980s, Silicon Valley 'appeared to promote a humane workplace not as a grudging concession to demoralised employees but as a valued asset to production'.[22] Angela McRobbie has addressed these dynamics specifically with regard to the British Labour Party's dual endorsement both of the creative industries and of *hard work* as the basis of social well-being.[23] Drawing upon her own work on young fashion designers, and on other empirical studies, McRobbie notes (in a Foucauldian vein) the way in which notions of passion for, and pleasure in, work serve as disciplinary devices, enabling very high levels of (self-) exploitation. She also notes the extremely low levels of union organisation in most cultural industries.

Concluding Comments

Ross and McRobbie's work represent important openings, because they join theoretical sophistication with empirical sociological analysis of the specific discourses of creativity and self-realisation in particular industries. There is room, in my view, to combine their approaches with historical analysis of changing discourses of creative labour and with the sensitivity

15. Bill Ryan, Making Capital from Culture, Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1992.
16. David Hesmondhalgh, *The Cultural Industries*; Hesmondhalgh, 'Cultural and Creative Industries'.
17. See Nicholas Garnham, *Capitalism and Communication*, London: Sage, 1990; Bernard Miège, *The Capitalization of Cultural Production*, New York: International General, 1989.
18. Ryan, *Making Capital from Culture*, p. 44.
19. Ryan, *Making Capital from Culture*, p. 44.

20. Andrew Ross, *No-Collar: the Humane Workplace and Its Hidden Costs*, New York: Basic Books, 2002.
21. Hesmondhalgh, 'Cultural and Creative Industries'.
22. Ross, *No-Collar*, p. 9.
23. Angela McRobbie, 'From Holloway to Hollywood: Happiness at Work in the New Cultural Economy?', in Paul du Gay and Michael Pryke (eds) *Cultural Economy*, London: Sage, 2002, pp. 97-114.

of the cultural industries approach to the specific conditions of cultural capitalism.[24] Such a synthesis would allow for a critique of arguments for the expansion of creative industries, at the local, national and international levels. I believe it would also serve to complement the interest in precarity amongst many intellectuals, and to temper some of the sweeping statements about the collectivism involved in immaterial labour in these traditions. Again, this is not to say in some simple and boring way that something called 'sociology' is superior to Hardt and Negri or Miller's NICL approach. This would be an absurd claim indeed. Rather, my concern is to show that certain forms of empirical engagement can help qualify – and thereby ultimately strengthen – arguments concerning the nature of creative labour in the cultural industries in modern societies.

This is not the only possible route of critique of creativity and the creative industries. It might be allied, for example, to criticisms of prevailing notions of intellectual property at work in the cultural industries (and there has been no space here to explore such potential links). A coherent and evidence-informed critique of cultural work under contemporary capitalism might help to prevent the danger in recent policy developments that the original visions of reform that motivated the cultural industries idea might be permanently distorted and even inverted. While creative industries policy and theory shares with cultural industries versions an emphasis on the specific dynamics of making profit from the production and dissemination of primarily symbolic goods, it tends to work with loose and sometimes dubiously broad definitions of 'creativity'. I have argued elsewhere that policy and theory using the term 'creative industries' tends to be based on arguments which all too often come close to endorsing inequality and exploitation associated with contemporary neoliberalisms.[25] It is important that critiques do not also suffer from the same vagueness and mystification of definition that is involved in ideological notions such as the creative industries, the knowledge economy and the information society.

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24. Stahl, 'Reinventing Certainties'; Ryan, *Making Capital from Culture*.
25. Hesmondhalgh, *Cultural Industries*; Hesmondhalgh, 'Cultural and Creative Industries'.

ICW – IMMATERIAL CIVIL WAR
PROTOTYPES OF CONFLICT WITH-IN COGNITIVE CAPITALISM

MATTEO PASQUINELLI

We are implicit, here, all of us, in a vast physical construct of artificially linked nervous systems. Invisible. We cannot touch it.
William Gibson, 'In the Visegrips of Dr. Satan', 2002.

Conflict is not a commodity. On the contrary, commodity is above all conflict.
guerrigliamarketing.it

A Revival of the Creative Industries

In early 2006, the term creative industries (CI) pops up in the mailboxes and mailing lists of many cultural workers, artists, activists and researchers across Europe, as well as in the calls for seminars and events. An old question spins back: curiously, for the first time, a term is picked up from institutional jargon and brought unchanged into alt culture, and used so far to debate other keywords (that may deserve an acronym as well!) and other post-structures like network culture (NC), knowledge economy (KE), immaterial labour (IL), general intellect (GI) and of course Free Software (FS), Creative Commons (CC), etc. The original 1998 definition adopted by the Creative Industries Task Force set up by Tony Blair stated: 'Those industries that have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property'.[1] As you can see, social creativity remains largely left out of that definition: after many years Tony Blair is still stealing your ideas. Let's try to do another back-story.

First, there is a European genealogy. Adorno and Horkheimer in 1944 shaped the concept of 'cultural industry' as a form of 'mass deception' in their *Dialectic* of *Enlightenment*.[2] In the early 90s the Italian post-Operaism (in exile or not) introduced the concepts of immaterial labour, general intellect, cognitive capitalism, cognitariat as the emerging forms of the autonomous power of the multitudes (authors like Negri, Lazzarato, Virno, Marazzi, Berardi).[3] In the same period, Pierre Lévy was talking of collective intelligence. Later, since

1. Creative Industry Task Force: Mapping Document, DCMS (Department of Culture, Media and Sport), London (1998/2001),
   http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Publications/archive_2001/ci_mapping_doc_2001.
2. Theodor Adorno and Max Hockheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002.
3. See Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt (eds) *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

2001, the transnational mobilisation of the Euro May Day has linked precarious workers and cognitive workers under the holy protection of San Precario. Second, there is an Anglo-American genealogy. During the golden age of net culture, the debate around ICT and new economy was often linked to the knowledge economy (conceptualised by Peter Drucker in the 60s). In 2001, the copyleft debate escaped the boundaries of FS and established the Creative Commons licenses. In 2002, the best seller *The Rise of the Creative Class* by Richard Florida (based on controversial statistical evidence) pushed trendy concepts like the creative economy.[4]

After years of fetishising precarious labour and the abstract gift economy, a Copernican turn is taking place (hopefully): attention has shifted to autonomous labour and autonomous production. A new consciousness is emerging around the creation of meaning understood as the creation of value and – consequently – the creation of conflict. At stake is the political re-engagement of a generation of creative workers (before getting mixed up with chain workers) and, at the same time, the 'economic' engagement of a generation of activists (as the Seattle movement was more concerned about global issues than their own income). *My creativity = my value = my conflict.* And vice-versa.

The Majority of the Value (and of the Conflict)
In this essay, I try to frame a missing part of the debate around 'creative' labour. First, I point out the collective dimension of value creation: it is an investigation of the social processes behind creativity, the creative power of collective desire and the political nature of any cognitive product (idea, brand, media, artefact, event). Question: what or who produces the value? Answer: the 'social factory' produces the greatest portion of the value (and of the conflict). Second, I spotlight the political space of cognitive competition. I do not focus on labour conditions or neoliberal policies within creative industries, but on the public life of immaterial objects. I put cognitive products in a space of forces, framing such objects from outside rather than inside. I am trying to answer another question: if production becomes creative and cognitive, collective and social, what are the spaces and the forms of conflict? As a conclusion, I introduce the scenario of an 'immaterial civil war' (ICW), a semiotic space that creative industries are only a small part of.

So far it seems a linear scenario, but there is also a grey zone to take in to consideration: the massification of the 'creative' attitude. 'Everyone is a creative' is a common slogan today. Many years after Benjamin's artwork essay, the mass artist enters the age of social reproducibility and 'creativity' is sold as being a status symbol. The social base of creative industries is getting bigger (at least in the Western world) and unveils new scenarios. In the first period, creative industries become hegemonic (as a fact and as an concept). In the second period, the creative industries face the entropy of meaning and producers. Thanks to the Internet and the digital revolution, we witness the conflicts of the latter stage every day.

Each of the different schools previously introduced focus on a different perspective. To clarify the subject we have to explore the question in its components. The 'creative thing'

could be dismantled as: creative labour (as autonomous or dependent work), creativity as faculty and production, the creative product (with all its layers: hardware, software, knowledge, brand, etc.), the free reproducibility of the cognitive object, the intellectual property of the product itself, the social creativity behind it, the process of collective valorisation around it. Moreover, the social group of creative workers (the 'creative class' or 'cognitariat'), the 'creative economy' and the 'creative city' represent further and broader contexts.

The original definition of creative industries focused on the exploitation of intellectual property. Richard Florida's concepts of creative class and creative economy are based on (controversial) statistics only, and on the idea of a political agenda for creative industries fuelled by local governments. On another level, Creative Commons is about open licenses, and operates as a formal solution to handle the free reproduction and sharing triggered by the digital revolution on a mass scale ('building a layer of reasonable copyright', as CC advocates put it). Coming from a different perspective, the post-Operaism and the precarious workers' movement identify the social and distributed form of contemporary production (Tronti's 'social factory') and ask for a guaranteed minimum income. Geographically close to these movements, Enzo Rullani (initiator of the term 'cognitive capitalism') suggests we focus on the autonomous power of producers, rather than on the dimension of dependent labour, as public welfare is a solution that transfers knowledge, risk and innovation capital to institutions.[5] Such a disambiguation of political views around creative industries is required in order to clarify what the present essay is *not* covering. I will not focus on the labour conditions of (precarious) cognitive workers, nor the exploitation of intellectual property and the legal protection of the public domain, but on the collective production of value and the strong competition cognitive producers face in the 'immaterial' domain.

Lazzarato Reading Tarde: the Public Dimension of Value
Contemporary criticism does not have a clear perspective of the public life of cognitive products: it is largely dominated by metaphors stolen from Creative Commons and Free Libre and Open Source Software, which support quite a flat vision without any notion of value and valorisation. For this reason, following Maurizio Lazzarato and Gabriel Tarde, I want to introduce a more dynamic scenario that is capable of explaining how value is produced by an accumulation of social desire and collective imitation. Lazzarato has re-introduced the thought of the French sociologist Tarde in his book *Puissances de l'invention* ('Powers of Invention') and in the article 'La psychologie économique contre l'economie politique'.[6]

To briefly summarise his argument in a few lines, Tarde's philosophy challenges the contemporary political economy because it: 1) dissolves the opposition of material and immaterial labour by considering 'cooperation between brains', a main force in the traditional pre-capitalist societies not only in post-Fordism; 2) puts innovation as the driving force of capitalism instead of just monetary accumulation (Smith, Marx and Schumpeter did not

4.   Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*, New York: Basic Books, 2002.

5.   Enzo Rullani, Economia della conoscenza. *Creatività e valore nel capitalismo delle reti*, Rome: Carocci Editore, 2004.
6.   Maurizio Lazzarato, *Puissances de l'Invention: La Psychologie économique de Gabriel Tarde contre l'Économie politique*, Paris: Les Empêcheurs de penser en rond, 2002; Maurizio Lazzarato, 'La Psychologie économique contre l'Économie politique', *Multitudes* 7 (2001), http://multitudes.samizdat.net/La-Psychologie-economique-contre-l.html.

really understand innovation as an internal force of capitalism, a vision more concerned about *re-production* rather than *production*); 3) develops a new theory of value no longer based solely on use-value, but also on other kinds of value, like truth-value and beauty-value (Lazzarato: '*Economic psychology* is a theory of the creation and constitution of values, whereas political economy and Marxism are theories to measure values').[7]

Tarde's crucial insight for the present work is about the relation between science and public opinion. As Lazzarato put it: 'According to Tarde, an invention (of science or not) that is not imitated is not socially existent: to be imitated, an invention needs to draw attention, to produce a force of "mental attraction" on other brains, to mobilise their desires and beliefs through a process of social communication... Tarde figures out an issue crossing all his work: the constituent power of the public'.[8] We could say: any creative idea that is not imitated is not socially existent and has no value. In Tarde, the public is the 'social group of the future', integrating the mass media for the first time as an apparatus of valorisation in a sort of anticipation of post-Fordism. Moreover, Tarde considers the working class itself as a kind of 'public opinion' that is unified on the base of common beliefs and affects rather than common interests.

The Tarde-Lazzarato connection introduces a dynamic competitive model where immaterial objects have to face the laws of the *noosphere* – innovation and imitation – in a kind of Darwinistic environment. Tarde is also famous for introducing the S-shaped curve to describe the dissemination of innovation, another good suggestion for all the digital planners that believe in smooth space. However, the process of dissemination is never as linear and peaceful as a mathematical graph might suggest. On the collective scale, a cognitive product always 'fights' against other products to attain a natural leadership. The destiny of an idea is always hegemonic, even in the 'cooperation between brains' and the digital domain of free multiplication. The natural environment of ideas is similar to the state of nature in Hobbes: the motto *Homo homini lupus* ('the man is a wolf to man') could be applied to media, brands, signs and any other kind of 'semiotic machine' of the knowledge economy. It is an immaterial, but often not silent, 'war of all ideas against all ideas'. If Lazzarato and Tarde track back the collective creation of value, such a competitive nature becomes more transparent in the work of Enzo Rullani.

Enzo Rullani and the 'Law of Diffusion'
Rullani was among the first to introduce the term *cognitive capitalism*. Unlike most, he does not point out the process of knowledge sharing, but above all the process of cognitive valorisation. He is quite clear about the fact that competition still exists (and is perhaps even stronger) in the realm of 'immaterial' economy. Rullani is one of the few people that try to measure how much value knowledge produces and as a seasoned economist he also provides mathematical formulas, as seen in his book *Economia della conoscenza* ('Economy of Knowledge'). Rullani states that the value of knowledge is multiplied by its diffusion, and that you have to learn how to manage this kind of circulation. As Rullani puts it, in an interview with Antonella Corsani published in *Multitudes* from 2000:

An economy based on knowledge is structurally anchored to sharing: knowledge produces value *if it is adopted*, and the adoption (in that format and the consequent standards) makes *interdependency*.[9]

The value of immaterial objects is produced by dissemination and interdependency: there is the same process behind the popularity of a pop star and behind the success of a software program. The digital revolution made the reproduction of immaterial objects easier, faster, ubiquitous and almost free. However, as Rullani points out, 'proprietary logic does not disappear but has to *subordinate itself to the law of diffusion*'.[10] In other words, proprietary logic is no longer based on space and objects, but on time and speed:

There are three ways that a producer of knowledge can distribute its uses, still keeping a part of the advantage under the form of: 1) a speed differential in the production of new knowledge or in the exploitation of its uses; 2) a control of the context stronger than others; 3) a network of alliances and cooperation capable of contracting and controlling modalities of usage of knowledge within the whole circuit of sharing.[11]

A speed differential means: 'I got this idea and I can handle it better than others: while they are still becoming familiar with it, I develop it further'. A better understanding of the context is something not easy to duplicate: it is about the genealogy of the idea, the cultural and social history of a place, the confidential information accumulated in years. The network of alliances is sometimes called 'social capital' and is implemented as 'social networks' on the web: it is about your contacts, your PR, your street and web credibility.

Here, it is clear that a given idea produces value in a dynamic environment challenged by other forces and products. Any idea lives in a jungle – in a constant state of guerrilla warfare – and cognitive workers often follow the destiny of their brainchildren. In the capitalism of digital networks, time is an increasingly crucial dimension: a temporal advantage is measured in seconds. Moreover, in the society of white noise, the rarest commodity is attention. An economy of scarcity still exists within cognitive capitalism as a scarcity of attention, as an *attention economy*. When everything can be duplicated everywhere, time becomes more important than space.

An example of competitive advantage in the digital domain is the *Wired* CD included with the November 2004 issue under the Creative Commons license. Music tracks were donated for free copying, sharing and sampling by the Beastie Boys, David Byrne, Gilberto Gil and others.[12] The neoliberal agenda of *Wired* magazine provides clear coordinates for understanding that operation. Indeed, there are more examples of musicians and creative workers that associate their activity with copyleft, Creative Commons or filesharing on peer-to-peer (P2P) networks, but we only hear about the frontrunners; it's no longer a novelty for

7.   Lazzarato, 'La Psychologie économique contre l'Économie politique'. (My translation.)
8.   Lazzarato, 'La Psychologie économique contre l'Économie politique'.

9.   Antonella Corsani and Enzo Rullani, 'Production de connaissance et valeur dans le postfordisme',
     Multitudes 2 (2000), http://multitudes.samizdat.net/Production-de-connaissance-et.html.
     (My translation.)
10. Corsani and Rullani, 'Production de connaissance et valeur dans le postfordisme'.
11. Corsani and Rullani, 'Production de connaissance et valeur dans le postfordisme'.
12. See http://www.creativecommons.org/wired.

those who came second. Anyway, there never is a total adherence to the Creative Commons crusade, it is always a hybrid strategy: I release part of my work as open and free to gain visibility and credibility, but not the whole work. Another strategy is that you can copy and distribute all this content, but not now, only in four months. And there are also people complaining about Creative Commons and FS being hijacked by corporations and majors – the point is that the world is full of bad music that is free to copy and distribute. No scandal, we have always suspected it was a race.

Rullani shows how competition is still present in the knowledge economy, even in the parallel enclave of digital commons. Competition is a field radical thought never attempted to enter because it was not politically correct and any political solution is controversial. It is impossible to reconstruct any unified political subject (as in the age of proletariat) starting from such a balkanised scenario of 'social factories' and molecular biopolitical production. However, if individual surplus value is difficult to measure and reclaim, the collective accumulation is still something visible and tangible.

David Harvey and Collective Symbolic Capital
If Tarde, Lazzarato and Rullani are useful for framing the competitive habitat of ideas (dissemination, imitation, competition, hegemony), David Harvey's essay 'The Art of Rent: Globalization and the Commodification of Culture' introduces a clearer description of the political dimension of symbolic production.[13] In this work, Harvey manages to link intangible production and real money not through intellectual property but by tracking the *parasitic* exploitation of the immaterial domain by the material one.

The key example is Barcelona, where there is a clear connection between the economics of real estate and the production of culture as social capital. The success of the city as an international brand has been created by its cultural and social roots and is continuously fuelled today by a cosmopolitan alternative culture: in fact, that collective product is exploited first and foremost by real estate speculators. These bottom-up kinds of gentrification processes are well known: outsiders attract artists that attract gentry; or, on the contrary, top-down: open-minded and futuristic art institutions built in a ghetto raise rents and force people to move (such as the Museu d-Art Contemporani de Barcelona in the Raval). However, Harvey contextualises these dynamics as part of a much more general process.

Harvey applies the concept of monopoly rent to culture: 'All rent is based on the monopoly power of private owners of certain portions of the globe'.[14] There are two kinds of rent: you can exploit the unique quality of a wine or you can visit the vineyard producing that extraordinary wine. You can construct a hotel in a very charming city, or sell the land on which to build hotels. Capitalism is always looking for marks of distinction. According to Harvey, contemporary culture produces distinctions that capitalism exploits by selling material goods. On a city scale, real estate business is the biggest business triggered by the knowledge economy. Any immaterial space has its material parasites: just think of filesharing and iPods.

If the degree of dissemination makes the value of a cognitive product, as Rullani points out, Harvey places a limit on that valorisation. Dissemination that goes too far can dissolve the marks of distinction into a mass product. There is an entropic endpoint for an idea after its hegemonic period. Harvey highlights the first contradiction, the entropy of the marks of distinction:

> The contradiction here is that the more easily marketable such items become the less unique and special they appear. In some instances the marketing itself tends to destroy the unique qualities (particularly if these depend on qualities such as wilderness, remoteness, the purity of some aesthetic experience, and the like). More generally, to the degree that such items or events are easily marketable (and subject to replication by forgeries, fakes, imitations or simulacra) the less they provide a basis for monopoly rent... therefore, some way has to be found to keep some commodities or places unique and particular enough... to maintain a monopolistic edge in an otherwise commodified and often fiercely competitive economy.[15]

A second contradiction connected to the first is the tendency towards monopoly: if the value inflates, the only way to preserve the rent is to set up monopolies and avoid competition. For example, the digital network revolution has attacked traditional monopoly rents (those accustomed to quite stable 'territories') and forced them to reinvent their strategies. The common reaction was to reclaim a stronger regime of intellectual property. On another level, capital was forced to find new material and immaterial territories to exploit. Harvey notices that capitalism rediscovers local cultures to preserve monopolies: the collective and immaterial sphere of culture is a crucial dimension to maintain marks of distinction in a post-Fordist economy.

> They have particular relevance to understanding how local cultural developments and traditions get absorbed within the calculi of political economy through attempts to garner monopoly rents. It also poses the question of how much the current interest in local cultural innovation and the resurrection and invention of local traditions attaches to the desire to extract and appropriate such rents.[16]

The cultural layer of Barcelona and its unique local characteristics are a key component in the marketing of any urban-based product, particularly in the case of real estate. But the third and most important contradiction discovered by Harvey is that global capital actually feeds local resistance to promote a mark of distinction:

> Since capitalists of all sorts (including the most exuberant of international financiers) are easily seduced by the lucrative prospects of monopoly powers, we immediately discern a third contradiction: that the most avid globalisers will support local developments that have the potential to yield monopoly rents even if the effect of such support is to produce a local political climate antagonistic to globalisation![17]

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13. David Harvey, 'The Art of Rent: Globalization and the Commodification of Culture',
    in Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography,
    New York: Routledge, 2001, pp. 394-411.
14. Harvey, 'The Art of Rent', p. 395.

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15. Harvey, 'The Art of Rent', pp. 396-397.
16. Harvey, 'The Art of Rent', p. 402.
17. Harvey, 'The Art of Rent', p. 402.

Of course, given that the example is Barcelona, such a social-democratic model of business will not be easily applicable to other contexts. At this point, Harvey introduces the concept of collective symbolic capital (taken from Pierre Bourdieu) to explain how culture is exploited by capitalism. The layer of cultural production attached to a specific territory produces a fertile habitat for monopoly rents.

> If claims to uniqueness, authenticity, particularity and speciality underlie the ability to capture monopoly rents, then on what better terrain is it possible to make such claims than in the field of historically constituted cultural artefacts and practices and special environmental characteristics (including, of course, the built, social and cultural environments)?... The most obvious example is contemporary tourism, but I think it would be a mistake to let the matter rest there. For what is at stake here is the power of collective symbolic capital, of special marks of distinction that attach to some place, which have a significant drawing power upon the flows of capital more generally.[18]

The collective symbolic capital of Barcelona is shaped more clearly now. The brand of Barcelona is a 'consensual hallucination' produced by many but exploited by few. The condition of the creative workers (and of the whole society) is a vicious circle: they produce symbolic value for the real estate economy that perpetually squeezes them (as they suffer the housing prices of Barcelona). Furthermore, Harvey helps to understand Florida more acutely: the so-called 'creative class' is nothing but a simulacrum of collective symbolic capital to raise the marks of distinction of a given city. The 'creative class' is the collective symbolic capital transformed into an anthropomorphic brand and a monopoly rent applied to distinctive parts of the society ('creative class'), of the territory ('creative city'), of the city itself ('creative district'). The 'creative class' is a parasitic simulacrum of social creativity detached from the precariat and attached to the elite class.

> The rise of Barcelona to prominence within the European system of cities has in part been based on its steady amassing of symbolic capital and its accumulating marks of distinction. In this the excavation of a distinctively Catalan history and tradition, the marketing of its strong artistic accomplishments and architectural heritage (Gaudi of course) and its distinctive marks of lifestyle and literary traditions, have loomed large, backed by a deluge of books, exhibitions, and cultural events that celebrate distinctiveness... This contradiction is marked by questions and resistance. Whose collective memory is to be celebrated here (the anarchists like the Icarians who played such an important role in Barcelona's history, the republicans who fought so fiercely against Franco, the Catalan nationalists, immigrants from Andalusia, or a long-time Franco ally like Samaranch)?[19]

Harvey tries to sketch out a political response, questioning which parts of society are exploiting symbolic capital and which kinds of collective memory and imaginary are at stake. Sym-

bolic capital is not unitary but a multiple space of forces, and can be continuously negotiated by the multitude that produced it.

> It is a matter of determining which segments of the population are to benefit most from the collective symbolic capital to which everyone has, in their own distinctive ways, contributed both now and in the past. Why let the monopoly rent attached to that symbolic capital be captured only by the multinationals or by a small powerful segment of the local bourgeoisie?... The struggle to accumulate marks of distinction and collective symbolic capital in a highly competitive world is on. But this entrains in its wake all of the localised questions about whose collective memory, whose aesthetics, and who benefits... The question then arises as to how these cultural interventions can themselves become a potent weapon of class struggle.[20]

The crucial question is: how to develop a symbolic capital of resistance that can not be exploited as another mark of distinction? As Harvey points out, this kind of vicious circle works even more effectively in the case of local resistance. Global capitalism needs anti-global resistance to improve the monopoly rent. Especially in the case of creative workers, resistance is always well-educated and well-designed: and in the case of Barcelona, it produces a titillating but never dangerous environment for the global middle-class. Inspired by this history of Barcelona, we introduce an immaterial civil war into the space of symbolic capital.

ICW – Immaterial Civil War
We suggest the term 'civil war' as conflicts within cognitive capitalism have no clear class composition and share the same media space. Moreover, if it is true that 'there is no more outside' (as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri state in *Empire*) and that 'there are no longer social classes, but just a single planetary petty bourgeoisie, in which all the old social classes are dissolved' (as Giorgio Agamben puts it in *The Coming Community*), conflicts can only take the form of an internal struggle.[21] The multitude has always been turbulent and fragmented. If Florida dreams of a 'creative class struggle' (where fashion victims are the first casualties, we guess), we push for a civil war *within* that comfortable 'class' (and within a comfortable notion of multitude). Moreover 'civil war' ties into the glorious resistance of Barcelona (a political background that interestingly fuels its current social capital) and is also a reminder of the internal fights of any avant-garde group (when anarchists and communists began to shoot at each other).

On the other hand, 'immaterial' is the constant struggle on the stage of the society of the spectacle: a cruel Ballardian jungle of brands, pop stars, gadgets, devices, data, protocols, simulacra. Immaterial exploitation is the everyday life of precarious workers, in particular of the younger generations, quite aware of the symbolic capital produced by their lives 'put to work' (new trends and lifestyles generated by what post-Operaism calls biopolitical production). The immaterial civil war is the explosion of the social relations enclosed

18. Harvey, 'The Art of Rent', p. 404-405.
19. Harvey, 'The Art of Rent', p. 405-406.

20. Harvey, 'The Art of Rent', p. 407.
21. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000, p. 186; Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, trans. Michael Hardt, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993, p. 65.

in the commodities. In his book *Les révolutions du capitalisme,* Lazzarato states that 'capitalism is not a mode of production, but a production of modes and worlds' (engineered by corporations and sold to the people) and that the 'planetary economic war' is an 'aesthetic war' between different worlds.[22]

Finally, immaterial civil war refers to all the usual conflicts between cognitive workers despite all the rhetoric of knowledge sharing and digital commons. It is present in the joke 'a friend of mine stole my idea for a book on Creative Commons'. It emerges through the well-known rivalries within academia and the art world, the economy of references, the deadline race, the competition for festivals, the envy and suspicion among activists. Cooperation is structurally difficult among creative workers, where a prestige economy operates the same way as in any star system (not to mention political philosophers!), and where new ideas have to confront each other, often involving their creators in a fight. As Rullani points out, there is almost more competition in the realm of the knowledge economy, where reproducibility is free and what matters is speed.

Facing the Parasite

The parasite is the parallel exploitation of social creativity. There are indeed modes of exploitation of creative work that are not based on intellectual property and produce more value and conflict. As we have seen, Harvey introduces the framework of 'collective symbolic capital' and suggests that 'cultural interventions can themselves become a potent weapon of class struggle'. Political activism in the cultural sector, creative industries and new economy have always remained within these fictional enclosures, making local protests and demanding more cultural welfare or stable contracts. Recently, a more radical demand to counter the exploitation of social creativity has invoked the notion of a basic income for all.[23] Conversely, Rullani notes that such a welfare system transfers both innovation and risk to the state apparatus reinforcing it. However, what Harvey suggests is to take action not only on the level of collective symbolic capital, but also on the level of the parasite exploiting the cultural domain. A difficult point for the radical thought to grasp is that all the immaterial (and gift) economies have a material, parallel counterpart where the big money is exchanged. Obvious examples include the combinatory relationship between MP3 files and iPods, P2P and ADSL, free music and live concerts, Barcelona lifestyle and real estate speculation, the art world and gentrification, global brands and sweatshops.

A form of resistance suggested by Harvey in the case of Barcelona is an assault on the myth of the 'creative city' rather than wanna-be-radical reactions that can only contribute to making it more exclusive. If the people want to reclaim the symbolic surplus-value vandalised by a few speculators, all we can imagine is a re-negotiation of the collective symbolic capital. Here comes the option of a grassroots re-branding campaign to undermine the accumulation of symbolic capital and alter the flows of money, tourists and new residents attracted by specific marks of distinction (Barcelona as a tolerant, alternative, open-minded city, etc.). Moreover, another field of action is to target the specific areas where the 'art of rent' plays a major role (in particular, districts like the Raval or Poblenou), where symbolic

accumulation could be reset by less than symbolic acts of sabotage. In the case of Barcelona, the 'parasite' to spotlight is real estate speculation, but we could apply that insight to a broader scale.

Recent forms of resistance have almost always been quite *representative* and media-oriented, dreaming of the rise of a new cognitariat or of a re-politicisation of the collective imagery and its producers, as epitomised during the golden 60s. Many activists and artists – like Harvey – are aware of the risk of overcoding of their messages and practices. In the end, many protest actions merely succeed in focusing the attention economy around their target. Traditional boycotts of big brands sometimes turn into free publicity for the enemy. What recent activism and critical thought have never attempted to explore is the material (and economic) dimension connected to the symbolic. Creative workers should start to recognise the surplus-value of imagery they produce beyond their immaterial objects and all the remote political repercussions of any sign. Leaving the symbolic, entering the economy of the symbolic. We are waiting for a generation of cognitive workers able to mobilise out of the imagery.

22. Maurizio Lazzarato, *Les révolutions du capitalisme*, Paris: Les Empêcheurs de penser en rond, 2004.
23. See http://www.euromayday.org.

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OUT-COOPERATING THE EMPIRE?

EXCHANGE BETWEEN **GEERT LOVINK** AND **CHRISTOPH SPEHR** ON CREATIVE LABOUR AND THE HYBRID WORK OF COOPERATION

This online dialogue grew out of the work that Trebor Scholz and Geert Lovink were doing on the documentation of the Free Cooperation project.[1] A book is scheduled to come out with Autonomedia late 2006 in which a key text on the art of (online) collaboration was written by German theorist Christoph Spehr. The following dialogue started as a series of comments by Christoph Spehr on the introduction to the Free Cooperation anthology that Geert Lovink and Trebor Scholz wrote in January 2006. An earlier online interview between Geert Lovink and Christoph Spehr took place in June 2003 and can be found in various archives on the Web. In this conversation we try to jump over our shadows and discuss precarious work, the gift economy concept and the relation between online and offline work. What does it mean to 'out-cooperate' the Empire in the sense of out-playing, out-performing the System? Is it aimed at creating 'surplus-virtuosity', drawing from a rich and diverse pool of lived experiences? Out-cooperating strategies should be read as the network equivalent of the outsourcing logic and relates back to questions of scalability, mass-adoption of 'social networking' practices amidst a looming crisis how to monetize cultural artifacts (and earn a decent income).

Cooperation & Individualization

GEERT LOVINK: I discussed with you whether to have the word 'online' in the title of our Free Cooperation book, but you didn't prefer that. Is it because the Internet hype is over? Why do you dislike writing texts on online collaboration? Or do you think the distinction between real and virtual should not be made?

CHRISTOPH SPEHR: I really think such a distinction leads us into the wrong direction. We all are tempted to produce texts that look smart because they put 'online' and 'cooperation' in the title. It's part of a wishful promise to scrutinize exciting, new, really sophisticated forms of interaction. But I doubt that there is such a thing as non-sophisticated social interaction. It's no accident that it's much easier to make a computer predict the course of a space vessel than to program a robot to bake pancakes. Space is very empty. The Internet is empty, compared to a kitchen. It's a point of view that we'd do 'basic stuff' at home in the kitchen with our kids, partners, organizing the day, etc., and do 'advanced stuff' out there in Internet communities or doing conferences – an idiom of would-be patriarchal-academic classism. Cooperation is *always* a complex thing.

GL: What do we mean by complexity? For me this word has often been misused by experts who are incapable or just too lazy to explain what a subject matter is all about and instead say: 'You have to understand, this is a complex matter.'

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1.   http://www.freecooperation.org.

CS: People using the term 'complexity' in that way have no idea about its meaning. All they want to say is 'Keep out – this is not your business.' But complexity is something completely different. A complex structure is one with a high density of information, a great range of reactions and options without being really random, something that cannot be brought down to a formula, cannot be exactly predicted. We are only just beginning to understand how complex structures work or are generated. Variety, feedback, interaction play a great role. We have come to see complex structures everywhere: life, nature, history, is like that. So while we think we would give orders, realize plans, understand processes, what we really do is a labour of managing complexity, with more or less satisfying results.

The point is, writing a program is usually much less complex than what happens in a kitchen – cooking, talking, raising children, forming ideas, reaffirming and changing social structures, doing the dishes. But when we try to build online networks and online communities, we should learn from 'real life' networks and communities. And maybe, 'real life' interaction may get inspired by how we do it in the Net, too. And both should show a different strategy of managing complexity than the dominant actors in bureaucracy, in the military, in politics do. *Their* main strategy remains one of reducing complexity by authoritarian means, bringing it into hierarchical order. But they, too, are learning, and learning fast.

GL: Now what was that about the Internet. Is it complex? Or, is cooperation on the Internet complex?

CS: It is the strength of the Internet that it has a structure of emergence: building rich structures out of very few and very simple rules. But when it comes to *cooperation* on the Net, rules become more complex, more real-life. Building online networks is a difficult thing. It cannot be brought down to a few simple rules, it has to be taught and learned by practice, and it often fails. On the other hand, we can learn from the Net about what rich structures we can build in real life if we operate with sets of very limited numbers of very simple rules, and let them develop, mutate, interact. In fact that seems to be the way how cooperation unfolds at all amongst very different, very distinct players. Very few, simple rules. That's the way how to speed up. Operating light, in terms of information weight.

What I find interesting in the context of the Net is the notion of individualization and its 'rise'. From a Marxist perspective it's quite clear that the potential for individualization is a result of the development of the forces of production. Stranded on an island, there's not much room for individualization. Individualistic strategies, ways of living, ideas, projects become possible because society has developed in such a way that life is not precarious, that a basic security is established, that we have a certain access to public wealth, strategic commons, to capital, information, communication and so on, and that direct social control weakens because the market allows us to change cooperations, to move, to leave, etc., because we are held together by the bounds of abstract cooperation. You can do enormous things in the net because someone has built it. Because someone is keeping it up. It's this stage of 'abstract cooperation' that makes individualization possible–and not only for very few individuals but as a mass phenomenon. Not only in the cultural sphere but as a productive force itself. From this point on, cooperation looks as if it is something special, voluntarily engaged, as if we were monads that come together to collaborate. While the truth is that we can only act in this monad-like way because we are embedded in very elaborated abstract cooperation, because we have so many resources and structures ready at hand.

This is very much what neo-liberalism is all about: Using the collective forces for very individualistic plans, but without paying them respect for this. The collective work thus precedes the possibility and experience of individualization, and in so doing the collective time becomes a forgotten work. And of course, the potentials of individualism are distributed unequally. Many people are forced to deliver the rawest forms of pure labour, without any control, creativity, social collaboration involved. While others can use the machine to collaborate, to individualize, to be creative. A revolutionary movement that leads us out of today's capitalism, however, must accept individualism as something to be freed, to be made available for everybody and all cooperations. Not something to be tossed aside again to 'go back' to Fordism and the world of the 60s. In my view, a future socialism will allow us all to use collective forces and cooperation for plans of our own. Some kind of individualistic collectivism, or "socialist individualism", as Magnus Marsdal from Norway puts it.[2]

GL: How do you see the relation between 'free cooperation' and work done inside institutions that is never entirely free of dirty deals and exploitation? What to think about institutions anyway? Ned Rossiter and I have been working on the concept of 'organized networks'. We see this as a way to 'invent' new institutional forms in the age of the Internet. Of course the 'institutional critique' of the nineties is still there, and remains valid, but has by and large been very moralistic and without consequences.

CS: We really have to re-think institutions. We're anti-institution in our attitude, of course. But there is some distinct flavour of neo-liberalism in this attitude. We tend to think that it's the institution that is black, and autonomy that is white, basically. But it's not that easy. There is a complicity with the system without institutions, and this involves implementing the system's forces and rules while feeling apparently absolutely on our own. Deleuze raised this issue in his famous 'Transcript on Control Society'. If we are acting free, and the outcome of this freedom is a high level of conformity, then there is something wrong with this freedom, then we are not really free, obviously.

During the seventies we reflected the structures of the Fordist times that were just about to end. 'You tell me it's the institution', the Beatles sang, and the movements and projects wanted to be autonomous. Neo-liberalism tore down the institutions as well–well, some of them, but not others–like the IWF and the World Bank. In other words, neo-liberalism *pretended* to be extremely anti-institutional, to support an autonomy against institutions. At the same time, integration and assimilation under power structures became organized more and more through markets, and so the new question became complicity, not autonomy in the old sense.

Looking into the future, there are two things that follow from this. First, we have to study the complicity between neo-liberalism and institutions, to destroy its aura of 'freedom for everybody' by re-telling the real story and its facts. Second, we have to think about new ways to imagine institutions (and markets, as well). To balance public, democratic control

2.   See Magnus Marsdal, 'Socialist Individualism',
     http://www.autodidactproject.org/other/marxind2.html.

and the potentials for individualism in a new way. That will be crucial if we want to get rid of what we have today. We have to be clear that a new attitude, that of living in a society that is ours, can not be obtained without institutions. This is something very important about cooperation, free cooperation. Social power lies not only in the fact that we are allowed to do this or that, or that we can do it, no matter what. Much more important is that social power lies in the fact that we can prevent others from doing this or that, and that we can make others do this or that. That's really power. In society, this power is gained by solidarity, but institutions are an operationalization of this solidarity. Institutions guarantee to *me* a certain access to our *collective* powers.

I think we have to re-think autonomy today as well. Autonomy is a form of separate organisation. But it is also a quality, a goal to be met, be it by common organisation, separate organisation or special tools and structures. The goal here is that the interests of a social group, e.g. women, or a special political concern, i.e. feminism, are not subdued by the overall logic of the organisation or the cooperation – that they are powerful enough to resist, to insist, to say No. Organisational autonomy contributes to that goal, but it is not enough – you also need integration, control, veto's, "mainstreaming", etc. In my view, we have to ask questions like, what may 'organized networks' contribute to autonomy, or, how can we construct institutions and organisations with open spaces, that allow for self-organisation and relative autonomy?

The Prospects of 'Giving Away'
GL: How do you look at the tension between giving away code, music, texts, for free, and the growing desperation of (young) people and how they make a living? For me there is a direct link, a strange dialectical relationship between McJobs and Linux. The more peer-to-peer networks there are, the less likely it will be for 'precarious' creative workers to get out of the amateurization trap. Instead of Lawrence Lessig, Joi Ito and other Creative Commons gurus we should argue in favour of professionalization. Not so much in order to defend existing professions and related IP-regimes, but as a way to invent new professions. My example here would be the VJ. It would be great if many more VJs could live from their work and be taken seriously – not just by the club culture but by society at large.

CS: We have two important notions. The first is that some people, some cooperations, some structures get out-cooperated by others in the course of things. This is a typical way economy develops – its Darwinian logic, if you like. And the dark side to the all-too-often friendly discourse of cooperation. 'Let's all do it together, but do it funkier than the rest'. Today it happens to the editors of the Encyclopedia Britannica who get out-cooperated by Wikipedia. They cannot compete. But it happens to millions of workers as well – in the harbours, in the ship industry, in the production of goods, in the proliferation of services. They lose their jobs, or they have to work for less income, with longer working days, harder conditions, less rights. Is this the same thing? Obviously, we have an idea of positive out-cooperating – this is when new forms of collaboration arise that are applied by the workers themselves, and old forms of hierarchy get ruled out in the same process. And we have a notion of negative out-cooperating – that is, when global power structures aim at the dis-empowerment of workers and local people, when hierarchy is re-inforced by the power of being global, of combining and re-combining global workforce, resources and markets without participation of workers

and people. Can we say which is which in any case? That would be important, even if it's not all simply black and white, of course.

The second notion is that exploitation happens not only inside the factory. That's the question: who exploits whom, who makes capital out of whose paid or unpaid work, is crucial in old and new capitalism? So, working for free does not guarantee anti-capitalism. That much should be clear. Nonetheless we have to take a very close look at this phenomenon as it operates within the networks of 'open cultures'. I wrote a paper on symbolic value and how it is produced in free software and network projects, how it is appropriated by some, and how it can even be exchanged into 'real' money in the end.[3] Symbolic value is the object of the 'style wars' in HipHop, the tremendous fights about Who Represents, sometimes a fight to death. HipHop is as very instructive example. It tossed aside the 'old school' of the left, setting up a 'new school' of 'Representation', of self-assertion. At the same time HipHop found itself sucked up by neo-liberalism. Successful HipHopers could avoid the pain of 'being low', but got the disparity of competition instead – fighting a war on representation almost without any content, except that of competition itself. 'What are you talking' about? I'm not talking about anything, I'm just dissin'.' HipHop really used the possibilities of 'racing' the system by using the cultural surplus of the imagined 'hood, of *individually* selling the cultural productivity of collectives in a post-modern world where there seems to be no us and them in the old, class-informed way.

We have to realize that 'free' projects can be more exclusive than 'non-free' structures in terms of gender, race, qualification, class. You need institutions to be inclusive. This sounds strange to us, but institutions are not only a matter of alienation. They are materializations of compromise, of conflict-borne rules on partizipation and mutual obligation. The alleged freedom of many structures means actually that there's just free competition where the priviledged prevail. As soon as you want gender equality in your network, as soon as you start to practice gender mainstreaming, as soon as you enable gender autonomy in the sense of working-groups and forums etc., you're building institutions. Because an institution means that you do not have to put up the same fight at every single occasion but establish a certain base of rule and compromise.

The notion of 'prolonged exploitation' is also a reminder to the first notion of out-cooperating. The Encyclopaedia editors are out-cooperated because the Wikipedia authors work for free. But this is partly an illusion, because the Wikipedia authors have to eat and dress and live in houses too. Only they get paid by other structures, outside the Wikipedia collaboration, not by the project itself. So we do not know, so far, which form of collaboration is more productive. The costs of Wikipedia are hidden, they are externalized. Whoever can externalize its costs, wins – that's a basic rule in capitalism, and that's why ecological movements always claim the internalization of costs. The reason Wikipedia is really more productive is because it does not have to spend work, money, etc. into means of forcing people to work, because editorial work is spread among all participants and not located in a fixed editors' class, because the roles of producer and consumer get blurred, because a strong responsibility of the worker for his or her work is established, etc.

3.   See Christoph Spehr, 'Trust No One – Some Remarks on the Political Economy of Virtual and Global Networking', http://www.all4all.org/2004/05/820.shtml.

GL: Is it productivity that counts? Ultimately a new system will win against the existing system, just because it's more productive?

CS: Yes, I think so. More productive, not more efficient. Usually, a new way of production, and a new society linked to it, is successful because it can accomplish something the old way of production (and the old social structures linked to it) could not. Machines, weapons, ideologies, structures of environmental control, intelligent machines, you name it. It is not successful because it is more cost-efficient. If something really new, really useful, really powerful can be accomplished, costs really don't matter. That's a very important historical lesson. So the question is: what is it about the new modes of production, as they emerge today, that enables them to accomplish things the old ones could not? It's not that Wikipedia authors work for free. That's not the point. But maybe it is Wikipedia indeed. And what's related to it. Maybe it's the astonishing productivity of free cooperation in such forms. That would be the new forces of production, and the new relations of production would be that of free basic income, personally free labour and shared means of production.

So what is it that new cooperations, like Wikipedia, can produce that older forms of cooperation could not? Wikipedia, using the tool of the wiki and the knowledge of online community building, creates a product that is completely up-to-date, that is mistake-free, error-free, while it works in extremely error-friendly ways at the same time. It is quite unbiased in terms of cultural hegemony, it is strongest when it comes to entries other encyclopaedias wouldn't even have. You may find better articles elsewhere, more to your gusto, but usually ideology is kept checked, balanced, controlled in Wikipedia. If you want it unbiased, you go there.

I think it's not even imagined where we could take that. Compare that, combine that, with real-world approaches like participatory economics. Could we build wikis that contain the knowledge about how our city, our village, our neighbourhood works and how it functions? Could we establish that kind of economic, political, cultural transparency? Could we lay economic source codes that open? What would that mean? Ain't that a road to economic democracy? We could use these new tools for cooperative decision-making. Just open up. We could use Artificial Intelligence as a means of empowering Lenin's female cook to really run a factory, a city, the state – collectively. If people can play SimCity, why shouldn't they be able to govern their real city? Why shouldn't they *like* it?

The Future of Creative Work
GL: Let's go back to the question of the (im)possibility of an online economy. Is giving away for free really the only option left?

CS: The culture of giving it all away needs a closer look. That you cannot sell your product to make a living,is not so new a situation in history. Before capitalism, a lot of things could only happen when the *producer* got paid, got supported, was kept alive – it wasn't the product that was paid for, it was the producer that was financed. That's how medieval courts sustained art in the 13th century. We can see this development at several points in history: first, culture as religious work, as performed by a priest cast; then, second, stuff that was directly paid for as a service that was ordered; third, stuff that was produced as hobby work in free time (soldier poets, the antecedents of free software programmers, in that sense); fourth, stuff that was

produced by real freelancers that worked for a kind of market system, people who were paid because they were 'good', who made a living out of their work (that is, they could choose between different possible clients).

Is there a rule? Is it that culture is controlled by an elite class, and then starts to slip, to break loose, to become 'free' (often commercial at the same time), then changes its domain of containment to a new, emerging class; and then this new elite class stops this ambivalent 'freedom' and uses direct service work, again? Then the freedom of hobby production, of giving away, of working for markets, etc. would not seem to be real opponents, but changing forms of inbetweeness, of emancipation from the old elite class. It's just using opportunities. That would fit well for the internet today. It would fit well for the whole semi-world of semi-precarious intellectual labour today. We're just shifting. The problem is, can we keep this state of not-being-bound, this time? Can we take part in a new movement of change while, at the same time, defining our role in more autonomous ways, both in the present as well as in a utopian future?

GL: Is it really necessary to live precariously when you're working with the Internet, and in particular when you're producing content?

CS: Stephen King could not raise money with internet content. But why? It is not that his content has no 'value' – out of the internet, his books sell very good. But the internet proved unable to deliver a stable structure of allocation for his artistic production. The business model was this: you could read the chapters of the book for free, but were asked to pay a dollar so that the production could go on. This didn't work, because the individual prospect of non-paying was real while the goal of continued production could not be guaranteed by an individual paying anyway. This, combined with a completely anonymous social context, failed to establish a stable structure of allocation. There is a specific problem of re-allocation raised by the internet and the digital copy: it is difficult to prevent people from consumption without contributing to the costs of production. And there is another problem – a lot of content loses its value because in an easily accessible global medium it's no longer special or distinct. In a global area, there's always someone better than you, and enough who are equal to you. So why pay *you*? Why work with *you*? We've already reached the point that local cultural producers, local creative workers, are not paid for their work–but that *they pay* for being allowed to do their work, for the opportunity of being visible. This is not a problem for the top dogs in cultural production, but for the others – the local bands, authors, artist, cultural workers – there's the problem of being out-of-time and out-collaborated by a global market. These are not necessarily good things for the development of collaborative or free cultures.

Here again we face what you mentioned before: the connection between McJobs and Linux. In a global economy almost every content loses its value except the most outstanding products that escape competition because they have no real competiton in the quality stakes. The winners are the producers of high quality products for global markets, and the producers of the cheapest mass products for global markets. The rest loses. So it's Hollywood and China, German Hi-Tech export firms and Eastern European assembly lines, the Pentagon and the maquiladora belt. Not the people who work there; the people and institutions that own them, 'run' them. That's the way it's meant to be from the perspective of today's global elite class.

The exact relation between the elite class and ruling class has to be discussed. Ruling is not government work, of course. But ruling is more contested today, it seems, more difficult, more compromised work, more taking into account of the global masses, at least the more privileged parts of them.

Are there alternatives emerging? New coalitions between intellectuals and workers, 'new' (more set-free, semi-precarious, academic-proletarian) intellectuals and 'new' (more cooperative, more self-ruling, more collectively responsible, more organized, more educated) workers? I hope so. That's the new proletariat, and Wikipedia is its bible, perhaps. And it's really the internet that shaped it: open source as it is, connecting and opening the knowledge of the world. Some of it. Some other parts stay hidden. And some parts cannot be taught, learned, transferred in this way, they need personal training.

But lines get blurred, hybrid forms of knowledge transfer and creation emerge and become more and more important. The hybrids. We have to talk more about the hybrids. We have to watch out for the hybrids.

We have two extreme approaches to the issue at the moment. One standpoint it that of the traditionalists in the music business: protect your content. Downloading is stealing. Catch the thieves. The other standpoint is that of Oekonux: give everything away for free. The only way of allocation for a future society is, according to Oekonux, that all goods are free, all services are free, all content is free, and that work is done completely independent from money, done only by the motivation of self-fulfilment. Reality tends to a third way at the moment: Use it, but don't sell it – and if you do sell it, then contribute to the production costs, which have to be covered if the production is to go on. The whole thing splits into different parts: A part of 'general production' which is done by 'general work' that is not paid by special means, and a part of 'special production' which is done by 'special forces' and is paid – and the ways and rationality of payment change, too. A Star Wars film raises more money by licenses for toys and advertisements than by selling ticket, which means people contribute to the costs of production by paying a kind of global Star Wars tax that is raised by selling silly Star Wars products. Strange, but it works.

And here, maybe, we get a preliminary idea about why and how new forms of cooperation may out-cooperate the Empire. Neo-liberalism was very good in 'special work' – in combining and re-combining labour, resources, connectivity, on a global scale. Dissolving first, of course, but then re-combining for new, huge, global tasks. Free cooperation is very good in 'general work' – in producing the 'white noise' of production, the general background, the overall element. These are factors often addressed as 'social capital' today, but this is a poor definition because it doesn't explain anything. It's like the alchemists talking of an all-abundant, but invisible, insensible element called 'Ether'. This is something the Empire has great difficulties in producing. That's why they cannot build stable civil societies in countries they have occupied. That's why they keep borders flowing between formal and informal labour – not only to throw out people from inside, but also to breath, to take in, people and content and any results of cooperation from outside.

Our whole thinking about distribution and markets has to be re-shaped. Classical theory doesn't work, but giving-away ideologies don't work, either. The point is: a classical capitalist market, like theory sketches of it (where competition works towards lowest possible prices and most efficient ways of production), needs some closure in space and openness in time. We act by bounded rationality, we have no sufficient knowledge, no total informa-

tion, never. So the crucial question and the structuring decision is: shall I buy his product *again*? It's a kind of tit-for-tat-strategy, which is normal for bounded rationality, as game theory teaches us. Only repetition rules out fraud. Only closure in space gives a chance of gathering sufficient information over time. At the same time, calculation (as part of organising production) is never frozen in time, calculation is always open in time: if I sell something cheaper, more people will buy, and I will become somewhat dominant in this market segment, I can then sell goods or services at a more expensive price – so *future* expectations are always built-in to the smart business strategy, however unpredictable that may be. So this assumes also a strategy that can handle risk, loss and contingency. And in this sense, it's never a case of pure 'efficiency' in the neoclassic sense. This is always true. It's nothing new. Now: if an economy enlarges to global markets, at a high speed with low transport costs, relations shift. Fraud rules. Buyers have trouble keeping path with sellers in terms of information. Strategies that link present and future become dominant over strategies stuck in the present. Market domination becomes more important than tit-for-tat-adeptness.

My point is that economy never worked through 'the market' alone. It was always through the market in a very special way, as one tool among others, as part of a more complex strategy and mechanism of rule. We have to think, if we think about the future, in terms of these kind of mechanisms and strategies. 'You can't sell CDs any longer' is too simple. But this is something that 'Wikipedia forms of production' can solve much better. They are a solution to the fraud problem. They reduce fraud considerably. Because there are rules and checks and, you might call them, 'institutions'. But also because the work isn't paid.

GL: Lately, interesting critiques of Creative Commons have been voiced. For some it is the legal contract itself, which is the problem. Both GPL and TRIPS are legal documents. It's already often stated that Creative Commons is a form of copyright. CC does not transcend the legal system and is not pointing in any new direction how we can develop sustainable structures. It's a mere defensive license in that it explicitly refuses to tell how professionals and amateurs that attempt to make a living out of their work can start to earn money. It's dogmatic in this one message: abandon all hope and give it all away for free, put that funky CC license on your content and shut your mouth. Both Joi Ito and Lawrence Lessig are good at staying on the message. How you make a living is your individual problem and we'll be the last ones to tell you how to solve this problem… apart from wishing you good luck with your t-shirt sales. That's the cynical logic of these Creative Commons leaders. For them CC is about the 'freedom' of 'amateurs' to 'remix'. But we are not all amateurs that fool around on the Net in our spare time. What should concern us is how amateurs can professionalize. Amateurs that want to remain amateurs is fine, of course. The amateur status should be a personal choice, not the default destiny.

CS: Who could really ever make money out of content? Ain't that always a problem? Problem is, the producer of creative content has such a strong interest in publicity, in making it public, that he/she has almost no bargaining power. He/she would do it for zero, even pay for it sometimes. Because he/she needs that, it's the kind of investment he/she can never afford him/herself. So every producer of creative content tends to work for zero, always, because it's so crucial to be heard. Not only for a mission, for the belief in what you do, but for economic

reasons. The only chance you'll ever have of getting really paid is global prominence. So meanwhile, you get paid in advertisements. That's why we need public support for creative producers. They just starve, or completely lose track of their creative work.

