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Cultural and Creative Industries

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The term *cultural industries* has been circulating in cultural analysis and policy for many years and has more recently been joined by another version of the same phrase: *creative industries*. There is understandable confusion about the relationships between the two terms, and an objective of this chapter is to reduce bewilderment in this area. To address such questions is more than just an exercise in semantics, however. The two phrases emerge from quite different theoretical lineages and policy contexts. And, for all the considerable difficulties of scope and definition that they raise, it is clear that both concepts refer to a domain that no serious cultural analysis can afford to ignore: how cultural goods are produced and disseminated in modern economies and societies. A second objective of this chapter is linked to the importance of that domain. I aim to assess how various theoretical traditions associated with these terms understand the relations between culture and economy, and between meaning and production. My main claims are that the term 'creative industries' represents a refusal of the forms of critical

analysis associated with the cultural industries approach, and that unqualified use of the former now signals a considerable degree of accommodation with neoliberalism. But simply to accuse creative industries policy of complicity with neoliberalism is not enough. How might we critique creative industries policy and its theoretical underpinnings? In the final section of the chapter, I briefly explore one avenue of criticism, involving the nature of work in these expanding industries.[1]

THE CULTURAL INDUSTRIES IN THEORY

A common misconception about the term cultural industries is that its use implies an adherence to Adorno and Horkheimer's critique of 'the Culture Industry' (1977/1944). It is more accurate to think of the term as an attempt to pluralize and sociologize the conception of cultural production in Adorno and Horkheimer's brilliant but flawed essay, and to question some of the simplifications arising in the adoption of the idea by student

radicals and others in the 1960s/1970s counterculture. The French sociologist Bernard Miège, for example, introduced a collection of his translated essays in 1989 by outlining the main limitations, from his perspective, of the culture industry idea: its failure to see how technological innovations had transformed artistic practice; its paradoxical emphasis on markets and commodities rather than on culture as an *industry*, as a process of production with limitations and