That's the main way to understand so-called 'free' or 'give-away' economy in the net. The smart bands virtually give away some stuff for free, as a kind of self-advertisement, and that's all that counts. Often it works. They don't sell their music if it comes packaged in digital forms. They sell themselves in the form of giving concerts. The rest is a global advertisement. And that's the trend we see in the e-economy. The companies that do well, like Google, EBay, Amazon, earn more and more through advertisements, while they provide more and more services for free.

GL: Yes, but what have writers to offer? Does it mean that writers have to give away all their texts for free and will have to live from the lecture tours they do? And who is going to organize these lecture tours, if not a publishing house? What strategies could we develop to turn interesting and creative work, done by artists, designers, writers and activists into more or less sustainable jobs, without going back to the old regime of intellectual property rights? There is no going back anyway. Creative Commons is already the default option, and I don't mind that.

CS: We have to get organized, and we have to develop some vision. There are four problems that need different, but consistent answers. The first is the problem of the Encyclopaedia Britannica editors and authors: that there are free and better alternatives to their product, produced by 'amateur' collectives in their leisure time. Here the only answer is: give it up. If the work is done by a distributed, non-professional collectivity, there is no more need for a professional to do the job. Change your job profile, re-define your professional activity to another field, like printers had to do when hot type was disabled.

The second problem is the Stephen King problem, that there is no sound re-allocation for the investment of your workforce when it comes to digitally reproducible content and creative mass commodities, like online novels or mp3-tracks. The radical solution would be: No more individual payments; introduction of a 'content tax' on PC hardware; financing artists by public programs and democratically controlled public culture institutions. The GEMA (German music revenue collector) is a step into that direction. At the same time, instead of privatising science production, there has to be a growth of public education and knowledge production that encompasses more than classical science work but 'basic creative work' as well.

The third problem arises when you do specialized creative work for a company that actually *sells* a product where your work is a part of it. A printed book, for example, belongs to this category: What sells is a complex product made of writing, editing, marketing, product placement, access to distribution and control of cultural markets. That's the difference between being printed and being published. Here the problem is that powerful actors can force others to accept poor contract conditions. The solution is getting organized in a trade-union style, like scriptwriters demonstrated in Hollywood, with support from state regulation that *guarantees* minimum wages and fair contract conditions.

The fourth problem is that companies try to privatise collective knowledge and herit-

age and raise quasi-feudalistic fees. Here the only answers are laws that prevent any such privatisation of 'intellectual goods' – very simple. Such a non-dogmatic, but visionary approach would bring a real advantage to the whole of creative production.

GL: How should artists make the collaborative aspect in their work visible? In opera, theatre, film and in television and radio there are very well defined rules for that. Credits make the division of labour and importance of each individual contribution in a production pretty clear.

CS: This not only counts for artists. Art is a field of production where lots of people contribute but some are in charge. Art cannot be done without special means of production that have to be produced by others (paper, PCs, paint), that's easy. But art is also a form where collective experience and life gets transformed into artistic products. So how does the author pay back the people who inspire him or her, who give their lives to produce what the artist uses for his or her work? Because the artist alone can't do anything. How many people really collaborate in the making of a work? How visible is this togetherness in the art work, and in the artist's conscience? How much do we know about this process of collaboration that exceeds the world of artists and artists' collaboration, about the process of people collaborating in producing culture? Let's discuss this as well! Otherwise, it would be a quite bourgeois discussion.

GL: Why? Don't you think that most creative workers are already living under 'precarious' circumstances? I just read Mickey Kaus' term 'involuntary entrepreneurs'. Glenn Reynolds used it in his book *An Army of Davids*. What it points at is the inevitability of neo-liberal working conditions. There is no way that workers one day will return to their Fordist factories, or their offices for that matter. They will have to get used to the 'freedom' of being a freelance contractor.

CS: In a way, precarity doesn't matter. Of course this problem has to be solved, but if some people decide – and are able to decide – to be culturally productive no matter what their income is, it does not allow them to forget that their work is still part of a collective production. The game of '99 percent of us will starve but 1 percent will be paid off in individual glory' is still a bourgeois game. The point is to resist the temptation of out-cooperating others, to resist the temptation of privilege, to pay respect to others. On the other hand, society has to accept that it cannot exist without cultural production and creative work, that this is no luxury or individual hobby, and that it has to be paid respect (and income), too.

Alternative Economies
CS: 'The alternative economy aspect is under-examined', you write together with Trebor in *Collaboration: For the Love of It*. Do you see any attempts to examine this? What about Oekonux? But it has become more of a nerd philosophy, of a software programmers' religion, than an instrument of economic analysis, yes? At what point did it start to slip? What should be put into the centre of such an economic analysis?

GL: We might agree with a lot of people that the Oekonux debate would need a restart, with a fresh input from various directions. Originally German Oekonux debate (2000-2002) tried to make a blueprint for society centred around the free software production principles. After

a few years the Oekonux debate got stuck for the simple reason that, in the end, it was con- trolled by the founder of the forum, Stefan Merten, who doesn't want to let go and probably has little experience with how to scale up and transform, from a cozy and closed high-level German context, into an international debate in which there would be a multitude of players and intentions. What is needed, in a sense, is a clash of theories, between the Marxist use- value approach and the hardcore libertarian free software/open source philosophy. Oekonux claimed to be its synthesis, but it wasn't. Still, it asked all the right questions. I am still in- spired by Oekonux, and so are you, I'd guess. After all, that's where we both met.

CS: Yes, virtually and literally! In the discussion on alternative economy, there are two posi- tions prevailing at the moment: one stating that capitalism itself is out-cooperated and has to be replaced by a new cooperative model of economic accumulation, allocation, information and decision-making. That's the Oekonux position. The other position is that the alternative is a strongly regulated capitalism under political control, but an economy where the driving forces and modes of regulation are capitalist, an economy of profit, competition and private ownership. That's the *de facto* position of most Left parties in Europe. The main argument for the latter position goes: capitalism is ugly but there is no other system so far that could com- pete with it in terms of the speed of innovation. Not ingenuity, but a tempo of real change in production. What do you think of this? What is your experience with cooperative project and innovation? And is innovation that important at all? Is that all we're in it for, innovation?

GL: We have seen where the 'political primate' ultimately takes us. What I have strongly be- lieved in is the model of temporary laboratories. Not eternal utopias that fail but experiments with a high level of collective imagination. What we need is fresh story-telling capacities. Social movements have an incredible capacity for this. But they can maintain the 'autono- mous zone' only for a limited time. Instead of going for the 'penis enlargement' model of the never-ending orgasm, I believe in a steady accumulation of best practices. This is not reform- ist as I do not really believe that we have to 'insert' such stories and concepts inside existing institutions. Maybe I'm too much of a media Gramscian, but yes, I believe in the capacities of the many, the multitudes of great people that I meet everywhere, to create a new cultural hegemony that can precontextualize the political. Learning from the Neocons, if you like. I am not the only one who is arguing for this.

CS: I'm not convinced that this is enough. Filling the gaps is not enough. We have to run the system in another way. This is what was discussed at the latest meeting of the German Rosa-Luxemburg Foundation's 'Future Commission': What exactly is it that neo-liberalism does? What is the productive contribution? What is the kind of work that is most strongly supported and honoured by the rules of neo-liberal markets? It seems to be combination and re-combination – of work, of resources, on a global scale and on a scale combining material and immaterial, professional and amateur work in a new way. That's the productive labour that is honoured by shareholder capital. It is not sustainable, it is not just, it is destructive, etc. But it is a kind of productive labour, and very powerful, and it is an elite kind of skill. And it's no wonder why this is the case – somebody has to do it.

There is no economic system without a structure of accumulation or allocation. How is it accomplished that labour and resources are concentrated and/or distributed, allowing

the action of production? How is the outcome of this production relevant to the continua- tion of production, and how is this relevance expressed in structures that 'inform' or force the productive unit to go on or not? Any accumulation system strengthens certain kinds of work and ignores others. So, saying 'the financial markets become more and more the driving force of production' doesn't really say very much. The point is, financial markets are just a means of accumulation. But why is accumulation handed to them in neo-liberal- ism? Because they strengthen certain kinds of work and ignore others. They ignore social capital, long-term collaboration, etc.; they strengthen the work of global combination, the dissolvement and re-combination of labour and resources on a global scale. It's no error that neo-liberalism features hedge funds. It's because they are effective in destroying old complexes of labour and resources and transferring the money and the resources to new labour-resources-complexes, especially those who operate world-wide.

Now: we want to terminate the unchallenged rule of this kind of work. But we do not want to eliminate this kind of work altogether, the work of combining and re-combining labour and resources for global tasks. We do it ourselves in a lot of cases. It's important. But we want it to be done on a free basis, not a forced one, not as a hierarchy, but as a driving and inspiring force.

It's clear that we aim at an economy where commons play a great role. Old and new commons – commons, where the public gets free access to information, communication, tools, technologies, small capital. But not everything will be done by commons, of course. There will be local markets and regional production. And there will be global projects that will need special modes of accumulation in order to get re-funded. At the moment, we do not know exactly how this should be done if it were up to us.

I'm also not in favour of contemporary ideas that all economic activity should consist of small collectives. Big scale production may be progressive too. And the separation between work and capital may have its emancipatory aspects also. I do not only want to control what I am directly working with. I want to have some influence on everything that happens in society. For this, 'having shares in something' is an important tool. That's why I like the Swedish idea of combining workers' control on the shop floor with economic democratisa- tion through workers' funds.

Unfolding Utopia
CS: In the introduction to *Free Cooperation* that you wrote with Trebor Scholz, there is some- thing that can be read easily as your contribution because you stress it all the time. It's 'the importance of being inspired'. Could you explain more about it? To you, it seems to be the REAL productive force in cooperation, in the Net, in the real world. And obviously, as in Oscar Wilde's 'The importance of being Earnest', it is something that is felt as important by others so that we try to fake it, if necessary... What is it you're thinking of, when you're talking about this 'being inspired'?

GL: Let's deal with its cynical reading first, the *Lebenshilfe* aspect. In English that would be filed in the self-help, the mind, body and spiritual New Age section that we find in today's bookstore. In the past I insisted that theory is not there to help you through the day. Music can do that job, a good joke, a short conversation. This inevitably leads to a dilemma for those amongst us who want to further theorize collaboration. You did a clever, yet classic German

move by giving free cooperation a negative, dialectical foundation, namely the freedom to walk away. Still, very few of us are actually in such position. Or want to. We all look for a motivational theory, to either get into what we do or transform the situation in which we find ourselves. To get a better understanding how, exactly, theory inspires people, is not a minor detail. We have to be open minded, on the look-out, read and interpret our feelings, get over frustrations, yet take our discontent deadly serious.

CS: You're also talking about 'extreme democracy'. What does it mean? How does it apply to online cooperation?

GL: It's not a term that I developed, but I like it. *Extreme Democracy* is the book title of a collection of essays, pretty wild online material from 2003-2004, written by US-American techno-libertarian activists/bloggers such as Radcliffe, Lebkowsky, but also Ito, Shirky, Weinberger and Boyd. It was written in the period of the Howard Dean campaign, the breakthrough of blogs and social networks, but before the Web 2.0 hype. What's extreme about it is most likely not the ideas (because they are flat and mainstream) but the dynamics of those social networks. Their growth (potential), the easy ways to link and refer to each other, opens up dialogues on a massive scale, and is indeed remarkable. I get inspired by such social networks. But from a leftist point of view, there is not much more to learn than radical self-criticism. Why can't progressive social movements be part of this? What makes this whole world of NGOs and unions so slow? Why is today's resistance so dull and arguably reactionary, if you look at the defensive and desperate tendencies in the French protests? Why do young people think that identifying with a bankrupt welfare state is the only option left, to live like their parents? What we in fact need is more extreme social imagination of how people want to live and work in the 21st century. To expect life-long care when you're 21, I don't know. Would that really be utopia? Why not go the extra mile and propose a basic income for all? Or other forms of radical redistribution of income? What disturbs me is the petty, fear-driven agenda of today's protests in Europe. In that sense it is, still, more interesting to look what the US libertarians are tinkering together in projects like http://www.worldchanging.com.

CS: That's why the struggle to make free basic income a central demand of the political Left is so important at the moment, and quite difficult in Left parties, because it contradicts the classical Fordist assumptions held up by the trade unions. Lacking, however, are visions for capital control, for free productivity, for personality development, etc.

The French riots in the Banlieus weren't exactly boring where they? People resisted a law that allowed to fire young people without any protection against it for as long as two years after they were hired. I think that's a good reason for protest. It's about seizing power, resisting powerlessness at work. And when young people are very aware of the family as an important way of life, we should listen carefully. Our ideas of independence, free contract labour, new productivity are often a question of class – you have to be a quite qualified immaterial worker to practice that successfully. Family networks and/or social security through the state are still the only means of security and freedom for most people. But you're right that here a discussion about visions must start – renewed visions, that make new ideas compatible with the interests and desires of, to put it bluntly, 'the masses'.

'Collaboration asks for concentration', you write. Could you explain that further? How

can we reach that concentration? Is that why *The Matrix* combines the virtuality hype with Eastern philosophy?

GL: Those who are impatient and have some kind of genius idea about themselves are incapable of collaborating. When you work with others online, there is a lot of social noise on the line and it takes a lot of patience and wisdom not to give up. If you need Eastern philosophy for that, or not, is a personal matter. I don't but I perfectly understand those who do. One has to be ready to speed up if the velocity picks up and mentally ready for the numerous delays and hic-ups on the way. It is this confused rhythm of speeding up, slowing down, being stagnant and again moving forward that tires people out and could be one of the main (and least understood) reasons why people jump ship and abandon Internet-based projects.

CS: Again, that's very similar in real life organizing processes! Just consider the process of funding a new Left party out of the PDS and the WASG: a lot of people are attracted and then get confused, bored, angry about these rhythm thing, the need for patience – and the need for velocity and action – and then patience again...

It's often said that hierarchy is unavoidable to organize processes. I don't want to buy that, but it's difficult. What do you think from your experience? The software programming model is what exactly does not convince me. The art of collaborative projects often doesn't convince me of it either. How can we change roles? I have the sense that you need strong cooperation, cooperative wealth, if such trials are to proceed. What is your definition of hierarchy? Is it cooperation without influence on the goals, on the purpose?

GL: What you often seem to presume in your writings is trust and friendship of relationships within a relatively close vicinity. The problem is that these are becoming rare these days, mainly because of increased mobility. What trust and friendship need is time that you all spend together in the same space in order to build up common experiences. Only then, for instance, can you deal with hierarchy in a non-authoritarian way. Namely when the 'anti-hierarchy' is no longer a slogan or an ideology but becomes a negotiated practice. But that is really difficult to realize with people you hardly know. I am not saying that hierarchy is a natural process but rather that you all have to work really hard to undermine such processes. So the real challenge is to question hierarchy in new, and fast changing social environments – not when you're amongst old friends. The need for celebrities, visionaries, leaders and gurus is immense and only seems to be growing. You find it in virtually all environments, from work to hobbies and sport, in entertainment and the arts. It is by no means restricted to politics or business.

For me hierarchy sets in when groups get bigger, when organizations grow, when there are more and more teams and task forces. So it's quite close to project work and division of labour. It also comes with the introduction of (middle) management. There is in a sense no hierarchy if there is just the boss and the others. People who motivate and give directions are usually quite open and egalitarian. The problem starts when mid-levels are introduced. I have no problem with 'leaders' that inspire. What sucks are boring managers without ideas. I have no idea why, time and again, they have to be brought in. Hierarchy is a product of abstract, bureaucratic administration procedures, not an expression of (absolute) power.

CS: So hierarchy is the organized subduction or withdrawal of collectivity, and the transformation of collective productivity into shadow labour. 'Shadow labour' is the labour that is not organized as a subject. Would you agree that definition?

GL: Yes, it's not identified, qualified or visible. But what will happen when we get used to online encyclopaedias, Wikipedia or not? That's my field of interest. What will happen when the online world, and our presence in it, will become so ubiquitous, so intense, that we no longer take notice. We are there, out in the (online) world, but we're also not there. This being present, while absent is a contemporary condition that interests me, and how this affects political formations, and political culture of the everyday. The way you portray it is too much of a doom scenario. The Net is not a one-way street in which we are drawn, with no possibility of escape. What young people show is this extraordinary capacity to create presence in parallel worlds, simultaneously. There is also a gender aspect to it. Apparently males have great difficulty when it comes to multi-tasking at work and in the household. This in turn leads to an entire army of male philosophers who make us believe that we have to chose between the real and the virtual world. No, what we need is a poly-gender socialisation which is focussed on the cultivation of multi-tasking.

CS: I like that! The female art of social multi-tasking, of simultaneously talking and listening, being in and out, as the core qualification of the emerging, global, individualized network production! But this also calls for a radical reduction of working hours – you can't stand this 40 hours a week, 8 hours a day. And we should keep in mind what you said about 'Cooperation asks for concentration'. We are developing a whole new division of labour at the moment, and I would not want the multi-taskers (mostly female, many migrant) to be the new 'precariat' and the focussed nerds the new white-collars. We need a common, visionary perspective for a real multitude.

This brings us back to our initial question of 'out-cooperating the Empire'. I'd like to ask how we imagine change today. In my opinion, our whole concept of change is itself rapidly changing at the moment. The prevailing concepts of change have always been very simple, it's strange that there is little science and theory about it. The classical Marxists theory is as simple and unsatisfying as the Oekonux idea of the '*Keimform*' (germ), not to speak of the still dominant ideas of gradualism and continuous evolution. At the moment, there are very fast and very interesting developments in the theory of evolution. The new theories sketch a process that is evolutionary and revolutionary at the same time, like we feel it in history and the transformation of societies. Notions of co-evolution, of memory of alternative possibilities, of rapid change and rapid adaptation, etc. are changing our perception in evolutionary biology.

I guess similar notions are growing for our understanding of programming processes, of network development. And in this perspective, we might get a new understanding of what is also typical for female multi-tasking and communication: a strong sense for 'potentiality,' which always tends to make men confused and nervous. The constant evolution and preservation of potentiality seems to play an important role in evolution. I'm sure all this will lead us to a better understanding of what it means to 'out-cooperate Empire'.

RE-IMAGINING CHINESE CREATIVITY
THE RISE OF A SUPER-SIGN

MICHAEL KEANE

The idea of creative industries is currently riding the crest of a wave, especially in China's large cities. Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, Guangzhou, Nanjing, Chengdu, and Tianjin have established creative industries, or cultural creative industries projects. Dalian in north China has recently constructed the *Xinghai Creative Island* which incorporates an Ideas Park (*six-iang gongyuan*). Although there is no surrounding water the concept is highly evocative, no less so than the *1933 Old Millfun* project in Shanghai's Hongkou District. The advertising pitch for the latter is even more enticing for investors, 'The experience *1933* offers is a higher awareness of the fullness of life'.[1] Another publicity brochure promises that *1933* will 'make you drunk in creative world'.[2] Fantasies of fun, fashion and enterprise come together in this reconverted abattoir designed by British engineers, now the business hub of the Shanghai Creative Industries Centre.

Many projects such as these are included in 11th Five-Year plan documents, which set the development agendas for China's reforms. Indeed, the process of cultural re-conversion has been underway since 2005. Disused factories and districts in China's cities have become 'creative clusters' (*chuangyi jiju*) and 'creative precincts' (*chuangyi yuanqu*). Shanghai had 36 so-called creativity industry clusters by the end of 2005; by the end of 2006, Beijing had 18 designated key projects with another 12 scheduled for commencement by 2010; Chongqing has plans for 50 by the end of 2010.[3]

China's policy-makers are upbeat about these creative clusters. It is said they can provide solutions to a list of development dilemmas – duplication of resources, low investment in intellectual property generation, post-industrial society job loss, an education system unresponsive to the market, industrial pollution and urban centralisation, and so on. How can such miraculous transformations come about?

In this chapter I trace the development of the idea of creativity in China and the associated concept of creative industries. I will argue that the creative industries in China need to be understood in the context of sustainable development and reform over a long period of development. I argue that creativity is a 'super-sign' in China; it is invested with almost supernatural powers to transform and revitalise.[4]

1. '1933 – Shanghai's Vanguard Global Phenomenon', publicity brochure, Axiom Concepts. See http://www.1933-shanghai.com.
2. '*1933 Old Millfun*', Shanghai Old Millfun Creative Industries Management Company, publicity brochure.
3. For an expanded discussion, see Michael Keane, *Created in China: The Great New Leap Forward*, London: Routledge, 2007.
4. The concept of super-sign is developed by Lydia Liu, *The Clash of Empires: The Invention of China in Modern World Making*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004.

In China's post-WTO landscape, it is important to understand how change comes from outside China, as well as from within. Investment and human capital pours in, more from smaller regional businesses than from the 'usual suspects', the transnationals. But why have some places in East Asia moved ahead at different times? For example, many countries, regions, cities and locales invested heavily in technological infrastructure during the 1980s and 1990s. Centres of excellence, technology parks, cyber-ports, multimedia super-corridors, and film production studios were constructed.

In the 1990s, the OECD countries set their development course to national innovation systems policy. By the end of the decade, the idea of creative industries had taken root in the UK. With a heavy emphasis on creative inputs – design, talent, branding and the role of human capital – the idea was gladly received in Singapore and Hong Kong. Is China, therefore, following a global or a regional script? Is it emulating Singapore, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Australia and several other countries in which creative industry policy has gained ground?

Of course, China can adopt any global model it desires. One of the critical success factors in the study of China's new creative clusters, however, is governance. In other words, how effectively will the new clusters self-organise? How will wealth and creativity be redistributed? Will they just be another extension of government or will they generate real change? The Chinese 'development script' reads that creative clusters will assist media and cultural industries to become more competitive. The appeal of clusters in this post-WTO period is 'freshness'; this is a relatively new concept in China, one given credibility by the eminent business writer Michael Porter.[5]

In reality, however, the idea of creative clusters makes perfect sense, given the legacy of collective production: the Peoples' Communes (1950s-1960s), the town and village enterprises (TVEs) (1980s-1990s), the science and technology parks (1990s-2000s), and the media conglomerates (instigated in the late 1990s – early 2000s). In differing ways these collective institutions responded to social and economic reforms. The common ingredients, however, have been a high degree of hierarchical management, favourable investment policies and state supervision.

A Creative Road

From 2003 to the end of 2005, I conducted research on the take-up of creative industries in China.[6] The hypothesis framing the investigation was that China would embrace changes occurring in developed economies. Could it leapfrog from the industrial age into the post-industrial age with the 'added value' of creativity? Could such a manufacturing hegemon transform into a creative nation? The hypothesis was ambitious, at least in the sense that the weight of evidence from 'Made in China' appeared to diminish the necessity of creativity in the Chinese marketplace.

The provenance of the changes that would eventually sweep China was the UK Crea-

tive Industries Task Force (CITF), which has been taken up in more detail by others in this volume. This entailed shifting culture into new categories, and in doing so, it upset the status quo whereby low-profit and no-profit performing arts had traditionally argued for ongoing public support based upon their inherent danger of market failure. What is often not understood, however, is that the creative industries was initially a strategy devised by Chris Smith, the then minister responsible for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), to procure more funds for the 'non-performing' performing arts sector. Tony Blair had insisted that his minister provide proof that culture was self-reliant, even profitable. The resulting mapping projects and the inclusion of new media, indeed, reinforced the ledger. Resolutely non-commercial activities (visual and performing arts, theatre, dance, etc.) were forced into a marriage of convenience with established commercial media (broadcasting, film, TV, radio, music), design and architecture sectors, and new media (software, games, e-commerce and mobile content).

In effect, a retro-fitting of cultural value occurred; it was surmised by advocates that all would learn to love the new enterprise values. Certainly, this rhetoric of development was influential beyond the UK. The migration of these 'knowledges of the creative economy' moved swiftly through Pax Britannica networks, finding fertile soil in Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand.[7] However, the question in relation to understanding China was: would the idea of the creative industries ultimately take root? Some colleagues with extensive experiences in Chinese cultural policy were sceptical. In 2004, Jing Wang had doubted that the idea of creative industries could be accepted by government under a system so guided by central planning.[8] By then the concept of 'cultural industries' (*wenhua chanye*) had been formally charged with leading the expansion of the cultural market. What was not understood then was the role that municipal governments would play in choosing their own development paths.

The idea of creativity had been dormant in China since the 1920s when the literary schools known as the Creation Society (*chuangzao she*) had championed the beauty of the Western Romantic canon, the ideal of 'art for art's sake', and decried the creative poverty of much Chinese literature. This celebration of the individual creative spirit was nipped in the bud by political expediency. With revolutionary mass culture, the default setting from the 1940s to the late 1970s, there was no room for individualist sentiment, except if this was expressed as one's undying commitment to revolutionary goals and the Chinese Communist Party. There was plenty of evidence of this in film and literature throughout the 1950s and 1960s. The mid-1980s saw a return to the creative imperative; first in the rarefied domain of literary culture with its emphasis on Chinese identity, and second in so-called creativity societies – marginal organisations attached to university departments – which were often supported by organisations outside the humanities. However, this was an impoverished creativity with no real hope of gaining mainstream support.

Meanwhile, the cultural market had been growing. By the early 1990s cultural institu-

5.   Michael Porter, 'Clusters and the New Economics of Competition', *Harvard Business Review* 76.6 (1998): 77-90.
6.   Other investigators were John Hartley, Stuart Cunningham, Stephanie Hemelryk Donald, Terry Flew and Christina Spurgeon. This was supported by an Australian Research Council Discovery Grant.

7.   Lily Kong, Chris Gibson, Louisa-May Khoo and Anne-Louise Semple, 'Knowledges of the Creative Economy: Towards a Relational Geography of Diffusion and Adaptation in Asia', *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 47. 2 (2006): 173-194.
8.   Jing Wang, 'The Global Reach of a New Discourse: How Far Can "Creative Industries" Travel?', *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 7.1 (2004): 9-19.

tions (*shiye*) were being forced to reinvent themselves as industries. The terms cultural industry (*wenhua chanye*) and cultural economy (*wenhua jingji*) were recognised in internal Party documents as early as 1992. This led to widespread discussions as to how to best stimulate the industrial development of culture. These debates continued for almost a decade. However, formal acceptance of the cultural industries took much longer. It wasn't until October 2000 and the 5th session of 15th Party Congress that the concept 'cultural industries' was formally proposed as part of the recommendations (*jianyi*) document for the national 10th 5-Year Plan. In March 2001, these recommendations were ratified in the 4th session of the 9th People's Congress (*renda*).

The original iteration of cultural industries in China was directly inked to the term innovation (*chuangxin*), which in Chinese literally means 'to make new'. Innovation has carried great national freight since the revolutionary era of Mao Zedong. At that time innovation was referred to as *gexin*, the first morpheme ge meaning 'to transform', and the second *xin*, 'new'. Subsequent applications of *gexin* ranged from reforming feudal practices and replacing these with scientific Marxist models, refashioning the thought processes of reactionary elements, and 'putting new wine in old bottles', a euphemism for using old cultural forms to disseminate new ideas. The real champion of innovation, however, was Jiang Zemin, whose words on the subject were reported in the *Enlightenment Daily* on 5 March 1998:

> We must now put the stress on innovation. We need to establish national awareness; to set up a national innovation system and to strengthen entrepreneurial innovation capacity, to put science and innovation in a more important strategic position, and accordingly allow economic construction to revolve around scientific progress and the improvement of the quality of workers.[9]

The cultural industries were born in China at a time when national innovation systems hit the radar of the Chinese government. The most influential document was the OECD's Oslo Report, published in 1990. Innovation emphasizes the role of research and development (R&D). However, there were many doubters of China's R&D capacity. Science and technology parks had mushroomed since the early 1980s, but many were about real estate and production.

Correlations are evident between China's ongoing economic reforms and its national innovation systems policy, which was officially instituted in 1998 as the 'knowledge innovation program' (*zhishi chuangxin gongcheng*). WTO accession in December 2001 had signalled a need for broad institutional reform, and in the eyes of radical reformers, a tide of 'creative destruction' was necessary. Observers – including senior government officials – have used the metaphor of a 'wrecking ball' to suggest a force that smashes old institutional practices and allows the marketplace to rebuild with greater capacity.[10]

The green light for cultural industries spawned a steady stream of articles and books focusing on development strategies to transform and regulate China's burgeoning but largely inefficient cultural economy. A Cultural Industries Research and Innovation Centre was

founded at Shanghai's Jiaotong University in 1999, which in collaboration with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences launched a series of industry reports reminiscent of the UK creative industries mapping projects. In 2002, the State Council gave the go-ahead for a second institute, this time located in Beijing: the State Cultural Industries Innovation and Development Research Institute.

The announcement of the cultural industries as a foundational element of the Chinese government's economic and social reform plans led to a plethora of cultural industries development strategies, mostly associated with exploiting traditional cultural resources. Culture was loosened even more from its ideological moorings, told to be more self-reliant, and sent to the market. To make the cultural economy stronger and self-reliant meant identifying resources, most of which at that time appeared to be located in tradition culture. In 2002, the First International Forum on China's Cultural Industries was held in Chengdu in Sichuan province, and this was followed by a second event in Taiyuan, capital of Shanxi province.

Creativity in China

One of the central problems in debates about the value of culture is its innate heterogeneity. Likewise, the notion of creativity conjures up a range of associations: some are banal; others are more specific and useful. The word 'creativity' is applied loosely to many products and processes produced by business in which conceptual content involves negligible amounts of novelty. Likewise, the uptake of the term creative industries by many regional and national governments globally has been based on a kind of faith in its ability to transform non-productive culture into value-added enterprise.

In contrast to the slow incubation of the cultural industries, the term 'creative industries' (*chuangyi chanye*) was a fast burner. International 'scholar-consultants' associated with the creative and cultural economies played a key role in facilitating its acceptance. The role of foreign knowledge is worth special scrutiny. International speakers appeared thick and fast offering advice about creativity indexes, creative classes, milieus, clusters and networks. However, what was often lacking in these international prescriptions for sustainability and creativity was the specificity of Asian culture and politics. But advice was received, absorbed, filtered, and sometimes rejected outright. Many of the scholar-consultants were duly acknowledged as contributors to China's new creative surge.

The 2nd International Forum on Cultural Industries was held in Taiyuan, Shanxi Province in 2004. This was an important event, complete with celebrity, ceremony and exhibitions for trading of cultural assets. A group of USA entertainment industry businesses led by the organisation American Television in China had come to broker entry into the restricted Chinese audio-visual market. Their presentations emphasised the beauty of the countryside (obviously they had flown in at night). They spoke of US-style co-production models, tax incentives for local production willing to provide resources, the importance of legal mechanisms, the need for copyright regimes and more transparency. In the main, the Americans were lavish in their praise of Chinese culture, creativity and enterprise.

The 2nd International Forum on China's Cultural Industries was perhaps a statement of intent by the Ministry of Culture. Shanxi province is situated on the north-west plains of China between Shaanxi and Hebei provinces. This area is regarded as the cradle of Chinese civilisation, the ancestral home of the legendary Yellow Emperor of the Xia dynasty.

9.   Cited in Jixiong Yi, *Chuangxin lun* (Innovation Theory), Hefei: Anhui Arts Publishing, 2000, p. 41.
10. Liqun Jin, 'China: One Year Into the WTO Process', World Bank address, 22 October, 2002,
     http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/voddocs/108/208/IMF-WB_address_final.pdf.

Today, Taiyuan is the centre of China's coal industry and the environment has suffered severe degradation. One of the first things that I noticed after arriving was the poverty of the city, in stark comparison with Beijing from where I had just come. In contrast to the colourful bright neon signs of Beijing and Shanghai advertising Armani and Microsoft, weak local brands jostled for attention in the greyish brown sky.

108 kilometres south of Taiyuan is the ancient walled city of Pingyao, built in the Zhou dynasty (11th century BCE to 221 BCE) and fortunately preserved from the excesses of the Cultural Revolution Red Guards who took their task of obliterating feudal culture very seriously. In 1997, Pingyao was listed as a World Heritage Site. Not surprisingly, cultural tourism was the subject of much of the discussion at the conference I attended. Listening to the excitement about cultural industries, I recalled Ian Buruma's wry observation that 'Theme parks... are to East Asian capitalism what folk dancing festivals were to communism'.[11] Provincial leaders gave keynote presentations, eager to promote unique traditional cultural resources; these views on local enterprise were supported by humanities academics keen to integrate the idea of the cultural industry into the governmental rhetoric of advanced modern culture.

The invited 'image master' was the Hong Kong and Hollywood kung-fu star Jackie Chan, who introduced the conference and wished China well in its pursuit of international achievement, then promptly disappeared. The theme of the event was economic development and many of the presentations reflected on the government's commitment to the idea of increasing the vitality of cultural industry and reaching out to new markets. Significantly, a few papers at the conference signalled a new direction. He Chuanqi, the Director of the Centre for Modernisation Research from the Chinese Academy of Social Science, began by reminding the audience that the cultural industries was not a new idea – they had been around since antiquity. In a wide-ranging survey of the development of the cultural economy, he cited Maslow's five level model of human needs, noted China's 4000 year history and its 23 world heritage sites (now 33), and indicated China's backward position in development. China was fundamentally locked into the agricultural and industrial era in comparison to advanced economies that had moved into the knowledge and service industries.[12]

Lui Shifa from the Creative China Industrial Alliance (CCIA) was another speaker. In the midst of the largely cultural development focused discussion, his presentation was an alternative and challenging model of catch-up. In short, this was the Creative China manifesto espoused by the Creative China Industrial Alliance. Liu proposed a shift of emphasis from the cultural industries model that had three years earlier been ratified by China's State Council. This was the model endorsed by this 'international' gathering. Liu proposed three points of intersection: digital China, creative China and cultural China. Noting that one of the core problems facing China was the 'duck style feeding' (*tianya shi*) of students in educational institutions, Liu Shifa argued that China needed to make a transformation from an economy that over-emphasized learning from others – one that 'inherits tradition, follows others, copies, and brings in' other cultures – to a 'creative economy' where creativity is the

priority strategy and originality is acknowledged and valued.[13] Creativity had to be instilled, from bottom-up, not drilled. In China, he said, government was the primary consumer of services and hence its role ought to be lead the creative movement, by amongst other things reducing direct subsidy to producers and instead acting as a procurer of creative goods and services. Other initiatives, although not spelt out in detail, included taxation incentives to pump-prime the creative economy, a strategic reassessment of intellectual property protection, and a bringing together of government, enterprises and education in creative industry pilot projects.

Creating the Environment

Following this major gathering, China's first symposium on the creative industries was held in Shanghai in December 2004, organised by the Propaganda Department of the Shanghai Municipal Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, the Shanghai Municipal Committee of Economic Development and the Shanghai Academy of the Social Sciences. It was attended by Chinese speakers, and it was clear that a consensus was emerging about the role of creativity. In particular, the fast tracking of creative industries policy in Shanghai was championed by Li Wuwei from the Shanghai Academy of Social Science and He Shouchang from the Shanghai Theatre Academy.

By January 2005, the idea of creativity had burst onto the radar of government, thinktanks and academics in China. During the ensuing year the idea of cultural clusters, centres and precincts provoked animated discussion at several 'international' conferences and seminars. The Baseline Study of Hong Kong's Creative Industries, which was produced by a team led by Desmond Hui from the University of Hong Kong Cultural Policy Unit, had meanwhile caught the attention of officials within the Chaoyang government in Beijing and its author Desmond Hui was hired in January 2005 to conduct an initial mapping of the district's capabilities. The Baseline study had adopted the UK methodological process of 'mapping' the value of the creative industries sectors, including occupations.[14]

It seemed as if the creative economy was set to follow the path of the high-tech sectors through national and local tax incentives and foreign investment. Articles and books appeared. In July 2005, Beijing hosted China's first international conference *Creative Industries and Innovation*, organised by Queensland University of Technology in association with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (Humanities Research Centre) and the Humanistic Olympics Research Centre of the People's University in Beijing. The conference used the slogan 'From Made in China to Created in China' to great effect. Nonetheless, despite the focus on creativity, the Chinese organisers were unwilling to directly translate the word creative industries, opting for the government's preferred term, 'cultural industries'.

Two events followed in relatively quick succession. The first was a special symposium on 'Cultural and Creative Industries' in September. Hui notes the nervousness of officials

11. Ian Buruma, 'Asia World', *The New York Review*, 12 July, 2003.

12. Chuanqi He, 'Culture Industry and Modernisation in China', conference paper, *The 2nd International Conference on Cultural Industries*, Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, PRC, Beijing: People's Daily Publishing, 2004.

13. Shifa Liu, 'Implementing the Creative Century Plan and Promoting the Creative China Campaign', conference paper, *The 2nd International Conference on Cultural Industries*, Taiyan, Shanxi Province, PRC, Beijing: People's Daily Publishing, Beijing, 2004, p. 90.

14. Centre for Cultural Policy Research (CCPR), *Baseline Study of Hong Kong's Creative Industries*, The University of Hong Kong: Hong Kong SAR, 2003, http://ccpr.hku.hk/Baseline_Study_on_HK_Creative_Industries-eng.pdf.

at the time with the idea of creative industries. In the Chinese version of the program the word 'creative' was omitted in Chinese but allowed to remain in English. The official term, of course, was 'cultural industries'. However, when the final report was presented to the Chaoyang government, the authors were advised to revert to the term 'cultural and creative industries'.[15] Within two months a 'Shanghai International Creative Industries Week' was instituted, supported by the Propaganda Department of the CCP Shanghai Committee. The organiser this time was the newly formed Shanghai Creative Industry Centre, which was later to develop a high profile in Shanghai's re-branding.

How had this change in language occurred so rapidly? Why had creativity – a concept previously confined to the rarefied academy of the arts and approached with clear suspicion for decades by Communist ideologues – been rehabilitated and set the task of reforming unproductive sectors, renovating education, and providing solutions to post-industrial urban renewal? The answer to this lies in the genesis of the concept, its association with the restructuring of the Chinese economy, and place competition among large Chinese cities.

Creativity: A Super-Sign
In order to understand the success of the idea of creative industries in China it is necessary to explore the translation and the diffusion of the term creativity from its Western origins into what was by 2004 fertile Chinese soil. Lydia Liu provides a way of understanding this cross-cultural translation through the idea of a 'super-sign'. She writes about the translation of terms such as barbarian, sovereignty and rights into China during the period of China's engagement with Western powers in the mid-nineteenth century. These terms were central to treaties ceding territory to the occupying powers. For instance, the British forbade the use of the character for barbarian (*yi*), a term that had a much more diffuse usage throughout Chinese history. Liu asks if we can recapture the true identity of language when such problematic terms are embedded in new territories. She says that a super-sign 'is not a word but a hetero-cultural signifying chain that criss-crosses the semantic fields of two or more languages simultaneously and make an impact on the meaning of recognisable verbal units'.[16]

The term creativity is arguably a super-sign, not just across linguistic and cultural barriers, but across disciplinary boundaries. Nevertheless, it quickly became an article of faith among business and policy-makers in China. Widespread benefits would accrue from creativity, benefits that were individual, collective, and organisational. Creativity was a green idea in a country where industrial pollution had turned skies a brownish grey. By 2004, it was clear that something new was occurring in Beijing and Shanghai. The creative economy was a 'wave' and it was ready to break. A short list of its benefits for China included wealth creation, re-conversion of traditional resources, enhanced productivity combined with cleaner greener production, talent renewal, and the ever-present theme of industrial catch-up.

However, the benefits of the intangible creative economy in China are difficult to measure, not just because of the rubbery nature of Chinese statistics. There are definitional and categorical issues inherent in the creative industries that are not evident in the accounting of the manufacturing industries, on which China has based its development model. This is a

problem that faces those who advocate the creative industries as a growth model. What is in? What is out? What is the core and what is periphery? Are they just another industry or do they deserve special attention? Where is the evidence base? While 'creative industries' appears to break down the foundations of rigid notions of culture, some regard the term as oxymoronic. How can creativity, essentially something emanating from the individual, be an industry?

A More Creative China, a More Harmonious Society: Is It a (Neo)-Liberal Illusion?
Despite all the prolix debates about creative industries that prevail in Europe and elsewhere, the shift to embrace creativity in China is arguably a positive move for China, and perhaps for the planet. So much production in China today is low-cost, low-value, polluting and demeaning for workers. While creative industries policy offers no magic solutions, as many in China now seem to imagine, it marks a shift from Made in China to Created in China. To take a hypothetical scenario, the template for China's 11th Five-Year Plan was bound to be focused on catching up to the West. In 2005, Morgan Stanley, the US Investment Bank, advised China's leadership to focus on increasing consumption.[17] The template, had they taken this advice, could have been 'increased consumption and harmonious society'. Again – following the *more is better* formula – the template might have been expressed as 'enhanced productivity and harmonious society'. To my mind, 'cultural creative industries and harmonious society', despite the propagandist elements, has more to offer.

Although similarities are evident in much of the globalising language of creative industries – the emphasis on 'value adding', revitalisation of urban space, enterprise, and clustering – creative industries in China does not blindly follow the Western template. In many countries, the creative industries have become the target of virulent criticism from the Left. Some of this criticism is well-founded, in particular, a tendency to collapse the value of the IT industries into the cultural sector in order to make the creative economy appear more robust.[18] The traditional and performing arts continue to struggle to survive. They are asked to relocate to disused industrial spaces, revitalise these spaces, become more 'enterprising', and reach out to new audiences. For many working in the traditional arts – in museums, galleries and the performing arts – the term creative industries provides little comfort, save for its use in boosting the total value of the cultural sphere. Whether this translates into public support in the longer term is a moot point.

The tendency to legislate into existence creative quarters reflects what has been called a 'cookie-cutter approach' to urban development.[19] Others have criticised the creative industries for their use of non-unionised casualised labour, arguing that workers are more precarious in these industries.[20] The creative industries, whether these are music, publish-

15. Desmond Hui, 'From Cultural to Creative Industries: Strategies for Chaoyang District', *International Journal Of Cultural Studies* 9.3 (2006): 317-331.
16. Liu, *The Clash of Empires*, p. 13.

17. Keynote speech at the Beijing Forum, held at Peking University, October 2005.
18. See Nicholas Garnham, 'From Cultural to Creative Industries: An Analysis of the Implications of the "Creative Industries" Approach to Arts and Media Policy-Making in the United Kingdom', *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 11.1 (2005): 15-29.
19. Kate Oakley 'Not So Cool Britannia: The Role of Creative Industries in Economic Development', *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 7.1 (2004): 67-77.
20. Andrew Ross, *Fast Boat to China: Corporate Flight and the Consequence of Free Trade; Lessons from Shanghai*, New York: Pantheon, 2006. See also Ned Rossiter, *Organized Networks: Media Theory, Creative Labour, New Institutions*, Rotterdam: NAi Publishers, 2006.

ing, fashion, design or web-based content industries, change the rules of revenue distribution; many artists have adopted self-management processes, cutting out intermediaries such as agents and distributors. For some this is a liberating experience; for others it is a case of increased abundance further spinning out the 'long tail' and creating uncertainty.[21] Terry Flew suggests that while new wealth and jobs are created by industrialisation, including new middle-class managers and professionals, this inevitably brings with it rising inequality, overcrowded urban centres and discontent among 'excluded' classes.[22] Fault lines also appear among the creative classes. Comparing Russia with the UK and China, O'Connor points to the resistance from supporters of St Petersburg's high modernist culture to the more commercially-focused cultural and creative industries.[23]

Yet when these arguments are applied to China, they find less traction. China is still following a developmental path in which the kinds of relationships that mediate government and civil society in Western society are lacking. Labour unions are conspicuous by their absence not only in the creative occupations but across all occupations, and particularly in manufacturing. People are frequently asked to move their place of residence in the name of progress and development. Moreover, while the convergence of science, technology and culture may appear to be expedient from a Western critical perspective, this has a longer legacy in China. Nor is the emergence of creative industries policy a sudden leap of faith. Policy-making in China is an extremely complex process, passing through multiple iterations before implementation. While the outbreak of creative parks, precinct and clusters may appear to be a 'cookie cutter' approach, it reflects a Chinese socialist model of planning and duplication of resources.

The problem of trying to see China through Western categories is compounded by the poor fit between Western-style libertarianism and the expediency of Chinese socialism. The Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese government, for all their past faults, face severe challenges to manage a huge population and to sustain the kind of double digit growth that frightens the life out of Western nations but is necessary to maintain social stability. China is massive in area, diversity and population; neo-classical economics struggles to account for its contradictions. There will always be labour problems and exploitation in China, whether this be the 'Made in China' development model or 'Created in China'. Andrew Ross' work makes the point about mobile labour very well, arguing that workers in the low cost factories have more power to move locations than before. This is not to say that we (from privileged positions in the West) shouldn't raise issues of human rights. However, the tendency of many writing from the Left is to champion critique without offering any solutions.

For China, however, it is more a question of what the creativity turn can offer in terms of development. There are positives behind the negative clouds of distrust that seem to pervade the traditional humanities. Creativity resonates negatively with notions of cosmo-

politanism and urban elites. Who are the elites in China? Are they the artists in 798 Space at Dashanzi Art District who are benefiting from access to tourism to buy their work? Are they the city officials who are looking to rezone the big cities to distribute high value industries more evenly in outer city areas, in the process relocating factories and factory workers? Are they visionaries like Su Tong from the CCIA who are working to grow local creative enterprise – from Made in China to Created in China?

Creative industries offer China more hope than pessimism. The discourse of creativity has now diffused into the mainstream; the idea may well promote greater pluralism. Experiments like 798 Space in Beijing, although obviously monitored by Chinese officials, open up spaces for new ideas. They might be a Western concept, and may have extant neo-liberal baggage, but the creative industries have the capacity to effect meaningful change in China, not only for the affluent classes. This is the deeper significance of the super-sign in China: to make new, to reform, and to transform.

21. Chris Anderson, *The Long Tail: How Endless Choice is Creating Unlimited Demand*, London: Random House Business Books, 2006.
22. Terry Flew, 'The New Middle Class Meets the Creative Class: The Masters of Business Administration (MBA) and Creative Innovation in 21st Century China', *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 9.3 (2006): 419-429.
23. Justin O'Connor, 'Creative Exports: Taking Cultural Industries to St. Petersburg', *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 11.1 (2005): 45-60.

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FROM BOSTON TO BERLIN
LOCATING THE DIGITAL MEDIA INDUSTRIES IN THE CELTIC TIGER

APHRA KERR

The former Táiniste (deputy prime minister) of the Republic of Ireland stated that Ireland was closer to Boston than to Berlin in terms of government and economic culture.[1] She was, of course, primarily referring to the low corporation and income tax policies that the government has been pursuing for the past decade. In the context of a rapidly growing economy, the government's discourse focuses on competitiveness, innovation and moving up the value chain. Conceptual fashions like 'national systems of innovation' and 'industrial clusters or districts' are commonplace in policy documents. The 'creative industries' concept, by comparison, has not yet been embraced by Irish policy-makers, either in rhetoric or practice. Instead, the focus is on the 'digital media' or the 'digital content' industry defined broadly, but excluding traditional arts and crafts.

This is not to state that Irish policy-making for the so-called 'digital media industries' is without its problems. Even this terminology, in practice, conflates digital media companies from very different sectors and at different stages of the value chain. A more worrying trend is that it tends to focus attention on the underlying technology and tends to ignore or underplay other types of innovation – for example, artistic, organisational, marketing or end-user. This tendency is also evident with regard to research and development programs which tend to value technical innovations (hardware and software), and formal research and development, more highly than other types of innovation or practice-based research and development. This issue is also evident in the conceptualisation of digital media districts.

Part of the problem relates to the received understanding of innovation which is very narrow, very focused on technology, and most commonly measured by clearly identifiable inputs and outputs. The social context of innovation, labour conditions and 'soft' inputs to innovation are less easy to identify and thus less valued. Our understanding of innovation comes in the main from studies of manufacturing companies, or public and private research laboratories, and is largely removed from the experiences of digital media companies. It is relatively recently that academics have started to study innovation in service industries, and this work has generally focused on knowledge intensive business services. Little has been done on services like the media and cultural industries.

In my previous work, I have argued that while technology is a key enabler of innovation, it is not the only driver of innovation. Indeed, a technology led approach to innovation in the content stage of the digital media value chain is far from sufficient for success.[2] The core

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1. See http://www.entemp.ie/press/2000/21070.htm for the full speech.
2. Aphra Kerr, 'Ireland in the Global Information Economy: Innovation and Multimedia "Content" Industries', PhD thesis, School of Communications, Dublin: Dublin City University, 1999.

argument of this paper is that policies for the digital content industries must begin to value non-technical forms of innovation and its social context if these sectors are to fully realise their potential in the contemporary knowledge economy. This paper will analyse policies for the digital media industries in Ireland and explore how these policies impact upon one specific sector, the digital games industry. It concludes that current policies for these sectors need to rethink what they define as 'innovation' and 'research and development' if these sectors are to succeed in the global economy.

Policies for the Digital Content Industry in Ireland
In many countries, it has become commonplace in policy circles to attempt to measure the economic value of the arts, media and cultural industries. Ireland is no exception, and it has experienced over a decade of policy reports attempting to redefine and measure the contribution of the cultural industries to the economy.[3] This must be seen in the context of over a decade of rapid economic growth, in macro economic terms, which has translated into full employment and for the first time in over 150 years, population growth and immigration. Recent policy documents for the arts and digital media focus on measuring employment and output, and place the software and digital media industries, in particular, within the remit of the same agency. It might seem churlish to criticise government policies in this area given the contribution of the software industry to this Irish success story, but herein lies the core of the conundrum: while Ireland grew to become the second largest exporter of software in the OECD over the past ten years, both traditional and digital content companies failed to match the packaged software companies either in terms of employment or in terms of output. While the software sector attracted a high level of mobile multinational software companies and spun off a relatively strong, if smaller, indigenous Irish software sector, the same could not be said of digital media companies.

Within this context, the situation of the arts and those media industries with a pre-digital history is complex and ambiguous. There is still a system of public patronage and support in place for the fine artist, the writer and the concert musician. In addition, tax policies are in place to help Ireland compete as a location for global footloose film productions. While these policies can be traced to the particular interests of past ministers, they point to more implicit values. Film, fine art, literature, music and broadcasting are valued for both their economic and cultural value, and are supported by a range of government agencies, councils and grants. New digital media score high on economic value, but low on cultural value and, therefore, are not deserving of any specific public support. Digital media companies, whether they produce content or technology, are treated like any other software company and must compete against all other sectors of the economy for investment capital. They also come under the aegis of the Department of Industry and Commerce rather than the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism.

Forfás, the body responsible for industrial policy development in Ireland, and policy for the digital content industry in particular, has not fully adopted the creative industries terminology, although it has recently acknowledged its international dominance.[4] The digital content industry, however, is defined broadly enough to include digital entertainment industries, e-learning companies, companies providing online services to consumers, and companies providing online services to businesses. A key difference from the creative industries concept lies in the exclusion of traditional arts and crafts from the latter. The digital content industry definition does, however, include companies at all stages of the value chain, from content or 'symbol creators' to publishers, data storage companies and telecommunications companies. In 2002, Forfás estimated that there were a total of 282 companies in the digital content sector in Ireland, employing between 4,000 and 4,500 employees. Software, by comparison employs almost 24,000.

Academic studies of the media industries in Ireland have noted that they tend to be clustered around Dublin, are very small to medium sizes companies, and went through a period of consolidation and shake out in the late 1990s.[5] Many traditional media companies were moving into the digital sector, and the largest and most visited websites in Ireland tended to be owned by large traditional media companies. When one examines employment by occupation within a sample of these companies, the importance of authoring and design as well as sales and marketing roles becomes apparent, and while technical jobs are important, they constitute a much smaller percentage. Interviews with 23 media companies (20 Irish firms and 3 UK firms) across a range of sectors in 2002 found that:

– Media content authoring and design occupations accounted for 34% of the total jobs in these firms (292 jobs out of a total of 866).
– Management, sales and marketing occupations accounted for 20% of the total employment.
– Software development, IT and system support accounted for 15% of the total jobs.
– Quality control and testing roles accounted for 19% of the total.[6]

These studies demonstrate that the general alignment of the digital media sector with the software industry in the Irish context is problematic. Firstly, the digital media sector is dwarfed by the software industry in terms of employment and output. Secondly, software attracts a high level of multinational corporate relocation to Ireland, and generates a lot of positive publicity as a result. Thirdly, the multinational element of the software sector relies, in the main, on research and development carried on outside Ireland. Fourthly, the multinational and indigenous software industry is able to avail of local, European research and commercialisation

3. Ellen Hazelkorn and Colin Murphy, 'The Cultural Economy of Dublin', in Mary Corcoran and Michel Peillon (eds) *Ireland Unbound: A Turn of the Century Chronicle*, Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2002, pp. 119-132.

4. Forfás, *A Strategy for the Digital Content Industry in Ireland*, 2002, http://www.forfas.ie/publications/digicontent02/021105_digital_content_report_s.pdf; Forfás, *Future Skills Requirements of the International Digital Media Industry: Implications for Ireland*, 2006.

5. Aphra Kerr, 'Ireland in the Global Information Economy', 1999; Anthony Cawley, 'Innovation in the Irish Digital Media Industry Between 1999 and 2002: An Emergent New "Content" Industry', PhD thesis, Dublin: Department of Communications, Dublin City University, 2003; Ellen Hazelkorn, 'New Digital Technologies, Work Practices and Cultural Production in Ireland', *The Economic and Social Review* 28.3 (1997): 235-259.

6. Paschal Preston, Anthony Cawley and Aphra Kerr, 'Skills Requirements of the Digital Content Industry in Ireland', unpublished draft research report, Dublin, Ireland: FAS Skills Labour Market Research Unit, 2003.

funds that target technology and software developments. Fifthly, the size of the sector and its profile has a shaping effect on educational policy, particularly at the tertiary level. In comparison to the high profile, globally linked and well capitalised software sector, the Irish digital media industries in general, and the content stage of the value chain in particular, has lower levels of employment and output, does not qualify for specific national research funds, and appears to have less capacity to interface with research laboratories and universities. They are also viewed as a more risky investment than technology projects by venture capitalists.[7]

Both the creative industries and the digital content industry/value chain approaches are problematic. The former groups a diverse range of industrial sectors together, and focuses on individual talent and intellectual property as output, which bears little relation to the creative or collaborative process of innovation which occurs in many digital media companies. It also underplays creativity in other sectors of the economy. In Ireland, so far, the digital content value chain approach is applied, and while this usefully highlights the links between digital content production and other segments of the economy, it tends to ignore the specific challenges faced by content producers as compared to technology producers in terms of labour, production and distribution. And this approach is followed through by industrial innovation funds and supports that appear, in the Irish context at least, to favour technology firms. The current policy framework in Ireland supports traditional arts and media on the one hand, and new software industries on the other, but new media producers specialising in content production have suffered. Of course, the national policy context is not the only factor at play here, but in the context of this paper, it is crucially important for this sector. Later, we will briefly explore the impact of these policies on the structure of the Irish digital games industry.[8]

Digital Hubs and Clusters

While Irish policy-makers have been slow to reorganise industrial policy and departments in line with the creative industry discourse, a related 'policy fashion' has taken root around the idea that digital media industries can play an important role in terms of urban regeneration. European, national and regional industrial policy has increasingly adopted the language of 'creative clusters' in an attempt to regenerate old industrial centres. 'Creative clusters' are geographically proximate groups of digital media companies whose location in proximity to each other and local universities are believed to generate positive spillover effects or localised externalities. This policy approach draws upon Porter's 'The Competitive Advantage of Nations', as well as more recent work within innovation studies and institutional economics on regional systems of innovation. The *MyCreativity* conference held in Amsterdam in 2006 demonstrated just how widespread these policies have become in Europe with speakers from Madrid, Barcelona, Rotterdam, Basel, Helsinki, Berlin and London.[9] Yet for all the ambitions

of these policy-driven top-down regeneration schemes, it was apparent from these conference presentations that they are deeply problematic. Many regeneration projects mean massive public investment in infrastructure and private redevelopment of property, leading to rising real estate costs and the relocation of existing occupants. Indeed, much more attention is needed to explore where the benefits from such redevelopments flow.

There have been three examples of such projects in Ireland to date: Temple Bar, the Digital Hub/Liberties projects in Dublin and the Digital Media Project (MIDAS) which runs in a corridor from Belfast in Northern Ireland to Dundalk in the Republic. None of these projects have been subject to independent academic analysis to date, but recent investigations by public spending committees point to a high level of waste of public funds in the Digital Hub/Liberties project in particular. Investigate journalism has noted the destruction of many historic buildings in the case of the Temple Bar project and the replacement of actual artistic practice by mega pubs, restaurants and galleries which present commodified cultural products generated elsewhere.

The Digital Hub/Liberties project is of interest because the aim is to create a digital media industrial cluster and regenerate an old industrial area of Dublin. This project has seen the purchase of old warehouses from the Guinness company (now owned by Diageo) in a very old industrial area of Dublin called the Liberties. Initially managed by the same consultancy company involved in the Temple Bar redevelopment, responsibility was later transferred to a government controlled development authority. The initial plan for the €250 million project was to involve a public-private partnership to redevelop nine acres of land with approximately 50 percent reserved for digital media businesses, one quarter for accommodation, and the rest for retail and educational use served by a high speed telecommunications infrastructure. After much delay, the first digital media companies moved into the area in 2002. The focus was on companies involved in games, e-learning, e-music and digital TV.

A coup for the plan was an agreement that the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Boston would become the 'anchor' tenant in the digital media industrial area around which small Irish digital media companies would cluster and benefit from 'spillovers', 'externalities' and 'technology transfer'. Established in 2001, Media Lab Europe (MLE) at one point had 66 researchers and students involved in 'blue sky' research in areas like palpable machines and sensory interaction. While corporate funding was meant to fund 80 percent of the €130 million budget for the first ten years, this level of private funding never materialised. Newspaper reports around the time quoted various spokespeople speaking about the advantages of clustering based on the Silicon Valley model and noting 'it is not just a property play, it's about people'.[10] Given that the first companies did not move into the area until one year after MLE was established, and the lab was already in financial trouble, this local clustering effect failed to take hold.

In February 2005, MLE officially closed after numerous management shake-ups and disagreement between the Irish government and MIT over how to fund and run the lab. In particular, the Irish government was dismayed at the lack of private fundraising by MLE and its unwillingness to adjust its 'non-directed research' strategy towards a more 'commercially

7. Joan McNaboe, *Skills Requirements of the Digital Content Industry in Ireland: Phase 1*, Dublin: FAS, STeM, Dublin City University and the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, 2005, http://www.skillsireland.ie/press/reports/pdf/egfsn0502_Digital_Content_Industry_Skills%20Report.pdf.
8. Aphra Kerr and Anthony Cawley, 'Snakes and Ladders: A System of Innovation Analysis of Ireland's Games Industry', forthcoming in Jason Rutter and Jo Bryce (eds) *Digital Game Industries: Work, Knowledge and Consumption*, London: Ashgate.
9. See http://www.networkcultures.org/mycreativity.

10. Jamie Smyth, 'Digital Hub Eventually Starts Rolling', *The Irish Times,* 8 November, 2002.

driven' research model after the dotcom slowdown. Further, a consultant's review of the project described the lab's outputs as 'dismal'. These outputs included 12 patents and 24 publications in internationally peer reviewed journals over a period of four years.[11] MLE disputes these figures. Links were established with local universities, but only after the government launched a specific research program for collaboration with MLE and made a further €1.25 million available. Overall, the government invested €35.3 million in the failed project and made available a building worth €22.2 million for a nominal rent. By comparison, MLE raised €4.5 million (approx.) in funding from private sources. While the project generated a lot of positive publicity, and was used as a marketing tool to attract foreign direct investment to Ireland, the project largely failed in terms of its clustering and development of original intellectual property aims. It also failed to become embedded in the local context.

Meanwhile, the larger 'Digital Hub' project continued, but by 2005 the much-vaunted public-private partnership model was reported to be under reconsideration.[12] While the district attracted both indigenous and foreign-owned digital media companies, the project failed to put in place a property development deal fast enough, and some companies were housed in prefabricated buildings as a result. The development of a state of the art digital learning centre for the local community has also been delayed. Today, the district has over 70 'digital media' companies, variously defined, but MLE has produced little to no demonstrable impact on the local companies or the local community, and seven of the nine acres are still not occupied.[13] A new development plan was launched in 2007, and will involve a 'community public-private partnership' to develop a 'digital quarter' and 'centre of excellence' in digital media research and enterprise. The government also proposed to replace MLE with a national digital media research centre.

Interestingly, these clustering/hub projects were undertaken despite the conclusion by Irish academics that industrial clusters were not the most appropriate industrial policy to apply in a small open economy like Irelands.[14] This may be even more pertinent given that many media companies are sole-traders or micro-enterprises, and may encounter specific difficulties either investing in research and development themselves, or benefiting from ideas developed in research centres like MLE. As Rosalind Gill notes in her work on freelance new media workers, many face difficulties maintaining and updating their skills and knowledge of the latest technologies.[15] Paul Jeffcutt examined the creative industries in Northern Ireland and found that despite their designation as creative, the creative industries are not more or less (in principle) creative than other industries. He argues there is much variation

11. Committee of Public Accounts, *First Interim Report for 2004 (Hearings of the Committee for Oct. 2005 to July 2006)* Media Lab Europe, Dail Eireann, 2007.
12. Jamie Smyth, 'Digital Hub Boss Says Project Still Coming to Town', *The Irish Times,* 11 March, 2005.
13. See http://www.thedigitalhub.com.
14. Leo van Grunsven and Chris Van Egeraat, 'Achievements of the Industrial 'High-Road' and Clustering Strategies in Singapore and Their Relevance to European Peripheral Economies', *European Planning Studies* 7.2 (1999): 145-173.
15. Rosalind Gill, 'Cool, Creative and Egalitarian? Exploring Gender in Project-Based New Media Work in Europe', *Information, Communication and Society* 5.1 (2002): 70-89.

and there is a need for empirical analysis of the industries in question.[16]

While there is evidence to suggest that particular companies in certain contexts may benefit from clustering, there is also evidence to suggest that top-down initiatives like the MLE project rarely work, and that more organic spin-offs from universities and companies are more likely to be embedded in local networks and become durable. The lessons from the Digital Hub project so far would suggest that both clustering and public-private partnerships are far from straightforward or proven strategies for developing intellectual property and company growth in the digital media sector, let alone community regeneration. While clearly external factors played a role in the demise of MLE, the imbalance between public and private investment in the project was quite staggering, and the lack of linkages between MLE and geographically proximate companies was plainly evident. More detailed research is needed to explore the organic relationships and dependencies that may develop between the 70 companies who are still co-located in this area of Dublin and the wider community.

Overall, policy for the digital media/content industry in Ireland is driven by a focus on technology, either hardware or software, and a focus on direct foreign investment. Digital content is largely seen in the same terms as software, but the differences between software companies and digital media companies in terms of their production processes, innovation processes, organisational and reward structures are largely ignored. This is before one considers the specifics of international production and distribution networks. Attempts to address the lack of capital available for digital media companies have so far failed, and the main policy initiative in this area remains the Digital Hub project. The overall focus on technology and on creating a 'digital district' is, I would argue, undermining other forms of innovation as we will see from a short examination of the Irish digital games industry.

Lessons from the Digital Games Industry

While technology is clearly an important driver of change in the digital games industry, both in terms of hardware and software, empirical analysis of the development of games, the key roles and skills involved in the development team, and their marketing and distribution, again highlights the importance of non-technical knowledge inputs and occupations to the process. These aspects are complicated even further by different regulatory, funding and consumption environments.

Elsewhere, I have described the various roles involved in the game production process, with the production team including producers, artists, designers, modellers, animators, scriptwriters, audio designers and programmers.[17] This team is often supplemented towards the end of production by a quality assurance and testing team. Generic design and programming skills must be adapted to particular platforms, and thus experience on previous titles and an ability to work in a team, rather than formal educational qualifications, are key to obtaining a publishing deal. Kline et al. point out that 'game develop-

16. Paul Jeffcutt, 'Knowledge Relationships and Transactions in a Cultural Economy: Analysing the Creative Industries Ecosystem', *Media International Australia: Incorporating Culture and Policy* 112 (2004): 67-82.
17. Aphra Kerr, *The Business and Culture of Digital Games: Gamework/Gameplay*, London: Sage, 2006.

ment… requires a synthesis of narrative, aesthetic, and technological skills'.[18] The design and development process is collaborative, takes place in a studio and can take one-two years for a high-end title.

The digital games industry can be divided into four content segments: console, standard personal computer, massively multiplayer online games and casual games. Each segment is structured differently, and companies within each segment have different production cultures and routes to market. These four segments produce content and are supported in the games industry by a range of publishing, distribution, retail, middleware and hardware companies. In order to support innovation in this industry, policy-makers need to attend not only to the range of companies involved in the value chain, but also to differences between the content segment of the chain. A key distinction between the segments is the fact that the console sector is highly concentrated with a small number of global companies (e.g. Microsoft, Sony and Nintendo), essentially controlling access to the key distribution and retail channels. While this is the largest market segment in terms of sales, it also has the highest barriers to entry for content development companies.

A study of the games industry in Ireland found that no indigenous Irish companies had successfully developed a game in the console and PC segments of the market.[19] While companies in many countries face difficulties entering this market segment, Irish companies would appear to face particular difficulties. Face to face interviews with Irish game companies found that while they have traditionally been strong technically, they tend to lack creative and business skills and operate in an environment which views content innovations as a risky investment. Thus, in the context of an environment which has seen ten years of rapid economic growth, particularly in the software industries, no Irish games company has succeeded in bringing a console or PC game to market, despite numerous attempts. At the same time, Ireland has successfully developed a number of middleware companies (i.e. companies who develop software that game development companies can use) and has grown a number of content developers targeting the mobile and casual games sectors where creativity, design expertise and entry barriers are lower.

When one examines the structure of the global games industry in general, one is presented with an industry where both hardware and software innovation is a key driver of change, particularly in the console segment where every four years or so a new generation of platforms require content developers to adapt, and in most cases radically change their production and design processes. Harnessing a new technology is, however, far from straightforward, and as Gallagher and Park point out, technological innovation has historically been a necessary, but not sufficient, factor for success in the digital games industry.[20] Overall, the key trends in the global games industry are towards greater concentration and conglomeration of publishing and distribution capabilities, increased licensing of intellec-

18. Stephen Kline, Nick Dyer-Witheford and Greig de Peuter, Digital Play: The Interaction of Technology, Culture, and Marketing, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003, p. 199.
19. Aphra Kerr, 'Loading. Please Wait. Ireland and the Global Games Industry', Dublin, STeM Working Paper No. 1, Dublin City University, 2002.
20. Scott Gallagher and Seung Ho Park, 'Innovation and Competition in Standard-Based Industries: A Historical Analysis of the US Home Video Game Market', IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management 49.1 (2002): 67-82.

tual property from real world and other media resources, and a decrease in the production of independent, indie and original game ideas. In other words, when one examines the top selling console games in the UK and US markets over the past ten years, there is an increasing trend towards sequels, multi-platform licenses and derivative game ideas.[21] There is a widespread fear that such trends will have a negative impact on the industry's overall long-term growth.

Radical content innovations tend to come from independent game developers, end users and modders rather than from within the core industry. Thus the best selling PC game of all time, The Sims, designed by Will Wright and his then independent company Maxis, failed for quite some time to get a publishing deal because publishers felt that there would be no market for the game. Similarly, Grand Theft Auto was developed by an independent game studio in Scotland. What these stories have in common is that the original game ideas went on to become multi-platform franchises, and the independent game companies themselves were bought out by multinational publishing houses. Interestingly, these game ideas all developed in the PC market, which is often the launching pad for new ideas that are later taken up by the more conglomerated and consolidated console segment. First Person Shooters as a genre, for example, developed in the early 1990s on PCs. One of the first successful titles, *Half Life*, was developed by an independent company, Valve, which was then further developed by a modder whose game was subsequently launched by Valve as the team play modification *Counterstrike*. These examples are more the exception than the rule, and demonstrate the importance of small independent companies and game players as producers of innovative ideas and the reliance of these sources on intellectual property deals with multinational publishing and distribution companies in order to reach key markets.

A further barrier to innovation would appear to be labour conditions within the industry. Studies of working conditions, production pipelines and careers in the games industry talk of 'passionate pay slaves' and 'free networked labour'.[22] They point to the lack of freedom development houses have to create original intellectual property and to get that property to market, particularly in the console segment. They highlight the exploitation of workers coming up to crunch time, the lack of credit given to workers on game packaging and in terms of acknowledging individual input. Overall, both freelance and contract developers in the games industry, particularly the console segment of the industry (the most lucrative and largest), are largely involved in underpaid creative work for which they are given little credit and from which they receive little to none of the royalties. The industry is dominated by young unmarried white males with little representation of women and minorities. Meanwhile, modders and fans are given tools to develop and improve games, but are carefully regulated and managed so that they do not exploit their creations.

Thus in the games industry, we see that technology is an important input into the

21. Aphra Kerr and Roddy Flynn, 'Revisiting Globalisation through the Movie and Digital Games Industries', Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies 9.1 (2003): 91-113.
22. Greg de Peuter and Nick Dyer-Witheford, 'A Playful Multitude? Mobilising and Counter-Mobilising Immaterial Game Labour', Fibreculture Journal 5 (2005), http://journal.fibreculture.org/issue5/depeuter_dyerwitheford.html.

innovation process, but that the development of new content crucially depends on the global structure of the industry (particularly the oligopoly in the console segment), on legal frameworks (especially intellectual property laws), and on the creative input of independents and modders. Independent game companies, however, require significant capital to enable them to produce a game demo to pitch to publishers, and this would appear to be one of the key stumbling blocks in the Irish situation. Further, the focus by Irish games companies on technical, rather than creative and design skills, would also appear to be a significant issue. While technology driven innovations are important in many industrial sectors, in the digital media industry, the creative content idea and business skills are at least as significant.

This point is emphasised in a case study of product development and localisation in a multinational digital media company. In this company, product innovation was technology driven rather than market driven.[23] Company strategy meant that new products had to exploit the latest technologies regardless of the market penetration of broadband or high-end computers. Further, content was highly culturally specific and not localised for particular markets. Cultural differences and taste differences between markets were largely ignored. Over the period of this study, the product had to be redesigned and re-launched three times, and in the end, the company developed a more decentralised user and market orientated content innovation strategy and scaled back its technological ambitions. This case study found that company strategy was technology driven, and it was only when they started to pay attention to design and market specificities that the application began to make money outside its home market.

Over the past two decades in Ireland, industrial development policy has favoured multinational companies, and companies involved in technical innovations to the detriment of projects focused on content innovations. The latter are often seen as too risky for both state and venture capital investors. Similarly, national industrial development priorities influence education, and while technical research projects flourish, creative and design projects struggle to survive. Despite widespread acknowledgment that digital content industries rely on a mixture of creative, technical and business skills, investment is heavily focused on technical skills and innovation. The same issues are currently emerging in Ireland in relation to the development of game development education, where courses are mainly emerging out of computer science departments, and are heavily focused on programming and infrastructure rather than design and market knowledge.

Final Thoughts
In the UK, where the concept of the creative industries was first delineated, the creative industries include the traditional media industries, computer software and craft activities like furniture making and jewellery design.[24] It is, as Paul Jeffcutt points out, a rather arbitrary and unwieldy categorisation. Nevertheless, it has been taken on board at European policy level as recent documents demonstrate:

23. Aphra Kerr, 'Media Diversity and Cultural Identities: The Development of Multimedia
    Content in Ireland', *New Media and Society* 2.3 (2000): 286-312.
24. David Hesmondhalgh, *The Cultural Industries*, London: Sage, 2002.

Creative industries are knowledge and labour intensive and foster innovation: the sector is considered to have a huge potential for generation of employment and export expansion. However, according to UNCTAD, its potential is currently not realised.[25]

Why is this potential not being realised? This paper draws on case studies and interviews with Irish and British digital media companies in order to explore innovation in digital media companies and the impact of actual industrial and research policies on digital media companies. The results would suggest that while digital technologies offer the potential for creative enterprises to operate on a global or regional scale, the structure of many digital media industries means that digital media companies are often very much focused on the local, and they depend on selling their intellectual property rights to a multinational publisher if they wish to move beyond this immediate context. Localising content for different markets is often well beyond the capacity of small digital media companies. For freelancers, the situation is even more precarious. A policy focus on individual skills and talent in the creative industries belies the imbalances in power in many industries and within certain segments of industries. A focus on creativity seems to remove the focus on actual labour and working conditions, and the falling numbers of women and minorities who are able to exploit the informal social and production networks within which the digital media sector operates.

While there has been a lot of public and private discussions on strengthening IPR laws to protect 'creativity', there has been less attention paid to supporting the process of creativity and innovation in the digital media industry. Certainly, in Ireland, traditional arts and crafts based around individual skill are increasingly separated in policy terms from the software and digital media sector. While the former is valued in cultural terms and receives state patronage, the latter two are valued in economic terms and receive a rather different form of state patronage. The evidence would suggest that policies which focus on traditional concepts of innovation, research and development, technology transfer, industrial districts and tangible product innovations may fail to support companies involved in content and intangible service innovations. Current policies do not seem to support risky content innovations to the same extent as risky technology innovations, and one must start at some stage to ask why.

In digital media companies, the innovation process draws upon a diverse range of actors and knowledge domains both internal and external to the firm, and is seldom demarcated and confined to activities within a research and development division. There are clear differences between companies involved in enabling technologies like middleware and those at the content stage of the value chain. Companies who specialise in content innovation must balance technology skills with artistic and business skills if they are to produce product innovations that succeed outside the local market. Thus traditional definitions of what constitutes research and development may not apply in a digital media company specialising in content innovations. Industrial, innovation and educational policies do not appear, however, to have really embraced the interdisciplinary nature of content innovation, and the need for these small to medium sized companies (or in some cases individual freelancers)

25. Carmen Marcus, *Future of Creative Industries: Implications for Research Policy*,
    Brussels: European Commission, 2005, http://cordis.europa.eu/foresight/working.htm.

to interface with multinational distribution and publishing companies. Measuring outputs in terms of intellectual property rights ignores the fact that many companies and freelancers sell on their IPR to global firms, or may choose to operate under open source or Creative Commons licenses. Current policies for the digital media industries in Ireland fail to capture important differences between and within industries, and while a universal policy may encourage innovation in some sectors, it may actively discourage it in others.

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WRONG IN THE RIGHT WAY?
CREATIVE CLASS THEORY AND CITY ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE IN THE UK

MAX NATHAN

1. Introduction

A few years ago, *New York Times* columnist David Brooks wrote an instructive guide on 'How to Be an Intellectual Giant'. Amongst the advice on tone, subject niche, demeanour, how to title one's first book and cadge the next newspaper column, Brooks includes one crucial insight: be wrong. But be wrong in the right way – ideas should be eye-catching and controversial enough to get everyone paying attention. That way lies fame, or at least infamy.

Many would accuse US academic Richard Florida of being wrong in the right way. For cities and the urban policy world, the biggest idea for years is Florida's 'creative class' theory, as set out in his bestseller *The Rise of the Creative Class* and more recent sequel, *The Flight of the Creative Class*.[1]

Florida has a striking take on city performance: diverse, tolerant, 'cool' cities do better. Places with more ethnic minorities, gay people and counter-culturalists will draw high-skilled professionals, and thus attract the best jobs and most dynamic companies.

These ideas are novel, controversial – and for progressive commentators, politicians and policy-makers, highly attractive. On both sides of the Atlantic, Richard Florida's work has been met with much interest and some scepticism. Not surprisingly, Florida's ideas have taken him from academic obscurity to worldwide recognition, and the author has developed a new niche as public intellectual, consultant and urban policy guru.[2]

It is important to understand the creative class approach, and what it implies for cities around the world. First, because if it is correct, many countries' approaches to urban policy will need a rethink. And second, because – without much-needed examination or scrutiny – it is becoming part of the conventional wisdom about how to make cities work better.

Some cities and states are already putting Florida's ideas into practice – Michigan, Cleveland and Philadelphia have all launched 'cool cities' initiatives, for example. The Mayor of Detroit has announced the city is 'hip hop'; Berlin's Mayor says the city is 'poor

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1. Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life, New York: Basic Books, 2002; Richard Florida, *The Flight of the Creative Class*: The New Global Competition for Talent, New York: HarperCollins, 2005.
2. See the 'Richard Florida Creativity Group' at http://www.creativeclass.org and http://www.catalytix.biz.

but sexy'.[3] In the UK, Liverpool is now considering creating a 'Gay Quarter' to rival Manchester's Gay Village, and Dundee has zoned a new 'Cultural Quarter' next to the city centre.[4] In the US, creative class ideas have generated headlines like 'Cities Need Gays To Thrive' and 'Be Creative or Die'.[5] They have also been slated, attacked and written off by a mob of angry academics, wonks and other pundits.[6] So has Florida hit on something profound about how cities work, or is he just wrong in the right way? And what are the lessons for post-industrial cities across the West?

Much of Florida's research concentrates on American cities. This paper aims to test the Florida thesis on British cities. It examines the creative class theory in more detail, and its implications for cities and urban policy in the UK. It then explores some broader themes in diversity, creativity, and city economic performance, and extracts some generic lessons for post-industrial Western cities.

2. About This Paper

The paper is structured as follows. Section 3 provides context, locating creative class theory among broader debates on the drivers of urban economic performance – and the real recovery of UK cities over the past decade and a half. Section 4 looks more closely at Florida's approach, and how it has evolved. Section 5 discusses one recent attempt to reproduce Florida's findings for urban areas in England and Wales. Section 6 takes a critical look at the assumptions underlying Florida's model. Section 7 discusses some of the broader debates around diversity, creativity and urban economic performance. Section 8 concludes.

3. Where is Florida? Placing the Creative Class Approach

The resurgence of cities is a big theme right now, for researchers seeking to explain it, and for national and city governments seeking to exploit it. In the UK, cities have risen up the policy agenda, and the British Government recognises that the major conurbations, or 'city-regions', are the building blocks of the UK economy.[7] This policy shift reflects real progress on the ground. Until the early 1990s, big British cities were in decline, losing population and employment share and suffering a range of negative social consequences.

3. Michael Storper and Michael Manville, 'Behaviour, Preferences and Cities',
   Urban Studies 43.8 (2006): 1275-1300.
4. Andy Kelly, 'Liverpool to Debate Gay Quarter Initiative', *Liverpool Daily Post*, 1 September, 2005;
   John McCarthy, 'Promoting Image and Identity in Cultural Quarters: The Case of Dundee', *Local
   Economy* 20.3 (2006): 280-293.
5. Steven Malanga, 'The Curse of the Creative Class: A New Age Theory of Urban Development
   Amounts to Economic Snake Oil', *Wall Street Journal*, 19 January, 2004.
6. Jamie Peck, 'Struggling With the Creative Class', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29.4 (2005): 740-770; Joel Kotkin, 'Urban Legends', *The New Republic*, 23 May, 2005;
   Ann Markusen, 'Urban Development and the Politics of a Creative Class: Evidence from the
   Study of Artists', *Regional Growth Agendas*, Regional Studies Association Conference, Aalborg,
   29-31 May, 2005; John Hannigan, 'Boom Towns and Cool Cities: The Perils and Prospects of Developing a Distinctive Urban Brand in a Global Economy', *The Resurgent City*, LSE Symposium,
   London, 19-21 April, 2004; Malanga, 'The Curse of the Creative Class'.
7. ODPM / DTI / HMT, *Devolving Decision-making: 3 - Meeting the Regional Economic Challenge:
   The Importance of Cities to Regional Growth*, London: TSO, 2006.

They were seen by Government as problems to be dealt with, rather than assets to be developed. As Mrs Thatcher so memorably put it: 'we must do something about those inner cities'.[8] Over the past decade or so, big British cities have got better. On key outcomes like population, output and employment, London has grown significantly; large conurbations like Manchester and Leeds are in recovery mode; and many small, service-based cities in the regions around the capital – such as Reading, Slough and Milton Keynes – have expanded hugely. Over the longer term, this last group of cities has been gradually gaining in economic significance.[9] Not all UK cities have shared the gains, however: many Northern ex-industrial cities – like Oldham, Burnley, Doncaster and Hull – continue to look for new economic roles. Urban recovery is partly due to factors outside cities' control, in particular, strong macroeconomic growth since 1993 and high public spending since 2000. But it also reflects performance factors at city and city-region level. How do current theories help us understand the recent recovery in cities? Urban resilience and adaptability, especially in non-'global cities', has been explained in two main ways.

The Preferences of Firms
The first set of theories focus on the behaviour and preferences of firms, and the production economies that cities provide businesses.[10] Despite falling transport costs and pervasive new forms of ICT, urban areas remain locations of choice for many businesses. Agglomeration economies in cities remain strong.[11] Thick labour markets, hub infrastructure and access to markets all matter, particularly for firms in the service sector where face-to-face communication with suppliers, colleagues or customers is also important. Technology appears to have double-edged effects, probably increasing the need for face-to-face communication to build trust and process complex and/or tacit information.[12] More broadly, cities may benefit from dynamic agglomeration economies – if knowledge spillovers and the flow of ideas stimulates innovation across sectors, and leads to the creation of new goods and services over the long term.[13]

8. Delivered on the morning of her 1987 Election victory, on the steps of the Conservative
   Party's HQ.
9. ODPM (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister), *The State of the English Cities Report*, London:
   ODPM, 2006; Barry Moore and Iain Begg, 'Urban Growth and Competitiveness in Britain: A Long
   Run Perspective', in Martin Boddy and Michael Parkinson (eds) *City Matters: Competitiveness,
   Cohesion and Urban Governance*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2004, pp. 93-111.
10. Alfred Marshall, *Principles of Economics: An Introductory Volume*, 8th Edition, New York: Macmillan, 1920; Edgar Hoover, *The Location of Economic Activity*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1940;
    Jane Jacobs, *The Economy of Cities*, New York: Vintage, 1969.
11. Masahisa Fujita, Paul Krugman and Anthony Venables, *The Spatial Economy: Cities, Regions
    and International Trade*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999.
12. Sylvie Charlot and Gilles Duranton (2006): 'Cities and Workplace Communication: Some Qualitative French Evidence', Urban Studies 43.8 (2006): 1365-1394; Sassen, Saskia, 'Four Dynamics Shaping the Ongoing Utility of Spatial Agglomeration', *Greater Cities in a Smaller World*,
    Cambridge Econometrics Conference, Cambridge, 4-5 July, 2006; Michael Storper and Anthony
    Venables, 'Buzz: Face to Face Contact and the Urban Economy', *The Resurgent City*, LSE Symposium, London, 19-21 April, 2004.
13. Jacobs, *The Economy of Cities*; Storper and Venables, 'Buzz'.

These ideas are considerably more controversial and harder to measure.[14] Why does 'dynamic agglomeration' happen in some cities and not others? Cluster theory, and related concepts of innovation systems provide some partial answers. Over time, localisation economies allow close, 'compete-collaborate' relationships to develop between networks of firms.[15] The public sector and HE Institutions play a critical role in mediating and shaping these networks.

There is a good deal of evidence for agglomeration-based theories of city performance, particularly the role of simple urbanisation economies in bigger cities.[16] Nevertheless, none fully explains UK cities' very variable performance, or why some relatively small cities have grown rapidly at the expense of others. Cluster theory, in particular, has come in for strong criticism.[17]

The Preferences of People
A second, linked set of theories may help us here. These newer approaches focus on consumption and quality of life, and the preferences of consumers, workers and residents.

First, at a basic level, cities offer 'agglomerations of consumption' to residents and visitors – access to lots of different goods and services in a relatively small area.[18] This is an increasingly important role for cities, particularly larger cities.[19] Their growing consumer base reflects the largely service-based character of many Western economies – nearly 80% of UK employment is now in the service sector.[20] And an increasingly service-based economic base in turn reflects and reinforces some deep social and cultural shifts.

Retail and leisure are blurring into each other. Leisure is becoming ever-more commodified; shopping is now one of the most popular leisure activities in the UK.[21] Shopping in big city consumer districts may confer cultural capital – providing information on what's in or out, and signalling consumer status to others.[22]

Second, lifestyle changes – particularly among young people – seem to be increasing the demand for urban living. Over the 1990s, the phenomenal rise of city centre living in UK cities reflects the aspirational quality of urban life, and the popularity of 'adultescent' lifestyles.[23] In one British survey, over 90% of 25-34 year olds said they wanted to live alone before settling down.[24] City centre living is very attractive for many of these people, particularly the better off: it is a space to work hard and play hard.[25] City centres full of young single people also operate as huge markets for future partners.[26]

More broadly, these theories intersect with more established approaches emphasising the role of skilled workers in city performance. There is a robust, long-run link between levels of human capital in a city and urban economic growth.[27] More specifically, availability of skilled labour is a key factor in many firms' location and expansion decisions. If skilled workers are attracted by a city's consumption and amenity 'offer', then it follows that policymakers should focus their efforts on attracting and keeping skilled people – particularly young graduates who may stay and raise families.

Many of these emerging ideas are much less well-explored than those of more traditional economic geography.[28] Florida's work is best seen as bridging these two approaches. There are some familiar components – agglomeration, the importance of human capital and the role of knowledge spillovers in innovation. There are also some more novel ideas – the merging of bohemian and consumer culture, the importance of amenities and the preferences of young skilled workers. It is significant that much of Florida's thinking is sited in these emerging approaches to urban performance – certainly, this highlights the need for thorough analysis of his ideas. It is to these ideas that we now turn.

4. Exploring Florida: The Geography of Bohemia
Richard Florida's ideas have developed in two distinct phases. His academic work links social diversity, high human capital and the presence of high-tech industry.[29] He tests these connections across 50 US metro areas, using:

14. See Mario Polese, 'Cities and National Economic Growth', *Urban Studies* 42.8 (2005): 1429-1451.
15. Michael Porter, 'The Competitive Advantage of the Inner City', *Harvard Business Review*, 73.3 (1995): 55-71; James Simmie, 'Innovation Clusters and Competitive Cities in the UK and Europe', in Martin Boddy and Michael Parkinson (eds) *City Matters: Competitiveness, Cohesion and Urban Governance*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2004, pp. 171-196.
16. See Daniel Graham, *Wider Economic Benefits of Transport Improvements: Link Between City Size and Productivity*, London: DFT, 2005; Patricia Rice and Anthony Venables, 'Spatial Determinants of Productivity: Analysis for the Regions of Great Britain', CEP Discussion Papers, Centre for Economic Performance, LSE, 2004; Stuart Rosenthal and William Strange, 'Evidence on the Nature and Sources of Agglomeration Economies', in Henderson J. Vernon Henderson and Jacques-François Thisse (eds) *Handbook of Urban and Regional Economics*, Amsterdam: Elsevier-North Holland, 2003, pp. 2119-2171.
17. Ron Martin and Peter Sunley, 'Deconstructing Clusters: Chaotic Concept or Policy Panacea?', *Journal of Economic Geography* 3.1 (2003): 5-35.
18. Storper and Manville, 'Behaviour, Preferences and Cities'.
19. Edward Glaeser, Jed Kolko and Albert Saiz, 'Consumer City', *Journal of Economic Geography* 1.1 (2001): 27-50.
20. According to the UK Labour Force Survey, cited at http://www.statistics.gov.uk.
21. The GB Day Trips Survey lists shopping as the fourth most popular leisure activity - after eating/drinking out, walking and seeing friends / relatives, see Countryside Agency, *GB Leisure Day Trips* 2004, London: Countryside Agency, 2004.

22. Sharon Zukin, P*oint of Purchase: How Shopping Changed America*, London: Routledge, 2004.
23. Max Nathan and Chris Urwin, *City People: City Centre Living in the UK*, London: Centre for Cities, 2006.
24. Miranda Lewis, *Home Alone? Unilever Family Report 2005*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research, 2005.
25. Paul Chatterton, Bernie Byrnes, Robert Hollands and Cait Reed, 'Changing Our "Toon": Youth, Nightlife and Urban Change in Newcastle', discussion paper, Newcastle: CURDS / Sociology and Social Policy Departments, 2003; John Urry, *Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-First Century*, London: Routledge, 2000.
26. Edward Glaeser and Joshua Gottlieb, 'Urban Resurgence and the Consumer City', *Urban Studies* 43.8 (2006): 1275-1299.
27. Edward Glaeser, 'Review of Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class*', unpublished monograph, Harvard University, 2004, http://post.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/glaeser/papers/Review_Florida.pdf.
28. Glaeser and Gottlieb, 'Urban Resurgence and the Consumer City'.
29. Richard Florida, 'The Geography of Bohemia', monograph, Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon University, 2001.

– A Bohemian Index, measuring the share of creative people in a given area
   (e.g. authors, designers, musicians, actors, visual artists and dancers).
– A Talent Index, measuring the population share with a BA or above.
– A Melting Pot Index, measuring on the foreign-born population share.
– A Gay Index, based on the number of households with co-habiting
   same-sex partners.

Output measures include:
– A High-Tech Index, measuring a Metro Area's contribution to national high-tech
   output, and high tech industries' share of local growth
– An Innovation Index, measuring patents per head in a given year.

Florida uses regression analysis to test the connections between Indices across 50 US
Metro Areas. Not surprisingly, he finds that bohemianism is spatially concentrated. He also
finds areas with a large bohemian population tend to have a large skilled population, are
ethnically and sexually diverse, and have concentrations of high-tech industry. Correlation
does not make causation, but Florida suggests a causal connection between bohemia,
diversity, technology and talent:

> The presence and concentration of bohemians in an area creates an environment
> or milieu that attracts other types of talented or high human capital individuals. The
> presence of such human capital in turn attracts and generates innovative, technology-
> based industries.[30]

The Creative Class
Florida's later work staples a second argument onto the first. He now argues that advanced
economies are driven by 'creativity', and are dominated by a 'creative class' at the top end
of the labour market.[31] Florida splits this creative class into two groups: a 'Super-Creative
Core' and a larger 'Creative Professional' group. The first group includes scientists, engi-
neers, actors, poets, novelists; the second group covers high-tech service professionals,
legal and health care professionals. Both groups are highly qualified, and either generate
new ideas or apply them. Together, the 'creative class' as defined by Florida comprises 38
million people, over 30% of the US labour force.

Drawing on interviews and focus groups, Florida suggests the creative class is over-
whelmingly liberal and cosmopolitan, with a strong preference for city living. Creative
people seek ethnic and sexual diversity, openness to others, vibrant cultural life, a good
environment and excellent amenities. As before, bohemian types pull in high-skilled crea-
tive types. Organisations compete for creative people, and business increasingly locates
where the best people are.

Cities that can attract and keep the creative classes will do well in this new economy.
Places like New York, San Francisco, Boston, Austin, Seattle and Portland – top of the US

Creativity Index, offering a mix of 'technology, talent and tolerance' – will thrive in years
to come.

Working with British think-tank Demos, Florida has also produced a stripped-down
'UK Creativity Index' illustrating the 'creative potential' of Britain's largest 40 cities.[32] Cities
were weighted according to patent applications per head, non-white residents and levels
of gay-friendly services. The top 10 are Manchester, Leicester and London (equal second),
Nottingham, Bristol, Brighton, Birmingham, Coventry, Cardiff and Edinburgh.[33]

Testing the Theory
Overall, Florida is making three big claims about the causal connections between diversity,
creativity and city performance. These are:
1. There is a creative class in Western societies, which wants to live in diverse,
   tolerant, cool cities.
2. The creative class shapes the economy of many cities. Increasingly,
   jobs move where the skilled people are.
3. Cities which attract and retain the creative classes will do better. Creativity
   is driving their development.

So how does it stack up? The rest of this paper tests Florida's arguments. It does so in two
ways. First, we assume Florida's basic model is sound, and his results for US cities hold
true. Can we replicate the results in the UK, a much smaller country with significant cul-
tural and economic differences? This section draws heavily on work by Chris Gibbon.[34]

Second, we drop our initial assumptions and take a closer look at Florida's model
itself. Do his three major claims hold true, in the UK or elsewhere? This section draws on
predominantly US and UK findings from a number of fields – gentrification and city centre
living, migration, business location decisions and overall city performance. An earlier ver-
sion of this material has already been published by the author.[35]

5. Bohemia in the UK? Applying the Model
This section looks briefly at whether Florida's findings can be replicated in the UK, by
highlighting one recent attempt to do so.[36] Gibbon applies Florida's basic methods to
large cities in England and Wales.[37] Because of differences in city boundaries and data

30. Florida, 'The Geography of Bohemia'.
31. Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*.

32. Demos, 'The Boho Britain Creativity Index', London: Demos, 2003,
    http://www.demos.co.uk/uploadstore/docs/BOHO_pr_index.pdf.
33. This Index does not actually test the creative class model in the UK. Rather, it illustrates
    what the model could show if it were true (as the authors are careful to point out).
34. Chris Gibbon: *The Cosmopolitan City: Does Richard Florida's 2002 Paper 'Bohemia and Econom-
    ic Geography' Provide a Useful Tool for Understanding the Spatial Concentrations of High-Tech
    Employment in Urban Areas in England and Wales?*, MSc thesis, LSE, unpublished, 2005.
35. Max Nathan, *The Wrong Stuff: Creative Class Theory, Diversity and City Performance*, Centre
    for Cities, Institute for Public Policy Research Discussion Paper 1, September, 2005,
    http://www.ippr.org.uk/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=448.
36. Gibbon, *The Cosmopolitan City*.
37. As set out in Florida, 'The Geography of Bohemia'.

collection, there are some differences in approach.[38]

For the England and Wales data, Gibbon finds some initial evidence for the creative class model, with strong bivariate correlations between a skilled workforce and the presence of creative 'bohemians'; a gay population and a foreign-born population. However, the skills-creatives relationship is affected by multi-collinearity (i.e. the two measures are highly correlated – in this case, the skilled workforce probably is the creative workforce). Applying further regression analysis to the different elements of the Florida model, he finds:

–　No relationship between a bohemian or diverse milieux and the presence of skilled workers, i.e. no evidence that a diverse, tolerant climate attracts skilled workers to a city
–　A significant link between a skilled workforce and the presence of high-tech workers, i.e. apparent evidence that a skilled workforce helps attract high-tech employment.

Similar results are found testing the model within Greater London. Gibbon concludes that there is weak support for one element of Florida's thesis, but there is no support for the novel element of his model, the importance of diversity and tolerance. Overall, Gibbon's analysis suggests that Florida's results cannot be replicated in the UK.

6. Opening the Box: Unpacking the Model
The previous section attempted to replicate Florida's results for some British cities, assuming the underlying model was robust. This section, conversely, questions that assumption – and examines each of Florida's three key claims in turn.

A Creative Class?
First, how important is creativity? Florida is on to something here. Western economies are changing. Returns to human capital are rising, and many companies are competing harder for the most able people.[39] Traditional manufacturing is becoming less important. In the UK high-tech manufacturing, science, services and the public sector now form a larger share of the economy. Between 1971 and 2001, Britain lost 4 million manufacturing jobs – but gained 3 million business service jobs, 2.3 million jobs in distribution and leisure, and 2 million positions in the public sector.[40]

This is nothing new. The problem has always been the language we use to describe such changes – phrases like 'the knowledge economy' aren't always helpful. Neither is 'the creative class'.

38.　Most significantly, Gibbon's High Tech Index – unlike Florida's – is a measure of high-tech employment, not the presence of high-tech firms. This means the results do not necessarily show any link between skilled workers and high-tech *firms*. Rather, they show that the presence of high-tech *workers* is affected by the presence of a bigger set of skilled workers (not a surprise). This finding is even consistent with an anti-Florida argument, that firms have labour market power, skilled workers move to where jobs are – and have no effect on business location decisions.
39.　Stephen Machin and Anna Vignoles, 'The Economic Benefits of Training to the Individual, the Firm and the Economy: The Key Issues', paper for Cabinet Office Performance and Innovation Unit, London: PIU, 2001.
40.　Moore and Begg, 'Urban Growth and Competitiveness in Britain'.

The concept feels large and unwieldy. Florida includes claims adjusters and funeral directors, but not airline pilots, ship engineers or tailors. Many of those working in 'non-creative' professions will exhibit creative behaviour day to day, even if they lack high educational qualifications. It's hard to see why some are 'creative' and others not.[41]

In practice, the concept has a number of drawbacks. First, the Gay Index is not as straightforward as it looks. Florida proxies 'gay' households by the number of same-sex households – so university cities with a lot of shared student houses are likely to score high on 'gayness' and human capital (in which case, the result simply reiterates the well-known relationship between high human capital and urban growth. We will return to this later).

Second, US Metro Areas cover city cores and suburban areas.[42] Many of the creative class will choose to live in suburbs, not cities. So it is also unlikely Florida's creative class has the common progressive outlook he suggests. Engineers, accountants, designers and social workers might all be professionals, but won't all share the same values, politics, preferences and behaviour as artists, musicians and dancers – or spend time with them.[43]

British evidence tells a similar story. Studies of the middles classes in UK cities find that professionals and managers have diverse attitudes to cities, live in different neighbourhoods – and use them very differently.[44] Experian's 'Chattering Classes' study found seven distinct socio-economic types across UK cities.[45] Recent work on middle-class London neighbourhoods found significant differences in politics and outlook.[46] In the same way, research on Manchester's financial and business services sector found most employees lived in suburban areas, wanted to move out to the countryside and showed little interest in loft living.[47] During the 1990s, professionals, managers and technical staff were more likely to leave big conurbations than any other economic group.[48]

This author's research on city centre living finds more encouraging evidence. Shops, bars and buzz pull students and young professionals into big city centres, boosting the

41.　Markusen, 'Urban Development and the Politics of a Creative Class'.
42.　Markusen points out that in the Atlanta Metro Area, the creative class live North of the city and I-285. Similarly, the Washington-Baltimore Metro Area includes at least 10 rural counties. See Markusen, 'Urban Development and the Politics of a Creative Class'.
43.　Markusen, 'Urban Development and the Politics of a Creative Class'; Hannigan, 'Boom Towns and Cool Cities'.
44.　Helen Jarvis, Andy Pratt and Peter Cheng-Chong Wu, *The Secret Life of Cities: The Social Reproduction of Everyday Life*, London: Prentice Hall, 2001.
45.　Jamie Doward, 'If You Want to Talk the Talk, Join the Trendsetters in Swinging Wandsworth', *The Observer*, 25 January, 2004.
46.　Tim Butler, 'The Middle Class and the Future of London', in Martin Boddy and Michael Parkinson (eds) *City Matters: Competitiveness, Cohesion and Urban Governance,* Bristol: Policy Press, 2004, pp. 269-284.
47.　Peter Halfpenny, Nadia Joanne Britton, Fiona Devine and Rosemary Mellor (2004): 'The "Good" Suburb as an Asset in Enhancing a City's Competitiveness', in Martin Boddy and Michael Parkinson (eds) *City Matters: Competitiveness, Cohesion and Urban Governance*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2004, pp. 255-268.
48.　Tony Champion and Tania Fisher, 'Migration, Residential Preferences and the Changing Environment of Cities', in Martin Boddy and Michael Parkinson (eds) *City Matters: Competitiveness, Cohesion and Urban Governance*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2004, pp. 111-118.

property market and the local service economy. However, this is not necessarily Florida's 'creative class'. First, the majority of residents stay for a few years at most. Their lives and preferences change, and they move out to suburban areas. The continued growth of city centre living has not yet changed the basic patterns of lifecycle migration – people come to big cities as young singles and leave as older families. Second, it is consumerism as much as 'high culture' that is the attractor – people move into city centres to have a good time. Shopping and going out are the big pulls, not museums, artists or performance spaces.[49]

Where does this leave Florida's ideas? Some of them work. Human capital is increasingly important. Cosmopolitan and bohemian values are becoming mainstream, in some sections of society.[50] But there's not much evidence for a single, 'monolithic' creative class in the US or the UK. And although knowledge, creativity and human capital are becoming more important in today's economy, more than 20 years of endogenous growth theory already tells us this.

Do Jobs Follow People?
Even if managers and professionals don't see the world the same way, maybe they still shape cities' economic futures. Personal mobility in the US is much higher than in Europe.[51] Rich and poor travel greater distances, and make more moves during their lifetimes. Across the West, the most mobile workers are those at the top of the labour market. Professional and business services firms routinely search in national or international jobs pools.

So some jobs may follow people. People follow jobs too. Turok suggests that Florida 'contradicts the overwhelming evidence that employment is the main determinant of migration patterns' – especially in the UK.[52] Even in the more mobile US, there is some evidence to suggest that lifestyle amenities follow high incomes, rather than the other way around.[53]

And even the most mobile workers are unlikely to make location choices without thinking about the different employment bases and career structures in different locations.[54] US evidence suggests many 'power couples' choose to locate in areas where they maximise joint access to jobs.[55] Similarly, UK evidence suggests high-income dual-earner households prefer 'accessible peri-urban locations' outside cities, with easy access to the city core and transport hubs.[56]

Business surveys tell us the same thing. Cushman Wakefield Healey and Baker's *Eu-*

49. Nathan and Urwin, *City People*.
50. David Brooks, *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There*, New York: Touchstone, 2000.
51. Max Nathan and Judith Doyle, 'Employment, Place and Identity: A Study of Hypermobile Professionals', *Work, Employment and Society* conference, Nottingham, September 11-13, 2001.
52. Ivan Turok, 'The Distinctive City: "Quality" as a Source of Competitive Advantage', *Environment and Planning A*, forthcoming.
53. Storper and Manville, 'Behaviour, Preferences and Cities'.
54. Markusen, 'Urban Development and the Politics of a Creative Class'.
55. Dora Costa and Matthew Kahn, 'Power Couples: Changes in the Locational Choice of the College Educated, 1940-2000', *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 112.3 (2000): 827-872.
56. Anne Green, 'A Question of Compromise? Case Study Evidence on the Location and Mobility Strategies of Dual Career Households', *Regional Studies* 31.7 (1997): 643-659.

ropean Cities Monitor is a survey of 500 senior staff across 30 cities.[57] For organisations, availability of qualified staff is the single most important location factor – but communications, low costs, access to markets and good transport links are also essential. Quality of life is the least important factor.

Again, Florida is half right. The best-qualified, highest-paid workers are most able to choose where to live. Firms take this into account when making location decisions. But all this is well-established. And the true picture is more complex than Florida suggests. Organisations and workers juggle several location factors, and they don't appear to rank 'creativity' or amenities that highly.

Do Creative Cities Do Better?
The final test of the creative class approach is how well it performs over time. Do Florida's 'creative cities' actually do better?

It is important to remember the big picture here. In the US and UK, 'urban renaissance' in central cities is part of a bigger, more complex pattern of urban change. Urban resurgence is one element of a broader 'urban emergence', which includes suburbanisation and vast polycentric systems around the biggest cities.[58]

Florida makes links between diversity, skills and high-tech sectors. Much of his substantial work was done in the late 1990s, where high-tech and new media was a good proxy for employment growth. After the dotcom collapse, this works less well: for example, San Francisco lost 17% of its business services jobs and 9% of financial service jobs between 2001 and 2004.[59] Many firms and jobs are leaving big city cores and migrating to lower density suburban 'Nerdistans' in smaller cities and towns.

The US economy was in recession post-2001, and this will explain much of these job losses. But more seriously for Florida, these patterns stretch well back beyond that business cycle. The city of San Francisco lost 5% of higher-paying jobs between 1995 and 2004, while the surrounding suburbs gained 3.3%. New York's share of securities jobs fell 37-23% between 1981 and 2004.[60] And overall, the cities Florida ranks as most creative created less jobs than the least creative over the 1980s and 1990s.[61]

Glaeser uses a different measure, population growth, to check the effects of diversity and bohemianism on city performance.[62] Using Florida's own data, he finds a significant link between high skills and population growth. But – in a similar result to the UK study – the presence of artists, gay people or bohemian population share has no effect.[63] So a simple link between skills and city performance may do a better job of explaining urban growth than the Florida theory.

57. Cushman Wakefield Healey and Baker, *European Cities Monitor 2004*, London: C W H & B, 2004.
58. Peter Hall and Kathy Pain, *The Polycentric Metropolis: Learning from Mega-city Regions in Europe*, London: Earthscan, 2006; Storper and Manville, 'Behaviour, Preferences and Cities'.
59. Kotkin, 'Urban Legends'.
60. Kotkin, 'Urban Legends'.
61. Malanga, 'The Curse of the Creative Class'.
62. Glaeser, 'Review of Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class*'.
63. Although the Bohemian Index does explain some population growth in Las Vegas and Sarasota, Florida.

What about British cities, especially those Demos and Florida ranked highly? Remember, these are Manchester, Leicester, London, Nottingham, Bristol, Brighton, Birmingham, Coventry, Cardiff and Edinburgh.

London skews the results. The capital has huge gravitational pull, and its hub role explains why so many of the highest performing cities lie around it. But London also has massively uneven growth: high unemployment, a low skills problem, areas of severe deprivation.[64]

How about the rest? The top line is that while many are doing well, few are the top performers. Core cities like Manchester, Nottingham, Bristol and Birmingham recovering. Between 1995 and 2001, they have seen substantial increases in output and employment.[65] And since 2001, they have been showing signs of population growth.[66]

However – and as noted above – over the past 20 years population, jobs and output growth has generally been highest in small, Southern, service-driven cities.[67] And these relatively homogenous, uncreative, medium density locations have seen the biggest growth in high-end financial and business service jobs – jobs which Florida suggests should gravitate to the big creative cores. These smaller cities have caught the wave, and the bigger places are playing catch-up.

Between 1991 and 2001, for example, employment growth was highest in Milton Keynes, Reading, Warrington, Brighton, Crawley, Northampton, York, Cambridge and Worthing. For 2001, GVA per employee was highest in places like Aldershot, Bedford, High Wycombe, Oxford, Derby, Reading, Coventry and Swindon.[68] Only Brighton and Coventry match up in Florida's list.

These results suggest Florida's model is a patchy predictor of real world city performance. It also suggests that there are many routes to success, not just the creative class approach. None of these models is perfect. But it looks as if others do just as well, or better at predicting performance: agglomeration in bigger places, clusters in smaller places, or human capital in both.[69]

7. Right in the Wrong Way?
Florida's work makes many useful points. However, the weight of the evidence implies that neither creativity or the 'creative class' (should it exist) explain city performance in the way he suggests.

This is not to say that creativity, skills and diversity do not matter. Florida's work is probably best seen as an unsuccessful attempt to pull together a lot of good ideas about cultural

64. Nick Buck, Ian Gordon, Peter Hall, Michael Harloe and Mark Kleinman, *Working Capital: Life and Labour in Contemporary London*, London: Routledge, 2002.
65. SURF Centre, Pion Economics and Salford GIS, *Releasing the National Economic Potential of Provincial City-Regions: The Rationale for and Implications of a 'Northern Way' Growth Strategy*, London: ODPM, 2004.
66. ONS, Mid-Year Population Estimates, 1999-2004, http://www.statistics.gov.uk.
67. ODPM, The State of the *English Cities Report*.
68. ODPM, The State of the *English Cities Report*.
69. Glaeser, 'Review of Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class*'; Simmie, 'Innovation Clusters and Competitive Cities in the UK and Europe'.

and ethnic diversity, talent, creative activity and urban economic performance.

First, quality of place is important. The right mix of physical, economic, social and cultural assets does probably help some cities. Glaeser and colleagues have done some work suggesting a link between consumer sectors, amenities and city growth.[70] In fact, it is hard to argue that good architecture, a strong economic base, skilled people, vibrant cultural life and a pleasant environment don't matter.[71]

Second, there should be some positive links between prosperity and creative activity. Clearly, richer cities and citizens are able to spend a greater share of their income supporting creative activities and industries. But the two do not always go hand in hand. Renaissance Florence was rich; Liverpool had the Beatles, then thirty years of industrial decline. Detroit techno has not helped Detroit much.

The relationship may work the other way too. Markusen argues that because spending on art and culture is predominantly local – it does not tend to flow out of the area – artists and art subsidies can boost indigenous economic growth in cities.[72] More generally, developing a base of artists can pay an 'artistic dividend', through dynamic agglomeration economies – artists' work can enhance design, production and marketing in other sectors, and can catalyse innovation elsewhere in the local economy. Over time, the economic impact of the arts sector helps expand the wider regional economic base.[73]

Zukin suggests that cultural industries have a number of indirect, symbolic benefits to city economies, not least through re-branding and perceptions effects on tourism and inward investment.[74] O'Connor and Banks argue that a distinctive local cultural identity is essential in a post-industrial economy.[75] Barcelona, Bilbao and Glasgow show what can be achieved. But further research is required to properly frame and measure direct and indirect economic impacts.

Third, skills and talent matter. Glaeser points to the well-known link between human capital and city performance. Ideas and knowledge flow more easily through urban space; a skilled population helps the economic base grow.[76] Similarly, the business world is clear there is a 'battle for talent', that companies do compete for the best individuals and that place-based strategies can help anchor talent in cities.[77] In the UK, big cities need to turn the trick of attracting jobs and keep people, growing a skills base and an economic base at the same time. Again, it is not clear how best to do this – should cities try to be distinct, compete on the basics or try a little of both?

Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, there is other work demonstrating positive links

70. Glaeser, Kolko and Saiz, 'Consumer City'.
71. Tom Cannon, Max Nathan and Andy Westwood, *Welcome to the Ideopolis*, working paper, London: The Work Foundation, 2003.
72. Markusen, 'Urban Development and the Politics of a Creative Class'.
73. Ann Markusen and Greg Schrock, 'The Artistic Dividend: Artistic Specialisation and Economic Development Implications', *Urban Studies* 43.10 (2006): 1661-1686.
74. Sharon Zukin, *Cultures of Cities*, Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 2005.
75. Justin O'Connor and Mark Banks, 'Cultural Industries and the City: Innovation, Creativity and Competitiveness', ESRC Cities Programme paper: Manchester, 1999.
76. Glaeser, 'Review of Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class*'.
77. Meric Gertler, 'The Future of Cities and Regions in the 21st Century Knowledge Economy', presentation to DTI Conference, December, 2004.

between ethnic diversity and economic performance. In theory, cultural diversity could be a bad – for example, communication and cultural differences could make it harder for workers to get on, increasing the costs of doing business. Or it could be a good – by plugging skills gaps, and bringing together diverse products and skill sets, thus helping companies innovate.[78] Ethnic and cultural diversity can also increase the range of available goods and services;[79] and 'lifestyle diversity' – particularly among gay people and young singles – helps fuel urban consumerism, especially in city centres.[80]

Over time, greater prosperity should also help explain patterns of ethnic tolerance and tension. By and large, for example, community relations are better in the more prosperous parts of the UK. Does it work the other way round? In the UK, we already know that immigrants contribute more in taxes than UK-born citizens.[81] And cultural diversity and intercultural spillovers could also be forces for longer term endogenous growth.

It is critical that researchers and policy-makers get a better understanding of these issues, in the UK and elsewhere. In Britain, immigration and ethnic diversity are major topics of debate: the value of British multiculturalism is being questioned as 'homegrown' terror plots are unearthed; and the country has experienced one of the biggest waves of in-migration in its history on the back of EU expansion.[82]

It is critical that we understand how migration, ethnic and cultural diversity affect cities too. In the UK, London's population growth and economic expansion over the 1990s has been partly driven by in-migration. Cities are the main sites of demographic and migration change, and they are the economic building blocks of the national economy. It is here that we are likely to see the biggest impacts on the economic, social and cultural fabric.

One study of US cities finds that between 1970 and 1990, cultural diversity increased US citizens' wages and rents – because immigrants bring complementary skills and provide new services.[83] Of course, in a growing economy immigrants could also bump the indigenous population up the employment ladder, taking the lowest paid jobs and swelling the ranks of the poor. Immigration would benefit indigenous – and better off – users of cities, but overall, there might not be average welfare gains. Further research is required to understand the impacts of migration and diversity at city and city-region level.

8. Conclusions

This paper has examined the case for Richard Florida's creative class model of city performance. The evidence we have stacks up heavily against it. What's true, we already knew. What's new is probably not true.

So much for the creative class approach – though not, perhaps, for some of the ideas

and issues around it. What are the lessons for policy-makers?

First, remember your geography. For example, the UK is unusual: a small island dominated by one huge city and the 'mega-city region' around it.[84] London's unique position in the UK urban system makes it the dominant city for creative types. This creative core exhibits increasing returns to scale, which is why very few cities have emerged as counterweights.

Second, be careful with policy transfer. Not all urban policy ideas travel well, and UK decision-makers should do due diligence on new concepts and proposals. This doesn't always happen – the UK has a particular weakness for looking to the US for ideas and ignoring Europe, even though many European cities perform demonstrably better than their American counterparts.[85]

But Florida is not always wrong. Policy-makers should pick out the insights and ignore the rest. British city centres are exhibiting something like a creative class effect – but it is short term and consumerist. And it is no substitute for a strong urban economy. People will ultimately go where the jobs are: for most, a career structure is more important factor than a cool city.

Third, avoid silver bullets. Cities should not rely solely on creativity, diversity and lifestyle as regeneration tools. In a few of Britain's bigger cities – London, Manchester, Liverpool – creative and cultural industries are emerging as a significant economic force. Everywhere, culture and creativity improve the quality of life; iconic buildings and good public spaces can help places reposition and re-brand.[86]

But most cities – large and small – would be better off starting elsewhere: growing the economic base; sharpening skills, connectivity and access to markets; ensuring local people can access new opportunities, and improving key public services. National governments also need to recognise the economic role of major conurbations, and give them the flexibility and powers to improve their performance further.

There may be important longer term advantages from cultural diversity and quality of place. Decision-makers should be alive to this agenda and the policy implications that emerge from it. For now, though, they should begin with the basics. Diversity, creativity and cool are the icing – not the cake.

78. Dino Pinelli, Gianmarco Ottaviano and Carole Maignan, 'Development and Growth', in Phil Wood (ed.) *The Intercultural City Reader*, London: Comedia, 2004.
79. Glaeser, Kolko and Saiz, 'Consumer City'.
80. Storper and Manville, 'Behaviour, Preferences and Cities'; Nathan and Urwin, *City People*.
81. Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah, Laurence Cooley and Howard Reed, *Paying Their Way: The Fiscal Contribution of Immigrants in the UK*, London: IPPR (Institute of Public Policy Research), 2005.
82. *Economist*, 'Second Thoughts', 26 August, 2006.
83. Gianmarco Ottaviano and Giovanni Peri, 'The Economic Value of Cultural Diversity: Evidence from US Cities', in Phil Wood (ed.) *The Intercultural City Reader*, London: Comedia, 2004.

84. Hall and Pain, *The Polycentric Metropolis*.
85. Max Nathan and Adam Marshall, 'Them and Us: Britain and the European City', Centre for Cities Discussion Paper 7, London: IPPR (Institute for Public Policy Research) Centre for Cities, 2006.
86. Zukin, *Point of Purchase*; Markusen and Schrock, 'The Artistic Dividend'.

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THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN AUSTRIA
THE GLORIES OF THE PAST VS.
THE UNCERTAINTIES OF THE PRESENT

ELISABETH MAYERHOFER AND **MONIKA MOKRE**

The aim of this paper is to point out the manifold tensions and contradictions in the Austrian formulation of policy for creative industries. While the notion of the 'creative industries' has been recently imported from UK and EU contexts, one can historically locate in the Austrian past some much earlier associations of commerce and the arts. The concept of creative industries, however, goes directly against the grain of these discourses concerning Austrian cultural politics that emerged after the Second World War (a fact that partially explains the rather inept ways that Austrian politicians and creatives have dealt with creative industries).

Definitions

Official definitions of the creative industries tend to subsume a broad range of creative activities, people and institutions under a single banner (including classical art forms such as fine and performing arts and commercial artistic products like the antiques market). The only link between these sub-sectors of the creative industries is the vague notion of 'creativity'. Moreover, when it comes to concrete analyses, only a limited part of those sub-sectors are usually taken into account, most often forms of applied arts that have the potential for commercial success. The notion of 'copyright industries' – i.e. the creation of cultural products and services as intellectual property – has never been fully adopted in Austria as a base of the creative industries. As with many other countries, the Austrian approach is driven by the aim to make the sector appear larger and economically more significant. Employment possibilities are a core argument in the discourses on this newly emerging policy field; however, when it comes to precarious working conditions in a flexible labour market, the creative industries are exceptional.

In order to analyse these different concepts in relation to the creative industries in Austria (and elsewhere), we attempt to disentangle the different aspects of this policy orientation by differentiating three dimensions:

Dimension 1: Position within the Arts World
- autonomous art
- applied art
- creative work without any artistic claim[1]

1. However, not every creative work claims to be artistic, such as the graphic design of a newspaper. This work is also characterised by a very high degree of routine.

Dimension 2: Economic Situation
– commercially successful
survival possible
survival under acceptable conditions possible
investments possible
– commercially potentially successful
– commercially unsuccessful

Dimension 3: Common Interests of Creative Industries Participants
– common socio-economic interests that can lead to solidarity and common
forms of representation
– more general political interests

While the first dimension is mostly related to cultural theory and art history, the second one calls for different forms of government intervention, above all different forms of public financing (no public financing at all, public financing as complementation to earned income, public financing for newly founded enterprises, public financing as main source of income). Finally, the third dimension introduces the potential for different forms of political alliances within or beyond the field of creative industries. Obviously, throughout the discourse and creative practices associated with the creative industries, these dimensions will overlap to varying degrees.

Historic Flashlights onto Austrian Creative Industries
In the late 19th century, when the Academy of Applied Arts in Vienna was first established, the foundational charter of 1868 declared: 'The mission of the "Kunstgewerbeschule" is to breed competent workers that meet the requirements of the arts industry'.[2] Clearly, the notion of applied (as opposed to 'autonomous') arts directed toward a commercial, arts-intrinsic marketplace is not as recent as the ongoing discourse might suggest. In fact, the original name of the Universität für angewandte Kunst was 'Kunstgewerbeschule', i.e. a school for arts as a professional trade or commercial industry. The foundation of the Kunstgewerbeschule represented the formal recognition of applied art as a practice, but simultaneously emphasised a strict institutional separation from 'high' or 'autonomous' artistic creation.

In the years before and after the First World War, architecture and handicrafts were booming. Indeed, they allowed an important employment opportunity for women who could not enter the field of 'high' arts, or could only do so with great difficulties, it being dominated still by the exclusive concept of the male artistic genius. Until 1920, the Academy of Fine Arts did not accept female students.[3]

Along with the murder and expulsion of millions of people, the Nazi era brought an end to the intellectual and artistic production of this period. After the Second World War, the

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2. Original translation, Manfred Wagner, 'Kunstgewerbe und Design – oder die Flucht
vor der Definition', in Hochschule fur Angewandt Kunst and Erika Patka (ed.) *Kunst
– Anspruch und Gegenstand: Von Der Kunstgewerbeschule Zur Hochschule Fur Angewandte
Kunst in Wien 1918-1991*, Vienna: Residenz, 1991, p. 27.
3. For gender relations in the arts, see Kathrin Hoffmann-Curtius and Silke Wenk, *Mythen
von Autorschaft und Weiblichkeit im 20. Jahrhundert*, Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 2002.

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policies of reconciliation prevented active strategies to retrieve emigrants and reconnect with the pre-war situation. Culture and the arts were more or less exclusively understood in terms of cultural heritage (be it on stage or in a museum); and in Austria (as well as Germany), the invocation of cultural traditions was used to bury the immediate barbaric past by negation. This re-orientation of cultural politics towards national heritage also led to a generally ignorant if not openly hostile attitude towards international influences, a tendency that was re-enforced and politicised during the Cold War – the boycott of Bertolt Brecht in the 1950s being the most prominent example of this development. In a sense, one could say that the provincialism of the Nazi era was ultimately realised in post-War Austria. Art was defined by elitist events associated with major cultural institutions, such as opera, theatre and museums. Applied art did not play a prominent role within this discourse – a fact that illustrates how extreme the restorative cultural climate was at the time, since not even the representative potentials of architecture were used to further the construction of a new national identity. Instead, the 'Sissi' movies glorifying the Habsburg Empire were probably the most important instrument of Austrian identity building.[4]

In the aftermath of the political movement of 1968 (and at the beginning of the government of the Social Democrats without coalition partners), a counter-tendency of cultural politics developed. International contacts increased during the social-democratic 1970s, while cultural policy began to recognise and finance more contemporary art forms and projects. In comparison to the funds for cultural heritage, public financing for contemporary projects was still minimal; however, it was enough to bring about a certain dynamic within the artistic and cultural scene in Austria.[5] It led, among other things, to the emergence of socio-cultural institutions that rejected the exclusivity of 'high' art and, instead, looked for the direct involvement of the arts in politics and everyday life. In addition, this movement was highly critical of any notion of art as the creation of an autonomous individual, instead, foregrounding production as the outcome of a collective process with manifold stages.[6] Here, art was one of several cultural forms utilised to further alternative political goals, such as the pursuit of sustainable environmental practices and the abolition or reduction of social inequalities (with regard to class, gender and race, but also between urban and the rural districts). This approach considered different art forms as equivalent to each other and other activities, such as German language courses for immigrants or bicycle repair workshops.

The support for contemporary art by the Social Democrats was based on a certain political sympathy with the respective artists and art forms, along with a perceived need to contest the conservative cultural hegemony in Austria. However, it always remained half-hearted, without any real cultural political program or form of evaluation. The programmatic understanding of cultural politics was mainly a side product derived from the general welfare orientation of Social Democratic government, a position aptly summarised

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4. Michael Wimmer, 'Konservative Kulturpolitik seit 2000: Eine Radikalisierung aus dem Geist
der austriakischen Restauration', *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft* 3 (2006):
287-310.
5. Monika Mokre, 'Austrian Theatres Cost Too Much!: A Summary of a Research Project in Vienna',
The International Journal of Cultural Policy 2.2 (1996): 289-302.
6. Howard Becker, *Art Worlds*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

by the slogan: 'cultural policy has to be understood as a form of social policy'.[7] Above all, this statement entailed a commitment to make high culture accessible to the lower classes as audiences, not as producers. In this way, a traditional understanding of the educational benefits of high culture was combined with the egalitarian ideals of social democracy. Like other European countries at the time, Austrian cities were furnished with drop sculptures to educate and civilise the masses. During the 1980s, however, this egalitarian stance would only require a slight change of focus to be transformed into a call for commercialisation. The notion that the uneducated masses should learn to appreciate the high arts was changed to a claim that the arts should meet the taste of potential consumers.

This development led, consequentially, to a new focus on the economic impact of the arts. Subsidies were no longer exclusively legitimised by the intrinsic value of culture and the arts, but by their external economic effects, for tourism, employment and general economic growth. Under this model, artistic and cultural activities were required to attract large publics in order to increase their direct and indirect economic ends. However, this development did not place the necessity of public financing for the arts into question; Austria followed the international trend towards commercialisation, but also maintained the traditional state subsidisation of the arts. Nevertheless, the new emphasis on commercial outcomes had a direct impact on cultural and artistic content – blockbuster exhibitions and big events replaced elitist understandings of the arts, but also the idea that art should or could be politically relevant. The economic side of commercialisation worked far less effectively: the big flagship institutions and events still rely on public funding, but now the box office is the most important indicator of success.

In the late 1990s, the concept of creative industries was imported to Austria – mainly from the UK and due to the White Paper of the European Commission[8] – and began to play a huge role in political speeches during the last years of the Social Democratic (coalition) government and the initial period of the coalition between the Conservatives and the populist right. However, this discursive hype was not followed by implementation strategies and, therefore, was not mirrored in cultural policy or in the development of the cultural sector. The first reports on the creative industries in Austria focused exclusively on the economic potential of arts and culture. After the change of government in 2000, the discursive hype around creative industries gained considerable momentum – not only for national politics but also in the city of Vienna (governed by social-democrats). Over the past six years, policy measures and institutions focussing on the creative industries have been introduced. There are both national and Viennese programs currently financing creative industries-related activities; the MuseumsQuartier in Vienna, for example, was conceived as a 'cultural district', a creative cluster where space has been reserved for creative start-ups. However, only a very small part of the site is now used for the creative industries, with the majority of the space being mainly defined by large, traditional museums and cultural events. The combination of the creative industries with these institutions has not led to synergetic effects. Moreover, rents are too expensive for most creative enterprises and, in general, it seems

unlikely that this kind of top-down strategy is the most appropriate method for developing a cultural district. Indeed, there has been no 'institutional thickness' developed in the MuseumsQuartier, to use the terminology of Erik Hitters and Irina Van Aalst.[9] Similarly, financing activities have shown inadequacies for meeting the concrete needs of the sector. Probably the most important change brought about by creative industries discourse has been an increased interest of policy-makers and civil servants in applied arts, and above all, in forms of design.

The Unpleasant Present

Keeping in mind the 'dimensions' developed at the beginning of this paper, the renewed interest in creative industries can be understood within a historical context of applied arts practice in Austria, whereby the prominent role of applied art-forms at the turn of the 20th century, up until the rise of National-Socialism, is perceived as being renewed after an interruption of half a century. Although this revival was induced by global policy trends, the long forgotten national tradition of applied arts practice can be used to argue that Austria is especially well equipped to play an important international role in creative industries (obviously, every country and every city propagating this paradigm uses a similar narrative).

The concept of commercially successful artistic activities represents a paradigm shift in Austrian cultural policy characterised by high public subsidies to culture and the arts. The notion of individual creators as creative entrepreneurs that goes along with this commercial ideal of micro-enterprises is also new for Austria. Since the 1970s, Austria had a strong welfare state orientation. The concept of the welfare state was mainly based on regular full-time employment, at least as a political aim. The new forms of organising work in the creative industries are, therefore, unforeseen in national social policy and the institutional orientation of trade unions, but they fit especially well with contemporary political aims more generally: reduction of state activities and social security measures, flexibilisation, etc. The positive image of the genius-artist (which still serves as an identity concept for Austrian artists) has merged with the economic success of the Schumpeterian entrepreneur, and the mysterious aura of the software engineer, to produce a new type of 'creative entrepreneur' or 'culturepreneur'. Accordingly, the Austrian discourse on creative industries serves two purposes: on one hand, it influences the way in which the arts field is politically conceptualised and, on the other hand, it deploys creatives in a PR-campaign for flexible labour markets with all the disciplinary mechanisms of precarious labour/network regimes.[10]

An assessment of the current state of the creative industries in Austria can be carried out from two different perspectives: from the position of government policy and official politics, and in the context of the 'stakeholders', of people working in the field, as well as artists effected by the creativity hype.

The Austrian State and the Creative Industries

As mentioned above, the creative industries have played a prominent role in the discourse of the conservative/right wing coalition government. The intrinsic value of culture and the arts

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7.   Original translation, 'Kulturpolitischer Maßnahmenkatalog', in *Bundesministerium für Bildung und Kunst*, Vienna: Kunstbericht, Vienna, 1975.
8.   European Commission, *Culture, the Cultural Industries and Employment*, Comission Staff Working Paper, Brussels: EC, 1998.

9.   Erik Hitters and Irina van Aalst, 'The Place2B: Exploring the Logic of Urban Cultural Clusters', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, forthcoming.
10. Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001.

ceased to be the only predominant grounds for public expenditure. Because of this change in political rationale, an artistic activity has to serve at least one of the following aims:

– National representation
– Economic success (e.g. in terms of sold products or tickets)
– Technological innovation
– Development of cities and regions

National representation has been the main aim of Austrian cultural politics since the post-war period, however, this function is now complemented by the significance of commercial interests. Thus, the cultural field is composed of big flagship institutions (museums, theatres, opera houses and concert halls) offering globalised programs of conservative cultural mass consumption: Picasso shows, philharmonic orchestras and their celebrity conductors as well as a handful of international directors. This sector is supplemented by the creative industries that embellish the surfaces of a globalised middle-class consumer culture. Both forms of cultural representation are linked to localised expressions of national identity and expansive networks of global culture. Design is sold in a similar manner as the Viennese Philharmonic Orchestra, and in both cases, the 'made in Austria' label is required to distinguish these consumer products from those of other countries.

Austrian politicians never stop to deny that the concept of creative industries leads to a reduction of subsidies; they maintain that autonomous arts are not affected by this policy concept. However, it would be naive to overlook the relation between shrinking budgets for critical institutions and the creative industries discourse. Not-for-profit institutions seeking non-commercial approaches to social organisation, such as the free flow of goods, do not fit with this concept. Arts and culture must have a direct economic impact. And, paradoxically, if they do not, they will not receive any funding.

Interestingly, the funding instruments of the social-democratic Viennese government and the conservative/right wing national government for creative industries are almost identical.[11] The funding model consists of a rather traditional assessment procedure involving a request, an application and a jury decision. Financial support is granted to projects (not institutions) by applying the de-minimis directive.[12] Thus, small or medium-sized enterprises can only get financing for a maximum of three years. These programs were started almost three years ago and, up to now, they have not been evaluated as a sustainable method for developing the creative industries. It is also remarkable that several years after the implementation of support programs for a supposedly leading economic sector, the 'highly profitable' and 'job producing' engine of creative industries seems of no interest to big corporations. The assumed manifold creative innovations that are fostered by the creative industries development agencies always stay limited to the SME level they come from (if

they survive as a business at all and do not have to go back to the non-for-profit arts field). Contrary to reports commissioned by political decision-makers, big commercial players are not interested in the sector. Nor has the promise been fulfilled that the fostering of creative industries will attract headquarters and innovation centres of global businesses (as Richard Florida had predicted).[13] The creative industries remain policy hype; Berlin seems to be the city that disproves Florida in the most obvious way: 'poor, but sexy'.

According to official political statements, public support for creative industries is meant as a long-term development plan for the sector on a SME level. But there was never an effort to connect existing institutions related to creative industries (arts universities design museums, etc.) with the new support agencies or even with persons currently working in the field. At present, none of the networking mechanisms characterising industrial clusters exist in the creative industries and neither are they being fostered by specific policy tools.

Furthermore, the form in which public financing is organised does not take into account the real situation in the sector; circumstances characterised by self-employed individuals or very small enterprises for which the rather complicated applications being used are simply not manageable. Incomes in the sector are low and vital social security instruments are lacking. However, the real working and living conditions of the creative entrepreneurs are hardly a subject matter for creative industries policy – probably less out of ignorance than due to the rationality of reducing social security in general and stratifying the field according to a contemporary governmental emphasis on the responsibilities of the individual.

The Stakeholders
The creative labour market shows the same characteristics as the traditional artists' labour markets.[14] The economic success of the creative industries as a whole does not improve the situation of the initial copyright holders. They find themselves in a 'winner-takes-all'-market comparable to the position of 'autonomous' artists. Those who profit are the intermediaries in the value chain, not those whose innovations are meant to bring about added value.

The different sub-sectors in the creative industries contain relatively big enterprises as 'old bulls' on the market that aggressively defend their position. There exist some SMEs and a crowd of self-employed creators, but they work under extremely different conditions within the same sector.[15] Many of them share work places and infrastructure in order to increase their chances of survival.[16]

Up to now, the discursive hype surrounding the creative industries has not reached the people targeted at the core of the concept. In spite of the definitional strength of hegemonic concepts, neither the existing discourse nor the funding programs have had any

11. The Austrian government coalition has changed at the beginning of 2007; obviously, the consequences of this change cannot be assessed at this time.
12. The maximum funding a project can get is €100.000 for three years, this corresponds with the de-minimis directive of the European Commission according to which no distortion of competition takes place up to this level. See *Funding Guideline 06 plus for the Creative Industries*, Vienna: departure (2006), http://www.departure.at/jart/prj3/departure_website/releases/en/upload/funding_guideline_06plus.pdf.

13. Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*, New York: Basic Books, 2002.
14. Hans Abbing, *Why Are Artists Poor? The Exceptional Economy of the Arts*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004.
15. Maria Kräuter, *Existenzgründung in Kultur- und Medienberufen*, Nürnberg, 2002.
16. Details about the current working situation in the creative industries are shown in the report 'Branchenanalysen zu Arbeit und Beschäftigung in Wiener Creative Industries: Architektur, Design, Film/Rundfunk, Software/Multimedia und Werbung', Wien: Forba, 2005, http://www.forba.at/kreativbranchen-wien/bericht1.pdf.

visible impact on the self-description of the creators themselves. A significant amount of those people working in the applied arts would not define themselves as part of the creative industries, but as graphic designers, fashion designers and so on, or according to the different artistic fields that shape education, professional representation, social security, the tax system, etc. In addition, the respective intrinsic systems of quality and reputation play a crucial role. These institutions still define the field, as opposed to some more or less adequately designed funding programs. The creative class remains wishful thinking for policy-makers influenced by Richard Florida.

However, there are some exceptions to this general assessment. In Vienna three centres for small enterprises and self-employed artists working in the creative industries have been recently founded without public support and the people there define themselves as creative entrepreneurs.[17] In a way, this self-understanding can be understood as a revival of the ideas of socio-cultural work in the 1970s – autonomy in organising one's own working conditions without any dependence of the state – although the market orientation of this creative conceptualisation goes against the grain of traditional political autonomist theory. In any case, both socio-cultural approaches and the economic idea of commercially successful creative entrepreneurs are equally based on a rejection of the idea of 'autonomous' art. The former see themselves as part of a left movement (though fuzzily defined), while the latter focus on their role in the 'normal economy'. As the autonomy of the arts can also be interpreted as a chance for political and social critique (and is used in this way by contemporary artists and art theorists), the rejection of this notion potentially undermines the critical possibilities of creative work. On the other hand, the rejection of the genius-concept can also be read as broadening or democratising the concept of creativity itself. However, while this held true in a substantial way for socio-cultural institutions regarding the position of women, this notion is far less contested throughout the creative industries. Indeed, the precarious situation of creatives is especially problematic for women, who have traditionally been responsible for all manner of unpaid care work.

What Has to Be Done?
The notion of the creative industries contributes to confusion rather than clarification and should, therefore, either be avoided or specifically defined with regard to the concrete questions we are dealing with.

On the level of general political discourse, it seems paramount to dismantle the political aims of the creativity hype that mainly consists of reducing state activities, enhancing a general market orientation, shifting the responsibility for social welfare from the state to individuals and testing disciplinary tools in flexible knowledge-centred labour markets. However, when it comes to proposing positive measures that can be developed out of this analysis, the claim for a return to the social-democratic welfare state in its strong and paternalistic form seems questionable. This is due not only to the empirical difficulties of such a return but also because an all-inclusive labour market of this type can hardly be envisaged from a normative perspective. Even in the heyday of the welfare state, regular full-time employment was predominantly a privilege of white male citizens. More importantly, the

welfare state also meant a high degree of state intervention into the working and living conditions of individuals; a limitation of individual responsibility and freedom that does not currently seem desirable. The demand for self-defined working conditions developed in the socio-cultural movement of the 1970s should not be buried together with many other political claims of the past. After all, this claim seems to be a common interest of people working in the creative industries, even while the desire for independence is becoming instrumentalised by the flexibilisation discourse.

However, it also does not seem viable or desirable to renounce every form of state responsibility, i.e. the responsibility for all members of a society. Thus, the system of social security has to be organised in such a way that warrants social security as a general basic income (obviously, there are many unsolved questions with regard to such a basic income, such as its amount and potential recipients).

Another crucial step to improve the economic situation of creators is a radical reform of the intellectual property system, including a model that directs the payment flow to the original copyright holders rather than towards an intermediary industry.

Apart from this general social responsibility, however, it seems worthwhile to think of forms of self-organisation rather than top-down state institutions. For instance, minimum fees for certain services could be regulated independently, as well as insurances for times of low or no income. Even loans for investments could be self-organised. The centres for the creative industries that were recently founded in Vienna could become a starting point of associations to develop other forms of cooperation and self-organisation through sharing a common infrastructure as well as developing synergy effects. Public support might be necessary at certain points of this development, or even constantly, but should not be combined with public control beyond a necessary minimum.

Self-organisation requires self-reflection and solidarity. In this sense, the discursive hype around creativity could help to enhance self-organisation within the field of the creative industries and, perhaps, lead to broader forms of solidarity and the definition of more general political aims. Discourses on precarious living and working conditions offer a forum for political activity beyond the field of the creative industries, however, this discourse has not currently reached Austrian creators. This is probably not only due to their apolitical attitude (although this is a factor too), but also because the claims of this discourse (as represented in the Mayday movement, for example) are too general to apply to their concrete living and working conditions. Above all, one has to differentiate between forms of flexibilisation that are clearly a means to exploit people who cannot defend themselves, and a flexibilisation that is, at least partly, desired by creatives themselves. If workers in the creative industries developed their own definitional concepts for their lives (as it has been done by the *intermittents du spectacle* in France), the possibilities for and limitations of solidarity could be defined. Indeed, it could be especially fruitful to develop discursive contexts with critical artists that reflect the living and working conditions in contemporary societies. And, obviously, an awareness of the broader global context would be required to compare national situations in the creative industries and to develop common strategies.

At present, the international hype around creativity has reached the Austrian political system, but not those effected by this policy hype. The same holds true for critical discourses on this subject. It seems paramount for this discourse to step out of the realms of critical theory and art, and to begin to include those we are speaking about.

17. See http://www.schraubenfabrik.at; http://www.hutfabrik.at; http://www.rochuspark.at.

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CREATIVITY IS NOT ABOUT INDUSTRY

ANNELYS DE VET

I have nothing smart to say about the creative industry. This might be because
I'm in the middle of it myself, not being able to see it clearly anymore. But most
of all creativity can't be compared with industrial principals.

It's not about production, it's about **reflection**.
It's not about security, but about **experiments**.
It's not about output, but about **input**.
It's not about graphs, but about **people**.
It's not about similarities, but about **differences**.
It's not about majorities, but about **minorities**.
It's not about the private domain, but about the **public domain**.
It's not about financial space, but about **cultural space**.

Creativity has nothing to do with the economy, or with bureaucracy. It's about
cultural value, trust, autonomous positions and **undefined spaces**.

THE MURDER OF CREATIVITY IN ROTTERDAM
FROM TOTAL CREATIVE ENVIRONMENTS TO GENTRIPUNCTURAL INJECTIONS

BAVO (GIDEON BOIE AND MATTHIAS PAUWELS) **WWW.BAVO.BIZ**

This essay deals with Rotterdam's recent attempts to win the title of 'Creative Capital of the Netherlands'.[1] In particular, it focuses on two recent housing developments in Rotterdam in which the 'creative class' features as a central referent: the Lloyd Quarter development in Delfshaven and The Poetic Freedom housing project in Spangen. The main argument of this essay is that if creativity is as bad off as it is often claimed today – instrumentalised as it is through perverted schemes by city-managers – the only option left for creative forces is to perform a similar act as the Greek mythological figure Medea: to stop what is most dear to her, her children, from being the object of a cruel manipulation by her unfaithful husband, Jason; instead of trying to protect them at all costs, she killed them out of love. In a similar vein, we plead for creative agents to tactically act *un*creatively in the face of the aggressive usurpation of creativity by government and market forces.

Rotterdam: The Next Creative Capital of the Netherlands?
It was always going to be tough for Rotterdam to market itself as a creative city. In the first place, it suffers the geographical proximity of Amsterdam, a city considered by many as 'creative by nature'. In Rotterdam, there can be no debate without 'big neighbour' Amsterdam serving as a shining example and/or being put forward as Rotterdam's foremost competitor. This underdog sentiment is additionally produced by the story Rotterdam 'tells about itself', about where it comes from, and how it wants to be seen by others. Here, we are referring to the popular image of Rotterdam as a 'no-nonsense working class city', the latter having enabled it to arise from its ashes after the destruction of the Second World War, and to build a strong and thriving harbour economy. This narrative was sublimely depicted in a series of collages by Crimson Architectural Historians, in which the Nazi bombardments of WWII that wiped out the entire centre of Rotterdam were not depicted as a traumatic event, but were, on the contrary, historicised and rationalised as a sublime chance to do 'it' all over again. Think of the simulated dialogue underneath one of the collages depicting the devastating post-war cityscape of Rotterdam:

One utterly destroyed town. Two men. Man 1: We are witnessing the death of our great city. Man 2: Absolutely not! We are witnessing its glory. The bombs and fires were fol-

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1. The essay is a reworked version of a presentation from *MyCreativity: Convention on International Creative Industries Research*, Centre for Media Research, University of Ulster and the Institute of Network Cultures, Amsterdam, 16-18 November, 2006, http://www.networkcultures.org/MyCreativity/.

lowed by five years of flattening and cleaning until the debris had yielded a perfect act plane. It took another ten years to conquer the emptiness with a collection of perfectly new objects. White was never whiter, concrete was never as mousegrey than that of the buildings parachuted on the emptiness created by the destruction of Rotterdam.[2]

However, it is this sturdy, resilient attitude depicted by Crimson that today appears to be Rotterdam's Achilles' heel in the rat race to become the Netherlands number one creative capital. On the one hand, this no-nonsense mentality to 'get to work' no matter how bad the circumstances is undoubtedly an asset in today's era of entrepreneurial capitalism. On the other hand, however, it is the main reason for Rotterdam's historic backlog in the construction of a bohemian climate – the *sine qua non* for a creative city. It was Richard Florida, after all, who posited a 'negative correlation' between the working class nature of a city and the presence of a bohemian climate.[3] And indeed, if in the creative city literature, homosexuals and artists are put forward as the ultimate bohemian subjects – and are even elevated into the critical yardstick for determining the 'creative index' of cities – the 'backpacker and gay Capital' of Amsterdam no doubt beats Rotterdam hands down. On top of that, with its high concentration of industrial workers, de-industrialisation has struck the city particularly hard and has made it a breeding ground for popular discontent and social unrest, a factor cleverly exploited by populist right-wing parties. It needs little explaining that this growing polarisation has not been conducive to Rotterdam's already non-existent image as a creative centre.

It was, therefore, not surprising that in order to catch up with other cities in the 'Creative League', Rotterdam made massive investments to try to undo its historical legacy. No expense or effort was spared to attract and bind creative people to the city as well as to mobilise, stimulate and organise existing networks of creativity. Inversely, the city management of Rotterdam undertook desperate attempts to prevent a further influx of socio-economically disadvantaged 'uncreative' people. Most notoriously, this was sought most through the 'Rotterdam Law', which made critics speak of a 'virtual fence' around Rotterdam, keeping all unwanted subjects out of the city like in medieval times. This law can rightfully be seen as a draconian measure to change the existing social composition of the city in a way more favourable to the accumulation of creative capital. Simultaneously, all manner of urban renewal schemes were used to dislocate unwanted 'uncreative' people from those neighbourhoods identified with a high potential for creative redevelopment – dispersing them over the city territory to clear the way for more creative and entrepreneurial workers.

Rotterdam, in other words, did not just 'sit back', waiting for creative initiatives to spontaneously pop up from the depths of its urban substance. On the contrary, it produced and manufactured the creative sector through forceful interventions. So, if the official doctrine states that local governments should refrain from the old tradition of social engineering to create a rich and vibrant creative atmosphere, and to allow a fertile and authentic creative climate to develop naturally, Rotterdam gives 'nature' a helping hand. It is our contention that Rotterdam is not exceptional in this regard, and that city governments and market

2. Crimson Architectural Historians 1994-2001, *Too Blessed to Be Depressed*, Rotterdam: 010 Uitgeverij, 2002.
3. Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*, New York: Basic Books, 2002.

players increasingly use methods of soft and hard intervention to engineer creativity in the ruthless struggle for obtaining a prime position as a creative city.

From Total Creative Environments (the Lloyd Quarter)...
Exemplary in this regard is 'the Lloyd Quarter' development. This is an Urban Development Project (UDP) of the former docklands of Delfshaven – the old harbour of Rotterdam – through which the local government and its privileged partners already anticipate the arrival of 'the creative class'. Indeed, the makeover of the old harbour quarter is exceptional in its provision of an all-inclusive 'working, living, dining and shopping' environment tailor-made for the needs and desires of the creative industries (including the anticipation of an audiovisual, film and ICT industry). The Lloyd Quarter is, consequently, not just another so-called 'breeding place' where creative people can cooperate, inspire and stimulate each other, create synergies, etc. In general, the majority of these districts are organised in old, abandoned industrial warehouses (such as 'Design Factory Van Nelle' based in the former coffee, tea and tobacco factory of Van Nelle or more 'bottom-up', less formally organised and market-oriented breeding places in Rotterdam, such as the creative hub in warehouse 357 in Marconistraat). Authentic or not, these marketed locales for creatives have one thing in common: they function more or less as a regular office block leaving *untouched* the 'private' life of these creative workers.

The newly built Lloyd Quarter, however, takes this specific step further by integrating formerly unexploited aspects of creative people's daily lives. The Lloyd Quarter presents itself as a 'total formula' for the creative class, supplying it not only with exclusive office and living space – a variation of shiny hypermodern objects, maritime-like buildings and reconverted warehouses – but also bars, restaurants, sporting and fitness facilities, and so on. A slogan on a promotion brochure for one of the developments could not have expressed the desired attitude of the ideal inhabitant better: 'This is not a warehouse, this is your life'.[4] In order to capitalise on the full potential of the creative class, the Lloyd Quarter has been conceived of as a hedonistic 'special zone' for the creative class, an exclusive playground fully catered to the needs and desires of its extravagant target group.[5] That said, it should be obvious that the Lloyd Quarter has little to do with providing affordable working space for creative people such as designers, artists and/or musicians – as in the Design Factory Van Nelle and Warehouse 357 mentioned above. In the Lloyd Quarter, creativity is no longer the exclusive right of cultural workers and artistic geniuses. Instead, it has become elevated to a lifestyle and is broadened to include all kinds of people that know how to enjoy a certain urban extravaganza and/or identify themselves, rightly or wrongly, with a bohemian way of life (managers, yuppies, CEO's). Creativity is, therefore, turned into a logo, a mark of authenticity or distinction, for top of the range urban developments that are implemented in good-old top-down fashion.

Of course, one would be blind not to see the problematic nature of these integral 'work-

4. We refer to the sales brochure of BAM Real Estate for the redeveloped Sint Jobsveem warehouse at the Lloyds Quarter, Rotterdam.
5. In their essay 'Pervercity', Bülent Diken and Carsten Bagge Laustsen describe the rise of the 'zones of exception' in the contemporary urban landscape, see BAVO (ed.) *Urban Politics Now: Re-Imagining Democracy in the Neoliberal City*, Rotterdam: NAi Publishers, 2007.

ing and living' projects. We will only mention two. First, although one of the official goals of the Rotterdam Development Company in developing the Lloyd Quarter was to empower a rather depressed part of the city by attracting creative industries and entrepreneurs to the area – whose presence and 'good practices' were supposed to encourage local people to start developing and 'tapping' their own creativity – it is unlikely that this will ever materialise. It is clear from its structure and layout that the Lloyd Quarter functions as a quasi-gated community and that, in this sense, it simply mirrors the isolation of the adjacent depressed neighbourhood Schiemond. Since no integration of these two worlds at two extremes of the socio-economic spectrum is being attempted, the sustained improvement of the area is destined to remain a case of statistics (with the high income bracket and employment rate of the newcomers raising the overall average).

A second problem is the expectation by the Rotterdam Development Company that the Lloyd Quarter in particular, and the creative class in general, will provide the city with a solid local economy that can serve as a complement to the harbour activities that strongly depend on the fluctuations of international market. It is, however, naive – not to say ridiculous – to put the Lloyd Quarter development forward as an example of Rotterdam using its own specific qualities as a way of avoiding an increasing dependency on global processes. Not only is Rotterdam importing the Quarter's future creative entrepreneurs from outside, the urban gadgets that are supposed to seduce them to re-locate are 'copy-pasted' from other wannabe creative cities that are equally tormented by the big question of how to bind creative forces to their region. Which contemporary city today does not provide in an all-inclusive 'working and living'-oasis reserved for creative entrepreneurs – preferably on the site of former docklands?[6] In other words, Rotterdam's great 'creative' leap forward does not so much disconnect the city from the global marketplace, but rather subjects it even more deeply to the latter's laws of competition. And, as more and more cities around the globe are entering into the creative era, one can only expect a further intensification of inter-urban competition.[7]

...To Gentripuncture (The Poetic Freedom)

However, in order to discuss the instrumentalisation of creativity in Rotterdam's attempts to remake itself as a creative capital, it would be wrong to focus exclusively on grandiose new developments like the Lloyd Quarter. For starters, all but the most uncritical adepts of the new creative city religion will readily agree that both the motives and outcomes of such

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6. Think of the curious multiplication of water front developments all over Europe: from the Dublin Docklands to Amsterdam's 'IJ-oevers', Antwerp's 'Eilandje', and so on.

7. This inter-urban competition, however, goes hand in hand with an intra-urban competition. This made us speak of a new urban class struggle in our article 'De creatieve stad. Stadsontwikkeling is politiek', *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 16 February, 2007. The latter is, of course, anathema today. We can think of the vehement response of Ries van der Wouden ('De harde competitie der steden', *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 23 February, 2006) in which he disqualifies our use of the term class struggle as an anachronism, a remnant of a long superseded Marxist orthodoxy. He suggests that the term 'struggle between cities' is more appropriate in denoting the current situation. His emphasis on a struggle *between* cities, however, completely leaves out of picture the *internal* struggle between different groups in the city – immigrant worker versus high-educated professional, working poor versus managerial groups, etc. – with which the former is waged.

projects are highly questionable. Although there is nothing wrong with this position, there is nevertheless something pathological about the many lamentations surrounding big urban developments misuse of creativity for profits or votes. These commentaries are often an inverted way of asserting there is nothing wrong with the creative discourse *as such*. It is this benevolent stance that should be ruthlessly questioned. To put it bluntly: if the concept of the creative city is easily appropriated and commodified in large UDPs such as the Lloyd Quarter (and many other similar projects around the globe), then we should also scrutinise its 'use and advantages' in less obvious, seemingly more authentic cases. The problem, in other words, is that it remains difficult to criticise the corporate misuse of creativity – however justified – and posit one's own creative initiatives as more authentic and radical. Ultimately, it prevents any serious discussion about how outwardly progressive, honest or 'real' creative initiatives are tightly bound up, and complicit with neo-liberal processes of the same sort.

In light of our analysis of the Lloyd Quarter, it is revealing that the Rotterdam Development Company is also active in supposedly more authentic creative city projects. The most striking example is the experimental housing project 'The Poetic Freedom' in Spangen, one of the most notorious social neighbourhoods of the Netherlands (a district that even featured as the setting of a nationally broadcasted crime series simply called 'Spangen'). Up to 75% of Spangen's inhabitants are immigrants and the area is threatened by the usual plague of unemployment, drug abuse and street violence. The Poetic Freedom was established by the local government and some respected partners within a broader urban renewal effort to change the negative image of the area. The concept was to offer practically for free a dilapidated housing block to a group of people who were looking for a place to buy, and have them renovate and restructure the block through a collective design and production process into high quality housing units. Although the public campaign to recruit possible candidates was open to all, the conditions were such that it cannot be seen as merely coincidental that the majority of the participants were part of the creative middle class. For instance, the most important condition was that the future homeowners would have to invest a lot of their time and energy in the collective renovation of the block, as well as invest a considerate sum of money within the first year after the purchase. Another noteworthy condition was that the participants were not allowed to sell the house, at least for the first couple of years. Also, it was expected that participants would actively engage with the impoverished local community through neighbourhood activities in order to become integrated within existing social networks. Finally, the renovations of the housing units had to conform to the high standards of the so-called 'new building norm' (*nieuwbouwnorm*).

At first sight, The Poetic Freedom is certainly more modest than projects like the Lloyd Quarter. While the latter is an enclave for creative elites ruthlessly implemented in a top-down fashion, the former represents a moderate 'gentripunctural' operation that aims at embedding creative workers in Spangen's socio-urban tissue. To a certain extent, the development is more radical, since it demands courage and initiative from the new inhabitants to develop in an area put aside by many as hopelessly depressed. It additionally requires a lot of time and self-sacrifice to engage in collective decision-making processes, not to mention the financial risk of investing in a neighbourhood denied any serious investment by both the local government and the major housing corporations for decades.

What is striking with The Poetic Freedom, however, is that immediately next to this block the same Rotterdam Development Company and its partners demolished huge chunks of social housing and replaced them with generic commercial condominiums. This begs the question as to why it chose to develop one block in such an experimental, 'non-commercial' fashion. This extreme juxtaposition of opposite approaches can additionally be found in the organisational structure of The Poetic Freedom known as 'collective particular commissionership'. The idea behind this formula is that the new owners are not simply consumers of a product, but play an active role in the production of their own house. And further, that this involvement takes place through the self-organisation of participants as a collective body that decides on all possible design issues, divides the renovation work among the participants, and only engages with market-oriented companies for specific jobs that cannot be completed independently. The fact remains, however, that all people involved remain 'private homeowners'. The main goal of the collective cooperation is to obtain a private house, to which the collective organisation stands in an instrumental relationship.

Most importantly, other than with matters directly concerning the production process, no clear formal commitments were made regarding the organisation of neighbourhood activities for which the new homeowners were officially recruited; that is, the necessary contribution of the project to bring about a new dynamic within the depressed neighbourhood. For this reason, there is little guarantee that The Poetic Freedom will not operate as an isolated oasis like the Lloyd Quarter – albeit on a different scale. That the participants in The Poetic Freedom act and behave like a highly exclusive 'club of like-minded people' (as they themselves call it) is the first indication of such an 'island mentality' emerging. Indeed, this club-formation was not only one of the main reasons mentioned by the participants for joining the project, it was also considered as its condition of possibility. For instance, the notion of engaging other income groups to join the 'club' – particularly people for whom home-ownership is not an option, or who do not possess a certain amount of technical know-how – is seen by all involved parties as unworkable.

The unlikelihood, or at least, uncertainty of a substantial contribution to the impoverished environment is all the more reprehensible if one considers the massive support of all kinds The Poetic Freedom received from government agencies. First of all, the City of Rotterdam used its full monopoly power, as well as its budget for urban renewal, to buy out the former homeowners or landlords of the block. Secondly, The Poetic Freedom was facilitated with all the necessary organisational infrastructure and expertise for structural renovation by the Rotterdam Support Services for Housing – a former municipal service for social housing that now focuses on the development of 'thematic' housing projects. This direct link to local government was additionally used to circumvent the obligatory transfer payments the participants owed to the tax authorities. This was done, again with the help of the Rotterdam Support Services for Housing, by organising the new homeowners in a so-called Neighbourhood Development Company (*Wijkontwikkelingsmaatschappij*) that allowed the block to be labelled as 'newly built'. The construction even needed special approval by the Netherlands Ministry of Spatial Planning. And is this not the deeper meaning of 'The Poetic Freedom'? Just as a poet is granted the freedom to say and do things that are forbidden to mere mortals, here, all manner of exceptional measures are taken to ac-

commodate a privileged group of creative people in realising the house of their dreams.[8]

All these various forms of governmental and non-governmental interference not only seriously undermine the spontaneous 'bottom-up' character of The Poetic Freedom, they additionally demonstrate how this seemingly progressive housing development represents its exact opposite: it encapsulates the integration of the creative sector as 'voluntary imprisonment' within Rotterdam's ambitious project to become the creative capital of the Netherlands. The example illustrates how the privileges ascribed to creative forces in receiving a new 'working and living'-oasis 'for free' is not so much poor compensation for their notorious precarious working conditions: worse than that, this 'gift' itself reflects those precarious conditions. As a point of contrast, in Barcelona, the radical creative movement rebelled against the real estate market by demanded a decent living wage with slogans that already anticipated the reactionary answer of the local government: 'You will never own a house in your whole fucking life'.[9] The mechanisms of The Poetic Freedom, however, represent the exact opposite. Here, the local government anticipated the demand for decent working and living space by saying: 'take this fucking free house, you creative idiot'.

Of course, it is crucial not to be blinded by this gift in order to perceive how the benefits of the transaction are disproportionately on the side of the government, and especially the housing corporations who own most of the housing stock in Spangen and profit most from its gentrification (after which prices are expected to rise from €1100 to €1800 per square meter). In this sense, the government and corporations are getting a bargain: while they do not pay the full price of creativity and its fundamental role in the gentrification of Spangen, they secure a group of new homeowners that have a 'heart' for multicultural neighbourhoods – a passionate attachment, moreover, that is strategically exploited by the Development Company Rotterdam in helping the new owners to 'customise their house around themselves'. This is a high price the creative class pays for a free house and its 'poetic freedom'. Receiving a free residency would be a nice gift to the creative sector if it was not wrapped in a smart 'deal': the city of Rotterdam's secures for itself a docile and enthusiastic creative labour force by providing them with cheap accommodation, while the new homeowners are forced to invest their time, energy and savings and share the risks amongst each other.

8.   Given the fact that the poet traditionally expresses the inconvenient or obscene truth of a certain situation, and the fact that this 'obscene underside' has now become fully part of Rotterdam's official planning policy, we can rightly say that the latter now perfectly matches what Jacques Lacan called 'the discourse of the capitalist' (Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Russell Grigg, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007). According to Lacan, the superiority and cunning of this discourse is precisely that it is extremely critical of its own approach and, inversely, that it is extremely open towards alternative, non-conventional solutions coming from the bottom-up (like The Poetic Freedom). Of course, the critical point is that, once fully incorporated within the capitalist discourse, such alternatives are deprived of their subversive sting and made instrumental to the ambitions and values of the status-quo; see BAVO, 'Always Choose the Worst option', in BAVO (ed.) *Cultural Activism Today: The Art of Overidentification*, Rotterdam: Episode Publishers, 2007. Any critique of the creative developments in Rotterdam should thus take into account all the reversals and complications caused by the capitalist nature – in the precise sense of Lacan – of planning discourse.
9.   We owe this example to Matteo Pasquinelli's presentation of the Barcelona case at the *MyCreativity* convention. See Pasquinelli's 'Immaterial Civil War', this volume.

All this makes The Poetic Freedom even more symptomatic of Rotterdam's 'creative turn' than the Lloyd Quarter. Or to be more precise, while the Lloyd Quarter embodies the excesses of neoliberalism, The Poetic Freedom represents its symptom: it affirms the neoliberal city in the sign of its opposite as a low-scale, bottom-up, cooperative, alternative, genuinely creative project. In other words, if there is any difference between the Lloyd Quarter and The Poetic Freedom, it is that the latter is covered by a mark of authenticity that prevents any criticism of it being an exclusive 'working and living'-oasis for the creative class.

The High Cost of Poetic Freedom
In order to fully recognise the high cost of the 'poetic freedom' granted to the creative class, it is useful to refer to the well-known role of the family under capitalism: on the one hand, the family is expected to deliver disciplined and productive subjects to society for free (by providing education, by teaching a certain set of social norms and values, good manners, etc.). On the other hand, the family functions as a safety net when individual productivity declines, for instance, due to physical or psychological problems. The parents are then supposed to provide emotional escort. However well insured the family might be, in the final instance, it always carries the risks for the dysfunctionality of its offspring. (The most recent addition to this risk-taking are proposals to make parents pay when their child ends up as a young criminal.)

In short, the family is caught in a double exploitation scheme where it has to carry the costs for services that society and the market are clearly not willing to pay for, although they clearly benefit from them, even depend on them for their existence. The point, of course, is that capitalism cannot pay for these services – even if it would want to out of a sense of ethics and justice. Or to put it better, capitalism *cannot* pay these costs and maintain the profits needed to keep the system running. Thus, it was not by accident that when Margaret Thatcher famously declared 'there is no such thing as society, only individual men and women', she quickly added, 'and their families'.[10] In order to maximize profits, capitalism is condemned to maintain a ruthless market system as the 'only game in town' and propagate the dream of a liberal utopia of free individuals, while *at the same time* sustaining non-market, social values such as family ties, community solidarity, informal networks, etc.[11]

If we transpose Margaret Thatcher's dictum to the situation today she would have certainly replaced 'and their families' with 'and their loose creative networks'. In today's capitalism, creative networks function in much the same way as the family did in its previous form. In the first place, creative networks are supposed to deliver disciplined creative subjects which – as we all know – means the exact opposite: creative workers are pioneers, always on the outlook for something new and alternative, constantly questioning the present state of affairs, and so on. In short, creative networks are production plants for the

true urban pioneers that by their presence alone are said to dynamise an urban economy and create a permanent revolution in the city's culture. At the same time, creative networks function as a social safety net. Today's creative workers – just like the rising amount of 'flex-workers' – are increasingly dependent on a close and well-maintained network of friends and co-creative workers for possible commissions. They also strongly depend on their extended family for their social security and health (especially in the case of many international students working for Rotterdam's 'top' architectural offices under deplorable, 19th century-style working and living conditions.)[12]

In this light, we can see The Poetic Freedom as a subsidised way of installing and organising a solidarity network among its creative participants through a collective and co-operative housing project. Of course, it is obvious from the self-description of the group as a 'club of like-minded people' that this 'community-based' project will never be truly inclusive, since social solidarity will never extend to a real 'Other', such as a traditional Turkish family or an Eastern European immigrant (unless they are already themselves successful in the creative sector). In this sense, the solidarity of The Poetic Freedom is strictly limited to the creative class and remains a clear case of the 'middle class helping the middle class'.

Conclusion: To Be *Un*creative
So, if The Poetic Freedom project illustrates anything, it is the cynical result brought about by the attempt of creative forces to safeguard at all costs their most precious capacity: their creativity. When creativity is affirmed as an autonomous value that needs to be nurtured and maintained, it stands in a direct instrumental relation to the current regime. The acquisition of poetic freedom by creative agents is achieved through the agent's voluntary acceptance of the inscription of creativity in the economic process, where it gets put into service as something that cannot be established by capital alone: i.e. in the case of The Poetic Freedom to market the specific 'radical' niche of a neighbourhood like Spangen. Moreover, the creative actors involved are supposed to allow this 'tapping' of their creative energies without financial compensation by the involved partners, since an essential cost of their reproduction – a space for work and living – is subsidised through an exceptional housing scheme. In other words, what is announced as the final liberation of creativity is the exact opposite: the localisation of creativity at a specific site in the city and its subsequent unrestrained exploitation.

When thinking of ways to undermine this deeply cynical situation, the main problem one is confronted with is the remarkable subjectivity of the creative worker. We all remember the days when the cultural sector was active in the education, organisation and emancipation of the working class. Its central mandate was to convince the deprived and dissatisfied masses of its revolutionary role in history, to raise consciousness among these people about the fact that although they are largely responsible for the well-being of the Dutch economy, they are not fully enjoying the benefits of their daily sacrifice. Their emancipation was seen as the *conditio sine qua non* to fulfil the dream of the Netherlands to become truly 'one', to establish solid, socially cohesive communities and a stable economy. However, through

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10. Cited in David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

11. The point is that capitalism cannot but present itself in an enlightened mode (i.e. caring for family ethics, environmental responsibilities and/or social values). It does so not only for 'strategic' ideological considerations, but structural reasons; see our essay 'The Freedom Not to Have a Wal-Mart', in Benda Hofmeyr (ed.) *The Wal-Mart Phenomenon*, Maastricht: Jan van Eyck Publishers, forthcoming.

12. Architectural firm OMA/AMO even cynically presented the inconvenient truth underlying the world-famous Dutch architecture: i.e. the precarious labour of international trainees, as the *sine qua non* for OMA's triumph of realisation. See OMA/AMO, Rem Koolhaas et al., *Content*, Köln: Taschen, 2004.

Rotterdam's attempt to become the next creative capital of the Netherlands, this traditional role is turned upside-down. Once baptised as the 'creative' sector, cultural workers eagerly take upon *themselves* the role of revolutionary subject and, along the way, redefine the struggle of Dutch society as one towards dynamism, innovation and competitiveness. Moreover, the 'education of the needy' is no longer on the agenda: creative agents now fully embrace their privileged position as connoisseurs and exploit it for maximum profit. Within this mentality, the old working class appears in creative circles as an annoying obstacle to the realisation of Rotterdam's creative dream. If anything, workers in Rotterdam – and its popular masses in general – are said to excel in capriciousness: while recognising the need for a strong economy to secure their current living conditions, they frustrate creative developments through their envy towards creative newcomers in the city.[13]

It is at this very point that we are able to identify the subversive core of creative networks today. If social engagement and political activism still means anything today for the cultural sector, it should take an unusual task upon itself: one should learn to be *not* creative.[14] It is only by a friendly, organised refusal of its manipulated role as creative avant-garde that the cultural sector can safeguard its most precious asset – its creativity – from becoming the object of perverse politico-economical games. The paradoxical situation today is that only by acting as an *un*creative subject – strategically conservative if necessary – can the creative/cultural sector create that crucial gap where the necessity of a real alternative to today's challenges can emerge and begin to take shape.

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13. Richard Florida's 'negative correlation' between the working class nature of a city and the presence of a bohemian climate returns not only in the official propaganda of Rotterdam's development company and its priviledged partners; most of all, it manifests itself where one would least expect it: in progressive cultural initiatives. Take those organised under the banner of WiMBY! in Hoogvliet (Rotterdam), for instance, an initiative of Crimson Architectural Historians and former Leftist politician Felix Rottenberg. Being an acronym for 'Welcome in My Backyard!', WiMBY! clearly addressed the negative, recalcitrant attitude of the Rotterdam working class towards the new – i.e. the 'not in my backyard' attitude or 'NiMBY!' – as the most important obstacle for the great leap forward of the troubled neighbourhood. A similar logic was staged in Slotervaart (Amsterdam) in the project 'Face your World' by artist Jeanne van Heeswijk – somebody who can hardly be accused of being unloyal to the fate of everyday man. For a critique of these art practices, see our essay 'Let Art Save Democracy!', *Regimes of Representation: Art & Politics Beyond the House of the People* (2006), http://www.museumofconflict.eu/singletext.php?id=32

14. With this strategy, we are influenced by Jacques Rancière, who conceptualised the essence of a political gesture as 'the long protocol of disagreement over an argument in which everyone agrees', giving a twist to the common-sense interpretation of a concept and thereby alienating the powers that be from their own discourse. See Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, trans. Julie Rose, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

BACK TO THE FUTURE OF THE CREATIVE CITY
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPROACH TO AMSTERDAM'S CREATIVE REDEVELOPMENT

MERIJN OUDENAMPSEN

Sometimes digging into the past is necessary in order to illuminate the present. In this case, contrasting Amsterdam's ongoing Creative City policy with a utopian precursor will hopefully shed some light on the contradictions inherent in the contemporary fusion between creativity and industry. Despite being a recent hype, the Creative City policy has shown remarkable vigour and longevity. Not unlike famous ageing rock bands, even in advancing years it has still been able to maintain a spell on groupies and adherents at local city governments around the western world.[1] However, I do not intend to argue that when it was young and fresh, Richard Florida's Creative Class Rock rang any truer, only that all along the line, a different tune is being played than the lyrics imply. In this article, I will argue that Amsterdam's Creative City policy – far from intending to make the city's entire population more creative – is predominantly a branding exercise, an expression of a more general shift towards entrepreneurial modes of city government; a shift that is currently being played out through an impressive urban redevelopment of Amsterdam.

The comparison between sociologist Richard Florida – author of two books on the rise and flight of the Creative Class – and a rock star is not unusual. Google 'rock star' with 'Richard Florida' and you will find dozens of descriptions of performances by the 'rock star academic' responsible for introducing pop sociology into regional economics. Amongst his urban policy dos and don'ts, 'lacking rock bands' even figures prominently among the reasons why a city could lose out on the economic development race.[2] This article, however, is not about the peculiar fusion occurring between pop culture and social science, but rather about the utopian claims that are being made for the creative economy. Florida has pronounced creativity to be a 'great equaliser', pleading for a 'New Deal' of the creative economy. Likewise, Job Cohen – the mayor of Amsterdam – has pronounced Amsterdam to be a Creative City that will 'foster the creativity of all its inhabitants'.

In retrospect, these claims can be seen as somewhat distorted echoes of an earlier utopian project that alluded to the revolutionary rise of creativity. Let's take a short leap back

1. Even though according to a recent investigation the creative economy in Amsterdam is experiencing decline instead of growth, the City Council still expresses its confidence in the strategic importance of the creative sector. 'It's beyond numbers', according to Alderman Asscher of Economic Affairs. See 'Creatieve Industrie Slinkt', *Het Parool*, 25 January, 2007, http://www.parool.nl/nieuws/2007/JAN/25/eco2.html.
2. Richard Florida, '*The Rise of the Creative Class*. Why Cities Without Gays and Rock Bands Are Losing the Economic Development Race', *Washington Monthly*, 2 May, 2002, http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2001/0205.florida.html.

in history, back to the future as imagined by the Dutch avant-garde, and more specifically, the artist Constant Nieuwenhuys. He was one of the founders of the experimental art group Reflex, which later became part of the international CoBrA movement. Discontented with the limitations of the world of art and the 'individualistic nature' of painting, Nieuwenhuys abandoned them in 1953 to focus on a more promising exploration of metal and architectural techniques. In 1957, he became a co-founder of the Situationist International (SI) and wrote the renowned tract on Unitary Urbanism with Guy Debord. Until his resignation in 1961, he would play an essential role in the formulation of a Situationist perspective on the contemporary city and a critique of modernist urbanism.

In 1956, Nieuwenhuys started a visionary architectural project that would stretch out over 20 years. A utopian city that went by the name of New Babylon, it consisted of an almost endless series of scale models, sketches, etchings and collages, further elaborated by manifestoes, lectures, essays and films. The project was a provocation, an explicit metaphor for the Creative City:

> The modern city is dead; it has been sacrificed to the cult of utility. New Babylon is the project for a city in which people will be able to live. For to live means to be creative. New Babylon is the product of the creativity of the masses, based on the activation of the enormous creative potential which at the moment lies dormant and unexploited in the people. New Babylon assumes that as a result of automation non-creative work will disappear, that there will be a metamorphosis in morals and thinking, that a new form of society will emerge.[3]

Nieuwenhuys envisaged a society where automation had realised the liberation of humanity from the toils of industrial work, replacing labour with a nomadic life of creative play outside of the economic domain and in disregard of any considerations of functionality. 'Contrary to what the functionalists think, culture is situated at the point where usefulness ends', was one of Nieuwenhuys' more provocative statements. Homo Faber, the worker of industrial society, was to be succeeded by Homo Ludens, the playful man or as Nieuwenhuys stated, the creative man. This was the inhabitant of New Babylon that thanks to modern architectural techniques would be able to spontaneously control and reconfigure every aspect of the urban environment. Nieuwenhuys took the surrealist slogan 'poetry should be made by all' and translated it to the urban environment, 'tomorrow, life will reside in poetry'. The work of Nieuwenhuys thus combined an aversion for modernist functionalism with an intense appreciation of the emancipatory potentials of new technology. Mechanisation would result in the arrival of a 'mass culture of creativity' that would revolt against the superstructure of bourgeois society, destroying it completely and taking the privileged position of the artist down with it. A society would be created where, in accordance with Marx's vision of art in a communist society, 'there are no painters but only people who engage in painting among other activities'.[4] The work of Nieuwenhuys would have a direct and major influence on the rise of

youth movement Provo. The Dutch counterculture proved to be an almost perfect incarnation of the Homo Ludens; through relentless provocation, happenings and playful actions, Provo would bring the authoritarianism of the Dutch 50s down to its knees.

Life Is Put to Work

However, developments took an unexpected turn. Automation and consequent de-industrialisation – the outsourcing of manufacturing to Newly Industrialised Countries – did not lead to the liberation of the Homo Ludens (or maybe we should grant Homo Ludens a short and partial victory, a short interlude located sometime during the 60s before being sent back to work). Of course, it is well known that since the sixties the total amount of working hours has grown steeply. Together with the consolidation of consumption as a leisure activity, the expansion of labour time has led to an unprecedented amount of human activity being directly or indirectly incorporated into the sphere of economic transactions through a process Marx would have called 'real subsumption', or the extension of capitalism onto the field of ontology, of lived social practice. Whereas Nieuwenhuys envisioned the liberation of the creative domain from the economic, we are currently witnessing – in sync with the Creative City discourse – the extension of the economic into the creative domain. This is exemplified by the transformation of the artist into a cultural entrepreneur, the marketing of (sub)cultural expressions, the subservience of culture to tourist flows and the triumph of functionalism over *bildungsideal* at the university. As an interesting spatial illustration of this dynamic, the once niche economy of the arts occupied a fringe position in the Amsterdam housing market, most notably as squatted dockland warehouses. Now that artistic production has been incorporated and elevated towards a seemingly pivotal position in the urban economy, it has been accommodated into the city through mechanisms such as het *broedplaatsenbeleid* or temporary housing contracts.[5] The majority of non-functional space in the city, derelict or squatted territories, has now been redeveloped or is in process of redevelopment. There is no longer an outside position.

What distinguishes the earlier utopian creative 'Babylon' from the one referred to by Florida and the Amsterdam City Council? To start with, in the post-Fordist economy, the rise of the creative sector in advanced economies is predicated upon displacement of industrial functions to low wage localities and the exploitation of cheap manual labour. This new functional divide in the global economy and its polarised wage structure is referred to as the New International Division of Labour. As part of this development, we have seen the rise of global cities whose economic success depends on the presence of high tech innovation and global control functions. These economic nodes coordinate international flows of goods, finance outsourced production, market and design global commodities and

3. Constant Nieuwenhuys and Simon Vinkenoog, *New Babylon: Ten Lithographs*, Amsterdam: Galerie d'Eendt, 1963: p. 10.
4. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology,* New York: International Publishers, 1970: p. 109.

5. 'Het broedplaatsenbeleid' (literally 'incubator policy') is a city policy whereby subsidies are allocated to house artists below the going market rates in specially redeveloped buildings (a significant part of the policy has been targeted at legalising squats). Like baby chickens, the idea behind the policy is that cultural activity needs to be sheltered from the market during its initial phase; when the chick finally turns into a chicken, it should support itself. It is a controversial policy and the artists benefiting from it often complain about the strict bureaucratic requirements. See Justus Uitermark, 'De omarming van subversiviteit', *Agora* 24.3 (2004): 32-35. Available online: http://squat.net/studenten/kraken-is-terug.pdf.

maintain a monopolist control over client relations.[6] From a macro perspective, the claims of the new creative city as being a 'great equalizer' actually appear as the opposite; it is based on functional inequality. Now let's take a closer look at the city.

Amsterdam™

To properly understand the arrival of the Creative City policy and what sets it aside from its utopian predecessor, we have to place it in a larger context. The Creative City is part and parcel of a greater shift impacting on the city, causing the Keynesian management of bygone eras to be replaced by an entrepreneurial approach. The rise in importance of productive sectors that are considered 'footloose' to a city's economic well-being has led to increased interurban competition. Amsterdam is pitted against urban centres such as Barcelona, London, Paris and Frankfurt in a struggle to attract economic success in the form of investments, a talented workforce and tourists flocking to the city. The ever-present threat of interurban competition is continuously invoked and inflated throughout the policy rhetoric. To illustrate my point, even the discussion on whether to discontinue a prohibition of gas heaters on the terraces of Amsterdam cafés was recently framed in these terms: 'it's a serious disadvantage in comparison with cities like Berlin and Paris', according to the leader of the local social democrat party.[7] The opinion of the city's population itself was not even mentioned in the newspaper article.

The dominance of entrepreneurial approaches to city politics is the feature of a new urban regime, labelled by scholars as the 'Entrepreneurial City'.[8] With origins in the US reality of neoliberal state withdrawal from urban plight, it has taken some time to arrive in the corporatist Netherlands and filter through the minds of policy makers. In this new urban regime, independent of the political colour of the party in power, the public sector displays behaviour that was once characteristic of the private sector: risk taking, innovation, marketing and profit motivated thinking. Public money is invested into private economic development through public-private partnerships to outflank the urban competition, hence the rise of mega-developments and marketing projects such as the Docklands in London, the Guggenheim in Bilbao or the Zuidas in Amsterdam. A concern voiced by critics is that although costs are public, profit will be allocated to the urban elite, hypothetically to 'trickle down' to the rest of the population. To face this new market reality – where cities are seen as products and city councils operate as business units – Amsterdam Inc. has launched the branding projects *I Amsterdam* and *Amsterdam Creative City*. After coming to power in Spring 2006, one of the first steps of the new progressive city council was to launch a 'Top City Programme' aimed at consolidating the city's 'flagging' position in the top ten of preferred urban business climates:

Viewed from an outsider's vantage point, Amsterdam is clearly ready to reposition itself. This is why we've launched the Amsterdam Top City programme. In order to keep ahead of the global competition, Amsterdam needs to renew itself. In other words, in order to enjoy a great future worthy of its great past, what Amsterdam needs now is great thinking.[9]

Of course, 'creativity will be the central focus point' of this program, since 'creativity is the motor that gives the city its magnetism and dynamism'. However, when one looks beyond the rhetoric to the practicalities of the program, it is surprisingly modest: sponsored expatriate welcome centres in Schiphol Airport, coaching for creative entrepreneurs by mayor Dutch banks and MTV, 'hospitality training' for caterers, 'Amsterdam Top City' publications in KLM flights and the annual Picnic Cross Media week, a conference aspiring to be the Dutch Davos of creative entrepreneurs.

In arguably one of the best critiques of Creative City theory, geographer Jamie Peck examines why Florida's work proved to have such an impressive influence on policy makers around the world.[10] According to Peck's sobering conclusion, Florida's creative city thesis was by no means groundbreaking – various authors had published on the knowledge economy before – but it provided a cheap, non-controversial and pragmatic marketing script that fit well with the existing entrepreneurial schemes of urban economic development. It offered a program that city authorities could afford to do on the side, a low budget public relations scheme complemented by a reorientation of already existing cultural funding. In Amsterdam, however, this creative branding may appear modest in its budget but is actually extensive in its effects, it is the immaterial icing on the cake of an impressive urban redevelopment of the city.

For Amsterdam currently abounds with building works, it is facing what I have called an 'Extreme Makeover'. The city's waterfronts are being redeveloped into luxurious living and working environments; in the south, a new skyline is being realised, the Zuidas, a high rise business district that is supposed to function as a portal to the world economy. In the post-war popular neighbourhoods, more houses are being demolished than ever before in the history of the city, and a significant part of the social housing will make way for more expensive owner occupant apartments. The trajectory of the new metro line – a straight line of sand, cement and continuous construction works – crosses the city from North to South and thus connects the new city with the old.

Not only is one of Europe's largest urban renewal operations underway, with demolition reaching historic levels, the image of the city itself is also being reworked. In both the re-branding and redevelopment of Amsterdam, the creative sector plays an important role. Creative industries are supposed to function as a catalyst for urban redevelopment, changing the image of a neighbourhood from backward to hip. Schemes have been put into place to temporarily or permanently house artists in neighbourhoods sited to be upgraded. Though modest in its budget, the *I Amsterdam* and *Creative City* marketing campaigns are

6. Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

7. 'Kachels op Terras gaan aan', *Het Parool*, 23 January, 2007, http://www.parool.nl/nieuws/2007/JAN/23/p2.html.

8. David Harvey, 'From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism', *Geografiska Annaler* 71.1 (1989): pp. 3-17; Tim Hall and Phil Hubbard (eds) *The Entrepreneurial City. Geographies of Politics, Regimes and Representation*, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 1998.

9. Gemeente Amsterdam, Amsterdam Topstad: Metropool, Economische Zaken Amsterdam, 14 July, 2006, http://www.amsterdam.nl/ondernemen?ActItmIdt=12153.

10. Jamie Peck, 'Struggling with the Creative Class', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29.4 (2005), pp. 740-770.

conceptually advanced (and extensively present in the public consciousness), for city marketing is the apex of *consumer generated content*, the dominant trend in marketing techniques. Creative hipsters serve as communicative vessels for branding projects; between concept stores, galleries, fashion- and street art magazines, the cultural economy expands itself over the urban domain and into the public realm.

The new marketing function of the creative sector is perhaps best illustrated by the recent project of Sandberg called *Artvertising*. It involves the facade of the Sandberg fine arts and design faculty being turned into a huge billboard filled with logos of predominantly major companies and also some smaller cultural projects. The sixteen thousand tiles of the facade (35 x 29cm each) were sold for 20 euros a piece, making sure to mention that all the business savvy people of the office park Zuidas would be passing on the adjacent ring road. A small blurb from the website of *Artvertising*:

> Every self considered art or design intellectual ends up twisting his or her nose to the so-called 'commercial world'. Art, culture, criticism is what it matters. But we don't think so. We believe that now, more than always, the world is ruled by commercial and economical relationships. Culture defines, and most important, is defined these days by market dynamics.[11]

The Sandberg project is a beautiful illustration of the state of art in the Entrepreneurial City. Perfectly vacuous, it's like a bubble that's bound to burst. The genius of the project – note also its grammatical bluntness – is that it becomes at once the tool of critique and its object; the embodiment of post-critical art, stretched beyond the cynical dystopias of Rem Koolhaas. However, it did not fail in sparking some resistance during its one month's existence, it was modestly vandalised by a group calling itself the 'Pollock commando', wanting to reclaim the facade as a 'public canvas' by throwing paint bombs on it.[12] Besides its uncritical embrace of the new commercial role of the artist as entrepreneur, the '*Artvertising*' project is also reflective of another tendency in Amsterdam's creative economy: with the borders between culture and economy fading away, the assessment of the value of art and cultural practice has risen in significance.

The Artificial Organic of Real Estate
In a recent article in Real Estate Magazine, we can read more about the strange collusion between the arts and real estate. It reads: 'the concept of the Creative City is on the rise. Sometimes planned, sometimes organic, but up till now always thanks to real estate developers'.[13] The article consequently describes a roundtable discussion on the Creative City by real estate entrepreneurs, organised by René Hoogendoorn. She is the director of 'Strategic Projects' at ING Real Estate, the real estate branch of one of the biggest banking conglomerates of the Netherlands. 'Strategic Projects' means, according to Hoogendoorn, that she initiates the de-

velopment of projects that need 'soul' – a form of creative branding provided by the presence of cultural actors – in this case the Zuidas and the new development on the northern waterfront, Overhoeks. She combines this function with membership on the advisory board of the Rietveld Art Academy, the spatial planning department of the employers federation and the Amsterdam Creativity Exchange – a club subsidised by the Creative City policy that, according to its own words, 'provides an environment in which business and creativity meet'.[14] It is therefore no coincidence that the last meeting of the Creativity Exchange took place in the old Shell offices of the strategic Overhoeks district, in a way, already providing a taste of much-needed 'soul'.[15] Hoogendoorn explains that ING Real Estate invests in art and culture up to the point that it increases the value of real estate surrounding it. Interesting examples are ING Real Estate funding Platform 21, the Design museum at the Zuidas, and the sponsoring of the post-squatter performance festival Robodock on the northern waterfront. Hogendoorn and other real estate developers are still struggling with the question 'how to assess up-front the net cash value of the future added value of culture', which shows there is still some way to go for the colonisation of culture.

Another interesting announcement in the article is that real estate developers have now come to realise the importance of 'software' for the successful realisation of real estate 'hardware'. Cultural institutions and temporary art projects create 'traffic', and allow developers to slowly bring property 'up to flavour': 'it's about creating space! The thing not to do is to publicly announce you're going to haul in artists; instead, give them the feeling they've thought of it themselves. If it arises organically, levels will rise organically'.[16]

The distinction between urban 'software' and 'hardware' was initially coined as an architectural term by the pop-art architecture group Archigram to champion the use of soft and flexible materials like the inflatable bubble instead of modernist 'hardware' realised with steel and cement. Together with contemporaries such as the Italian group Archizoom and publications such as Jonathan Raban's *Soft City*,[17] Archigram levelled a critique against deadpan modernism, putting forward a more organic conception of the city as a living organism. Urban utopian theory thus acquired its present day computer analogy, where software is the 'programming' of the city and hardware its 'infrastructure'. Much like the SI – experimenting with the bottom up approach through psychogeography and the *dérive* – subjective, organic and 'soft' approaches became a focus point for utopian urbanism.[18]

The recuperation of the utopian language of the sixties into neo-functionalism by real estate entrepreneurs is tragically appropriate. In the SI's 'Formulary for a New Urbanism', Ivan Chtcheglov argues for a city where everyone could live in their 'personal cathedral'.

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11. Artvertising, http://www.sandberg.nl:106080/artvertising.
12. Adbust bij het Sandberg Instituut, 22 December, 2006,
    http://indymedia.nl/nl/2006/12/41476.shtml.
13. Bart van Ratingen, 'Ik Zie Ik Zie Wat Jij Niet Ziet, Vijf Ontwikkelaars over de "Creatieve Stad",
    haar Mogelijkheden en haar Beperkingen', *Real Estate Magazine* May, 2006.

14. Amsterdam Creativity Exchange, http://www.acx.nu/.
15. Website Overhoeks Development, http://www.overhoeks.nl/template4.php?c=209.
16. Ratingen, 'Ik Zie Ik Zie Wat Jij Niet Ziet' *Real Estate Magazine* (May, 2006), my translation.
17. Jonathan Raban, Soft City, London: Hamilton, 1974. For a good introduction to Archizoom,
    see: Valentijn Byvanck (ed.) *Superstudio: The Middelburg Lectures*, Middelburg: Zeeuws
    Museum, 2005.
18. See also the World-Information.org IP City Edition for a relation between the utopian urbanism
    of the sixties and the present struggle against copyrights: Wolfgang Sützl and Christine Mayer
    (eds) *World-Information.org IP City Edition*, Vienna: Institute for New Culture Technologies, 2005,
    http://static.world-information.org/infopaper/wi_ipcityedition.pdf.

He proposed a city where districts correspond to their inhabitants emotional lives: Bizarre Quarter, Happy Quarter, Noble and Tragic Quarter, Historical Quarter, Useful Quarter, Sinister Quarter, etc.[19] In a similar vein, the present restructuring of the Dutch housing market has seen the arrival of 'differentiated living milieus', where planners partition existing neighbourhoods into themed areas accompanied by a discourse of 'consumer choice'. In the Westelijke Tuinsteden, the biggest redevelopment of social housing in Amsterdam, planners have 're-imagined' the entire neighbourhood in terms of different consumer identities, like 'dreamer', 'doer', 'urbanite', 'networker', 'villager', etc. When consumer demand from outside of the neighbourhood failed to materialise, however, the planners had to readapt their visions, reluctantly returning to a half-hearted focus on the needs of the local population.[20]

Thus the hardware-software dialectic has become an intrinsic part of the current urban development approach. As an example of entrepreneurial city hardware, we could look at the new urban mega-development, the business district Zuidas and the North South metro line that will connect it to the city (all together good for several billion euros of public investment). A good example of software would be the new media conference Picnic '06, that was granted almost half a million by both the city council and the national government and still managed to ask an entrance fee of 750 euros for a three day conference. Creative City schemes, therefore, become an attempt to build competitive 'urban software package' or 'program' space, to use Henri Lefebvre's expression for top-down spatial organisation.[21] To continue with the computer analogy, the first problem with these hierarchical approaches is that their 'source code' is undisclosed. Public planning and citizen participation in the Zuidas, the North South metro line and the redevelopment of the Westelijke Tuinsteden has been problematic, with most of the decisions being made behind closed doors and later publicly legitimised by false arguments or financial 'miscalculations'. Only when we break that code can we truly assess additional problems, such as social polarisation or the curtailment of the public sphere.

Multiple Personality (Dis)order

The subject of the Creative City is not Homo Ludens as imagined by Nieuwenhuys, but the entrepreneur in all its guises, for the creative city is an entrepreneurial city. Accordingly, in the cultural field, the artist is being converted into a cultural entrepreneur. An illustrative example is the conversion of the Artist Allowance, a state scheme that before its current transformation was just a monthly allowance, but is now conditional on a yearly growing profit. Each year, artists have to earn more to be able to apply to the Work and Artist Income Act (WWIK). The new Art Plan and other Creative City initiatives attempt to infuse an entrepreneurial mindset into the artist by giving them courses on administrative and entrepreneurial strategies. Cultural Funding is increasingly geared to crossover projects between the arts and the economy. Of course, the great threat of competition is again invoked: "despite big investments of the council and the national government, the cultural significance of Amsterdam, and accordingly the international position of Dutch culture, is under pressure".[22]

According to Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's analysis of Empire, a battlefield is staged between a creative, communicative and productive multitude and a parasitic mode of capital. In the Entrepreneurial City, this opposition becomes a permanent psychological state, a multiple personality disorder. The Creative Class is at once Homo Ludens and Homo Economicus, it incorporates the drive to create, produce and socialise with the drive to appropriate those powers and passions. In Marxist terms, if capital is a social relation, then the entrepreneurial mindset is the interface of that relation.

Paradoxically, the consequence of Amsterdam's conversion into a cultural knowledge economy has resulted in a drive to economise on creativity. Universities await the introduction of a voucher system, a ticket system comparable to the food stamps in crisis times. Popular but not economically successful educations on the polytechnic schools will have to lower their student enrolments. An entire bureaucracy has been set up that forces teachers and students into streamlined submission to quotas and efficiency concerns (Dutch students, unconsciously, have already grasped that studying is now nothing more than unpaid labour, by working as little as possible).

What does it mean that the Amsterdam Creative City policy is predominantly a branding project, a thin layer of varnish, under which resides banal economic strive? There is a Dutch expression, '*de wens is de moeder van de gedachte*', which literally means 'the wish is the mother of the thought', a pseudo Freudian folk wisdom that relates well to the reality of the Creative City.

According to the marketing experts at city hall, Amsterdam is engaged in 'a form of communicative warfare' in an international competitive field of Creative Cities.[23] As Sun Tzu stated in *Art of War*: 'all warfare is based on deception'. So here it is, Amsterdam, a city where 70% of the youth population can only complete the lowest level of education, the Vmbo, which is additionally suffering from record amounts of drop-outs, labelling itself as a Creative City for all. Perhaps Paolo Virno's take on post-Fordism is better at identifying creativity in terms other than the Creative Class, even if it proves to be not as rewarding for everyone:

> Post-Fordism certainly cannot be reduced to a set of particular professional figures characterized by intellectual refinement or 'creative' gifts. It is obvious that workers in the media, researchers, engineers, ecological operators, and so on, are and will be only

19. Ivan Chtcheglov, 'Formulary for a New Urbanism', trans. Ken Knabb, Interactivist Info Exchange, August 2006, http://info.interactivist.net/article.pl?sid=06/08/25/191240&mode=nested&tid=9.

20. Helma Hellinga, *Onrust in Park en Stad. Stedelijke Vernieuwing in de Westelijke Tuinsteden*, Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 2005: pp. 143-154.

21. Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space, trans. Donald Nichelson Smith, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.

22. Gemeente Amsterdam, Amsterdam Creatieve Stad, Kunstenplan 2005 – 2008, Amsterdam, 2004, http://www.amsterdam.nl/gemeente/documenten?ActItmIdt=4750.

23. 'What should brand carriers comply with? An intrinsic descriptive name is recognisable yet less distinctive and specific for the brand it refers to: there are several artistic cities in the world so "Amsterdam city of art" or "Amsterdam the metropolis" is not quite unique and distinctive when it comes to the communication war between cities'. Gemeente Amsterdam, Choosing Amsterdam: Brand, Concept and Organisation of the City Marketing, Amsterdam, 2003, p. 23, http://www.amsterdam.nl/aspx/download.aspx?file=/contents/pages/4629/d69_citymarket_samen.pdf.

Another interesting detail is that the present alderman of culture, Caroline Gherels has come from the '*I Amsterdam*' marketing team.

a minority. By 'post-Fordism,' I mean instead a set of characteristics that are related to the entire contemporary workforce, including fruit pickers and the poorest of immigrants. Here are some of them: the ability to react in a timely manner to the continual innovations in techniques and organizational models, a remarkable 'opportunism' in negotiating among the different possibilities offered by the job market, familiarity with what is possible and unforeseeable, that minimal entrepreneurial attitude that makes it possible to decide what is the 'right thing' to do within a nonlinear productive fluctuation, a certain familiarity with the web of communications and information.[24]

Not far removed – albeit from a different political perspective – is an interesting statement from Florida that creativity 'is a fundamental and intrinsic human capacity'. According to Florida, in the end all human beings are creative, and all are potentially part of the creative class, but just a small part is so lucky to get paid for it.[25] Here is where the precarity comes in, since the entrepreneur is precarious by definition. The investments made are speculative and risk taking is the central requirement. Therefore, not only the artist, but the entire city becomes precarious; its income dependent on the flows of deterritorialised creativity. Social institutions of old, like social housing and unemployment subsidies, are being slowly deconstructed. For the freelance entrepreneur, social protection is market distortion and unionisation is infringement on cartel legislation. Amsterdam's metamorphosis towards an entrepreneurial city has worrying social consequences – while the city looks outside for investments and talent, the local population that is not productive or cannot sufficiently market its creativity becomes redundant. This surplus population is slowly displaced by the urban renewal offensive towards the region. The 'urban facelift' revolves around the removal of social tissue just as cosmetic surgery removes fatty tissue. The environment of the Creative City becomes a highly segregated one.

According to Lefebvre, 'the right of the city signifies the right of citizens and city dwellers [...] to appear on all the networks and circuits of communication, information and exchange.' We need to re-imagine what a real Creative City would look like. Let the first condition be that it's software runs on programming that is 'open source'.

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24. Branden W. Joseph and Paolo Virno, 'Interview with Paolo Virno', trans. Alessia Ricciardi, *Grey Room* 21 (Fall, 2005): 32, http://mitpress.mit.edu/journals/pdf/GR21_026-037_Joseph.pdf.
25. Richard Florida, 'Cities and the Creative Class', *City & Community* 2.1 (2003): 8

DISCONNECTING THE DOTS OF THE RESEARCH TRIANGLE
CORPORATISATION, FLEXIBILISATION AND MILITARISATION IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

BRIAN HOLMES

We've heard a lot in recent years from urbanists and economic planners about the 'creative city', the 'creative class' and the 'creative industries'. To compare facts with fictions, I decided to take a little tour of one of the urban areas that have been specially designed to put the creativity into industry.

The Research Triangle is an unusually wealthy, unusually brainy metropolitan region of North Carolina, centred around the university towns of Chapel Hill, Durham and Raleigh, and home to about one-and-a-half million people. It owes its name and fame to the establishment in the late 1950s of a state-funded science park, the Research Triangle Park, which is a woodsy retreat for the R&D labs of giant transnational corporations. 'Where the minds of the world meet' is the RTP motto.

Long before Silicon Valley or even Northern Italy, Research Triangle Park was the template for the creative industries. At the time, the phrase would have evoked men and women in white coats with test tubes in their hands, bringing you a better tomorrow with chemicals, plastics, nuclear radiation and colour TV, all beneath the umbrella of the US government and its Cold War agendas. The RTP project can easily appear as its own caricature, like other relics of the fifties. But is the present-day picture really that different? As our tour unfolds, we're going to see that far more intricate private-public partnerships in the universities have taken up where the old-style science park left off, boosting employment and productivity and continually advertising the potential to do more, with the result that the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill technopolis is now being touted as a model for the emerging knowledge dumps of Europe. The question for everyone living downstream of the 'Triangle model' is whether we want to throw our minds away in the restricted space of corporatisation, flexibilisation and militarisation – the triple dead-end of the neoliberal knowledge economy.

Entropy and its Discontents

To raise a few doubts, I'm going to try something between thick geographical description and allegorical landscape. The approach has an illustrious predecessor. Some forty years ago and a few hundred miles to the north, the artist Robert Smithson proposed 'A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey'. He was looking not at majestic beaux-arts sculptures but at freeway projects, or what he thought of as involuntary earthworks: 'the Bridge Monument', 'the Great Pipe Monument', 'the Monument with Pontoons', etc. Smithson saw these infrastructure projects as *ruins in reverse*: 'This is the opposite of the "romantic ruin" because the buildings don't *fall* into ruin *after* they are built but rather *rise* into ruin before they are

built'.[1] Coming of age in the era of peak production and planned obsolescence, Smithson was fascinated with the dark side of the American dream, and with what he conceived as the entropic nature of the industrial monuments. Their very construction seemed imbued with an invisible dissolution and decay, a hidden destiny of collapse and disorder, which he brought out graphically in the black-and-white snapshots that illustrate his essay.

Ours is a more optimistic age. The new monuments of the Research Triangle appear in bright digital colour, like projected images, or life-sized advertisements for someone else's utopia. As you glide by them in your air-conditioned American car – from the GlaxoSmithKline building and the National Centre for the Humanities at Research Triangle Park, to the Nasher Museum on the Duke University campus, the Lucky Strike Water Tower at the American Tobacco Historic District in Durham, or even the brand-new County Jail right next door – what's striking is that here in the South, in cities like Durham or Raleigh with historically important black communities, everything that looks the slightest bit monumental tends toward an increasingly pure, clinical white. Maybe this shade of 'laboratory white' signifies a different type of entropic monument, beyond the limits of thermodynamics with its simple laws of energetic decay. And since the knowledge-based economy – with its emphasis on superstructure, not infrastructure – requires such extraordinary rates of data transmission, maybe this new entropy is of the kind that telecommunications engineer Claude Shannon famously ascribed to information.

Shannon is the founder of the 'mathematical theory of communication'.[2] Recall that for him, 'meaning' is irrelevant: all that matters is the quantity of information, the ratio of signal to noise. More signal, less decay, less disorder – less entropy in the usual sense of the word.[3] Shannon's ideal is maximum order, perfect transmission, i.e. *negentropy*, which literally means entropy in reverse. Now, negative entropy is held by modern science to be the characteristic of life, of growth. The term obviously has its economic connotations – in biotech for instance, where everyone constantly predicts the next great financial bonanza.[4] The Research Tri-

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Thanks to the Counter Cartography Collective for their welcome in North Carolina, and to Claire Pentecost for critique and suggestions on this paper.

1.   Robert Smithson, 'A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey', in Jack Flam (ed.) *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1996, p. 72.

2.   Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1998.

3.   'Entropy' is a strange word to describe the quantity of information, which is obviously ordered. Von Neumann apparently made this remark to Shannon: 'You should call it entropy, for two reasons. In the first place your uncertainty function has been used in statistical mechanics under that name, so it already has a name. In the second place, and more important, no one really knows what entropy really is, so in a debate you will always have the advantage', quoted in Myron Tribus and Edward McIrvine, 'Energy and Information (Thermodynamics and Information Theory)', *Scientific American* 225.3 (1971): p. 180.

4.   'Negative entropy' was theorised as the characteristic of life by Erwin Shrödinger; Shannon's entropy was identified as 'negentropy' by Léon Brillouin. A full discussion of the relations between information, negentropy and biotech can be found in the recent work of Tiziana Terranova. See Léon Brillouin, *Science and Information Theory*, New York, Academic Press, 1956; Erwin Shrödinger, *What Is Life?: The Physical Aspect of the Living Cell*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992; Tiziana Terranova, *Network Culture: Politics for the Information Age*, London: Pluto Press, 2004, pp. 6-38, 98-130.

angle is banking heavily on biotech, as we shall see. Still, there comes a point when you have to ask the question: where does all this knowledge-driven growth really lead? When the entire spectrum of human concerns, from knowledge and creativity to democracy, social justice and ecological sustainability, is subsumed under the imperative of economic expansion, then the absolute purity of the informational signal becomes indistinguishable from noise.

In the knowledge-based economy, growth just cranks up the volume of white noise. This is the most basic idea I'm going to offer, inseparable from the pixellated images of the Triangle monuments. The ever-expanding range of digital choice – starting from the 0/1 alternative that is the essence of information – finally culminates in a meaningless blur.

Surface Illusions

Let's begin our tour of the negentropic monuments like any good tourist would, with the new UED or 'urban entertainment destination' of the American Tobacco Historic District in Durham, right across the street from the County Jail. Once a factory for poison products, now a veritable leisure campus, still unfinished but already in full swing, it conforms in every way to Richard Florida's descriptions of successful urban theme parks for the creative class, combining luxurious consumption environments with chic professional interiors, everywhere marked by the presence of art and design. Like any prosumer paradise, it calls out to the intellectual side of you, it offers you informative lectures accompanied with lunch or drinks, it includes an extension of Duke University and mingles PR firms with perky restaurant ideas – so you can do your corporate duty while having some innocent fun, or vice-versa. In short, it's a perfect architecture for what I call 'the flexible personality'.[5]

It's fascinating to go into such a place as it is being built, to see the underside of the façade, the material end of the immaterial labour, and then to follow the workers outside to the 'ordinary' city, which now appears as an immense reserve of nostalgia and available space, ripe for gentrification. For your eyes only, every dilapidated building, every vacant lot, can be a Disney-in-waiting, just as the ruined American Tobacco factory once was. The whole seduction of the postmodern lies in its capacity to transform entire urban environments into 3-D images. Your pupils become the cinematic lens, reshaping everything through your own free experience. But back at the Historic District, paradox awaits: because this narcissistic mirror is all under copyright, and if you take out your camera to fulfil your artistic aspirations, you'll be rapidly hailed by a security guard and required to sign a contract restricting any use of the images.

One could no doubt explore the ways that the exercise of copyrighted creativity gradually turns the open space of experience into a labyrinth of obligation, constraint and submission, subverted but also reinforced by the clandestine pleasures of immaterial piracy. It's a perversely gratifying sort of game, with which American academics will be all too familiar. This would be perfect material for yet another exercise in what the literati like to call 'theory' – after all, we're at Duke, the stomping grounds of Fred Jameson, who wrote

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5.   Brian Holmes, 'The Flexible Personality', in *Hieroglyphs of the Future*, Zagreb, Croatia: Arkzin/ WHW, 2002. Available at: http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/1106.

the definitive post-Marxist book on postmodernism.[6] But maybe that would be a bit too much local colour.

What I really think is that in the Triangle all creation of images, and probably every activity subject to copyright, functions primarily as advertising for the region, laying a seductive gloss over a more fundamental vector of wealth production that arises from the patenting of technological inventions. Between the two, copyrighting and patenting, there is a functional division of what has been called 'immaterial labour'. That is, the creation of images still helps you to forget what's really going on – even if today, in the new version of the spectacle society, it will as often as not be yourself doing the creating. And so it might be possible to say, in a very general vein, that there can be no critical approach to the creative industries without a dissolution of the commodity veil that both conceals and reinforces the relation between copyrighted image and patented technology.

But this kind of ultra-Leftist pronouncement is ultimately void without an examination of concrete situations, which always evolve in time, following their intrinsic trajectories. So now we're gonna have to put some history in our postmodern geography.

Back to the Future
Research Triangle Park, or RTP, is a separated, isolated space designed specifically for patent production. It was officially founded in 1959 as a non-profit foundation, charged with developing, managing and gradually selling off a strip of unincorporated land four kilometres wide and fifteen kilometres long, close to the airport, well served by freeways and theoretically just a twenty-minute drive from all the major universities of the metropolitan area. This is the place that brought you Astroturf and the Universal Product Code – but also 3-D ultrasound technology and AZT, the AIDS treatment.

Initially it was conceived as a private venture, promoted by corporate officers of Wachovia bank and a local building contractor with the benevolent support of the governor's office, Duke University and the University of North Carolina.[7] The loftier goals were to stem the tide of unemployment in a state dominated by low-wage manufacturing and small-scale agriculture, and to halt the brain drain of educated youth. However, its backers soon realised that only clear commitments from the state and the universities would give corporations the confidence to locate their labs in a relatively unknown area of the American South. Public money was therefore raised for the Foundation, and the non-profit Research Triangle Institute (RTI) was installed alongside it, to perform contract research for government, business and industry. The aim of RTI was to spark interest in the park from social-science faculty who might like to try their hand at the messy practicalities of governance, while at the same time setting the example of a functioning business, in the hopes of attracting private investors. IBM led the way, with the decision to build a 600,000 square-foot research facility in 1965. Today there are some 137 corporate landowners in the park. In addition to IBM, residents include Nortel Networks, GlaxoSmithKline, Cisco Systems, Ericsson, BASF, Eisai, Biogen, Credit Suisse and Syngenta, as well as a host of federal agencies. With its

nearly fifty-year history, RTP claims to be the premier science park in the world.

What you see on the tour is forest, parking lots, curving driveways, stop signs, heterogeneous buildings and omnipresent warnings prohibiting photography – this time for reasons of corporate secrecy. The architecture has a boxy, outdated look, recalling the shoddy modernist designs and Formica interiors of the postwar era. There is no housing anywhere on the grounds, as the whole point was to avoid incorporation into a municipality, and thus be able to offer tax-free status to the businesses. The original guidelines called for no industrial production, but these were eased to permit 'approximately 20%' manufacturing activity – a figure that no one suspects the sprawling IBM plant of having ever respected. Still the mainstay of the park is scientific innovation, recognised from the 1950s onward as the major driver of advanced economies. The sylvan landscaping, vast green lawns and endless jogging trails evoke the Apollonian imaginary of research in the fifties and sixties.

A building with the intriguing inscription of 'Cape Fear' – the name of a North Carolina river – revealed nothing of any particular interest. Nonetheless, fear has a certain tacit currency at the RTP Foundation these days. A graph entitled 'Expected Results', distributed to visitors, shows the sharpest-ever decline in jobs in the park since 2001, as well as a pronounced flattening in the curve of R&D firms moving in. While biotech and pharmaceutical companies remain strong, IBM has sold its manufacturing to the Chinese firm Lenovo, Nortel remains mired in the scandals of the new-economy bubble and Cisco has seriously cut back operations. The major upswing shown for the next six years, in dark black, is entirely hypothetical.

A regional report, entitled 'Staying on Top', notes further job loss in the rest of the Triangle area.[8] Yet another one analyses critical weaknesses with respect to comparable regions in the US: failure to meet the needs of start-up companies, less opportunities for social interaction, a lower level of popular brand-name recognition, an absence of networking and awareness-raising mechanisms to encourage the creation of spin-offs.[9] To that can be added the transport crisis: freeway bottlenecks at quitting time, when 40,000 employees all simultaneously get behind the wheel.

To be sure, the last few open plots in the south of the park have recently been sold to massive financial institutions such as Fidelity and Crédit Suisse, looking to install backup facilities in the woods, in case New York is ever bombed again. But a bunker mentality is hardly a key resource for the overwhelming priority that now obsesses corporate execs: namely, achieving the highest possible rank in global competitiveness. The hope seems to be that solutions will come from elsewhere.

Great Expectations
Don't forget you're still on tour. Take the time for a leisurely stroll around the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: admire the tree-covered grounds, the stately classical buildings. A blue banner stretched between the columns of the School of Information

6.   Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1992.

7.   Albert Link and John Scott, 'The Growth of Research Triangle Park', *Small Business Economics* 20.2 (2003): 167-175. Available at: http://www.dartmouth.edu/~jtscott/Papers/00-22.pdf.

8.   Future Cluster Competitiveness Task Force, 'Staying on Top: Winning the Job Wars of the Future', Research Triangle Regional Partnership, 2004, http://www.researchtriangle.org/uploads/Reports/StayingOnTop.pdf.

9.   Research Triangle Foundation, 'Triangle Innovation Project: Preparing for the Next 50 Years', 2005, http://www.rtp.org/files/final.pdf.

and Library Science proudly reads: 'Ranked 1st in the Nation by US News and World Report'. Make no mistake, that ranking is all-important. A little further on you'll find what students call 'the Pit': a sunken plaza reserved for democratic expression, where a volunteer sandwich man gesticulates and vociferates, his personal billboard reading 'Trust Jesus, Fear God'. The link between an ostentatious quest for the highest economic rank and an intimate desire for salvation was revealed long ago by Max Weber.[10] It has found an extraordinary new field of expression in neoconservative America, where public mores were decisively influenced in the 1990s by religiously oriented technophiles such as George Gilder.[11] All this has had its consequences on education. The real 'ruin in reverse' in the USA today is the university, and the minds it manufactures. The campus is the ultimate negentropic monument – the key resource on which the entire Triangle concept was based.

The effort to restructure the educational system for a vastly more intensive production of patented technologies dates from the late 1970s, when US corporations were perceived as losing technological leadership to Japan. The problem, according to sociologists Walter Powell and Jason Owen-Smith, was that at the cutting edges of industrial development, 'research breakthroughs were distributed so broadly across both disciplines and institutions that no single firm had the necessary capabilities to keep pace'.[12] The solution has been to engineer a fusion between corporate appetites for technical innovation and the university's capacity to span the most diverse domains of fundamental research – often at enormous capital expense, paid for by the public.

Two things were required for the transition from in-park secrecy to open cooperation between state, corporations and civil society. The first was a way to keep the technologies acquired functionally private, reserved for exploitation by a single licensee. The patenting of material formerly in the public domain accomplishes this, with worldwide profits, thanks to the extension of intellectual property treaties under the WTO. The second thing was a maximum of social legitimacy, a pure and unquestionable ideology of direct benefits for everyone, to maintain an unruffled equilibrium among all the minds that are destined to meet, even those still tempted to believe in utopias of technological progress for the whole planet. This could be provided by the touchy-feely side of the new technologies, or what are now called 'the creative industries'. Yet if you look around the world, what meets your eyes is really an updated version of classical imperialism, where intellectual property laws and IMF-guaranteed loans are used to extract profits from a global 'South of the Border'. Is it too much to speak of a white ideology?

What gets lost, in the meeting of minds under the aegis of a search for excellence, is exactly that sense of utopian separation and critical reserve that campus architecture – and the whole concept of the modern university – was designed to foster. The appearance of religiously backed neoconservativism as the major US political actor in the post-bubble era, with its continuous injunction to 'fear God', has served above all as a distraction from the

10. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*,
    New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958.
11. Thomas Frank, *One Market Under God: Extreme Capitalism, Market Populism and the End
    of Economic Democracy*, New York: Doubleday, 2001, pp. 79-83.
12. Walter Powell and Jason Owen-Smith, 'Universities and the Market for Intellectual Property
    in the Life Sciences', *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 17.2 (1998): 257.

psychic consequences of the vast social overhaul carried out by neoliberal policy over the past thirty years, spurred on by a more basic narcissistic fear of competition from a distant, abstract other – no longer Japan, but now the strangely Americanised clone of communist neoliberal China.

Intellectual Incubators

The money's the thing, where you'll catch the conscience of the postmodern king. The same goes for educational reform as for genetic engineering. The archaeology of the public university's ruin goes way back to the invention of the Cohen-Boyer gene-splicing technique in 1973, and its privatisation by Stanford's patent administrator, Niels Reimers. A significant event because it involved not an application but a primary research technique. And even more because of the enormous profits it netted: some \$300 million in the 17 years before the patent's expiration.[13] This is the figure that made the University Patent Office inevitable.

The privatisation of research formerly held in the public domain has been a long process, whose major phases have only recently been retraced. But there is a landmark piece of legislation in this story, something like the genetic code of the corporate university: the Bayh-Dole act of 1980.[14] Passed in a context of rising international competition and declining federal funding for education, it served to codify the increasingly prevalent practice of patenting and commercialising publicly funded research. Exclusive licensing of inventions would be legal, even encouraged; and the inventors would be allowed and even required to take a cut of the profits. The keyword here is technology transfer, or the process of moving ideas as quickly as possible from laboratory to industry. This transfer has spawned two new identities: the professor as small-time entrepreneur, and the university as big-time business.

A glance at one of the University of North Carolina websites reveals the basic procedure:

The Office of Technology Development (OTD) manages inventions resulting from research conducted at UNC-Chapel Hill. OTD evaluates and markets UNC technologies, obtains intellectual property protection where appropriate, and licenses these technologies to industry. OTD also assists faculty in obtaining research support from corporate sponsors. OTD is dedicated to serving its faculty and helping corporations gain access to UNC's technological resources. This process works best when companies first identify specific areas of scientific interest, OTD can then bring inventions to a company's attention which specifically match those areas of interest. We invite companies to get to know us and hope you will think of us as a guide to the technology and collaborative opportunities available at UNC-Chapel Hill.[15]

13. Jennifer Washburn, *University Inc.: The Corporate Corruption of Higher Education*,
    New York, Basic Books, 2005, pp. 49-54; Niels Reimers, 'Stanford's Office of Technology
    Licensing and the Cohen/Boyer Cloning Patents', 1997,
    http://content.cdlib.org/xtf/view?docId=kt4b69n6sc&brand=calisphere.
14. Bayh-Dole Act, United States Congress (1980),
    http://www.cctec.cornell.edu/bayh-dole.html.
15. Office of Technology Development, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 'Overview
    for Companies', http://research.unc.edu/otd/industry/overview.html.

In short, the university itself now takes charge, not only of the mechanics of licensing, but also of the functions of what is known in business circles as an 'incubator', providing support to fledgling businesses in the start-up phase before they attain commercial success – or, more commonly, before they're snapped up by a major corporation.

To do all this has required a change in the institutional nexus that guides the activity of scientists, but also a deep-running change in what Michel Foucault theorised as 'governmentality', i.e. the underlying logic or common sense that structures individual modes of self-evaluation, of public expression, of relation to others and to the future.[16] Nigel Thrift catches this imbrication of policy and individual subjectivity very well, in his book *Knowing Capitalism*:

> Nearly all western states nowadays subscribe to a rhetoric and metric of modernisation based on fashioning a citizen who can become an actively seeking factor of production... And that rhetoric, in turn, has hinged on a few key management tropes – globalisation, knowledge, learning, network, flexibility, information technology, urgency – which are meant to come together in a new kind of self-willed subject whose industry will boost the powers of the state to compete.[17]

The disinterested university becomes the active incubator of *homo economicus*. In the case of a teaching school like UNC Chapel Hill, the payoff may appear slim: a measly $2 million in 2005, with a peak of around $4 million in 2004, sums still dwarfed by federal and state contributions. Consider, however, how far the process of corporatisation has gone in nearby Duke University, an elite private school that boasts the most romantic faux-Gothic architecture in the region. Duke is currently on a building spree, thanks to the $2.3 billion it raised in an eight-year campaign; it leads all other American universities in industry funding for R&D, obtaining approximately a quarter of its research budget from corporate sponsorship ($135 million in 2005).[18] What's more, it is now partnering with Singapore on a seven-year, $350 million project to install a new graduate medical school in the Asian city-state, 'as part of a national strategy [for Singapore] to become a leading centre for medical research and education. "They told us, you hire the faculty, you admit the students, but we'll build it and give you total control", says a Duke spokesman, "It's a very cool deal"'.[19]

Little wonder that the theoretical infinity of biological growth – negative entropy – has fascinated corporate capital for the last ten years. Given the way that American universities such as Duke are now run – as incubators – deals like this could proliferate into the greatest exportation of governance that the world has ever seen. Nigel Thrift lists no less than

16. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (eds) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991; Andrew Barry, Thomas Osborne and Nikolas Rose (eds) *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neoliberalism and Rationalities of Government*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
17. Nigel Thrift, *Knowing Capitalism*, London: Sage, 2005, p. 98.
18. Ella Powers, 'Corporate Research Support Rebounds', *Inside Higher* Ed, 1 February, 2007, http://www.insidehighered.com/2007/02/01r_d.
19. Michael Wagner, 'Duke On Track with $100M Singapore Medical School', *Triangle Business Journal*, 11 August, 2006, http://triangle.bizjournals.com/triangle/stories/2006/08/14/story9.html.

fourteen universities – including one each from France, Holland, Germany, Sweden and India – which have agreed to similar contracts with Singapore (even if one, John Hopkins University, has since proved unable to uphold its end of the bargain). Thrift describes the strategy of the Singapore Economic Development Board as consisting in:

> The creation of a 'world-class' education sector which would import 'foreign talent', both to expose Singaporean educational institutions to competition (thereby forcing them to upgrade), and also to produce a diverse global education hub attractive to students from around the Asia-Pacific region. In theory this cluster of educational institutions would produce and disseminate knowledge at a range of scales, supporting local and foreign firms in Singapore, state institutions in Singapore, and firms and states in the South East, East and South Asian regions.[20]

The big prize here is the China market, followed by India. The question is apparently not whether Asians will get American-style neoliberal governmentality, but instead, whether they will get it directly, or through a Singaporean relay.

In any case, there is now a huge market for the education of the flexible knowledge-worker. Such an education is an export product for its chief supplier, the United States, with a profitable role left for all kinds of intermediaries. One could make similar remarks about the role of Britain – the great promoter of the creative industries – as a major relay in the transmission of 'white noise' from the USA to Europe.

The Final Frontier

Meanwhile, back in the metropolitan region where so many basic tenets of contemporary societal planning were born, the problems that confronted the 1950s-vintage RTP science park are well on their way to being solved. The driving force this time appears most nakedly at the third corner of the Triangle, North Carolina State University at Raleigh. NCSU Raleigh is in the process of executing a full-fledged vision of the future: the Centennial Campus, a perfectly integrated private-public partnership, explicitly described as a 'knowledge enterprise zone', making the best of all corporate, governmental, leisure and academic worlds. Every lesson from the long history of neoliberal planning, including the fluffier ones more recently offered by Richard Florida, seems to have been applied. I quote from the project description:

> This 'technopolis' consists of multi-disciplinary R&D neighbourhoods, with university, corporate, and government facilities intertwined. A middle school, residential housing, executive conference centre and hotel, golf course, town centre and recreational amenities will weave the campus into a true interactive community…. The unique master plan for this environmentally sensitive, mixed-use, academic village responds to the professional, educational and recreational needs of the University's faculty, staff and student body, as well as those of corporate and government affiliates whose presence on Centennial Campus adds to its vigour and effectiveness.[21]

20. Thrift, *Knowing Capitalism*, p. 100.
21. 'Vision of the Future', Centennial Campus, http://centennial.ncsu.edu/overview/index.html.

No longer an isolated, secluded activity, R&D is now proposed as a whole way of life, able to extract the full spectrum of value from every creative person engaged in it. It seems that the final frontier of knowledge-based capitalism – or the last natural reserve of energy to be exploited by the state and its corporations – is *you*, your body, your intelligence, your imagination. The question is, what will you be used for? Some inkling of the innovative possibilities that lie in wait at Centennial Campus can be gained from the first completed facilities: not one but *two* Biosafety Level 3 laboratories, built with federal subsidies as part of an effort to increase America's readiness in the ever more likely event of bioterrorism.[22] You guessed it, the growth market is potentially tremendous. It's worth noting that this effort also serves to bail out the failing biotech industry, which US economic planners have slated to replace with networked computer technologies as the new benchmark of technological superiority on the world market. Indeed, Defence Department funding is an essential piece of the puzzle.[23] The 'third leg' of the triangle that defines the meeting place of minds in the knowledge-based economy is militarisation, which alone can provide the massive influx of subsidies on which private-public partnerships depend. But the question of whether this kind of military-driven economic growth is viable, in the face of rising hostility abroad and deepening inequality at home, does not seem to get asked in the US anymore.

While waiting to judge the lifesaving capacities of NCSU Raleigh's unfinished biomedical campus, we can get a whiff of the creative-industrial future from a news item on the NCSU Engineering website: 'Sponsored by the Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency, the Grand Challenge competition was created to answer a congressional mandate to convert one-third of military vehicles to driverless, computer-driven mode by 2015'.[24] This is a nationwide program, conceived to mobilise an entire population, from amateur computer geeks and small-town racing aficionados to corporate project teams and university engineering labs. The Raleigh campus has been thoroughly hooked in. Already the road tests of a lushly designed and specially modified Lotus Elise sports car are generating enormous excitement, at least if you believe the PR campaign. But what this kind of remote-controlled

creativity conceals is a deepening militarisation of society, heralding not only the advent of robotised battles in foreign countries (the only way to escape the shortfalls of a mercenary army), but also an increasing regimentation of life on local streets. As the rhetoric continues: 'The technology that will guide the Elise through city streets may one day revolutionise not only the way the military performs missions but also the way that commuters drive to work each day'. In other words, someday the steering wheel of your car may be connected to a centralised computer, in the name of rush-hour efficiency. But by that point, what else will be hooked in? The silver lining is that such an invention would finally solve the bedevilling RTP traffic problems, and allow the would-be visionaries of North Carolina to make it back in less than twenty minutes to the Research Triangle Institute – which as early as March of 2003 had won its largest-ever contract, worth over $400 million dollars, for the redesign of local governments in the fledgling democracy of Iraq.[25]

So our tour comes full circle, back to its point of origin, just when the illusions of the creative industries finally come to coincide with the meaningless economy of war. And it all works so smoothly, so perfectly. Who knows? With the help of defence, academic and corporate contracts, along with a dash of aesthetics and a few computer-piloted automobiles, the declining science park might still contribute to a future World Government. Unless some more radically creative class finds the way to disconnect the dots of this hell machine.

Epilogue
These reflections were inspired by an in-depth introduction to the Triangle region, offered generously by the 3Cs Counter-Cartography Collective at UNC Chapel Hill. 3Cs is about permeability and difference: students, professors, community members, political groups, distant interlocutors; labour, leisure, professionalism, amateurism, discipline, organising, satire, statistics, subversion… They've created a 'disorientation guide' to the school, with a definition of precarious labour on the back, and a cartographic image stating that the university is both a 'functioning body' and 'a factory producing your world'.[26] It's my belief that an extended network of such personal-political partnerships could throw the ruined future of the world-factory into reverse, by dissolving the surface images and uncovering the triple program of corporatisation, flexibilisation and militarisation that increasingly defines the shapes and destinies of the knowledge-based economy. But to do so means establishing priorities that aren't fixed by an ideal of unsustainable and ultimately meaningless economic growth, and that aren't pictured through the seductive lens of PR and advertising. To do so, in other words, requires a kind of revolution.

The public universities – not only in the US, but everywhere – are the places to begin imagining an entirely different future, a turn away from war and ecological collapse. And if it's impossible to use them for anything but intellectual property production and self-fetishisation, then it's time to start up free ones, where there's some room to think among the debris of the future. Every step through the postmodern mirror offers our still-functioning bodies another chance to cut the signal, click off the automatic pilot, give away the dots and open our minds to other possible worlds.

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22. 'NC State College of Veterinary Medicine Dedicates Research Building', Media Advisory, NC State University, 27 April, 2005, http://www.ncsu.edu/news/press_releases/05_04/103.htm. Duke University also operates two Biosafety Level 3 labs, one of them installed in 2003, see Kristie Lee, 'Duke Receives Money to Start Construction of New Laboratory', Duke News, 3 October, 2003, http://dukenews.duke.edu/2003/10/20031003-4.html

23. Vernon Ruttan studies the role of US military R&D in the development of 'six general-purpose technologies: (1) interchangeable parts and mass-production, (2) military and commercial aircraft, (3) nuclear energy and electric power, (4) computers and semi-conductors, (5) the Internet, and (6) the space industries'. These major civilian technologies are 'spin-offs' from previous military research, which thus acts as a planning instrument, following the notion of the 'permanent war economy' advocated in 1944 by Charles Erwin Wilson (CEO of General Motors, later Secretary of Defence under Eisenhower). However, Ruttan suggests that recent military investment in biotech is a 'spin-on' approach, which involves 'weaponising' basic discoveries made with non-military funding. Note that so-called 'biodefence' always involves the creation of new bioweapons, considered the only way of knowing whether there is a potential threat! See Vernon Ruttan, *Is War Necessary for Economic Growth? Military Procurement and Technology Development*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 7, 178-181.

24. 'NC State Unveils New DARPA Urban Challenge Driverless Vehicle', NC State University News, 15 November, 2006, http://www.physorg.com/pdf82917173.pdf.

25. Brooke Williams, 'Windfalls of War: Research Triangle Institute', Center for Public Integrity, Washington D.C, http://www.public-i.org/wow/bio.aspx?act=pro&ddlC=49.

26. See http://www.countercartographies.org.

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WHAT IF WE WOULD NOT HAVE COPYRIGHT?
NEW BUSINESS MODELS FOR CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURS

JOOST SMIERS

Hard to Imagine

Some serious cracks are surfacing in the system of copyright as we have known it in the Western world for a couple of centuries. The system is substantially more beneficial for cultural conglomerates than for the average artist – a situation that cannot last. Furthermore, it seems very clear that digitisation is undermining the foundations of the copyright system. It must be acknowledged that several authors have recently presented analyses of the untenability of the contemporary system of copyright. Yet, most of their observations only allude to – but do not address – what we deem the most fundamental question of all: if copyright is inherently unjust, what could take its place to guarantee artists – creative and performing – a fair compensation for their labours, and how can we prevent knowledge and creativity from being privatised?[1]

It is time to move beyond merely criticising copyright. The pressing question is: what alternative can we offer artists and other cultural entrepreneurs (in both rich and poor countries) that is more beneficial to them and brings the increasing privatisation of creativity and expertise to a halt? My goal in this essay is to develop such an alternative, and to move beyond any notion centred on private intellectual property rights.

The first observation must be that the present Western copyright system pays little at-

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1. Ronald V. Bettig, *Copyrighting Culture: The Political Economy of Intellectual Property*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1996; David Bollier, *Silent Theft: The Private Plunder of Our Common Wealth*, New York and London: Routledge, 2003, pp. 119-134; James Boyle, *Shamans, Software, and Spleens: Law and the Construction of the Information Society*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1996; Rosemary J. Coombe, *The Cultural Life of Intellectual Properties: Authorship, Appropriation, and the Law*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998; Peter Drahos and John Braithwaite, *Information Feudalism: Who Owns the Knowledge Economy?*, London: Earthscan, 2002; Peter Drahos and Ruth Mayne, *Global Intellectual Property Rights: Knowledge, Access and Development*, Basingstoke: Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan and Oxfam, 2002; Simon Frith and Lee Marshal (eds) *Music and Copyright*, Second Edition, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004; Lawrence Lessig, *The Future of Ideas: The Fate of the Commons in a Connected World*, New York: Vintage, 2002; Lawrence Lessig, *Free Culture: How Big Media Uses Technology and the Law to Lock Down Culture and Control Creativity*, New York: Penguin Press, 2004; Jessica Litman, *Digital Copyright*, Amherst, New York: Prometeus Books, 2001; Michael Perelman, *Steal This Idea: Intellectual Property Rights and the Corporate Confiscation of Creativity*, New York: Palgrave, 2002; Siva Vaidhyanathan, *Copyrights and Copywrongs: The Rise of Intellectual Property and How It Threatens Creativity*, New York and London: New York University Press, 2003.

tention to the average artist, especially those in non-Western societies. The system dispro-portionately benefits a few famous artists and especially a few major enterprises, but it has little to offer for most creators and performers.[2] The copyright system does enable a handful of cultural enterprises to dominate the market, and to withdraw substantive diversity from the public eye.[3] Copyright has thus become a mechanism for a few cultural conglomerates to control the broad terrain of cultural communication. Something that has been derailed to such a large extent, and that hurts the interests of most artists and the public domain, should be cut back to normal proportions.

For most artists, the profits derived from copyright do not form a significant incentive to create and perform artistic work because artists hardly receive the majority of these pro-ceeds. This has been the case historically and it remains the situation for most artists in the present in nearly every culture. From an historical perspective, we may also note that the concept of private intellectual property rights has traditionally been absent from most cul-tures. Yet, there have always been artists who created and performed works.[4] The incentive argument – artists stop their labours if they stop receiving copyright payments – therefore does not hold: 'copyright today is less about incentives or compensation than it is about control'.[5] Further, 'firms in the creative industries are able to "free-ride" on the willingness of artists to create and the structure of the artists' labour markets, characterised by short term working practices and oversupply, make it hard for artists to appropriate awards'.[6]

One may add to this observation that the value of copyright royalty rates is decided in the market place and it is therefore artists' bargaining power with firms in the creative industries that determines copyright earnings. Artists' bargaining power is, however, con-siderably weakened by the persistence of excess supply of creative workers to the creative industries. As with artists' earnings from other art sources, the individual's distribution of copyright earnings is highly skewed with a few top stars earning considerable sums but the medium or 'typical' author earning only small amounts from their various rights.[7]

For non-Western countries, the Western intellectual property rights system is nothing but an out right disaster. Their knowledge and creativity is obfuscated from them, and they have to pay dearly to receive the fruits of these sacrifices in return. To some extent, this relation also explains the unfavourable debt position of many non-Western countries.[8]

We must face the reality that digitisation is attacking the roots of the copyright system.[9] By abolishing copyright, the process of creative adaptation will once again enjoy every imaginable opportunity. This is all the more interesting in the digital age. After all, digital sampling enables the production of creative works, much like those have always been pro-duced, by finding inspiration, themes, or forms of expression in works previously produced, whether historically or in recent cultural productions. Digitisation enables this distribution of inspiration, although it is also helpful from another perspective. In the world of copyright there has always existed a bizarre distinction between an idea and the expression; however, in the digital age a work is no longer fixed and the strict separation between an idea and its expression is no longer possible. In this sense, digitisation has made the artificiality of distinction between idea and expression irrelevant, and the continual discussions regarding this division have become superfluous.

Another observation linked to possibilities engendered by creative sampling is that the philosophical basis of the present system of copyright is founded on a misconception – specifically, that of the boundless originality of the artist, regardless of whether he or she is a creator or a performer. Contrasting this enduring misconception, we should remember that one always builds on the labours of predecessors and contemporaries. Subsequent artists can only add something to the existing corpus of work, nothing more and nothing less. Although we may highly respect and admire those additions, it would be incorrect to provide a creative or performing artist, or his or her producers, with an exclusive, monopo-listic claim to something that has largely emerged from knowledge and creativity in the

2. Boyle, *Shamans, Software, and Spleens*, p. xiii; Drahos and Braithwaite, *Information Feudalism*, p. 15; Martin Kretschmer, 'Intellectual Property in Music: A Historical Analysis of Rethoric and Institutional Practices,' in Paul Jeffcutt (ed.) 'Cultural Industry Special Issue', *Studies in Cultures, Organizations and Societies* 6 (1999): 197-223; Martin Kretschmer and Friedemann Kawohl, 'The History and Philosophy of Copyright', in Simon Frith and Lee Marshal (eds) *Music and Copyright*, Second Edition, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004, p. 44; Vaidhyanathan, *Copyrights and Copywrong*s, p. 5.

3. Bettig, *Copyrighting Culture*, pp. 34-42, 103; Boyle, *Shamans, Software, and Spleens*, pp. 121-125; Coombe, *The Cultural Life of Intellectual Properties*, p. 144; Drahos and Braithwaite, *Information Feudalism*, pp. ix-x, 74-84; Litman, *Digital Copyright*, p. 14; Robert W. McChesney, *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999.

4. Bettig, *Copyrighting Culture*, pp. 25, 44, 171; Boyle, *Shamans, Software, and Spleens*, pp. 38-39.

5. Litman, *Digital Copyright*, p. 80.

6. Ruth Towse, 'Copyright and Cultural Policy for the Creative Industries', in Ove Grandstrand (ed.) *Economics, Law and Intellectual Property*, Amsterdam: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003, p. 10.

7. Towse, 'Copyright and Cultural Policy for the Creative Industries', p. 11.

8. Boyle, *Shamans, Software, and Spleens*, pp. 34, 125-130, 141-142; Chomsky quoted in Joost Smiers, *Arts Under Pressure: Promoting Cultural Diversity in the Age of Globalisation*, London: Zed Books, 2003, p. 77; Coombe, *The Cultural Life of Intellectual Properties,* pp. 208-247; Car-los M. Correa, I*ntellectual Property Rights, the WTO and Developing Countries: The TRIPS Agree-ment and Policy Options*, London: Zed Books and Penang: Third World Network, 2000; Willem Grosheide and Jan Brinkhof (eds) *Articles on the Legal Protection of Cultural Expressions and Indigenous Knowledge*, Antwerp: Intersentia, 2002; Silke von Lewinski, *Indigenous Heritage and Intellectual Property: Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore*, The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2002; Tôru Mitsui, 'Copyright and Music in Japan. A Forced Grafting and its Consequences', in Simon Frith and Lee Marshal (eds) *Music and Copyright*, Second Edition, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 125-145; Perelman, Steal This Idea, pp. 5-7; Jeremy Rifkin, *The Age of Access: The New Culture of Hypercapitalism, Where All of Life is a Paid-for Experience*, New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 2000, pp. 229-232, 248-253; Vandana Shiva, *Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge*, Boston: South End Press, 1997; Vandana Shiva, *Protect or Plunder? Understanding Intellectual Property Rights*, London: Zed Books, 2001.

9. John Alderman, *Sonic Boom: Napster, P2P and the Battle for the Future of Music*, London: Fourth Estate, 2001; Lessig, *The Future of Ideas*; Litman, *Digitial Copyright*, pp. 89-100, 112-116,151-170; John Motavalli, *Bamboozled at the Revolution: How Big Media Lost Billions in the Battle for the Internet*, New York: Viking, 2002; Rifkin, The Age of Access, pp. 218-229; Dan Schiller, *Digital Capitalism: Networking the Global Market System*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000; Vaidhyanathan, *Copyrights and Copywrongs*, pp.149-184.

public domain and that is indelibly connected to the labours of predecessors.[10]

Of course, we are well aware that an artist receives a copyright for the addition he or she makes to what can be found in the public domain of knowledge and creativity. Again, this addition can be very impressive or very banal, but the point is that it cannot be tolerated to grant an artist or producer an exclusive, monopolistic property right for their addition, which is guaranteed until 70 years after his or her death, and legally transferable to an individual or corporation that had nothing to do with the creative process. The credibility of the system really starts to fall apart when we realise that the author and his or her rightful claimants can forbid almost anything that resembles the copying of 'their' work.[11]

The development of the public domain of creativity and knowledge deserves a reappraisal. Subsequent artists must be able to delve into this domain in order to find a supply of artistic materials that they can build on. This possibility is foreclosed when artistic materials from the past and present fall into private hands, as is the case to an ever-increasing extent under the present system of copyright. This privatisation of our past and present cultural heritage is devastating for the further development of our cultural life.[12] In fact, an 'author-centred regime can actually slow down scientific progress, diminish the opportunities for creativity, and curtail the availability of new products'.[13]

For cultural conglomerates, which control the bulk of the property rights worldwide, the possibility to forbid reproduction is exceptionally important: it enables them to dominate broad areas of artistic expression in which no contradiction, no counter-melody, no counter-image, and ultimately no dialogical practice is tolerated.[14] Yet, we have to realise that culture is not embedded in abstract concepts that we internalise, but in the materiality of signs and texts over which we struggle and the imprint of those struggles in consciousness. This ongoing negotiation and struggle over meaning is the essence of dialogic practice. Many interpretations of intellectual property laws squash dialogue by affirming the power of corporate actors to monologically control meaning by appealing to an abstract concept of property. Laws of intellectual property privilege monologic forms against dialogic practice and create significant power differentials between social actors engaged in hegemonic struggle.[15]

Democratic societies require a surplus of opinions and emotionally-engaging claims which contradict each other in processes of dissent and disagreement.[16] The system of copyright as we know it renders this process difficult, if not impossible.

Alternatives?

After my summation of the fundamental shortcomings of the copyright system, it should not come as a surprise that I feel the need to investigate alternative ways to protect the public domain of knowledge and creativity, and to assure many artists and other cultural entrepreneurs

that they will receive a fair income for their labours. This type of investigation happens all too rarely, and although a few scholars and policy-makers have recently presented alternatives to the system, their proposals have many disadvantages and do not constitute a real alternative to the copyright regime.

The most far-reaching re-orientations have been systems like the General Public License and the Creative Commons.[17] The Creative Commons entails that 'A' supplies some kind of public license for his or her work: go ahead, do with the work as you please, as long as you do not bring the work under a regime of private ownership. The work is thus subjected to a form of 'empty' copyright. This 'hollow' copyright constitutes the most extreme option the author has under the Creative Commons regime.

More often, however, the author opts for the choice 'some rights reserved' and maintains, for example, that the usage of the work is restricted to non-profit activities. This is an uncertain form of contract law that will keep lawyers busy. The sympathetic aspect of Creative Commons-like constructions is that it becomes possible, to a certain extent, to withdraw oneself from the copyright jungle. It is of course always laudable to start a new world order on an island, and there is no scepticism in this statement. I hope that more and more artists will renounce the system of copyright that disadvantages them so badly, and begin hollowing it out by embracing the idea of a Creative Commons. Without any doubt this system is helpful for museums, archives and other institutions that want to spread their cultural heritage to the public while avoiding copyrighted and inappropriate usage by other individuals or firms.

As long as the system of copyright is still in place, the Creative Commons appears to be a useful solution that may even serve as an exemplar, but it is important to remember that there are some strings attached. The Creative Commons does not paint a clear picture of how a diverse set of artists from all over the world, as well as their producers and patrons, might generate an income. This is an unavoidable question that we must be prepared to answer. Most artists will not dare to put the existing copyright regime to rest until they have been offered a clear view of a better alternative – even though the present regime only has smoke and mirrors to offer. That is easily understandable.

A second drawback of Creative Commons-like approaches is that they do not fundamentally question and challenge the copyright system. An essential objection to Creative Commons-like approaches is that they involve only those artists who are willing to adhere to this philosophy, making them a veritable 'coalition of the willing'. Cultural conglomerates, which have the ownership of big chunks of our cultural heritage from past and present, however, will certainly not participate. This downgrades and limits the sympathetic idea of the Creative Commons. Another contradiction worth indicating is that one of the most outspoken advocates of Creative Commons licensing, Lawrence Lessig, is a strong advocate of the idea that knowledge and creativity can be owned as individual property.[18] From this perspective, isn't the title of his 2004 book Free Culture a bit misleading?

A second alternative for copyright is connected to different forms of art created and produced in a collective manner (regardless of whether or not it concerns more traditional or contemporary works), as is the case in many non-Western countries. In these societies,

10. Roland Barthes, 'La mort de l'auteur', *Oeuvres complétes, Tome II*, 1966-1973, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1994, pp. 491-495; Boyle, *Shamans, Software, and Spleens*, pp. 42, 53-59.
11. Coombe, *The Cultural Life of Intellectual Properties*, pp. 92-98.
12. Locke in Boyle, *Shamans, Software, and Spleens*, p. 9.
13. Boyle, *Shamans, Software, and Spleens,* p. 119; see also Perelman, *Steal This Idea*, pp. 7-9.
14. Coombe, *The Cultural Life of Intellectual Properties*, pp. 42, 46.
15. Coombe, *The Cultural Life of Intellectual Properties*, p. 86.
16. Bettig, *Copyrighting Culture*, pp. 103-106.

17. Bollier, *Silent Theft*, pp. 27-30, 99-118; Boyle, *Shamans, Software, and Spleen*s, pp. 132-133; Lessig, *The Future of Ideas*; Lessig, *Free Culture*, pp. 282-286.
18. Lessig, *Free Culture*, pp. xiv, xvi, 10, 28, 83.

the individual approach of the Western copyright system does not fit the more collective character of creation and performance. If one stays within the paradigm of the private ownership of knowledge and creativity, it is obvious that a concept like collective ownership comes to mind. Is it not possible to grant so-called 'traditional' societies a tool that resembles copyright, but is in fact collectively owned? Would this not enable them to protect their artistic expressions from inappropriate use and/or guarantee their artists an income?

The problems for effectively introducing a system of collective intellectual ownership rights are abundant. For instance, one may wonder who represents the community and who is able to speak on behalf of the community. It is not necessarily the case that everybody agrees on how to deal with artistic creations of the past and present. Copyright is about the exploitation of works, but many people in non-Western societies may consider this blasphemous, or may prefer not to see their works being used in certain contexts. The appropriation of knowledge and creativity is something that certainly causes problems in the Western world, although it does so even more in countries where this strange system has only recently come into existence and where artists use each other works openly, as was the case in the Western world before the introduction of the copyright system. Thus, even without considering the position of Western cultural conglomerates, there are many reasons to suggest that recent attempts at elaborating a collective intellectual property system have failed thus far.

Is the tweaking of the current system a solution for the problems as we have described them? Several scholars, critical to the present copyright system, propose optimising it instead, although their angles of approach are somewhat varied. Some argue for the re-establishment of the fair use principle, which has suffered enormously over the last decade, or for making copyright solely applicable to real authors, creators and performers. Others favour a much shorter period of protection, for instance, fourteen years. Moreover, others believe there is no real problem in the European context, because in these countries the collecting societies put aside a portion of the copyright earnings for cultural projects and their distribution schemes favour individual artists.

Unfortunately, it is unthinkable to bring the current system back to normal proportions because it is not in the interest of the main proponents of the system – the cultural conglomerates – to assist in this transformation. On the contrary, they have ambitious and highly successful in extending and broadening the copyright system. Moreover, digitisation is greatly impacting the functioning of the system. At what point must a society decide that when nearly everyone is participating in an 'illegal' practice – like P2P music or film exchange – it can no longer be considered illegal?[19] And even if the European collecting societies have a higher moral ground, the problem of individual appropriation of knowledge and creativity, which is the basis of my critique of the system, continues to exist. In the next sections I will address this issue more thoroughly.

Artists, Producers and Patrons: Cultural Entrepreneurs

Before presenting my proposal we must first observe that artists are inclined to sell their work on the market and – if it all works out – make a living for themselves. Artists have always been merchants and small shopkeepers. They live off an acquisitive audience that wants to admire, enjoy and buy their production. Included in this audience are institutional purchasers like kings, churches, philanthropists, labour unions, banks, hospitals and other societal institutions.[20] This reality, as I will demonstrate below, will provide us with an important point of orientation while developing an alternative to copyright.

Artists, as well as their producers and patrons, are thus inevitably connected to certain entrepreneurial dynamics. This requires a risk-prone mentality and it involves competition, under the condition that real competition exists to the greatest extent possible for artistic expressions. The observation that artists, their producers and their patrons are entrepreneurs makes one wonder what the decisive reason is for reducing the entrepreneurial risks of cultural producers, because this is precisely what copyright does. Copyright renders a product exclusive and provides the entrepreneur with a *de facto* monopoly. This system of institutionally protected gifts is seemingly bizarre in an era in which even cultural conglomerates themselves herald the blessings of free market competition. Major entrepreneurs in cultural sectors bargain for ever-stricter intellectual property rights in the form of extensions and expansions of existing copyright legislation, but this is completely at odds with the so-called rule of the free market. We also observe the exact same phenomenon in the area of patent law and other intellectual property laws such as trademarks, database rights, plant breeder rights and design rights.[21]

Before we attempt to present a new alternative system, we must first identify the locus of the impulse to create. In general, I would identify three main categories under which the creative impulse might be identified: one possibility is that a work is being commissioned; a second option is that the artist takes the initiative to make an artistic work, possibly in collaboration with multiple, differentially endowed creators and performers; in the third case, a producer can be the binding factor in production and bear the responsibility and risk involved in an artistic venture.

In all three cases – the initiative commissioned from a patron, from one or several artists, or from a producer – there is a person or an institution that intentionally becomes responsible and accountable for creating or performing a certain artistic work. To be responsible and accountable not only implies undertaking a broad range of activities to give the artistic project momentum, but also to bear, among many other things, the financial risks involved. The project initiator then becomes an entrepreneur and bears the risk that unavoidably comes with entrepreneurship. In my alternative to copyright it is not the artist who takes centre stage, but the entrepreneur, regardless of whether he or she is an artist, a patron or a producer.

In this scenario, the first person who brings a work to market can use the advantage to reap revenues. This is known as the first-mover advantage, where the entrepreneur has 'lead-time' with respect to the marketing of their specific product. This time gives the first mover a lead over possible competitors, the opportunity to skim the market for the

19. Litman, *Digital Copyright*.

20. Arnold Hauser, *Sozialgeschichte der Kunst und Literatur*, München: C.H. Beck, 1972.
21. Drahos and Braithwaite, *Information Feudalism;* Perelman, *Steal This Idea*; Jeremy Rifkin, *The Biotech Century: Harnessing the Gene and Remaking the World*, New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/ Putnam, 1998; Rifkin, *The Age of Access*; Shiva, *Biopiracy*; Shiva, *Protect or Plunder?*; Seth Shulman, *Owning the Future,* New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999.

new cultural product, set the price for it, and thus earn a return on investment. After all, it will take several months before a similar product will reach the market. It should be understood that the work falls immediately in the public domain; thus it can be used by others as well and anyone is free to adapt this work creatively. The competitive advantage that most artists possess in one form or other is put at the very core of my new system. If such advantages are permitted to unfold openly and competitively, ancillary forms of protection, like copyright, will be unnecessary.

One counter-argument might be that given the increasing role of digitisation, the reality is that lead-time is only a couple of hours, or perhaps even minutes.[22] Does this mean that there are almost no works that can benefit from a competitive advantage? I do not believe so. Apart from the first-mover advantage, many artists are able to add value or create advantages in other ways. In order to understand this, we should keep in mind that cultural production and distribution would reshuffle considerably after the abolishment of copyright. For instance, music concerts and performances would become much more important and a greater source of income for artists and performers. Live, direct contact with an audience generates inimitable value and performing qualities are of decisive importance for long and lasting careers of musicians even under the present copyright regime.

This performative quality is what gives artists a good reputation, which in turn creates value. Reputation has a signalling effect as it indicates guaranteed quality. Customers are more loyal and more willing to pay higher prices for cultural products from artists with a good reputation, and it makes them aficionados.[23] Later in this essay we will test this proposal in the different fields of the arts and return to the question of how cultural production and distribution would change in a world without copyright. Presently, I want to simply stress that the service qualities of artistic works would become much more important than the individual product.

From what I have stated above about the philosophically doubtful concept of the originality of the author, it is clear that I believe any artistic creation or performance belongs to the public domain. It is derived from the commons, based on the works of predecessors and contemporaries, and therefore, from its moment of conception onwards, it must be located within the public domain. I define the public domain or the commons as the space in any society that belongs to all of its members and can be used by any of them. It is a misunderstanding to think that the commons, or the public domain, is an unregulated space. Of course it is not: both historically and in nearly all contemporary societies, common spaces exist under one form of regulation or another (for example, on the conditions of its usage). In my alternative vision, I aim to return to the commons what has always belonged to it – no more and no less. Actually, in my alternative, what is returned is precisely what has been privatised in the fields of creativity and knowledge in the Western world over the last centuries.[24]

22. Towse, 'Copyright and Cultural Policy for the Creative Industries', p. 19.
23. C.J. Fombrun, *Corporate Reputation: How Companies Realise Value from the Corporate Brand*, Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996.
24. Eva Hemmungs Wirtén, *No Trespassing: Authorship, Intellectual Property Rights, and the Boundaries of Globalization*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004, pp. 133-134.

My proposal, as stated above, would prompt a new cultural market to emerge. The first observation is that the abolition of copyright would force cultural conglomerates to lose their grip on the agglomeration of cultural products with which they determine the outlook of our cultural lives to an ever-increasing extent. What would they lose? They would have to give up control over huge areas of the cultural markets. They would lose the monopolistic exclusivity over broad cultural areas because everyone would be allowed to exploit artistic materials that are not protected by temporary usufruct, and absolutely no limitations would be put on creatively adapting works of art. With these new conditions, the rationale for cultural conglomerates to make substantial investments in blockbusters, bestsellers and stars would be undermined. After all, by making creative adaptation respectable again and by undoing the present system of copyright, the economic incentives to produce at the present scale would inevitably diminish. However, it would not be forbidden for a cultural entrepreneur to invest millions of dollars or euros in a cultural product (a film, game, CD, DVD, etc.), however the investment would no longer be made under an endless wall of protection.

There would once again be room to manoeuvre in cultural markets for a variety of entrepreneurs who would no longer be publicly overshadowed by blockbusters, bestsellers and stars. Those plentiful artists are more likely to find audiences for their creations and performances in a normal market which is a level playing field and that is not dominated by a few large players. There is not a single reason to believe that there would be no demand for such an enormous variety of artistic expressions. In a normalised market, with equal opportunities for everyone, this demand can be fulfilled. This increases the possibility that a varied flock of artists would be capable of extracting a decent living from their endeavours.

Another important observation regards cultural adaptation and how the market should be regulated with respect to fraud and plagiarism. I stress the fact that I do not like theft. Of course, I would not propose that 'X' can attach his or her name to 'Y's' book or film, falsely claiming authorship of another's work. This is plain misrepresentation or fraud. If this type of inevitable activity is discovered, then the fraudulent artist would receive his or her fair penalty in the court of public opinion; we do not need a copyright system to accomplish that. It would be up to all members of society to have the courage to publicly accuse artists of misrepresentation or fraud. However, this will only happen if we are culturally alert; this attentive condition is necessary if we want to do without judgments of the courts, which have led us into a posture of cultural laziness. Instead, we should critically discuss what we consider to be culturally inappropriate use.

From what I have suggested thus far, it is quite feasible to have both a flourishing cultural domain and a reasonable income for artists without the existence of a copyright system. However, it is evident that the completely new approach I am proposing it does not immediately eradicate all conceivable problems. If cultural enterprises can no longer control the market through the regime of copyright, they would then resort to secondary protective mechanisms which they would apply with even greater force. These mechanisms relate to the far-reaching control over distribution and promotion of cultural expression possessed by cultural conglomerates.

This too must be limited with metes and bounds. After all, from a democratic perspective it is impermissible that a limited number of cultural giants determine the contents of

artistic and cultural communications, using traditional as well as new media.[25] Democracy is not the privilege of a few cultural conglomerates. It is thus a necessity to use ownership and content regulations to organise the cultural market in such a way that cultural diversity has the best possible chance to flourish. First of all, there should not be dominant modes of distribution. It should not be the case that a single owner dominates, controls, or concerts the market for music, films or books. Vertical integration and other forms of cross-media ownership must be condemned. Content regulations may take the form of diversity pre-scriptions, which would attend to diversity in terms of genre, musicians' backgrounds, and geographical diversity. Of course, there would be outlets specialising in certain genres that want to be known for this specialisation, but these outlets would also be subject to diversity prescription, albeit within their own genre.[26]

This type of regulation does not take anything away from a free market economy. To the contrary, these rules, while in need of further elaboration, serve to create a free market, or, stated differently, to 'normalise' the market and to bring about a level playing field. No one should be able to dominate the cultural market or to have such a strong position that cultural diversity will be suppressed, marginalised, or revoked from the public. This demands certain regulatory controls: on the one hand, the elimination of the control mechanism of 'copyright' and, on the other hand, the instalment of some regulations concerning owner-ship and content that protect and promote the flourishing of artistic diversity.

A Thought-Experiment and a Challenge
In this essay I have presented a thought-experiment. I urge everyone to participate in this quest. Who should become our strategic partners on our journey into a world without copy-right? What is at stake here is the possibility of once again respecting the public domain of creativity and knowledge. My main concern is with providing the producers of artistic work with a decent income and sufficient possibilities to bring their work, in all its diversity, to the attention of many audiences without being pushed from the market by a few over-sized cultural conglomerates. The system of copyright has existed for over a century in Western societies. It has been long enough. It is not equipped to withstand the digitisation that has supplied artists with a magnitude of entrepreneurial freedom, and through which I propose a completely new cultural market can emerge. Initially, it might be difficult to imagine such a new market constellation, because we live in a world in which copyright and the dominance of huge cultural giants seem to be self- evident. They are not. Nevertheless, it is not easy to envision that completely other market relations can exist. However, throughout history, we have seen markets change continuously. Why not in the distant future? Market relations can change, radically.

The *first* effect we might expect from the proposed radical restructuring of cultural markets is that, with these new conditions, the rationale is lost for cultural conglomer-ates to make substantial investments in blockbusters, bestsellers and stars (however, it is unlikely that those kind of cultural giants will still exist after the introduction of the market regulations we have proposed). After all, by making creative adaptation respectable again

and by undoing the present system of copyright, the economic incentives to produce at the present scale will diminish. It will also no longer be possible to decisively dominate the production, distribution, promotion and the preconditions for the reception of the arts. In my proposition, not a single enterprise will be capable of decisively manipulating the cul-tural playing field. With the abolition of copyright, cultural conglomerates will lose their grip on the agglomeration of cultural products, with which they determine the outlook of our cultural lives to an ever-increasing extent. Because what will they lose? They have to give up control over huge chunks of the cultural markets.

By employing a fully implemented cultural competition policy, in combination with oth-er property rights-delineating measures and diversity of content incentives and obligations, enterprises can never again reach an exorbitant size and dominate the market. Of course, it will not be forbidden, for instance, for a cultural entrepreneur to invest millions of dollars or euros in, for instance, a film, game, CD or DVD. However, the investment can no longer be made under an endless wall of protection.

One of the far-reaching consequences of the measures I propose is that it will no longer be likely for a certain enterprise to hijack the works of other parties – which is no longer protected by copyright, because this has been abolished – and market it. After all, in the past situation of industrial piracy, the pirate tried to obtain a unique, if not monopolistic, position in the illegal market. Yet, in the new situation, no one operates at a scale that ena-bles him or her to straightforwardly take over the works of others and, aided by a dominant market position, market it to all kinds of audiences on a global scale. Piracy disappears in thin air, because everybody is a legalised pirate! Thus, the word piracy no longer has any meaning in this context.

When copyright is abolished and the present cultural conglomerates are substan-tially smaller in size, a level playing field is put in place in which many artistic expres-sions can find their way to publics, buyers, readers, users, and audiences. This is the *second* effect of my proposals. There will once again be room to manoeuvre in cultural markets for a variety of entrepreneurs, who are then no longer pushed out of the public's attention by blockbuster films, bestseller books, and music, visual arts or design stars. Those plentiful artists are more likely to find audiences for their creations and perform-ances in a normal market that is not dominated by a few large players. There is not a single reason to believe that there would be no demand for such an enormous variety of artistic expressions. In a normalised market, with equal opportunities for everyone, this demand can be fulfilled.

This increases the possibility that a varied flock of artists would be capable of ex-tracting a decent living from their endeavours. Chris Anderson claims that in the long tail, the aggregate market, for instance, for niche music is huge. 'What if the non-hits – from healthy niche product to outright misses – all together added up to a market as big as, if not bigger than the hits themselves'.[27] Anderson is quite optimistic: 'Our culture and economy are increasingly shifting away from a focus on a relatively small number of hits (mainstream products and markets) at the head of the demand curve, and moving toward

25. Smiers, *Arts Under Pressure*.
26. Joost Smiers, *Artistic Expression in a Corporate World: Do We Need Monopolistic Control?*,
    Utrecht: HKU/ Utrecht School of the Arts, 2004.

27. Chris Anderson, *The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business Is Selling Less of More*, New York:
    Hyperion, 2006, p. 8.

a huge number of niches in the tail... As the audience continues to move away from the Top 40 music and blockbusters, the demand is spreading to vast numbers of smaller artists who speak more authentically to their audience'.[28]

If copyright no longer existed, all works would belong to the public domain from the moment of their creation or performance onwards. While this is true, however, it does not mean that creators, performers and other cultural entrepreneurs cannot make a living from their operations and make them profitable. In order to understand this, we should take into consideration the fact that market relations will fundamentally change. There will be no market dominating forces anymore, a reality that guarantees that a level playing field will exist for hundreds of thousands cultural entrepreneurs who will not be pushed away from public attention, as is presently the case.

If these proposals concerning the abolishment of copyright and the establishment of a level playing field were to be implemented, substantial gains stand to be realised when the public domain of artistic creativity and knowledge will be restored in its former glory. This is the *third* effect of the changes in cultural market relations I am proposing. It will no longer be possible to privately appropriate works that in actuality derive from the public domain. We may highly appreciate the new work, but it remains accessible for further creations, appropriations and for critique, and also for changes and amendments. The public debate will then have to decide whether alterations are made respectfully, and whether the original work commands that respect. If the public debate does not materialise, it is a loss for democracy. Independent and well-informed critique must once again come to play an important role. It is only by testing and dissecting a work that we can sense what is of value, and what is unspeakably banal. Actually, cultural conglomerates would lose the monopolistic exclusivity over broad cultural areas because everyone would be allowed to use all kinds of artistic materials they find on their way, and there will be no limitations on creatively adapting works of art.

An extra benefit of my approach is that the absolute character of property, which wreaks havoc upon our societies, is loosened, and in our case undone. In general, ownership has been allowed to occupy a far too central position in our neoliberal societies. Nevertheless, society has to become much more vocal about particular interests – for example in the social, ecological and economic sense – and has to be able to enforce these. In our case of cultural entrepreneurship, it is even undesirable from a human rights perspective that it is possible to vest an exclusive property right on a creation and development in the area of knowledge, and this is furthermore unnecessary under normal market conditions.

This is precisely one of the objectives we muster against the alternatives to copyright that are presently in vogue like the Creative Commons, which leaves the notion of property intact. My main objection, of course, is aimed at the transformation of the copyright system by industry, which is currently being replaced by contract law and sealed off by digital rights management. It goes without saying that in my approach digital rights management must not exist and must be banished in all its shapes and sizes. If the work cannot and is not allowed to be property – as we imagine it – then digital rights management is the last thing we need.

We should also involve in our considerations that digitisation and the Internet are deeply changing how artistic expressions are produced, distributed, promoted and received. This *fourth* effect has obviously far-reaching consequences for the development of market relations. To summarise, we have several changing variables: the absence of copyright means cultural conglomerates no longer dominate markets, and this radically transforms the production, distribution and promotion circumstances for films, books, music, theatre, dance, visual arts, design and a variety of mixed cultural forms.

The last effect of our proposals, number *five*, concerns global economic policies. If I were Minister of Economic Affairs, or Secretary of Commerce, I would be quite nervous. Viacom, the owner of MTV and Paramount, has demanded that YouTube pays one billion of dollars for missed copyrights and has brought this case to the court. Google bought YouTube for 1.65 billion dollars. Every day we see these kinds of figures pass before our eyes. We see an industry where fabulous amounts of money have been invested and lost because of copyright issues. One must be blind not to observe that copyright is in its final days. Even massive criminalisation of users of artistic materials does not work any longer. Somebody should sound the alarm and all Ministers of Economic Affairs should listen: the billions and billions of dollars and euros invested in those huge cultural conglomerates are on the brink of vanishing into thin air. Currently, cultural industries are risky businesses.

There is hard work to be done to avoid an economic catastrophe that is caused by the concentrations, the mergers and the monopolistic control of copyright; one might say that these bad habits of a sector in our society even destroys our freedom of expression. A radical change in the conditions for the production, distribution and promotion of artistic and cultural expressions is necessary, also from an economic point of view. This is exactly what I propose. The outcome would be a blessing for our economies, resulting in more balanced, equitable and less risky economic relations.

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28. Anderson, *The Long Tail*, pp. 52, 82.

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CRAFT, CONTEXT AND METHOD
THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AND ALTERNATIVE MODELS

DANNY BUTT

This paper emerged from an invitation to join a panel for *MyCreativity* on alternative business and organisational models, which I accepted because I was excited to participate in such a convivial environment with friends I knew well, and wanted the opportunity to meet others at the event whose work I've admired. I can see why on the surface I might have seemed like a good choice for such a panel. I've worked as a contractor inside a few different kinds of organisations – from commercial web shops in the 90s, advertising agencies, cultural institutions and academia. I've also participated in many not-for-profit groups and collectives of various types. Now, as a consultant, I am lucky enough to get to see the inside of many different kinds of firms and engage with their business models (and, of course, our own professional services firm has its own distinctive model).[1] Finally, through work in the field of Internet Governance, I have spent time formally researching and assessing different kinds of models that exist in intergovernmental organisations and NGOs – attempts to support diverse and ethical mechanisms for collectivity and organisation.

However, after all of these experiences, I am less comfortable about proposing alternatives 'outside state subsidies and hyped markets', as the framing for the panel suggested. That seems like an odd thing to say given that I have, for as long as I can remember, anxiously sought alternatives to the status quo. However, while I still value where that search has taken me, and still believe in the need for alternatives, I can't shake the feeling that the levels of alternative platform/model sustainability are mostly low, and that Spivak is correct in her suggestion that it is sometimes better to 'sabotage what is inexorably to hand, than to invent a tool that no one will test'.[2]

There are three reasons that have led me to this point of view. Firstly, alternatives are easy to propose and difficult to sustain. The need for better alternatives is a 'mom and apple pie' discussion in activist communities, and there is a moral flavour to the valorisation of the 'alternative' that overrides any true evaluation of one's actual political effectiveness. Are we prepared to test the impact of our alternatives against the value of efforts at reforming existing organisations and institutions? Personally, I am not suffering for lack of potential new places to put my energy. What I struggle to find are situations where this energy can make meaningful change and such situations are usually attached to availability of resources. Resources exist in organisations and institutions, and I think that it is characteristic of new media and the creative sector to underestimate the resources

1.   Suma Media Consulting, http://www.sumamedia.com.
2.   Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present,* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 9.

required for projects: there is a feeling that if we could agree on the priorities for change that these changes would somehow happen 'immaterially'. However, without resources, we are usually in the sphere of sacrificial labour, as Ross terms it.[3] The martyr streak runs strong in activist culture. The continuing Western European popularity of Mauss' concept of the 'gift',[4] idealised and de-contextualised from the Pacific cultures which provided the concept for him, perhaps indicates the value that a postcolonial sensibility may bring in deconstructing a philosophical imaginary predicated on a utopian past which never existed, and allowing us a more nuanced view of ethical praxis.

Secondly, outside of the sustainability of alternatives, my ethical sense is that the important political work for those with cultural capital (those of us reading this book) is in precisely orienting our efforts to institutional reform, rather than looking around for emergent forms to appropriate. We have the capability to effect change in existing organisations and institutions, precisely because we have the capacity to critique them. Many others don't. My interest is in clearing institutional openings to allow the non-dominant to assume their role of the emergent with the support of organisational resources that exist. This will entail us learning to have a dialogue with the agenda/context of the emergent. However, this learning must always be wary of reading the emergent agenda in terms of our own, as such appropriations result in the destruction of the difference.

In other words, we have to accept our cultural dominance in our textual work. We can only claim to be marginal within a very small proportion of the world, and I believe there is the opportunity to expand the field within which we see oppositions between dominant and alternative taking place. Here I would gesture toward, say, the various indigenous language education movements internationally that perform an inspirational and practical critique of colonial education systems. I'm not quite sure what the lessons from those are for us in the West, and I suspect it is a personal and subjective encounter. But I do know that when I talk with people working in these initiatives, I routinely feel refreshed and empowered to create change, which has to be a good thing.

Thirdly, when alternatives are proposed – and almost every meeting/gathering proposes an alternative network or a group as an 'action item' morally opposed to the 'talkfest' – I rarely have confidence that they will raise a response from those in non-dominant cultural sectors. As suggested above, these are the sectors who I think have the most to offer by way of alternatives. I think Creative Commons is a perfect example of how the political economy of the creative sector all too easily becomes about the expressive capability of the Euro-American middle classes, which is a too-limited scope for discussion in the face of the financialisation of the planet under transnational capital. Despite the efforts of people like Lawrence Liang, we still have the Creative Commons leader Larry Lessig essentially describing Asia as a centre of piracy and implicitly morally defective.[5] This is not likely to bring residents of Asia on board the political movement of open content, and this is where I believe the most creative approaches to authorship and intellectual property are to be found.

If such responses sound mundane and sociological, they nevertheless for me reflect a vivid social context that is too little discussed within the new media sector. During their presentation at *MyCreativity*, Rosalind Gill and Danielle van Diemen described a Surinamese new media worker who remarked on their experience of Dutch firms where the designers were all blond haired and blue eyed, and the service workers were all black. It was a poignant moment, as looking around it was easy to see that who was in our conference didn't look like who is outside in the street, demographically. I know next to nothing about Suriname, other than a schematic of its history as a South American Dutch colony, but I do know for sure that it is a place whose resources are intimately connected with the ability of the Dutch to have an advanced capitalist economy that can set policy around 'the creative', just as I know that the material basis of my own settler culture in Australia and New Zealand is based on the appropriation of indigenous resources here. We can only pretend to not be connected to those who are not in the room, even if the questions of how to engage are complex.

It's difficult to know exactly how to respond to these suspicions of the 'alternative', but I would like to attempt some displacements of the alternative through the example of my own trajectory through the creative industries. For Judith Butler, 'giving an account of oneself' can be a way of exploring the limits of one's experience as sufficient data upon which one can propose a model for change. The autobiographical mode of address implies the experience of another (you the reader) for whom I must attempt to make myself substitutable in this story – for the story to work, you must believe that you potentially could imagine yourself within parts of this narrative. Where my self-presentation does not reflect your experience of yourself, is where we find the limits of our shared agenda, but also, paradoxically, opportunities for dialogue. As Butler suggests, 'it may be that a certain ability to affirm what is contingent and incoherent in identity allows one to affirm others who may or may not "mirror" one's own constitution'[6] and it is in this 'impossible intimacy of the ethical'[7] that I have found value in work within diverse fields including deconstruction, Pacific cultures and my own work within the management consulting field. However, as Butler points out, this is not just a personal process: the terms by which I tell my story are not of my own choosing, and so there is also a larger social structure embedded in the language and terms of the story which I am not in control of, and therefore, parts of my experience remain opaque even to me. Every autobiography is also an auto-ethnography. As Octavia Butler's character Lillith puts it in the sci-fi novel *Dawn*: 'I suppose I could think about this as field work, but how the hell do I get out of the field?'[8]

The mode of the personal story is one which seems fraudulent or self-indulgent within the terms of reference of classical political analysis, but I wish to suggest that there is a resolutely pragmatic character to such stories, if one believes that the most urgent priority right now is to establish more effectively global intellectual platforms against international exploitation. There are two main themes in my story of creative industries practice that structure how I approach creative and intellectual labour: craft and context.

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3.   Andrew Ross, 'The Mental Labor Problem', *Social Text* 18.2 (2000): 1-31.
4.   Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, London: Cohen and West, 1970.
5.   Lawrence Lessig, *Free Culture: How Big Media Uses Technology and the Law to Lock Down Culture and Control Creativity*, New York: Penguin Press, 2004, pp. 62-80.

6.   Judith Butler, 'Giving an Account of Oneself', *diacritics* 31.4 (2001): 27.
7.   Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'French Feminism Revisited', in *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, New York: Routledge, 1993, p.171.
8.   Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science*, New York: Routledge, 1989, p. 382.

Craft
I had my first real job of longer than a few months duration just before I turned 29, as a design lecturer. (I don't count running a business as a job.) Before that I lived a fairly typical creative industries itinerary. I finished high school with no idea that I would be a 'creative', as this was before the explosion in art/design/music programs and the widespread marketing of the university in Australia, and in any case I couldn't draw so was discouraged from studying art at school. After a year, I dropped out of my sociology degree to play punk rock in Sydney. I was also writing a fanzine on experimental music, and those connections eventually took me to New Zealand. In a way, even before the arrival of the web, I was used to the idea of my imagined community of peers being outside the local environment.[9]

When I arrived in New Zealand in 1993 I was able to turn my fanzine experience and music connections into a writing gig for the local student radio magazine SPeC, and this in turn got me an art-writing gig with the local daily newspaper. Later, I edited the magazine, all the while making music with the people who were some of my favourite musicians in the world at that time. I was developing two parallel crafts, in music and writing. I was also beginning to learn graphic design from a friend who was *SPeC*'s designer, and I was also writing and exhibiting in the contemporary art context, as some of my main music collaborators were also working in this field, and it turned out to be the place I felt most comfortable.

During 1993, I also discovered the Internet and that new thing called the World Wide Web, and along with some friends we decided to do a free newspaper/magazine about it during a festival in Wellington. The web, as you'll remember, was a new interdisciplinary context that in the early days was very much the domain of the settler individual (almost uniformly white and male) who was required to integrate technological, design and editorial prowess. Through projects for both various independent media and art initiatives I taught myself interaction design in this environment, and this seemed to be something I was good at.

I was also reading a lot of philosophy and cultural studies on the side. By the time I was 27, I had pretty much done the equivalent of what I now see as two art/media/design degrees, but outside of formal academic institutions, if occasionally supported by New Zealand's generous social welfare system. I had developed four or five different craft bases that I could use with some facility, if not to a high level. But all of these had been deployed in organisational contexts that were largely self-directed, and where client work was involved, it usually came about through personal connections. Overall, like the average graduate, I was more interested in the process of learning to make than what the effects were, and I was a bit naive and overambitious about the true impact of my work.

So far, not a completely uncommon story for a number of young white middle-class men from the suburbs. The explosion of the Internet and the dotcom boom during the 1990s provided an opportunity for self-styled media revolutionaries such as myself to ply their wares to larger media companies, and New Zealand in 1996/7 was no exception. A friend was working as a Photoshop artist for ad agencies, and it became clear that those

9. Danny Butt, 'Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism and the Creative Industries', in *The Creativity: A Free Accidental Newspaper Dedicated to the Anonymous Creative Worker*, Sandberg Institute, Institute of Network Cultures and Centre for Media Research, University of Ulster, Fall, 2006, p. 4. Available at: http://www.networkcultures.org/_uploads/20.pdf.

agencies were not getting the input they wanted from 'web companies' that were primarily set up by people from a technical background, and whose understanding of how normal people communicated was a bit skewed. So we set ourselves up to do web development for this market, and suddenly I was not quite in control of the context where my work was being created and received.

Context
Working in advertising (firstly as an external contractor, then based inside the agency) was the first time I had really worked for a sustained period to a contextual/cultural script that was not my own. The values, methods and temporalities in the agency environment were quite contrary to mine. My work motivators are essentially intellectual and political – projects have to be interesting or doing good, and preferably both. My working style is process-oriented – I prefer to do things with all the relevant information at hand, and to document processes so that next time around I do it better. The agency field, on the other hand is success-oriented, and personality-based. 'Quality' is very situational, individualised. Sarah Thornton, in her excellent ethnography of adland, describes the criteria implicit in her job interview perfectly:

> Although ideas about advertising were at issue, the questions that seemed to loom largest were: *Do I like this person? Will others in the team like her? Is she* or *can she be one of us?* While it would be considered an inappropriate official criterion for working in an academic post, personality is a legitimate concern in a business where working in teams and pleasing clients are essential.[10]

Working in advertising taught me that context itself is different than craft. One might have a certain set of craft skills (say, graphic design) that are theoretically applicable to a particular domain (such as advertising), but in practice they are not because those craft skills have been learnt within another context (say, contemporary art) that turns out to be incommensurable. It's an experience of not fitting in, where even one's body seems to give oneself away constantly. It's not that I didn't understand how advertising worked. I was an assiduous student and rapidly learnt more than many seasoned professionals about the structure of the industry. But in fact, my very hunger to learn the structure of it gave me away as someone who couldn't be effective in it. My suggestions never seemed to quite get taken up; my ability to articulate areas of risk or likely error for projects – even when couched in the correct terminology – would be seen as 'unhelpful'. I gave it my best shot, but in retrospect it was clear to all concerned that I was not 'one of us', and after 6 months working inside Saatchi New Zealand I left for academia.

I had done some design teaching on the side when we were running our business in Auckland and enjoyed it, and was able to get a real job teaching undergraduate design students on the basis of my professional experience. Teaching in a design school also required me to get my own academic qualifications, and so I enrolled in an MA under McKenzie Wark, ostensibly to look at rural Digital Divide issues (I was living in the countryside), and

10. Sarah Thornton, 'An Academic Alice in Adland: Ethnography and the Commercial World', *Critical Quarterly* 41.1 (1999): 61.

ending up studying class theory which is where the structuring questions for those concerns seemed to be housed. The academic world also, at last, provided a context for my own writing. Writing is probably the craft I am best at, but it had not had much of a run during my time in the new media design world, and my art and music writing always felt limited by the constraints of formal aesthetic explication which was central to those genres, and in which I had no formal training.

However, while most people now see me as a natural academic, the organisational environment of academia has never been a natural home for me, and I had to work hard to understand it. No one in my family had been to a university, and I didn't even really have a sense about the social function of the institution. Coming from a small business environment, then through advertising, the sheer scale and immovability of the organisational structures made the academic institution a frustrating place to work, impervious to the rhythms I was used to. I come from the white colonies – we work fast and like to see results fast. Looking back I see that I gained success quickly, probably too quickly, and made some decisions that were also made too hastily, which I regret. However, once again, adapting to this environment/context, doing what it took to gain recognition within the academy, was a learning experience of a different order from learning a new craft skill. Shifting contexts is a test of one's most basic drives, desires and consciousness – one needs patience and, I think most crucially, an ability to seek out good teachers and guides.

I always kept my hand in the commercial arena. My business partner and I were doing consulting work in the new media industries: assisting with strategic planning, business case development, new venture development, facilitation, competitive research and analysis. I think we ended up in consulting because as those of you who work in the design sector know, design is an integrative discipline that, at its core, has strong overlaps with organisational strategy. In design, one is really grappling with how the core aims of the organisation are embedded in product and service delivery. And during the dotcom era, there was an unprecedented discussion about value chains, business models and how businesses work, which we were really interested in – more so than what looked good or what was technologically possible, concerns which were more common for visual designers and technologists in the new media field.

I can also see that there were aspects to my own upbringing that made me suitable for this kind of work: my stepfather, who I grew up with, was a successful entrepreneur who turned a one-person surf shop into a 50-person business. My father started his work career as an electrician, worked for one coal company his entire life, moved eventually into a personnel role and then acted as a kind of internal consultant, receiving the very creative industries title 'Methods Analyst' in the 80s and being a kind of bridge between the shop floor and management, while not fitting into either. I find myself regularly bemused at the degree to which his dinner-table work conversations are reflected in my thinking. Further to that, I usually score INFJ on the Keirsey/MBTI personality tests and this puts me into the archetype of 'Counsellor'. The old joke is that consulting is 70% therapy, 20% philosophy and 10% artistry and that's probably about right. Clients are usually people whose institutional environment is driving them crazy. From my mother, I gained some empathetic skills that are critical in that kind of work.

Eventually, I grew tired of the particular academic institution I was in and wanted to further my research on settler-indigenous relations, which seemed like the most complex and

critical social issue where I live, and one that has many resonances with my other research interests. I also wanted to have more diverse work, and my father had been unwell, so it felt important to have some time to attend to family. So for the last eighteen months, I've been running a company with my business partner based in Australia. While academics often suggest that I'm 'brave' for having left academia for 'life outside', I don't see it that way. Working in the private sector doesn't make one autonomous – if anything, I am now more dependent on the financial variations of our academic clients than I was when I was employed by them. This is why I'm most likely to end up back in academia if I find the right gig – the freedom from business pressure *inside* the academy is significant (despite the complaints of the natives about commercialisation), and I'm not really driven enough to be good at business development. But that's another story.

The beauty of the experience of consulting is that it has allowed me to see the inside of a further range of organisations than I knew before: broadcasters, NGOs, government agencies, the UN system. So I've had to formalise my methods of adapting to new contexts. This is where the ability to conceptualise difference than I've learnt from feminist and postcolonial work, and from deconstruction, is constantly put to use. When entering a new context of practice, I need to make a subtle reading of cultural scripts that are operating, and learn the operational languages, if I am going to make interventions that elicit a response from those contexts.

Note the methodology embedded in this language. It is not about learning to read a situation in order to make a commentary elsewhere (standard academic social sciences technique: I study something in order to talk about it at a conference). Nor is it about learning to read a situation in order to make a recommendation that has an impact (instrumental consulting technique: I propose a solution which fits your situation). It is about trying to enter the fabric of a context and make a contribution that will be seen by that context as an impetus for change. Spivak calls this the 'uncoercive rearrangement of desire', which is a great phrase.[11] It's a very tough thing to do, an impossibility. But an urgent impossibility that is the hallmark of the consultant's work (we constantly fight our desire for control which we have no authority to take), and of course, work in teaching the humanities. If our goal with political action is to be more broadly inclusive in our work, I am convinced that a methodology for negotiating difference is critical to enabling effective change.

Fibre
Reflecting on the trajectory of my work, I can see the range of craft skills and contextual understandings that led to my current interests, even though I had no idea how they would become integrated at the time I was learning them. It's because I can speak the various associated languages of these crafts and contexts that I can be 'interdisciplinary' – interdisciplinarity is not newly divorced from any of threads of craft/context, but is precisely woven from these threads. Like a length of rope spun from off-cuts, there are no clear points where it is easy to say 'this colour starts here', even though not all fibres travel the entire length of the rope. And neither are all the fibres fused into an amorphous mass – under close analysis

11. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2003, p. 101.

all of the different filaments are visible as distinct entities, and are largely non-substitutable. The specific colours of threads in our various yarns, perhaps, is what makes our creative identities unique.

I raise this fabric/sewing metaphor (with echoes of the Pacific and the interrogation of metaphors in Traweek and Haraway's work in science studies) because it illuminates what for me is the critical question in the practice of political change. What craft skills can I learn, or am I prepared to learn? These crafts take time, experience and teachers to develop. Perhaps more significantly, what specific contexts of practice am I prepared to participate in, where I can actually use my craft skills in a way that draws a response from that domain of practice? I have a number of connections to contexts where I essentially have no author- ity and capability to make a significant impact on the political agenda – how do I conduct myself in these?

These questions ask me to reconsider the relationship between theory and practice in particular contexts. If I write academic work in English, that is because that is what I can or am doing, and being able to do it means I might not be able to do other things – or at least, I cannot necessarily do all of the political things I might wish to within the context of theory. The 'global' is not accessible to me through theoretical work – instead my own prac- tices of reading and writing are constrained by limitations of language, craft and contextual understanding. Following Butler, it has proven useful to me to evaluate my own writing and political practices sociologically, to better understand who I develop intellectual relation- ships with, and in which contexts my work can be effectively made use of by others. In this way, I can also evaluate who is not in the economy of my textual circulation.

This sociological perspective leads me to a level of frustration when encountering the- oretical work that seeks a 'totality' which remains uninfluenced by the critical literature from the new social movements in ecology, peace, ethnicity, anti-colonialism, gender and sexuality that primarily identify outside classical Marxist terminology, and which have been most influential on my own intellectual and political development. This is not because such totalising categories are not useful – after all, there are international systems which must be described, and this is why I value Marx still – but because their value for the dispossessed can only be activated through resonance with specific social contexts, and the world is big- ger than 19th century Europe could conceive.[12]

Whenever I attend conferences such as *MyCreativity* which attempt to engage the question of political change, I feel very aware of the limited capacities we have to identify 'the political', and also the limited scope of 'the political' that is customary in English- speaking new media discourse. Overall, we are more comfortable talking about something 'political, out there' (capitalism, war, or technology) than the openness of our hearts and imaginations to other possibilities that might be excluded from the room we are in. Yet, my suggestion is that it is through our elaboration of our own subjectivity and position that we can connect to others who can help us in our work, rather than limiting our connections to those who already share our ways of making sense of the 'world'.

So it feels more critical than ever to pull apart narrowly shared understandings of the

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'political' and to narrate the politics of how we come to these understandings. These politics are, simply, our own stories, our ability to listen to the stories of others, to allow the stories of others to transform our own, and to understand the limits of our ability to tell, limits that are inextricable from the social/economic/cultural locations we inhabit. These limits are, of course, constructed by 'big issues' and 'global themes', but whose big issues, from when? The geopolitics of significance in our political imaginary seems unbalanced when I know more about the history of the political environment in Paris leading up to May 1968 than I do about any African nation on its path to decolonisation, let alone the Pacific region I live in today.

Exploring a more global sense of accountability for my writing and work has not been so much about travel to new physical locations, but recognising that a shift in consciousness can take place in the imagination. This is the lesson from feminist theory: the movement that is required is not of ourselves as subjects within the world, but to allow the nature of ourselves as subjects to be moved by the presence of another subject. If there is one thing I've learnt from working in the creative sector, it's that the affective dimensions of our prac- tices, where we feel ourselves changed emotionally, that build solidarity and motivate our engagement at both the practical and aesthetic level. In seeking analogues in the theoreti- cal/philosophical domain I return to Irigaray's fundamental understanding of the importance of openness and receptivity in the ethical subject – where we are at risk of change from the touch of the other. To write 'I' and 'you', as Irigaray does, is not to write 'he' and 'she' – the subjects in the I/you question are not substitutable, or able to be easily instrumentalised in systems thinking.[13] It's through the sociology of our imagination, perhaps, that we find the structural boundaries that are most in need of transformation in ourselves, and a possibility for a utopian politics that constitutes itself in the ethics of our encounters.

From identity-based social movements, as from craft, we learn the limits of elastic- ity in our thought: our ability to transform ourselves is much less than we think, and our identities, even under extreme pressure, will probably not turn themselves to something unrecognisable from who we are now. Here is where the value of the imagined 'alternative' system becomes less useful, or at least, we have to envisage alternatives in terms which are not available for us to invent, but are precisely constituted in our relationships with each other. This is not a disabling sensibility. In *Undoing Gender*, Butler considers the possibilities for transgender and intersex recognition in a binary gendered system, one where the subjects move toward and between alternative genres of life that are already overdetermined by binaristic social discourse.[14] There is no possibility of flight from the gendered binary, and yet utopian impulses play a critical role even when there is persistent failure to achieve them:

> Not only does one need the social world to be a certain way in order to lay claim to what is one's own, but it turns out that what is one's own is always from the start dependent on what is not one's own, the social conditions by which autonomy is, strangely, dispos- sessed and undone.

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12. See, for example, Blaut's critiques of Euro-Marxist diffusionism and the Asiatic Mode of Produc- tion. James Blaut, 'Marxism and Eurocentric Diffusionism', in Ronald Chilcote (ed.) *The Political Economy of Imperialism*, Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999, pp. 127-140.

13. Cecilia Sjöholm, 'Crossing Lovers: Luce Irigaray's Elemental Passions', *Hypatia* 15.3 (2000): 92-112.

14. Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender*, New York: Routledge, 2004.

In this sense, we must be undone in order to do ourselves: we must be part of a larger social fabric of existence in order to create who we are. This is surely the paradox of autonomy... Until those social conditions are radically changed, freedom will require unfreedom, and autonomy is implicated in subjection. If the social world... must change in order for autonomy to become possible, then individual choice will prove to be dependent from the start on conditions that none of us author at will, and no individual will be able to choose outside the context of a radically altered social world. That alteration comes from an increment of acts, collective and diffuse, belonging to no single subject, and yet one effect of these alterations is to make acting like a subject possible.[15]

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15. Butler, *Undoing Gender*, pp. 100-101.

STRANGE

ANNELYS DE VET

'Rules serve the people, and we cannot allow the people to serve the rules', argued the Dutch MP Femke Halsema during the debate over ex-MP Ayaan Hirsi Ali's naturalisation. She couldn't have summed up the problem more succinctly.

The creative sector is crying out for a similar argument. It is becoming a pet of politicians, but there is a risk hanging in the air – one which has everything to do with the *zeit-geist* – that the creative industries will become an extension of political economic policy. After the industrial and digital revolutions, a creative revolution has evidently now dawned. The swing, however, must be and stay creative. The creative industries, as part of the field of the arts, must not be restrained. On the contrary, they need confidence, depth, experimentation, brainpower, and, especially, space. These things must come first, and rules only later.

Recently, I attended a gathering of the ACX (Amsterdam Creativity Exchange) at which Robert Marijnissen (the city's creative industries project leader) was one of the speakers. With a proud look on his face, he told us the city had set aside twenty million euros for the creative industries, to be spent in the next government term. Inarguably, this was a terrific decision. He asked the audience what ought to be done with this pot of gold. But their questions about the specifics of the agenda were derisively laughed off. 'We don't want professional committees or artistic rationales – just good simple ideas that politicians can understand without mediation from others'. What ideas *would* be honoured, and with what goals and expectations, was never made clear. It remained completely obscure what those 'good simple ideas' might be, and who would determine it.

What was crystal-clear was that Marijnissen, too, has got Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class* on his nightstand. It is the bible of policy-makers. But alas, it is not creativity that has crept into their dreams, but hard cash. The twenty million is above all else an economic investment whose goal is to strengthen the financial position of Amsterdam. The creative industries are viewed as the basis for a future economic boom. It seems to have been forgotten that creativity also implies a creative way of dealing with rules.

This city is over-regulated; every square metre has a purpose. Any unexpected movement is nipped in the bud. Where is the noise? Where is the undefined? The uncontrollable? A 'creative city' needs a humus layer – a layer of research, space, confidence, and many, many margins. This includes unsuccessful projects. Creativity arises from dialogue and a public sector that supports it without economic motives. It arises from a physically and mentally inviting public space where people are paramount, not financial interests or carefully thought-out instructions.

'Cultural' space like this needs political protection. It is not a sector in which money grows, but a field that gives shape to meaning. It is the domain in which Prime Minister Balkenende's debate about norms and values could have achieved more depth. It is not the

Minister of Economic Affairs who should be the standard-bearer of the creative revolution, but a Minister of Culture. A member of government who can convince the Lower House of the importance of culture, someone who understands the social and moral significance of creativity. It is the job of the next cabinet to appoint such a minister. And – to jump ahead of things – Femke Halsema seems to me to be the obvious candidate. Because she understands that culture begins with people, with humanity, and with 'freedom as an ideal'.[1]

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1. 'Vrijheid als ideaal', Bart Snels (redaction), Femke Halsema (afterword), Uitgeverij SUN, Amsterdam.

THE PINK REBELLION OF COPENHAGEN
DANISH YOUTH REVOLT AND THE RADICALISATION OF THE EUROPEAN CREATIVE CLASS

ALEX FOTI

It was a very hot weekend in Copenhagen between March 1st and March 3rd, particularly in Nørrebro, the alternative neighbourhood where the evicted and demolished Ungdomshuset was located, and around Christiania, the hippy free city known Europe-wide as a current site of harassment by the Rasmussen government. The eviction that occurred, and the three days and nights of heavy rioting that followed, was initiated by the local social democrats, who have been in charge of the city since 1900. The harsh treatment of protesters, the alteration of Andersen's mermaid with pink paint, and the arrest of some 600 activists, have prompted a wave of transnational solidarity among the European youth with appeals, actions, boycotts, and occupations of Danish consulates, not only in Malmö, Hamburg and Berlin, but also in Venice, Milan, Salonica, Istanbul.

Why in Denmark? Why was there such a forceful rebellion of the city's dissenting youth, promptly joined by the immigrant youth? How could a full-scale riot occur in such a peaceful and wealthy European capital, with burning barricades and sustained the clashes with the police, who had to bring help from Sweden in order to bring the situation back under control? Weren't consumerist European youth supposed to be eager only to discover the world, flying and chatting at low-cost? Weren't they deemed to be irreversibly post-ideological, much less attracted to radical activism?

In political terms, Denmark is a special country in more ways than one. It's been part of the EU since 1973, but its people have opposed Maastricht with all their will, with major riots breaking out after the 1993 referendum (the only comparable in recent history to the eviction weekend), which in retrospect were at least as important as the 1995 French strikes in catalysing the anti-globalisation movement in Europe. And many Danes were in Göteborg, a crucial episode in the maturation of the noglobal protest, just before Genoa. As the now respectable Italian right-wing leader and former fascist Gianfranco Fini said to *Time* magazine: 'Genoa will be like Göteborg, or worse'. (He went on to commandeer the riot cops in Genoa, making sure his dire prediction would come true). As a consequence of the opposition to Maastricht, Denmark is not part of the euro currency, but it's very much part of the Eurocratic mainstream. The reason: flexicurity, currently the solution favoured by the European Commission to temper the disasters and political costs brought by unilateral flexibility, while forcing workfare down the throats of the unwilling youth of Europe. Although a Nordic country with an extensive welfare system and strong unions, social democracy hasn't had an easy life in 21st century Denmark. A staunchly occidentalist, neoconservative Right has been in power since 2001. Denmark has turned into a faithful ally of Bush, more long-lasting than Berlusconi's Italy. This exceptional partiality toward NATO and America makes the Danish version of flexicurity – the latest edition of Nordic social model after the

demise of the top-down and paternalist, but generous and universalist, social democratic welfare state – particularly liked by the Barroso commission.

Of course, the land which hosted the first Jacobin revolution outside France and invented quantum physics remains a land with a penchant for free thinkers and rabble rousers: the Danes have a fierce sense of humour, which compares favourably with their Scandinavian neighbours (remember *The Kingdom* by Lars von Trier?). And Copenhagen, a city fully immersed in the informational networks and supply channels feeding the global economy (think container and shipping giant Maersk), is full of them. With respect to the British or Italian creative class, Danish brainworkers are more radical and libertarian. Anarchism has flourished since the early 80s, from anarchopunk to black bloc and beyond. Radicalism with red and green tinges is also in full bloom. In fact, a generalised reliance on peer-to-peer sharing and free downloading has been furthered by collectives such as Piratgruppe. And anti-precarity ideas and actions are currently fermented by groups like Flexico. And who could ever forget such great subverting stunts like anti-Pepsi Guaraná Power (also a commercial success in the Jutland peninsula)?

All this is just a fraction of what Copenhagen's creative class could potentially achieve when it thinks in terms of political action and cultural engagement. Denmark, however, is also a strongly agrarian economy that has prospered under the Common Agricultural Policy, thanks to its superior dairy and pork products that have conquered European and world markets. And farmers are just as religious, narrow-minded, lily-white protestant and patriotic as urban dwellers tend to be secular and open-minded. The former have been pivotal in the rise to power of the Right, and the latter are increasingly dissatisfied by the traditional Left.

The Danish anti-globalisation movement has been the only one in Europe to develop its own independent political force. Sections of it joined the Red-Green alliance, bringing a woman under the age of 30 into Parliament, and establishing a pink list in Copenhagen's municipal elections, which scored almost 10 per cent of votes at the city level and is firmly in the double digits in alternative neighbourhoods like Nørrebro. No wonder Andersen's mermaid was covered in pink paint as a sign of solidarity with the protesters. The osmosis of activists into local politics and cooperative ventures has created a multi-level context, in which radical forces of all denominations can work in synergy if the situation requires, from the streets to the city to the parliament, with a tacit division of labour, which respects political autonomy at all levels. We've got networked autonomous struggles + municipal representation + foundation based civil/union/lawyer/ cultural entrepreneur/artist amalgamations + parliament + media networks (etc.) all working together with a common understanding of connectedness and different forms, tasks and possibilities. The Padovans may be right when they say that representation can no longer exist in the philosophical sense of the word, but the concrete renewed neo-tribalism proposed in their organisational conclusions is wrong and simplistic. The multi-levelledness and that common supplementary attitude which intelligently knows and acknowledges the role of the different levels and methods of communication is what makes us strong here now. No riot could have done the trick alone and no riot will make it to the next level – one where gains can be made – without all of the other levels.

Perhaps more importantly, activists have worked hard to bridge the divide between the mainly white creative class and the mainly immigrant service class, and especially between

alternative youth and ghetto youth. Unlike in Paris, where the students who stormed the universities and boulevards to protest against juvenile precarity and the French government did not fundamentally connect with the rioters (there were actually tensions during the demonstrations between students, radicals and *banlieusards* intent on looting and fighting the police), in Copenhagen, all recent social turmoil has seen white and non-white youth on the same side of the barricade.

The only factual incorrectness is the part around the immigrant kids. An analysis of this kind cannot carry. It is rather a neighbourhood thing – Nørrebro as an inclusive space with a certain spirit and a lot of local shared social spaces, plus a certain tribe like history of connections between Arab kids and the rest of us. We would help them out when one of their friends got expelled and they know us to be fiercely anti-racist; they would join protest activities and identify themselves in connection with the riots: you helped us, we help you. We have coffee in the same bar in the square, and people respect each other even though we don't like their crime business and they might find us to be strange freaks. We share the same streets and we share the same pride of those streets. They came and bought the T-shirts that were made after the riot, quoting Dr Dre: 'still not loving police'.

Large-scale riots occur spontaneously in response to blatant violations of individual liberties, collective rights and arrogant abuses of state or police power. Think of the Rodney King trial and the 1992 LA riots, think of the electrocution of those teenagers running from the cops, which triggered the uprising of Paris *banlieues* in 2005, and you can understand why the raid of the Danish special forces to evict Ungomdshuset in the early hours of March 1st was just like a match thrown on the parched prairie. Riots are spontaneous processes that emerge after all hopes in non-violent tools of protest and confrontation are exhausted, due to the deafness of power.

And Danish state power is as deaf as it is dumb. As soon as the Right took office, it launched a cultural crusade to protect the Occident from Muslim immigration, perceived as a threat to the Danish cultural identity. The extent of its hostility to migrants in Denmark (a very nativist state with very strict immigration laws, in an already xenophobic European Union) became clear to the whole world with the mishandling of the crisis of satirical cartoons. The cartoons, purportedly making fun on the Prophet, were in reality the political editorial of a conservative newspaper, traditionally the expression of the right-wing agrarian interests noted above. Only a pan-Islamic boycott of Danish products pushed the country's multinationals to plead for a more sensible approach with the Danish Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen.

In fact, the prime minister – whom Berlusconi advised as a lover to his wife because of his good looks (seriously!) – shares his last name with a prime mover of European politics, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, head of the European social democrats in Strasbourg and influential in the Socialist International. The blunder of the social democrats in Copenhagen, with the shady sale of the youth centre Ungdomshuset to a homophobic and Islamophobic Christian sect – worsened by the forced eviction (there had already been skirmishes in September, so it was clear Copenhagen's youth was going to explode at the next provocation) – makes one thing clear: the two Rasmussens are one of the same kind. European politicians, either social democratic, liberal or conservative, increasingly look the same. They all share deference to financial markets, big corporations, have repressive and xenophobic instincts, and pander to firmly established interest groups and older generations. Even the

mainstream Danish unions are realising that social democrats no longer reliably defend the interests of employees, and when push comes to shove, they side with the student protesters, as with the general strikes and university occupations that rocked the country in the spring of 2006, when Rasmussen announced welfare 'reforms' cutting benefits for young and old workers alike, which the social democrats opposed only rhetorically. But it would be foolish to consider the extension and duration of the riots solely in the context of a supposed Danish exceptionalism. Rather, precisely by virtue of their socialist past and libertarian present, Danish movements are in a privileged position to fight against the sociopolitical consequences of both Atlanticist neoconservatism and European free-market liberalism more broadly. Copenhagen's pink rebellion could be the harbinger of a more generalised youth insurgence, involving many sectors of the so-called creative class of net/flex/temp workers.

In fact, it makes sense to see the Copenhagen riots as a continuation of the French protests of 2006, and both as instances of a new phase for radical movements after the failed attempt of blocking the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq. In particular, it is tempting to see it as the anticipation of a generalised rebellion of the European creative class against the hypocrisy, arrogance and corruption of the elites ruling the EU, which have been delegitimised by the French-Dutch refusal, but are clinging to power as if Europe were an asset that belonged only to them. The Brussels summit is supposed to spruce up the environmental credentials of the EU in order to make it at least appealing to somebody beyond the privileged few. Later in March 2007, the Berlin summit (which will issue the Berlin declaration on the constitutional future of the EU) will celebrate half-a-century of European treaties, but it will be the death of European federalism and the transition to some kind of confederation of nation-states, combining the bellicosity and racism of the former with the transfer of sovereignty of the latter. We'll also see how things turn out in Heilingdamm-Rostock in June, and how movements from East and West of Europe will be able to fight the G8 and the huge transnational police force that will protect its closed-door decisions. The insurgence of European youth in Copenhagen, Paris and elsewhere seems to point toward increasing political awareness and radicalisation among young people working in information, knowledge and culture industries.

Only the creative class can alter the course of European history away from its present reactionary path, and toward the social emancipation of a finally mulatto Euro-generation. We have to act now for radical Europe by connecting and unifying in solidarity with major struggles like the Copenhagen and Athens revolts: let's create a European space for radical youth culture!

ORGANIC INTELLECTUAL WORK
INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW ROSS

GEERT LOVINK AND **ANDREW ROSS**

Does cultural studies scholar and labour activist Andrew Ross need to be introduced? I became familiar with the work of US American researcher of Scottish decent in the early nineties when his co-edited anthology *Techno-Culture* and books *No Respect* and *Strange Weather* reached wide audiences. His highly readable works deal with a range of topics from sweatshop labour, the creative office culture of the dotcoms, middleclass utopias of the Disney town Celebration to China's economic culture as a global player. For outsiders, Andrew Ross might embody the 'celebrity' persona of academia, but he is someone I experienced as modest and open, a prolific writer who is very much on top of the issues. To me, Andrew Ross has been a role model of how to reconcile the world of High Theory with the down-to-earth work within social movements, a tension that I have been struggling with since the late seventies. Reading Andrew Ross makes you wonder why it is so hard to be an organic intellectual after all, as Antonio Gramsci once described it, a figure who is light-years away from the abstract universes of the Italian autonomous theorists such as Antonio Negri, Paolo Virno and Maurizio Lazzarato. No esoteric knowledge of Spinoza, Tarde or Deleuze is necessary to enjoy Ross. We do not read about exploitation in a moralistic manner but instead obtain a deeper understanding of the complex contradictions that the global work force has to deal with.

Australian post-doctoral researcher Melissa Gregg, whose book *Cultural Studies'* Affective Voices deals with the history of (Anglo-Saxon) cultural studies, includes a chapter about Andrew Ross. Gregg describes Ross as an 'intellectual arbiter between the academic politics of cultural studies and the activist imperatives of the progressive Left'. His 'academic activism' describes the 'human cost of economic growth,' thereby counterbalancing the 'neglect of material labour conditions'.[1] Instead of fiddling around with concepts and terminologies, Ross describes the 'human face of economics', much like Barbara Ehrenreich's investigative journalism, reaching into the category of airport non-fiction. The suspicious attitude towards appropriate payment is the key obstacle to an effective labour-orientated politics among Leftist intellectuals. In the case of the no collar culture, 'not only did the culture of willing overwork severely haemorrhage any chance of a sustainable industry, but investment in the cult of creativity disassociated no collar work from the manual labour involved in producing the tools of their craft'. In the following email exchange with Ross, we focused on the topics of research methodology and styles of writing, the role of ethnography, the question of creative labour and strategies of activism.

1. Melissa Gregg, *Cultural Studies' Affective Voices*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. pp. 106-127.

GEERT LOVINK: Suppose you were to write a booklet and we would entitle it 'Letter to a Young Researcher', how would you approach this? Could you tell us something about your method? Is it fair enough to say that you moved on from General Theory to case studies? Clearly, students need to know about both, but I have the feeling that theory is a dead-end street these days and that your research methodology offers an alternative.

ANDREW ROSS: Since I came of age, intellectually and politically, in the 1970s, I was a paid-up member of the Theory Generation, dutifully participating in Lacan and Althusser reading groups, and the like. But even then, I was rarely comfortable with the hothouse climate around what you call General Theory. Even then, I was learning that theory should be approached as simply a way of getting from A to B. It wasn't the only way to get from A to B, nor was it always the best way, and it was easy to get stuck en route with all your mental wheels spinning in the air. Indeed, I saw some of the best minds of my generation – to paraphrase Allen Ginsberg – vanish down that path. I'm glad I survived. I've been in recovery for two decades now.

When it comes to method – and this is what I tell my graduate students – it's more important to know what A and B are. Once you have a good sense of your object and the questions you want to answer, then you are in a position to choose your methods – i.e. how to get from A to B. In most disciplines, the method comes first, and is then applied to an object. For us, it's the other way around. The questions and the goals determine the methods. So, how will I answer those questions? Do I need to do interviews, or conduct surveys? Do I need to visit sites, or consult archives? What kind of reading do I need to do, and what is the likely audience? In the program where I teach, our students are trained in more than one method – ethnography, historical inquiry, textual analysis, data analysis – and are encouraged to be flexible in their application. They are much more likely to think of themselves as investigators, undertaking case studies, rather than being motivated by general theoretical problems.

Approaching research in this manner, it's more likely that they will find their own voice, or at least a voice that is uniquely theirs, rather than aping the consensus voice of their discipline, or whatever influential master thinker they have been weaned on. It took me several years to shake off my own academic training and find a voice that I felt was my own and I had to go well outside my comfort zone to achieve anything. So my advice to young researchers is tailored to the goal of getting them to that point much earlier than I did.

GL: Does your move from cultural studies to a new form of labour sociology also imply a critique of the way in which cultural studies has been bogged down in studying popular culture and mainstream products and services? In my experience 'cultural studies' has not globalised but can increasingly be identified as an Ango-Saxon project that has not broadened its reference system outside of the United Kingdom, United States and Australia. It may have adopted 'French theory', but in France itself cultural studies is nowhere to be seen. Now, there is nothing wrong with cultural specificity and the political heritage of research schools, knowledge is always embedded in particular generations and experiences of a small group of players. I know there are a zillion debates about the 'future of cultural studies', but could you nonetheless say something about this?

AR: To answer that question, I'd have to touch on a debate about why labour was not more central to cultural studies during its heyday. Indeed, some would say that a conscious effort was made to sideline attention to labour. This is quite understandable if you consider how the British Left, for example, was dominated by a labourist mentality in the 1960s and 1970s. It was necessary to get out from under the heavy weight of that mindset to appreciate that other things mattered politically. I myself grew up in the industrial belt of Scotland, where labourism was the air that you breathed, and so the discovery of cultural politics – the fact that you could even think about culture politically – came as a revelation. Naturally, there was a certain degree of overcompensation involved in the cultural turn. Folks just kept going further and further from the labour fold, arguing that this or that sector of daily life 'mattered' in ever more ingenious permutations of the feminist axiom that 'the personal is the political.' The result was that the field of political economy was abandoned, to some extent, to the hardliners, who no longer had to listen to the feminists, queers, cultural radicals, and ethnic identity advocates, and polarisation set in between the cultural justice and the economic justice camps. The legacy of that split is still with us – indeed it has been played out in every US election since the early 1990s. There's no doubt it has hampered the Left, but the division has been exploited much more adroitly by the Right.

While you may be right about the limited geographical footprint of cultural studies as an academic discipline, I don't think these larger political conflicts are confined to the Anglophone countries. They are expressed in different ways in other societies – usually through the repressive filter of religion or statism or ethnic sectarianism – and are sometimes harder to discern, but they are no less relevant.

In all of the hand wringing about polarisation, what's neglected is the work that was done – it was never really abandoned – and is still being done to reconnect these two wings of social justice. I suppose that's where I would place my own energies from the late 80s onwards, in areas of research – science and technology, and environmentalism in books like *Strange Weather, The Chicago Gangster Theory of Life, and Real Love* – that were not at all central at the time to the main currents of cultural studies. By the mid-1990s, I was being drawn into labour and urban research, both of which have dictated the bulk of my research and activism for the last decade or so. However, I'm not sure I would have gone in that direction if it hadn't been for cultural studies. For example, it was my interest in fashion consumption that took me into the anti-sweatshop movement and led to the publication of *No Sweat* and *Low Pay, High Profile*, and it was an interest in ecological politics that motivated my fieldwork on the New Urbanist movement in *The Celebration Chronicles*.

One area where all these currents re-converge is in the emergent policy about the 'creative economy'. Here is a sector that has received a massive amount of attention from government agencies and national economic managers desperate for a development paradigm that will allow them to compete or play catch-up in the high-skill, knowledge economy. And it's all about cultural workers, once seen as completely marginal to the forces of production and now increasingly central as a source of potential economic value. Now there does exist an extensive body of cultural studies scholarship, initiated by Tony Bennett in the mid-1990s, that engaged directly with cultural policy-making, but it's only recently that this tendency has moved centre-stage, and will, I predict, occupy more and more of the field. In many ways, it's an angle that was missing from Raymond Williams' distinction between two conceptions of culture: one based on the high/low value hierarchy, and the

other, more anthropological understanding of culture as 'way of life'. Neither made much room for culture as a livelihood, or cultural work as labour. In Williams's day, it would have taken a remarkable act of social foresight to imagine that artists, writers, and designers would come to be seen, in the governmental imagination, as model entrepreneurs for the new economy, and yet here we are.

Let me give you an instructive example. Back in the mid-1990s, after the leadership of the AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organisations) changed hands, I became involved in an organisation called Scholars, Artists, and Writers for Social Justice (SAWSJ). It was founded, mostly by labour historians, in recognition of the hope that the US labour's movement's era of complicity in the Cold War was over, and that a rapprochement with intellectuals was now possible. Most of the activities of SAWSJ were dedicated to supporting the industrial and service unions. This was entirely laudable, but it often meant ignoring the labour issues in our own backyard of the knowledge economies. Even at that time, it was difficult to get an audience for the view that we were not only in denial about this, and that we should be alerting the labour movement to the opportunities and dangers posed by the burgeoning culture/creative/knowledge industries (I wrote an essay 'The Mental Labour Problem', which was intended to address this denial). Not long after, managers and ideologues of the New Economy dramatically reshaped perceptions about how value could be generated, and the labour movement was left sucking dust. New media employees helped to glamorise the 24/7 workweek, design, art, architecture, and custom craft were embraced as engines for boosting property values in the real estate boom, the amateur (MyCreativity) ethic became the basis for a whole new discount mode of production that exploited the cult of attention as a cheap labour supply, and much, much, more along these lines.

The only development along these lines that has really attracted trade unions is in academic organising, and largely because it offers a fairly traditional opportunity to recruit new members. For sure, there are individual unionists, mostly in sectors like telecommunications, who are keeping up with changes in the mode of production, but the labour movement, as a whole, and not just in the US, may have relinquished the short-term opportunity to fight over the terms of the knowledge economy. Knowledge and cultural workers are accustomed to think of themselves as in the vanguard, and it will probably take a generation of 'proletarianisation' and another big recession to persuade them that collective organising is in their long-term interest. But that's no reason not to build a movement of ideas and actions that will be serviceable, when that moment comes.

GL: I read your *Low Pay, High Profile* as a search for new strategies in activism. In your 'academic activism', you leave behind the disempowering reform-or-revolution choice and try to imagine being part of a movement where the 'global push for fair labour' can be taken. Here in Amsterdam I have seen how the Clean Clothes Campaign is doing this. Is it fair to say that you practice a form of 'radical pragmatism'? Is there a politics of immersion? Many of us fear deep engagement and try to keep the appropriation machines at a safe distance. How do you gain the confidence to survive Disney's Celebration, the dotcom madness, and Chinese IT culture?

AR: 'Intellectual activism' is a term we use among our students. We vastly prefer it to 'public intellectual' because there are very few slots available on the public media spectrum at any one time, and they are usually reserved for gatekeepers or single-issue political advocates. For sure, activists and intellectuals function in a different kind of temporality. The activist needs something to happen tomorrow, the intellectual needs a slower germination of ideas. But you can't have movement of action without a movement of ideas, and the challenge really is to try to synchronise your thought with what's happening on the ground. If you work closely, as a scholar, with a justice movement, then requests will invariably be made to provide tailor-made research to further the activist cause. In some instances, that will be straightforward, in others it won't be so easy to provide because activists generally don't want complexity, they need black and white, and critical scholars are not trained to think in black and white. I have certainly encountered this dilemma in my own labour-oriented work, in the anti-sweatshop movement, for example, where at times it seems that the only desirable research is that which corroborates the existence of corporate atrocities. But I didn't experience it as a fear of 'deep engagement' as you suggest, nor as a fear of indulging in intellectual dishonesty.

Take the work I did in the China field as an example. I had been a China-watcher for a long time, but was clearly not a sinologist. Nonetheless, I figured that I may be able to produce some useful research (that a sinologist, bound by disciplinary convention, perhaps could not) by going there. So, too, since the AFL-CIO refuses to have any official relationship with the China labour federation, there was a real research gap for labour scholars and educators to fill. I was familiar with all the literature on the labour-intensive export factories of South China, but I could find very little about the Yangtze Delta workplaces, where the lion's share of high-tech FDI was beginning to flow, and most of it higher up the technology curve than in South China. At that time, there was a wave of anxiety about the outsourcing of high-wage, high-skill jobs to China and India, but very little was known about the conditions, aspirations, and opinions of the new offshore workforce employees. So I enrolled in Mandarin classes for a year to give me some language mobility and took my family off to Shanghai to see what I could find. A trained sinologist would probably not have started out interviewing where I did – at the American Chamber of Commerce, in the belly of the beast, as it were – but in fact the contacts I made there helped open doors to many of the factory and office workplaces where I did my research. Nor do I think that a sinologist would have followed some of the leads I did since they were often about explicitly transnational flows of capital, knowledge, technology, personnel, and customs.

In fact, in the year's worth of field work I did in the Yangtze Delta industrial parks, I didn't come across a single researcher doing anything in any of the areas I myself was pursuing – documenting the regional labour market, workplace conditions, the nature and character of the investments, the rate of technology transfer and knowledge transfer into the industrial parks, the cultural conflicts between young Chinese engineers and their foreign managers, etc. Now this is the single biggest regional economy in China, and the most high-tech, so it was astonishing to find no one else in the field. Even the foreign journalists I got to know there rarely left their offices in Shanghai – a convention, no doubt, that goes back to pre-Liberation days.

So, to get back to the gist of your question, I think the 'confidence' you refer to has more to do with not being bound by the conventions of a discipline or a profession that tends to dictate the conduct of scholars, activists, and journalists much more than we imagine. I became an agnostic in that regard a long time ago. The downside of this is that you have no idea who your audience will be, or that you will indeed have an audience. For example,

the most detailed early review of my China book was by George Gilder, in his newsletter for high-tech investors. He mined it for information about the performance of Chinese tech companies that would be especially useful to his readers. Not exactly the kind of audience I had anticipated!

GL: How important is storytelling in your work and is it something that we, cultural theorists, can learn? I find this skill more difficult to practice, and teach, compared to the relatively easy act of summarising the theory of canon of the day, now Agamben and Badiou, in the past Derrida and Foucault, and Althusser and Gramsci in the early 1980s. I see your recent work in the critical anthropology tradition. Action research also had a particular mix of observation and active participation. Is ethnography something we should look into or do we then again run the risk of turning it into a theory religion?

AR: You are right, it is not easy to teach, and largely because it is so experiential. I was trained first as a textual analyst, and then as a theorist, so I developed skills as a close reader and a conceptual thinker. What this meant was that I was a pretty bad listener. I grew up in a storytelling, working class culture in Scotland, but my academic training had taught me to distrust all of that, in fact, to distrust language tout court. Over time, and as I developed my own ethnographic techniques, I had to re-learn how to listen to other people's stories, and to be accountable to these people when I used their stories for my own purposes. So listening was important. As for telling the stories, the genre of investigative journalism has probably been as useful to me as critical anthropology. When anthropologists are in the field, they are often competing with journalists (though not on deadlines) but they rarely acknowledge journalistic narrative. In the full-length ethnographies I have done – in new media companies, in Celebration, and in China – I was competing directly with other journalists for stories insofar as my informants were often used to talking to journalists. Being a scholar was an advantage in those situations because people trust you more with their stories and confidence.

As for ethnography becoming a religion, I don't see that happening. To go back to what I said at the outset, it's a method for getting from A to B, but it's not the only way, nor is it always the best way. You have to choose your methods based on your goals. These days, ethnography feels more honest to me than the kind of armchair criticism that I started out doing in the 1980s, but I still do certain kinds of writing that don't entail getting out of my seat.

GL: Activist campaigning is becoming more and more associated with 'tactical media', social networking and so on. Is this justified? Do you think that a better understanding of Web 2.0 and new media would alter activism as is often claimed? As you know my work is associated with the 'tactical media' term but I have often made clear that (new) media cannot create social movements out of nothing. A more effective way of using cell phones and the Net is not in itself a guarantee that the real existing discontent in global capitalism will flip into organised resistance or even protest.

AR: I agree, these days it is necessary but not sufficient for social movements to be tech savvy. The tactics for outwitting the oppressor have to be continually updated, and that is the job of movement tacticians, but the 'sufficient conditions' for change haven't altered appreciably. You need a critical mass of popular sentiment, you need a significant fraction of elites to break with their class station and cross over, and you need an effective formula for capturing media attention. These days, most social justice movements have about six or seven years to make their mark before a) activists burn out or branch off, b) the formula exhausts its efficacy, c) the enemy co-opts public attention. The anti-sweatshop movement was a good example; the formula of shaming the brand was like a narcotic for the media, 'Nike sweatshops' became a household phrase, and elite guilt was appropriately mobilised. It took the lavishly funded efforts of 'corporate social responsibility' several years to convince the public that the big garment companies had somehow 'fixed' the problem and that it was OK to go out and buy Gap clothing again. In the interim, I think we achieved quite a lot. At the very least, the trading rules of the global economy are now contested in the public eye, rather than written in secret by unelected WTO officials, and consciousness-raising about sweatshops contributed, in no small part, to that shift in the rules of play.

That said, there is one key area of activism in which tactical media has become particularly important, and that is in the copyfight over intellectual property. The corporate rush to proprietise knowledge is surely one of the biggest acts of theft in centuries, and new media activists have a frontline role to play, because the tactical tools they use are, more often than not, the technologies at play in the property grab. Disciplining rogue users (for the downloading of unauthorised content) is just the most highly publicised face of the massive effort of capital-owners to administer an effective division of labour within the knowledge industries. That effort increasingly depends upon control over not only the authorised use of technologies, but also the IP inside employee's heads. But it's not just the high-tech employees that are suspect. The new property grabbers are in a running battle with the ever-proficient hackers of the technocratic fraternity, and now they have to contend with a small army of legally-minded and tech-savvy advocates of the information commons.

As I see it, this contest is very much an elite 'copyfight' between capital-owner monopolists and the labour aristocracy of the digitariat (a dominated fraction of the dominant class, as Pierre Bourdieu once described intellectuals) struggling to preserve and extend their high-skill interests. The history of shareware and its maturation into free software/open source can be seen as the narrative of a distinctive class fraction – a thwarted technocratic elite whose libertarian worldview butts up against the established proprietary interests of capital-owners. While they see their knowledge and expertise generating wealth, they chafe at their lack of control over the property assets. Their willingness to work against the proprietary IP regime is directly linked to their entrepreneurial-artisanal instincts, but, more importantly, it is a power-test of their capacity to act upon the world. The class traitors in their midst are engineer innovators who go over to the dark Gatesian side of IP monopoly enforcement. So, too, the mutualist ethos of the FLOSS communities is very much underpinned by the confidence of members that their expertise will keep them on the upside of the technology curve that protects the best and brightest from proletarianisation.

What I don't see is all that much attention to those less-skilled who are further down the entitlement hierarchy, who are not direct participants in this power struggle, and whose prospects in the chain of production do not extend to the profile of the master-craftsman straining at the corporate leash. They are much more distant from the rewards of authorship, and are less likely to feel personally disrespected when IP rights are expropriated

from above. So how do the interests of these below-the-line workers get represented in the copyfight? I'd like to see new media tacticians think more about sustainable income models for everyone rather than focus primarily on the livelihoods of creatives or high-skill knowledge workers.

GL: Surprisingly, in the new media sector, young professionals are earning less and less while their working conditions aren't that great either. This is one of the outcomes of Rosalind Gill and Danielle van Diemen's case study on the Amsterdam web designers.[2] It's important here to add another level that sufficiently describes the freedom and subjectivity of the actors involved. People are passionate about the challenges that new media create. In what ways could we describe such a paradoxical situation?

AR: The Amsterdam study is interesting, though these results don't surprise me. The labour market for new media employees was at its rosiest at the height of the New Economy years – there was a limited labour supply, the new entrants had a monopoly on skills and applied knowledge, and demand for them was fierce. Under normal circumstances, conditions and pay scales could be expected to deteriorate from that high. But the impact of outsourcing, since 2001, has accelerated that decline, if not in terms of actual jobs transferred overseas, then as a result of the general climate of insecurity that has been ushered into white collar and no collar workplaces by the imminent threat of 'knowledge transfer'. The house motto of Razorfish in the boom years used to be 'whatever can be digital, will be'. It was by no means easy to predict what came to pass all too quickly as 'whatever can be outsourced, will be'. For sure, the offshore transfers started out in coding and in the more routine sectors, but they moved up into design and web development fairly rapidly. As far as jobs in the global North goes, there's no reason not to expect that the situation will soon resemble the garment industry, with the most specialised, custom work remaining onshore, perhaps along with a less formal sector of sweated or intern work needed for fast turnaround. Everything else will be done overseas.

As for on-the-job passion and enthusiasm, it's an integral part of the job profile, attested to through thick and thin. It was this devotion that got me interested in studying new media workplaces in the first place, since it's quite uncommon, in the history of modern work, to hear employees express this kind of zeal around their jobs. My study, in *No-Collar*, turned into an effort to describe and diagnose the conditions of 'self-exploitation' that resulted. One of my informants put it most succinctly when she said she was given 'work that you just couldn't help doing', and in a workplace from which the very last drops of alienation had been squeezed. Nowadays, every knowledge industry employer recognises the benefits of this kind of ideal employee, who is turned on by the challenge of risk, accustomed to sacrifice (long hours) in pursuit of gratification, and willing to trade his or her most free time and free thoughts in return for the gifts of mobility and autonomy. Folks in the arts have long lived with this sacrificial mentality, and know a thing or two about the insecurity associated with it. So, too, gearheads, from the days of ham radio onwards, are familiar

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2.   Rosalind Gill, *Technobohemians or the New Cybertariat? New Media Work in Amsterdam a Decade After the Web*, Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, Network Notebook No. 1, 2007, http://www.networkcultures.org/networknotebooks.

with the devotional cults that a machine can inspire. But neither cohort has been prepared for the consequences wrought by the rapid industrialisation of their respective crafts and hobbies. The effort to industrialise custom creativity is a primary goal of capitalist production today, right now.

I suppose I would say the same of the academic sector, with the proviso that academics are so fond of their siege mentality that they can only see their workplaces being invaded by corporate logic or industrial process. They don't see that the traffic goes in both directions, they know so little about the corporate world that they can't see how the mentality and customs of academic life are being transplanted into knowledge firms, whose research is increasingly conducted along similar lines. The truth of the matter is we are living through the formative stages of a mode of production marked by a quasi-convergence of the academy and the knowledge corporation. Neither is what it used to be; both are mutating into new species that share and trade many characteristics, and these changes are part and parcel of the economic environment in which they function.

GL: You touched on the 'creative economy'. As you know, we've been dealing with this in the MyCreativity project that the Institute of Network Cultures in Amsterdam co-initiated. What should the critical research in this field look into? There is a call to go beyond the hype bashing and look into the labour precarity issue. Still, the consensus-driven hegemony of business consultants seems strong and uncontested. What work could be done to open the field and make space for other voices and practices? Are there ways to obtain cultural hegemony these days?

AR: That's a good question, and should be at the heart of anyone interested in a sustainable job economy. It's not all that productive to scoff at policy initiatives that might just be capable of generating a better deal for creative labour. As I see it, critical research ought to be doing what governments are not, and that is coming up with qualitative profiles of what a 'good' creative job should look like, based on ethnographic methods. Currently, all we have are productivity and GDP statistics, on the government side, and, on the other side, a cumulative pile of scepticism based on the well-known perils of precarity that afflict creative work, dating back to the rise of culture markets in the late eighteenth century. I have yet to see a 'mapping' of the creative sector that includes factors relating to the quality of work life. It wasn't that long ago, in the 1970s, in response to the so-called 'revolt against work', that governments actively championed 'quality of work life'. Of course, corporations came up with their own versions of 'innovative' alternatives to the humdrum routines of standard industrial employment, but the hunger for mentally challenging work in a secure workplace has under-girded and outlived all the management fads that followed.

For those with an appetite for a dialogue with the policy-makers, I'd say that the qualitative research about good jobs is a plausible way to go (and I'm talking about fully-loaded jobs, not simply work opportunities). It wouldn't take all that much to come up with some proposals for guidelines, if not outright guarantees, about income and security, based on that kind of research. The goal would be to offer a sustainable alternative to the IP jackpot economy that currently drives the consultants' worldview. I'm not sure if the result would be what you would call cultural hegemony, but if the challenge to existing hegemony is going to draw on labour power in any way then it's in our interest to ensure that there will be

a robust employment sector there to provide heft and volume to these challenges. Clearly, the strategies for organising have to be re-thought in ever more ingenious ways, but there are no good substitutes for organising, as far as I can see. Tactics like culture jamming or brand busting have their uses, and they have served as appropriate tools, but you can't give up on the power of numbers.

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MYCREATIVITY
CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL CREATIVE INDUSTRIES RESEARCH

Date	16-18 November, 2006
Venue	PostCS 11, Post CS Building, Amsterdam http://www.ilove11.nl
Organisation	Institute of Network Cultures, HvA Interactive Media, and Centre for Media Research, University of Ulster
Concept	Geert Lovink & Ned Rossiter
Contact	Shirley Niemans, shirley(at)networkcultures.org
Mailing List	http://idash.org/mailman/listinfo/my-ci

Audio & video documentation available at the INC Media Archive

On November 16-18, 2006 the Institute of Network Cultures and the Centre for Media Research, University of Ulster will organise MyCreativity, a Convention on International Creative Industries research. MyCreativity is a two-day conference that intends to bring the trends and tendencies around the Creative Industries into critical question. It seeks to address the local, intra-regional and trans-national variations that constitute international creative industries as an uneven field of actors, interests and conditions. The conference explores a range of key topics that, in the majority of cases, remain invisible to both academic research and policy-making in the creative industries.

Overall, the conference adopts a comparative focus in order to illuminate the variability of international creative industries. Such an approach enables new questions to be asked about the mutually constitutive tensions between the forces, practices, histories and policies that define creative production, distribution and organisation within an era of information economies and network cultures.

MyCreativity will take place at PostCS 11 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Introduction
Emerging out of Blair's Britain in the late 90s as an antidote to post-industrial unemployment, early creative industries discourse was notable for a promotional hype characteristic of the dot. com era in the US. Over the past 3-5 years creative industries has undergone a process of internationalisation and become a permanent fixture in the short-term interests that define government policy packages across the world. At the policy level, creative industries have managed to transcend the North-South divide that preoccupied research on the information economies and communication technologies for two decades. Today, one finds countries as diverse as Austria, Brazil, Singapore and New Zealand eagerly promoting the promise of exceptional economic growth rates of "culture" in its "immaterial" form. Governments in Hong Kong, Japan, Australia,

and the Netherlands have initiated creative industries policy platforms with remarkably similar assumptions and expectations given their very different cultural and political environments.

Despite the proliferation of the creative industries model, it remains hard to point to stories of actual "creative innovation", or to be even sure what this might mean. What is clear – if largely unacknowledged – is that investment in "creative clusters" effectively functions to encourage a corresponding boom in adjacent real estate markets. Here lies perhaps the core truth of the creative industries: the creative industries are a service industry, one in which state investment in "high culture" shifts to a form of welfarism for property developers. This smoke and mirrors trick is cleverly performed through a language of populist democracy that appeals to a range of political and business agents. What is more surprising is the extent to which this hype is seemingly embraced by those most vulnerable: namely, the content producers (designers, software inventors, artists, filmmakers, etc.) of creative information (brands, patents, copyrights).

Much research in the creative industries is highly speculative, interpretive and economistic, concerned with large-scale industry data rather than the network of formal and informal relations that make possible creative production. It is also usually produced quickly, with little detailed qualitative analysis of the structure of economic relationships creative industries firms operate in. In many cases, the policy discourses travel and are taken up without critical appraisal of distinctly local conditions.

In contrast to the homogeneity of creative industries at the policy level, there is much localised variation to be found in terms of the material factors that shape the development of creative industries projects. For example, a recent UNCTAD (2004) policy report on creative industries and development makes note of the "'precarious'" nature of employment for many within the creative industries. Such attention to the uneven and variable empirics of creative industries marks a departure from much of the hype that characterised earlier creative industries discourse, and also reflects the spread of this discourse out of highly developed market economies to ones where the private sector has a very different role.

This conference wishes to bring these trends and tendencies into critical question. It seeks to address the local, intra-regional and trans-national variations that constitute international creative industries as an uneven field of actors, interests and conditions. The conference explores a range of key topics that, in the majority of cases, remain invisible to both academic research and policy-making in the creative industries.

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Themes and Sessions
– Critique of Creative Industries
– Creative China

– Alternative Business and Organisational Models
– Economy of Design
– Creative Labour and Precarious Creativity
– Made in Europe: Dispatches from the City
– Economy of the Arts

Discussion List
This international conference will be used as a preliminary meeting of an emerging network of researchers that critically engage with the creative industries field. If you are interested to join the network mailing list, please register at: http://idash.org/mailman/listinfo/my-ci

Program
Thursday November 16 - opening night at Damrak 16
Friday November 17 - MyCreativity day 1 at PostCS11
Saturday November 18 - MyCreativity day 2 at PostCS11

Thursday November 16 Opening night
19:30 **Doors open**
20:00 **Start program** ends at 23:00.
Venue: Chequepoint, Damrak 16, Amsterdam. http://squat.net/chequepoint

20:00 - 21:30 **Screenings**
Imbattibili (2006, 06'00") by Chainworkers http://www.imbattibili.org

Talent Community: IO Design Office (2005, 19'00") by Lars Nilsson
http://www.larsnilsson.net
Talent Community is an ongoing documentary project about cultural entrepreneurs and free-lance collectives in Gothenburg, Sweden. It's about creativity and flow, about economic pressure and flexibility, about small town pride, about beautiful images, fun and the good life.

On Blood and Wings – A Study on the Dark Side of Cooperation (2006, 37'00")
by Yeti Films, Jörg Windszus and Christoph Spehr
On Blood and Wings is about the multitude battling capitalism. Giving a vampire twist to Marx in unveiling the crucial mechanism of capitalism ("to make more and more blood out of blood"), it shows the problems of the Multitude fighting the vampires to conquer capitalism towards a free and just society. The video is put together from found footage out of a dozen different vampire movies. A voice over reads the political text. The video is published under the GNU public license.

Hosts: Sabine Niederer and Shirley Niemans

21:30 **Music by My Little Soundsystem and Neef Rave**

Friday November 17 PostCS 11, Amsterdam
9:30 **Doors Open** coffee/tea

10:00 - 10:30 **Welcome & Introduction** by Geert Lovink and Ned Rossiter

10:30-12:30 **1. Critique of Creative Industries**
In this opening session we look at the main critical concepts for research into the creative industries. There is little empirical correspondence between the topography of "mapping documents" and "value-chains". The actual social networks and cultural flows that comprise the business activities and movement of finance capital, information and labour-power within creative economies remain under-researched. Too often the attempts to register the mutual production of economic and creative value are inherently reductive. Much creative industries discourse in recent years places an emphasis on the potential for creative clusters, hubs and precincts to develop cultural economies. The limits and political problematic of existing methodologies such as these are considerable. Complexity is not something that is easily accommodated in the genre of policy and the activities of what remain vertically integrated institutional settings. In undertaking a critique of the simplicity characteristic of much creative industries policy, this session explores the ways in which the experiences of workers, businesses and government and the structural formations of the creative industries can be better understood in terms of the complexity of information economies and network societies.
Presenters: Brian Holmes (Paris, France) Matteo Pasquinelli (London, United Kingdom)
Rosalind Gill (London, United Kingdom) and Danielle van Diemen (Amsterdam, Netherlands)
Chair: Geert Lovink (Amsterdam, Netherlands)

12:30 **Book Presentation Ned Rossiter**
Organized Networks: Media Theory, Creative Labour, New Institutions, Ned Rossiter
Paperback, sewn, 250 pages, Size: 16 X 23 cm
ISBN 90-5662-526-8 / 978-90-5662-526-9, € 23.50
Cover design: Leon Kranenburg & Loes Sikkes http://www.leon-loes.nl
Design: Studio Tint, Huug Schipper
First publication in the series 'Studies in Network Cultures,' published by NAi Publishers, Rotterdam and Institute of Network Cultures, Amsterdam.
Order online: https://www.naipublishers.nl/ordering.html

12.45-13:30 **Lunch**

13:30-15:00 **2. Creative China**
One is hard pressed to find comparative research that examines the inter-relations between geo-politics (regional trade agreements, national and multi-lateral policies on labour mobility, security and migration, etc.) and the peculiarities of intra-regional, trans-local and global cultural flows. For many, the creative industries are an exclusively Anglo-American and now European phenomenon. This session is interested in other experiences of the creative industries. Of particular interest is the case of China, which is rapidly emerging as

the dominant player in the global economy. How is "culture" being understood as an economic resource in China? Who are the key players and what sort of cross-sectoral relations are emerging? How are artists positioning themselves in political and economic senses? To what extent are external influences and architectures (e.g. WTO and IPRs) shaping the creative industries formation in China and the Asia-Pacific region?
Presenters: Michael Keane (Brisbane, Australia) Chaos Chen (Beijing, China)
Su Tong (Beijing, China)
Chair: Ned Rossiter (Ulster, Northern Ireland)

15:00-15:15 **Tea/coffee Break**

15:15-16:30 **3. Economy of Design**
One could speak of an equivalent "Clash of Civilisations" between the social and urban engineering desires of policy-makers and the actually existing practice of design. There is without doubt a discord between the "mapping documents" produced by government departments and academics across the world and the on-the-ground experiences of creative workers. These empirical exercises function as an abstract expression to be circulated amongst like-minded institutions seeking self-produced validation. But how are young designers making sense – if at all – of the policy directives being set out for them by government departments? What sort of languages, expressions, connections are made and circulated here? And what, if any, mobilising capacity do such relations enable with regard to a different form of organisational power?
Presenters: Rogerio Lira (Amsterdam, Netherlands) Annelys de Vet (Amsterdam, Netherlands) Teun Castelein and Mieke Gerritzen (Amsterdam, Netherlands)
Chair: Hendrik-Jan Grievink (Rotterdam, Netherlands)

16:30-18:00 **4. Alternative Business and Organisational Models**
For all the talk about culture as a generator of economic capital, the relation between the two continues to be neglected in much research and is difficult for many to understand. The economic models applied to cultural production in an era of broadcast media have proven to be inadequate to this period of networked media. And the follies of the dot.com boom were all too clear – though this is still ignored by many creative industries policy-makers and advocates. The search for alternative business models for the creative industries is currently at a fairly experimental stage, and there's little scope for transferability due to national and cultural contingencies (though this too is often ignored). How can creative work become sustainable, beyond state subsidies and hyped markets? Do we necessarily have to buy into intellectual property regimes? What is the economic reality of Creative Commons?
Presenters: Joost Smiers (Utrecht, Netherlands) Christoph Spehr (Bremen, Germany)
Danny Butt (Aotearoa, New Zealand) Paul Keller (Amsterdam, Netherlands)
Valery Alzaga (Hamburg, Germany)
Chair: Ned Rossiter (Ulster, Northern Ireland)

Saturday November 18 PostCS 11, Amsterdam
10:00 **Doors Open** coffee/tea

10:15-10:30 **Welcome & Introduction** by Geert Lovink and Ned Rossiter

10:30-12:00 **5. Creative Labour and Precarious Creativity**
Since the initial policy reports by the Blair government's Department of Communications, Media, and Sport (1998/2001), governments around the world have reproduced the key definition of creative industries as consisting of 'the generation and exploitation of intellectual property' (DCMS, 1998/2001). Key to this definition is the invisible subject of exploitation: namely, those engaged in the production of creative commodities and services. Such work is largely undertaken by young people, who have no experience or identification with traditional labour organisations, such as the trade union. The reasons for this are historical, generational and structural: young people do not have formal or cultural associations with vertically organised institutional settings in the way that workers did during the modern era of industrial capitalism. This session investigates the precarious conditions of labour and life within the creative industries.
Presenters: Marion von Osten (Vienna, Austria) David Hesmondhalgh (Milton Keynes, United Kingdom) Merijn Oudenampsen (Amsterdam, Netherlands)
Chair: Brian Holmes (Paris, France)

12:00-12:30 **Discussion** Donna Ghelfi (Geneva, Switzerland) and Joost Smiers (Utrecht, Netherlands)

12:30-13:30 **Lunch**

13:30-15:30 **6. Made in Europe Part I: Dispatches from the City**
Europe has long prided itself as the origin of (state funded and guided) creativity, but the romanticism that underpins this arrogance and institutional power is no longer viable in the context of economic globalisation. With its system of protectionist policies and welfare states still relatively intact, albeit considerably battered, countries across Europe have been comparatively slow to incorporate the UK-model of creative industries in their policy agendas. This is gradually changing and will no doubt continue to do so as the EU forces resistant states to conform to international policy trends and trade agreements. On the one hand, this session is interested in the distinctive cultural variations that define creative work across European countries. And then, on the other hand, the session is interested in the kinds of connections being made at social and economic levels between European countries. Is it still possible, beyond tourism, to speak of "Europe" in a global economy of trade and services?
Presenters: Monika Mokre and Elisabeth Mayerhofer (Vienna, Austria) Aphra Kerr (Maynooth, Ireland) Barbara Strebel (Basel, Switzerland) Matteo Pasquinelli (London, United Kingdom)
Chair: Geert Lovink (Amsterdam, Netherlands)

15:30-16:00 **Tea/coffee Break**

16:00-18:00 **7. Made in Europe Part II: Dispatches from the City**
Presenters: Anthony Davies (London, United Kingdom) Minna Tarkka (Helsinki, Finland) Sebastian Luetgert (Berlin, Germany) BAVO (Rotterdam, Netherlands)
Chair: Geert Lovink (Amsterdam, Netherlands)

18:00-19:00 **Drinks at PostCS 11**

SUMMARY OF THE 'ARTS & CREATIVE INDUSTRIES' DEBATE
MY-CREATIVITY MAILINGLIST, DECEMBER 2006

COMPILED BY GEERT LOVINK

The relation between visual arts and 'creative industries' is problematic, to say the least. On the MyCreativity list, which kicked off in May 2006, a debate took place in December following the MyCreativity meeting in Amsterdam. We have tried to summarize that debate here. It moved from the 'arts' topic to a more general debate on creative industries. If you would like to read the entire thread, please visit the online list archive.[1]

The discussion kicked off on December 26, 2006 with a remark by Andreas Jacobs (Amsterdam) who accused creative industries' advocates of 'pretending to create' whereas in fact all they are doing is 'producing goods for the global market, which has nothing to do with creating in an artistic way'. Referring to Walter Benjamin, Jacobs stated that in a time where everything is measured according to its economical value, all goods and services are becoming a commodity, be it the form of human relationships (prostitution), thoughts (intellectual property) or artistic expressions. As a result, 'the actual meaning of creativity loses its ground'.

Vito Campanelli from Naples then responded that 'if we focus on creative work within an industrial framework, art is miles away'. The aesthetic expression, what we commonly call 'art', starts where the commercial expression is finished. 'It's a basic equation: commercial expression is to communication what aesthetic expression is to art'. Enlisting various communication strategies, the creative industries mass-produce cultural objects. Creative work doesn't belong to the artistic field. When it delivers outstanding results it still remains within the realm of craft. 'Its own finality (to sell objects or ideologies) puts the creative work outside of the aesthetic expression'. The real artist, so Campanelli says, is never creative, he or she is just a medium between his or her visions and the world. We could say that the actual art system is aimed to sell artworks, but that's another matter.

Brian Holmes in Paris adds that for him the creative industries really is the discourse of 'alienation perfected'. 'Most people seem content to hand over their creative faculties to whoever will pay for them'. For Brian, the question is not 'that of recovering an old model of artistic genius. Rather, the point is how to invent a much better system of living together on this planet, and along with it, all kinds of ways of disrupting precisely the "systemic" character that every rational and administrative order has. There can be an ethics which is inseparable from art, and yet does not destroy it either'.

Octavi Comeron asks if others also have the impression that 'the massive use of the idea of creativity in the discourses of creative industries is anything else than a branding strategy?' What is the aura of an artwork other than 'added value'? 'Could someone tell a

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1.   http://idash.org/pipermail/my-ci/2006-December/thread.html.

reason to use "creativity" instead of "production" to talk about the kind of labour we do both in art and creative industry?'

Vito Campanelli reminds us that we should see aesthetics as a powerful answer to the violence of mass communication. The goal of mass communication, indeed, it's always the dissipation of any content. 'The only alternative to the effects of mass communication is the return to an aesthetic feeling of things, a kind of aesthetics not ideological but rather active (e.g. Adorno), a kind of aesthetics able to bring again into the society and into the culture, feelings such as the economic unconcern (rather an interest-unconcerned), the discretion, the moderation, the taste for the challenge, the witticism, the seduction'. We can debate if this attempt to return to an aesthetic dimension of things could really shake the foundations of the monolithic 'culture factory'. Vito: 'I don't have any problem to admit that, nowadays, most of the artists are involved in the creative industries'. However, 'when they design things that are directed to the market, or rather when they design things that require a communications strategy, a marketing plan, they simply are not making art'.

Monica Mokre in Vienna fully agrees that one has to be critical of corporate or policy language. 'But I am not so sure with regard to defining and re-defining if this means to find the "real meaning" of a term. Creativity is such an empty term. All you can say is that it is positively connotated (similar to "democracy"). In mainstream discourses it is used to sell a concept that is a special form of exploitation. The question would be how to use it in a more critical/progressive way or whether one should avoid the expression all together. In my opinion "art" is also such a super sign that does not have a special value in itself. The highly problematic idea of artistic autonomy can sometimes be used to make art an instrument of critique and this is, in my view, the value of the term'.

For Brendan Howell creative industries feels like a pragmatic spin on McKenzie Wark's *A Hacker Manifesto*. 'It seems a sophisticated way of pitching the lifestyle of graphic designers as the new model for urban utopia. On bad days I feel like it's nothing more than the rhetorical patina that city politicians put on their conversion of rust-belt cities into condo-colonialism. These are my American perspectives and the American model of the "creative economy" has a lot to do with urban renewal and real estate development. Artists are often cynically seen as the shock troops of the Bourgeoisie. "Send in the Art Corps to pacify that crumbling neighborhood! They will stabilize property values so that we can finally get some decent coffee on the corner"'.

Monica Mokre agrees. 'You have, on the one hand, the artists acting as avant-garde real estate developers. On the other hand, the phrase "everybody is creative" becomes an order: "everybody has to be creative". Those who are not successful economically, do not find a job and are made responsible for their own situation. Thus, a democratic way of dealing with creativity (it is not the genius artist but rather collective creativity, networks, general intellect etc. that lead to creative achievements) leads to commercialisation and precarisation'.

Mark Deuze (Indiana) wonders why normative strategies are so important in this debate. 'In this young and emerging (and promising) field it is perhaps more important to let ideas run free rather than immediately try to establish a semi-formal hierarchy of which ideas, approaches or questions are more or less "better" or valid'. Mark's enthusiasm for the creative industries concept stems from the opportunities it raises to think across problematic boundaries, such as between work and meaning or between culture and economy.

'My interest in the work-styles of people in the media – who one week may be active on the set of a reality game show while the next project involves a documentary on global warming – if anything suggests that they are not necessarily "torn" between commerce and creativity – these notions are implied in one another, just as much as how marketing and advertising decisions are not necessarily "economic" or "market-driven", at least often not in the eyes of the creatives involved. Its a lot more messy than that (things generally seem to be)'.

Brian Holmes, responding to this statement of Mark Deuze, asks 'how to get beyond a situation where critique of realities like global warming is not so equivalent to a reality TV show that it just gets lost in the mix. The reason for being suspicious of the invocation "to be creative" is that it comes with exactly the proviso that forms the concept of CI: "for industry". This injunction to be creative for industry fits into a larger concept, generally called neoliberalism, which says: government can't solve problems, so everything should be delegated to private initiative, which clearly has some good sides to it: less bureaucracy, more autonomy. This again comes with a proviso: the initiative has to be profitable on a highly competitive market. What this can easily result in is a straitjacket tailored to fit exactly your measure: whatever you are good at will be inserted into a situation where your talent can become profitable'.

Brian continues: 'For those who observe that the democratic societies are slipping toward various forms of cultural regression, inequality, security panic and war, the profitability of the status quo looks like it comes at a very high price. The question is: what to do about it? What can we who work with ideas, images and media do about it? The thing about "being creative" is that it is also defined as the ultimate satisfaction. If I am creative everything must be alright. There is one further danger in creative industries: it asks expressive and intelligent people to become narcissistically blind to the ways the world is developing around them'.

For Mark Deuze creative industries opens up cans of worms as well as it creates possibilities and opportunities. 'As media are democratizing while at the same time becoming corporatized, this supposed "tension" can perhaps be addressed by across or beyond type concepts, rather than whip lashing emerging ideas back into paradigmatic straightjackets? If we are all so concerned about the precarious lives of people caught up in the creative economy maelstrom, actually listening to those at the forefront of these developments makes some kind of sense. And if we do, we will learn that – although there is much to be critical and skeptical about – the zombie categories of commerce/creativity or the "suits" and the "artists" are more problematic than the social problems they are supposed to unlock'.

Brian Holmes, in reply to Mark Deuze, agrees that zombie categories of suits and artists are not so useful. 'But the typical opposite excess of saying, since we are no longer talking about strict dualisms between commerce and creativity, then everything must be fine in the best of all possible worlds and all you have to do is move from a reality show to a global warming documentary and back again, and before you know it, voila, life will be great. Americans elected what's about as close to a fascist president as we've ever had, twice. This was done under a media system that has basically been run according to the ideas of "creative industry" long before the British ever codified those ideas into policy'.

Brian Holmes: 'What British policy wonks generally do, and I encourage you to look into a thing called "the new public management", is to repackage the way the American

economy works so that it can be adapted for use in more social democratic countries. Creative industries and the notion of the "creative class" that goes along so well with it, are pretty good descriptions of the media ecology we already have in the US, which has developed there since the 1980s, right in parallel to a number of other, rather obviously unwholesome developments. The point of these observations is not to say that we should go "back" to some Stalinist, state-controlled media system which certainly never existed in the USA. The point is to say that instituted spaces for the development of very important social critique, necessary for the maintenance of anything like democracy, have gradually disappeared under the management principles of neoliberalism which cuts every social function up into profit-making modules'.

In response to Brian Holmes, Mark Deuze talks about his own research: 'Brian, I would love to know how "expressive and intelligent" people respond to your observations. My students and I have sat down with approx. 600 media professionals (in film, TV, news, advertising, and games) in 5 countries (Netherlands, Finland, New Zealand, South Africa, and the US), and talked about these issue with them in terms of how they can claim agency in the process. Clearly everyone expresses concern about the bottom line, about profit margins and the pressure of market researchers making demands on their work. Yet a consistent narrative was a combination of professional arrogance ("I don't care what the client wants, I have a story to tell"), tactical production techniques ("I know how to play it so they will go with it'), and claims to editorial autonomy ("Yes, you must negotiate with many people and pressures, but it also opens up many new opportunities to do really amazing things"). Frankly, save a few I have not found "narcissistically blind" creative workers anywhere. Everybody is well aware of the forces you describe, and I find it more productive to train my students to be relatively autonomous and at the very least empowered participants in this global economy, rather than unemployed bystanders'.

Mark Deuze's closing remarks go like this: 'I am not skeptical about the critique of rampant consumerism and the destructive force of economical globalization – but I also refuse to be blind to its complexity and its potential for empowerment and agency. Kicking against zombie categories such as "the elite" or "neoliberalism" or "fascist presidents" seem less useful than a more nuanced analysis. I moved to the US because I find there are more alternative media and critical voices in public discourse there than in my native Netherlands where everybody seems to be subsidized to sleep and an equally questionable coalition government sanctions more hardships against immigrants and workers than the US administration'.

We close this summary with some impressive philosophical remarks, posted on January 3, 2007 by Andrew Murphie from Sydney, which we quote here at length. According to Andrew, the nature of work itself has to be problematised: 'If creative industries has a benefit for its proponents it is not just that creative labourers can talk the talk of established economics (as full of problems as this might be). The benefit of creative industries is that – by talking to talk – creative labourers might finally be able to align more of the "system" (what some of our students still call, appropriately enough "the man"), with their work. It is from this that economic benefits will flow, although creative industries is peculiar on this. Of course a central claim of CI is that the economic benefits are *already* flowing (that is, without the CI assemblage itself). So it is not just a matter of an existing economics but, more importantly, the increased benefits of systematic *recognition* (recognition by the system)

that will flow to the creative worker. This might relocate the economic benefits of creative labour (even more than without CI) towards creative workers'.

'This suggests that the economic benefits are just as often located in institutional forms of recognition rather than general commercial gain. One might suggest perhaps that it is these institutional economic forms that keep the creative industries industry itself going (that is, the industry that benefits from the creative industries promotion). This means that the creative industries industry/assemblage itself produces more of the "system" in a complex relation to the general economic system. And this is where labour comes in... The simple fact is that work is not as easily aligned with "the system" as seems to be assumed'.

'French psychoanalyst of work, Christophe Dejours, proposes a definition of work that is apposite here. For Dejours work is precisely the individual – and specifically embodied – suffering involved in making things work *despite* the system. Working thus means "bridging the gap between the prescriptive and concrete reality".[2] One could argue that CI only adds more systems. Creative industries make for more gaps between the prescriptive/abstract (the concept of creative industries itself as productive of systems, systemic variation) and concrete/embodied. This makes more work – more suffering in Dejours' sense – for the creative worker. Of course, as the system is also not as benevolent as is often assumed in creative industries discourse, the benefits of this suffering are highly dubious. This is before you get to the addition of specifically CI-flavoured systems of audit and performance measurements, etcetera... all perhaps with the obvious result of changing the nature of creative labour itself as it tries to bridge all these new gaps with all the systems involved. One obvious problem is the attempt, perhaps in part produced by the understandable but mistaken desire for recognition by the system, to constantly make creative labour more "visible" within the economy. Here again Dejour is relevant: "The essence of work does not belong to the visible world… what is evaluated can only correspond to what is visible (the materialized part of production) and what has no proportional relationship to real working"'.

'What I point to here is just as much about the position of the creative worker in relation to the discourses/practices of the creative industries' industry itself (that is, the industry which promotes creative industries as a concept producing culture according to certain dysfunctional norms), as it is about the position of the creative worker in relation to the general economy. It is a complex position, involving a creative worker's complex attempts at folding herself into the "system(s)", including trying to fit the systems of creative industries itself, along with new systems of audit, forces of compliance with creative industries, etc. The result is perhaps to be tied into the economy in a manner which is not intended or desirable'.

'This is not to reject "systems" or technologies as a whole – or to propose that we return a more idyllic past of labour. Bernard Stiegler's complex argument regarding différance, technics and work in a subtle and full critique of Heidegger on exactly this issue is relevant here. However, we must question the specific conjunctions of the technical systems (and creative industries is nothing if not an assemblage of technical systems) we are engaged with. Are they producing new forms of constraint? New assemblages to resist

2.   Christophe Dejours, 'Subjectivity, Work and Action', *Critical Horizons* 7.1 (2006): 45-62. All further references to Dejours are from this text.

social change? Resistance to exactly the kinds of remaking of forms of living that creative work might involve? Or are they producing new forms of sociality? If so, what kind? Is creative industries even producing satisfactory forms of recognition or does the conjunction of the two in CI's assemblage merely produce new forms of suffering?'

'I am not proposing that the *concept* of creative industries is inadequate and can therefore be mended, or that we must simply rethink the cognitive dimension of labour (re-conceptualising our work or seeing it in different cognitive terms – it is exactly in these terms that creative industries is not nearly as innocent as it seems to propose). Ned Rossiter has long provided a complex analysis of the ambiguities and subtleties of the reduction of creative work to cognitive regimes like intellectual property'.

'Dejours writes: "Intellectual work cannot be reduced to pure cognition. Rather, working goes first through the affective experience of suffering, the pathic, and there can be no suffering without a body to undergo it. This means that intelligence in work can never be reduced to subjectivity looming over the subject. Subjectivity is only experienced in the insurmountable singularity of an incarnation, a particular body, and a unique corporality". So it is the embodied specificity of the forces marshalled by the creative industries assemblage that has to be questioned – its concept is not just right or wrong but productive and we need to ask what creative industries is producing'.

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES WIKIPEDIA ENTRY
SEPTEMBER 25, 2007

Creative industries (or sometimes creative economy) refers to a set of interlocking industry sectors, and are often cited as being a growing part of the global economy. The creative industries are often defined as those that focus on creating and exploiting intellectual property products; such as the arts, films, games or fashion designs, or providing business-to-business creative services such as advertising.

Demarcation of the Sector
The UK Government Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) define the creative industries as:

> Those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property.[1]

The current DCMS definition recognises 11 creative sectors:
– Advertising
– Architecture
– Arts and Antique Markets (see also Restoration)
– Crafts
– Design (see also Communication Design)
– Designer Fashion
– Film, Video and Photography
– Software, Computer Games and Electronic Publishing
– Music and the Visual and Performing Arts
– Publishing
– Television and Radio

The DCMS list has been influential, and many other nations have formally adopted it. It has not, however, been immune from criticism. It has been argued that the division into sectors obscures a divide between lifestyle business, non-profits, and larger businesses, and between those who receive state subsidies (e.g. film) and those who do not (e.g. computer games). The inclusion of the antiques trade is often questioned, since it does not generally involve production except of reproductions and fakes. The inclusion of all computer services has also been questioned.

Some nations, such as Hong Kong, have preferred to shape their policy around a

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1.   Creative Industry Task Force: Mapping Document, DCMS (Department of Culture, Media and Sport) (1998/2001), London,
     http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Publications/archive_2001/ci_mapping_doc_2001.

tighter focus on copyright ownership in the value chain. They adopt the WIPO's classifi-
cations, which divide the creative industries up according to who owns the copyrights at
various stages during the production & distribution of creative content.

Others have suggested a distinction between those industries that are open to mass
production and distribution (film and video; videogames; broadcasting; publishing), and
those that are primarily craft-based and are meant to be consumed in a particular place
and moment (visual arts; performing arts; cultural heritage).

Predecessors and Comparators of the DCMS Method
The DCMS approach has antecedents in earlier, international, attempts to measure creative
activity, notably
– The Leading European Group (LEG)
– The Canadian Statistical Office
– UNESCO

How Creative Workers are Counted
The DCMS classifies enterprises and occupations as creative according to what the enter-
prise primarily produces, and what the worker primarily does. Thus, a company which pro-
duces records would be classified as belonging to the music industrial sector, and a worker
who plays piano would be classified as a musician.

The primary purpose of this is to quantify – for example, it can be used to count
the number of firms, and the number of workers, creatively employed in any given loca-
tion, and hence to identify places with particularly high concentrations of creative activi-
ties.

It leads to some complications which are not immediately obvious. For example, a
security guard working for a music company would be classified as a creative employee,
although not as creatively occupied.

The total number of creative employees is then calculated as the sum of:
– all workers employed in creative industries, whether or not creatively occupied (eg
  all musicians, security guards, cleaners, accountants, managers, etc working for a
  record company)
– all workers that are creatively occupied, and are not employed in creative industries
  (for example, a piano teacher in a school). This includes people whose second job is
  creative, for example somebody who does weekend gigs, writes books, or produces
  artwork in her spare time

Properties or Characteristics of Creative Industries
According to Richard Caves, creative industries are characterised by seven economic proper-
ties:
1. Nobody knows principle: Demand uncertainty exists because consumer reactions to
   a product are neither known beforehand, nor easily understood afterwards.
2. Art for art's sake: Workers care about originality, technical professional skill, harmony,
   etc. of creative goods and are willing to settle for lower wages than offered by 'hum-
   drum' jobs.
3. Motley crew principle: For relative complex creative products (e.g. films), the produc-

   tion requires diversely skilled inputs. Each skilled input must be present and perform
   at some minimum level to produce a valuable outcome.
4. Infinite variety: Products are differentiated by quality and by uniqueness: each prod-
   uct is a distinct combination of inputs leading to infinite variety options.
5. A list/B list: Skills are vertically differentiated. Artists are ranked on their skills, original-
   ity, and proficiency in creative processes and/or products. Small differences in skills
   and talent may yield huge differences in (financial) success.
6. Time flies: When coordinating complex projects with diversely skilled inputs, time is of
   the essence.
7. Ars longa: Some creative products have durability aspects that invoke copyright pro-
   tection, allowing a creator or performer to collect rents.[2]

The properties of Caves have been criticised for being too rigid.[3] Not all creative workers are
purely driven by 'art for art's sake'. The 'ars longa' property also holds for certain noncreative
products (i.e. licensed products). The 'time flies' property also holds for large construction
projects. Creative industries are therefore not unique, but they score generally higher on
these properties relative to non-creative industries.

Difference from the 'Cultural Industries'
There is often a question mark over the boundaries between creative industries and the
similar term of cultural industries. Cultural industries are best described as an adjunct-sector
of the creative industries, including activities such as: cultural tourism & heritage; museums
& libraries; sports & outdoor activities; through a variety of 'way of life' activities that arguably
range from local pet shows to a host of hobbyist concerns. The possible difference would thus
be that the cultural industries are more concerned about delivering other kinds of value to
society than simply monetary value, such as cultural wealth or social wealth.

The Creative Class
Some authors, such as the American Richard Florida, argue for a wider focus on the prod-
ucts of knowledge workers and judge the 'creative class' (his own term) to include nearly
all those offering professional knowledge-based services.

Difference from the 'Knowledge Industries'
At that point, the term begins to elide with knowledge economy and questions of intellectual
property ownership in general.

The Creative Class and Diversity
Florida's focus leads him to pay particular attention to the nature of the creative workforce. In
a study of why particular US cities such as San Francisco seem to attract creative producers,
Florida argues that high proportion of workers from the 'creative class' provide a key input to

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2. Richard E. Caves (2000). *Creative Industries: Contracts Between Art and Commerce*,
    Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000.
3. Ruth Towse, 'Book Review of Creative Industries', *Journal of Political Economy*
    110 (2002): 234-237.

creative production, which enterprises seek out. He seeks to establish, quantitatively, the importance of diversity and multiculturalism in the cities concerned, for example the existence of a significant public gay community, ethnic and religious variety, and tolerance.[4]

Economic Contribution

Globally, creative industries excluding software and general scientific research and development are said to have accounted for around 4% of the world's economic output in 1999, which is the last year for which comprehensive figures are currently available. Estimates of the output corresponding to scientific research and development suggest that an additional 4-9% might be attributable to the sector if its definition is extended to include such activities, though the figures vary significantly between different countries.

Taking the UK as an example, in the context of other sectors, the creative industries make a far more significant contribution to output than hospitality or utilities and deliver four times the output due to agriculture, fisheries and forestry. In terms of employment and depending on the definition of activities included, the sector is a major employer of between 4-6% of the UK's working population, though this is still significantly less than employment due to traditional areas of work such as retail and manufacturing.

Within the creative industries sector and again taking the UK as an example, the three largest sub-sectors are design, publishing and television/radio. Together these account for around 75% of revenues and 50% of employment.

The complex supply chains in the creative industries sometimes make it challenging to calculate accurate figures for the gross value added by each sub-sector. This is particularly the case for the service-focused sub-sectors such as advertising, whereas it is more straightforward in product-focused sub-sectors such as crafts. Not surprisingly, perhaps, competition in product-focused areas tends to be more intense with a tendency to drive the production end of the supply chain to become a commodity business.

There may be a tendency for publicly-funded creative industries development services to inaccurately estimate the number of creative businesses during the mapping process. There is also imprecision in nearly all tax code systems that determine a person's profession, since many creative people operate simultaneously in multiple roles and jobs. Both these factors mean that official statistics relating to the creative industries should be treated with caution.

Wider Role

As some first world countries struggle to compete in traditional markets such as Manufacturing, many now see the creative industries as a key component in a new knowledge economy, capable perhaps of delivering urban regeneration, often through initiatives linked to exploitation of cultural heritage that leads to increased tourism. It is often argued that, in future, the ideas and imagination of countries like the United Kingdom will be their greatest asset. Indeed, UK government figures reveal that the UK's creative in-

dustries account for over a million jobs and brought in £112.5 billion to the UK economy (DCMS Creative Industries Mapping Document 2001), although the data sets underlying these figures are open to question.

Alternative Definitions

A wide variety of definitions of the creative industries have been adopted as a growing number of national and international agencies have become aware of their economic significance.

Evolution of the DCMS Framework

An earlier DCMS definition (citation needed) provides for:
– Advertising
– Broadcast network talent
– Design
– Architectural Design
– Communication Design
– Designer Fashion
– Editorial Commentary Journalism
– Film and Video Industry
– Fine Art Illustration
– Game Development
– Handicraft
– Antiques Restoration Market
– Music Industry
– Performing Arts
– Publishing
– Software Development and Computer Services

The 2001 definition recognised 14 creative sectors:
– Advertising
– Architecture
– Arts and Antique Markets (see also Restoration)
– Crafts
– Design (see also Communication Design
– Designer Fashion
– Film and Video
– Interactive Leisure Software
– Music
– Performing Arts
– Publishing
– Software and Computer Services
– Television and Radio

More recent publications, for example the DCMS Creative Industries Statistical Estimates Statistical Bulletin, reduced this to 11 sectors:
– 'Film and Video' became 'Film, Video and Photography'

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4.   Richard Florida. *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*, New York: Basic Books, 2002.

–   'Music' and 'Performing Arts' were combined to form 'Music and the Visual and Per-
    forming Arts'
–   'Interactive Leisure Software' was combined with 'Computer Services' to form 'Soft-
    ware, Computer Games and Electronic Publishing'[5]

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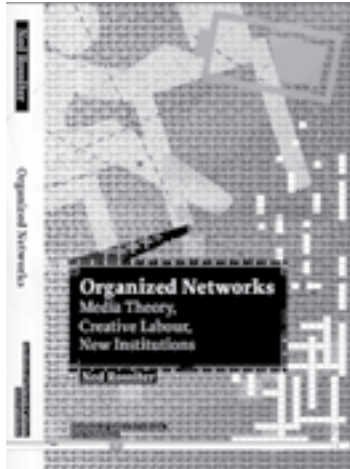
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EXTERNAL LINKS

Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia:
    http://www.creativeindustries.qut.edu.au/.
National Institute for Excellence in the Creative Industries™ (NIECI), UK:
    http://www.bangor.ac.uk/creative_industries.
Department of Culture, Media and Sport, UK: http://www.culture.gov.uk.

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5. Creative Industries Statistical Estimates Statistical Bulletin, DCMS (2006), London,
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Organized Networks
Media Theory, Creative Labour, New Institutions

Design: Studio Tint, Huug Schipper. Cover: Léon en Loes, Paperback, sewn, 250 pages, Size: 16 X 23 cm
English edition, ISBN 90-5662-526-8 / 978-90-5662-526-9, € 23.50
First publication in the series 'Studies in Network Cultures'

The celebration of network cultures as open, decentralized, and horizontal all too easily forgets the political dimensions of labour and life in informational times. Organized Networks sets out to destroy these myths by tracking the antagonisms that lurk within Internet governance debates, the exploitation of labour in the creative industries, and the aesthetics of global finance capital. Cutting across the fields of media theory, political philosophy, and cultural critique, Ned Rossiter diagnoses some of the key problematics facing network cultures today. Why have radical social-technical networks so often collapsed after the party? What are the key resources common to critical network cultures? And how might these create conditions for the invention of new platforms of organization and sustainability? These questions are central to the survival of networks in a post-dotcom era. Derived from research and experiences participating in network cultures, Rossiter unleashes a range of strategic concepts in order to explain and facilitate the current transformation of networks into autonomous political and cultural 'networks of networks'.

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ON THE CREATIVITY OF THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
SOME REFLECTIONS

SEBASTIAN OLMA

MyCreativity

Over the last decade or so, the notion of *creativity* has come to global prominence as an attribute sparking the imagination of neo-liberal elites and providing the respective policy projects (creative cities, creative clusters, creative economies, creative industries, etc.) with a token of sanctity. Of particular interest in this context is the notion of the creative industries that recently has become something of a new paradigm for policy-makers, investors, practitioners and academics alike. Feeling the need 'to bring trends and tendencies around the creative industries into critical question', Amsterdam's Institute for Network Cultures (INC) teamed up with the University of Ulster's Centre for Media Research for the *MyCreativity* conference in November 2006.[1] *MyCreativity* featured designers, activists, critical intellectuals, mainstream academics, art critics, curators and even a self-invited WIPO representative.[2] Its formula for success – and such it doubtlessly was – consisted in bringing together a variety of people who do not usually encounter one another, thus accomplishing a sort of cross-section of the theory and practice of the creative industries.

The present article takes up some of the contributions to and impressions of *MyCreativity* in order to reflect on questions regarding creativity, the creative industries, and their significance for contemporary capitalism.[3] An instructive starting point for such a reflection is provided by Ned Rossiter, one of the co-organisers of *MyCreativity*. His book *Organized Networks: Media Theory, Creative Labour, New Institutions* was launched at the Amsterdam event, thus providing a sort of academic blueprint for the conference. Rossiter links the rise of creative industries to the emergence of two policy trajectories. One was initiated by the Blair government's Department of Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) Task Force Mapping Document, which decreed a new post-industrial super-sector out of thirteen otherwise distinct sectors ranging from advertising, interactive leisure software to performing arts. The policy initiative around this document is seen by most creative industries researchers as the birth of the creative industries as we know them today. The other trajectory takes off

1. *MyCreativity: Convention on International Creative Industries Research*, Centre for Media Research, University of Ulster and the Institute of Network Cultures, Amsterdam, 16-18 November, 2006, http://www.networkcultures.org/mycreativity.
2. World Intellectual Property Organization, http://www.wipo.int.
3. For a more general review of *MyCreativity* see Monika Mokre, http://transform.eipcp.net/correspondence/1166104888.

from the 1995 WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), which inaugurated the juridical regime of control over the increasing informatisation of social relations.

This double foundation of creative industries policy makes clear that what is at stake with the global rise of the creative industries paradigm is more than simply the export of Blairite ideology. As the DCMS put it, the central goal of its initiative is 'the generation and exploitation of intellectual property'.[4] In other words, creative industries policy aims at a transformation of the structural conditions of production in such a way that 'creativity' (the reference here is to 'individual creativity, skill and talent') can be channelled into regimes of property. However, as Rossiter stresses, in order to address the political dimension of creative industries, the 'structural determination' resulting from these policy interventions has to be understood in combination with 'the conditions and experience of creative labour as it relates to intellectual property regimes'[5].

Focusing on policy reports alone does not get one very far in understanding the complexity of creative industries. Fortunately just a few presentations at *MyCreativity* adopted this type of approach. Often combined with a super-reductive notion of Foucauldian discourse analysis, all that this type of research accomplishes is the transformation of critical analysis into an exercise in recording statements found in policy reports, governmental websites and the like.

 A different understanding of 'structural determination' was suggested by Brian Holmes' brilliant analysis of the North Carolina research triangle park. Holmes essentially depicted creative industries practice as an exercise in intensified cluster building for the sake of generating industry-compatible creativity. As he argued, science parks of this kind can be seen as conveyor belts between universities and industry, accelerating the transformation of the former into production sites of copyrightable and patentable knowledge. Here, creativity is fed into a program of corporatisation, flexibilisation and militarisation. Anthony Davies' presentation in a certain sense extended Holmes' analysis by exploring the ongoing transformation of British universities into globally operating businesses.

Another structure determining creativity and its appropriation is, of course, the city. At *MyCreativity* the most interesting 'dispatches from the city' were presented by a number of activists/autonomous researchers. Drawing on the work of David Harvey as well as on his own research, Matteo Pasquinelli described Barcelona's ascent to prominence within the system of European cities as being based on an economy of rent. According to Pasquinelli, Barcelona's success can for no small part be attributed to a 'collective hallucination' of a creative city based on the steady accumulation of symbolic capital. This collective hallucination can be appropriated economically as it creates a sort of cultural monopoly for Barcelona translating into exploding real estate and housing prices. Merijn Oudenampsen presented a carefully constructed map of Amsterdam's 'extreme makeover', dissecting the seemingly consensual and balanced but in reality rather brutal reinvention of the city

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4. Creative Industry Task Force: Mapping Document, DCMS (Department of Culture, Media and
    Sport) (1998/2001), London,
    http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Publications/archive_2001/ci_mapping_doc_2001.
5. Ned Rossiter, *Organized Networks: Media Theory, Creative Labour, New Institutions*,
    Rotterdam: NAi Publishers, 2006, p. 26.

as an archipelago of creative islands, featuring – among other things – the open racism toward its Turkish and North African population for which the Netherlands have become notorious over the last few years. A very engaging report from Berlin was delivered by Sebastian Luetgert who tried to understand the current attraction of Berlin as a result of the city's permanent economic (fiscal) crisis. Berlin is essentially a city of failure. As Luetgert argued, it is such a condition of structural precarity that provides a fertile soil for appropriable social creativity. As Berlin's mayor puts it: 'Berlin is poor but sexy'. What these 'city reporters' agreed on was that Richard Florida's 'creative class'[6] is – if anything – 'a parasitic simulacrum of social creativity' (Pasquinelli). The question then becomes how one actually determines *real* or *authentic* social creativity, if it does exist at all.

Since the publication of *Empire*, post-autonomist thought has become highly influential as a version of Marxism that rejects the dialectic in favour of an analysis of indeed the real or authentic forces of creativity, conceptualising the latter in terms of the ontological primacy of *puissance, potentia, Vermögen*: a pre-individual, generically social power articulated in the dynamic historical subjectivity of the multitude. It is therefore not surprising that the question of creativity was most explicitly raised at *MyCreativity* by contributions from this intellectual tradition. Christoph Spehr for instance argued for a displacement of the analytic perspective of creative industries research from focussing on the creative industries per se to thinking creativity within the broader context of a shift in the capitalist mode of production. Recalling the *social factory* thesis developed by Mario Tronti in the early seventies, Spehr noted how the Fordist regime of production pulled the social into the factory, whereas post-Fordism distributes production throughout the entire social field. Similarly, Pasquinelli reproached critical creative industries research for having failed developing a proper understanding of what constitutes creativity in contemporary capitalism. He insisted on a 'Copernican turn' that needs to take place, shifting attention 'to autonomous labour and autonomous production'. In other words, in order to understand creative industries as a particular practice in the context of contemporary capitalism it might be instructive to analyse the living forces on which the entire capitalist machine runs.

Post-Autonomia and Creativity

If, on the one hand, post-autonomous thought represents a systematic attempt at grasping creativity while, on the other hand, the creative industries are a method of exploiting creativity, then the former should offer a potentially rich perspective for the exploration of the latter. Thus, before returning to an explicit discussion of the creative industries issue, a brief look at some post-autonomist approaches to creativity in contemporary capitalism is on order.

In *Empire*, Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt understand real creativity as something inherent to what they call the 'social bios', i.e. the living multiplicity of that constitutes the social.[7] Under contemporary conditions of real subsumption, social bios is held in a state of permanent *virtual* mobilisation by novel dispositifs of capital – such as indeed IP – that capture the increasingly *immaterial labour* of the informational economy. Immaterial labour in its info-industrial, symbolic analytic and affective aspects is seen by the authors as a more

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6. Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure,
    Community and Everyday Life*, New York: Basic Books, 2002.
7. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Empire, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000.

authentic, autonomous expression of 'social bios' than, say, industrial labour, since social interaction and cooperation are immanent to immaterial labour rather than being the result of capital's imposition. For Hardt and Negri, this signals a becoming ontological of exploitation: the *poietic* potential of 'social bios' is rendered effective in immaterial labour while the passage toward a creative *praxis* (in the Marxian sense of human being's capacity to constitute their genus in praxis) is perpetually blocked. Social life is in a state of permanent mobilisation but without the possibility of adequate actualisation. The immanent creative expression of the multitude is encouraged by the dispositifs of neoliberal capitalism as long as it remains outside the sphere of the political. What initially appears to be real creativity (*praxis*) on closer inspection turns out to be its perpetual postponement for the sake of capitalist *poiesis*. It takes Negri's particular Spinozian magic to appreciate this situation as a revolution taking place (*rivoluzione avvenuta*) that merely needs to be realised.[8]

A bit more ambivalent on the question of creativity and revolution is Paolo Virno, whose notion of virtuosity highlights capital's subsumption of two central aspects of *praxis*: on the one hand, virtuosity characterises an action that finds its purpose and fulfilment within itself. The virtuoso's product is her performance. On the other hand, it marks the intrinsically social dimension of contemporary labour. Virtuosity implies the presence of others, an audience or witness on which the virtuoso has to rely in the absence of a material end-product of her performance. Not unlike politics, virtuosity requires a 'publicly organised space'. Such a strange 'politicisation' of production is not something that happens arbitrarily. According to Virno, centuries of modern capitalism have transformed the contemporary multitude into a *bios xenikos*, i.e. a living multiplicity of strangers. He refers to the condition of 'not feeling at home'[9] as the permanent and irreversible situation of the contemporary multitude. It is in fact this ontological lack of home, he argues, that leads to the attempted escape of the multitude into the 'apotropaic' resources of language and cooperation, to speaking and sharing as generic capacities of the species. Virno's perhaps romantic reference to an ontological lack of home would thus suggest a field of practice such as the creative industries to be a sort of pseudo-shelter drawing the multitude's capacity to constitute itself as an open genus into a productive custody that is simultaneously a political black hole for Negri's *rivoluzione avvenuta*.

Finally, Maurizio Lazzarato understands creativity (he also refers to invention) in terms of an event that emerges as an expression of a 'possible world' in order to then become actualised in corporeal practice.[10] Such a 'creation of worlds' defines Lazzarato's understanding of the political which is modelled on the emergent forms of post-socialist movements whose logic is that of networked invention of new forms of social life rather than class struggle. Only such a perpetual exodus from existing forms of sociation (a sort of super-reflexive line of flight) has a chance of bringing about the adequate social articulation of the onto-

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8. Antonio Negri, *Subversive Spinoza: (Un)Contemporary Variations*, trans. Timothy Murphy, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004.

9. Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude*, trans. James Cascaito, Isabella Bertoletti and Andrea Casson, forw. Sylvére Lotringer, New York: Semiotext(e), 2004, p. 38.

10. Maurizio Lazzarato, *Les révolutions du capitalisme*, Paris: Les Empêcheurs de penser en rond, 2004.

logical *puissances de l'invention*,[11] that is, real creativity. The virtual source of ontologically adequate creativity Lazzarato refers to as 'inter-cerebral cooperation'. Contemporary capitalist production does, of course, tap this source but rather than allowing its proper expression, the *puissances* are transformed into *pseudo-events* or *pseudo-worlds*. Practices such as those taking place within the creative industries are understood as being productive of assemblages of expression that effectuate pseudo-worlds, i.e. corporately induced life worlds in need of specific products. Tools such as intellectual property and copyright are indispensable as they insert an artificial border through an otherwise immanent multiplicity of 'inter-cerebral cooperation'. Common goods that naturally evade the logic of capitalist valorisation because they escape the logic of scarcity (knowledge, language, art, science, etc.) can thus be subsumed under the axiomatics of capital. However, within the capital relation, creative activity must always be reduced to productive labour, i.e. an institution that destroys creativity or reduces it to the simulated creativity of capitalist *poiesis*. Hence, and here Lazzarato entertains an interesting relation to Virno, the paradox of contemporary capitalism is its reliance on something that is at once its foremost casualty: virtuosity, or, as Lazzarato calls it, social 'genius'.

Creativity, 'Creative Labour', Organisation

Post-autonomist theory thus allows us to recognise contemporary capitalism as a formidable force of anti-production with dispositifs such as the creative industries being in fact great destroyers of real (i.e. ontologically adequate) creativity. They are feverish attempts to plug into new sources of value that – although formally successful (the creative industries do generate profits) – remain inadequate with respect to the enormous potential inherent to the materiality of contemporary social life. The creative industries represent a particularly cunning dispositif in this context as they also represent an active intervention into the machine of expression in so far as they try to discursively confine creativity to a specific field of capitalist practice. Inserting post-autonomist thought into creative industries debates might help to counteract this tendency.

Rossiter's work on the creative industries is an attempt to critically draw on this tradition in order to make sense of creative industries practice. His analysis is predicated on the notion that what he calls 'creative labour' forms the constitutive outside of the creative industries. Now, this might sound trivial, but in fact, it is not. What Rossiter argues is not merely that creative industries research has to take into account 'the conditions and experience of creative labour' but rather that 'creative labour' provides a possible basis for an immanent and practical form of critique:

> In the case of the creative industries, the constitutive outside is a force of relations characterized by two key features: antagonism in the form of the exploitation of creative labour as it subsists within a juridico-political architecture of intellectual property regimes; and the affirmation of creative labour that holds the potential for self-organization in the form of networks.[12]

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11. Maurizio Lazzarato, *Puissances de l'Invention: La Psychologie économique de Gabriel Tarde contre l'Économie politique*, Paris: Les Empêcheurs de penser en rond, 2002.

12. Rossiter, *Organized Networks*, p. 32.

Rossiter here points to the political potential of 'creative labour' that he locates at the level of organisation. In order to appreciate this argument one needs to specify the post-autonomist argument about capitalism's ontological turn in terms of its organisational articulation. Neoliberalism's systematic disorganisation of production, Rossiter argues, represented also a departure from the transcendent rigidity of modern organisation. It is well known that Gilles Deleuze conceptualised such a change in organisational strategy in terms of a shift from *moulding* to *modulation*: what was previously arrested in the moulds of the confinement is now allowed to flow within the channels of more topological or process-like arrangements.[13] Instead of pre-emptively imposing a metric pattern of moulds on the creative forces, the neoliberal organisation of labour prefers modes of control that are able to flexibly modulate the creative process per se. As Foucault has shown in *La Naissance de la Biopolitique*, the logic of neoliberalism is to act not directly *on* but *around* the creative process of living labour.[14] Hence, neoliberalism's demand of super-human flexibility and dynamism, its reinvention of living labour in terms of a perpetually self-improving 'human capital' necessitates a structural opening that capital cannot fully control.

With particular reference to the creative industries, Rossiter defines 'creative labour' in terms of being 'disorganised' in order to foreground its political potential: here, he argues, the neoliberal disorganisation of production is predicated on an emerging network ecology that holds the potential for the self-organisation of 'creative labour'. It cannot be denied that there are self-organising groups of creative workers – such the French *Intermittents* – that use network ecologies as their mode of organisation. However, if one moves up the network a bit, say to the level of the *EuroMayDay* networks, one realises that the practice of organised networks is by no means a privilege of so-called 'creative labour'. This is not to dismiss Rossiter's argument at all. To the contrary, his analysis is absolutely crucial as it points toward political trajectories that are opening up as capital adjusts to the evolving materiality of social life. What would be problematic is the reductive totalisation (or, in Marxist lingua, fetishisation) of these new forms of labour that understands 'creative labour' in terms of a political vanguard.[15]

Rossiter is clearly aware of this problem, which might have been one of the reasons for inviting Valery Alzaga from *Justice for Janitor*s to *MyCreativity*. Her powerful political message was a reminder to the assembled 'creative workers' that any consequent attempt to understand the creative network of living labour under conditions of neoliberalism must include those armies of workers whose activities would not so easily receive the label 'creative'. Looking at neoliberal, disorganised capitalism it is paramount to realise that its economic network ecologies are themselves constituted by those creative networks that the post-autonomists approach in terms of social bios, virtuosity, inter-cerebral cooperation and so on. These creative networks not only extend throughout the entire social field, they are also ontologically prior to any division that capital might insert into it.

The crucial argument to be put forward with respect to the creative industries is that they are indeed the product of such an insertion. This is to say that the proliferation of *economies of intensified creativity and invention* cannot be conceptualised without reference to the simultaneous expansion of a new kind of *economies of intensified repetition*. The latter takes the form of a network of generic labour among which feature the aforementioned janitors. Today, such generic labour has become a massive phenomenon. One of its genealogical sources can be found in the post-war practice of corporations to vertically disintegrate (a trend arriving in Europe and the US via Japanese automobile manufacturers), i.e. to outsource their supply chain. In the late 1980s, the practice of outsourcing began to invade the organisation structure *per se*. What began with janitors and technical staff soon reached those repetitive administrative processes that until recently were considered to be integral part of any given organisation: information technology, accounting, financial services, payroll, human resources, customer relations, etc. The massive growth of these kinds of outsourcing has resulted in the emergence of an archipelago of neo-factories of concentrated organisational routine hidden in the periphery of an ostensibly creative economy. There is now a wide network of *intensively repetitive* labour that almost invisibly sustains the 'liberated' organisational arrangements within which capitalism's contemporary pseudo-creativity can thrive.

Developing a proper understanding of the interface between *economies of difference* and *economies of repetition* (the latter of which includes intensified industrial production) will require a good deal of research. However, it does appear reasonable to assume that in order to make sense politically of creativity under conditions of contemporary capitalism, these two economies need to be conceptually brought together. Nigel Thrift describes neoliberal network ecology as a situation in which, 'more and more companies are becoming like project co-ordinators, outsourcing the "business-as-usual" parts of their operations so that they can be left free to design and orchestrate new ideas'.[16] Today the generation of these new ideas and 'immaterial' goods is increasingly outsourced to the 'liberated' spaces in which 'creative labour' dwells (unless it is 'crowdsourced' to potential consumers). Perhaps it would be apposite to speak of a new division of labour along the lines of difference and repetition, held together by the mediation of Thrift's project-coordinators.

Whatever is *created* within the arbitrarily defined context of the creative industries is the result of a creative social process that cannot be reduced to an internal affair of 'creative labour'. If there is anything to be learned from a post-autonomous approach to contemporary capitalism, it is that creativity does not belong to an actual social group but rather is an immanent property of a social multiplicity that precedes the structures of exploitation. Neoliberal capitalism's division and intensification of economies of difference and economies of repetition should not make us forget the Deleuzean (originally Tardian) insight that creativity includes both, difference and repetition. In the context of neoliberal capitalism in general and the creative industries in particular, it might be an insight whose repetition will make an important analytical difference.

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13. Gilles Deleuze, 'Postscript on Control Societies', in *Negotiations*, 1972-1990, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, pp. 177-182.
14. Michel Foucault, *La Naissance de la Biopolitique. Cours au Collège de France 1978-1979*, Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 2004.
15. Steve Wright, *Storming Heaven: Class Composition and Struggle in Italian Autonomist Marxism*, London: Pluto Press, 2002.

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16. Nigel Thrift, 'Re-Inventing Invention: New Tendencies in Capitalist Commodification', Economy and Society 35.2 (2006): 287.

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Brian Holmes is an essayist, translator and political activist whose PhD studies in Romance Languages at U.C. Berkeley encouraged him to abandon the sterile career of the American academic for some free-lance curiosity in Europe. He is a member of the editorial committee of the journal Multitudes (Paris), writes for a variety of other journals, mailing lists and museum catalogues, and considers capitalism not to be eternal. He is the author of the books *Hieroglyphs of the Future: Politics & Art in a Networked Era* (Zagreb: WHW/Arkzin, 2003) and *Unleashing the Collective Phantoms: Essays in Reverse Imagineering* (Autonomedia, 2007), as well as lots of stuff you can find on the Internet. http://www.brianholmes.wordpress.com

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MyCreativity Reader
A CRITIQUE
OF CREATIVE
INDUSTRIES
EDITED BY
GEERT LOVINK AND **NED ROSSITER**

The *MyCreativity Reader* is a collection of critical research into the creative industries. The material develops out of the MyCreativity Convention on International Creative Industries Research held in Amsterdam, November 2006. This two-day conference sought to bring the trends and tendencies around the creative industries into critical question.

The 'creative industries' concept was initiated by the UK Blair government in 1997 to revitalise de-industrialised urban zones. Gathering momentum after being celebrated in Richard Florida's best-seller *The Creative Class* (2002), the concept mobilised around the world as the *zeitgeist* of creative entrepreneurs and policy-makers.

Despite the euphoria surrounding the creative industries, there has been very little critical research that pays attention to local and national variations, working conditions, the impact of restrictive intellectual property regimes and questions of economic sustainability. The reader presents academic research alongside activist reports that aim to dismantle the buzz-machine.

Contributions by: BAVO (Gideon Boie and Matthias Pauwels), Danny Butt, Alex Foti, David Hesmondhalgh, Brian Holmes, Michael Keane, Aphra Kerr, Geert Lovink, Toby Miller, Monika Mokre and Elisabeth Mayerhofer, Max Nathan, Sebastian Olma, Marion von Osten, Merijn Oudenampsen, Matteo Pasquinelli, Andrew Ross, Ned Rossiter, Joost Smiers, Christoph Spehr, Annelys de Vet.

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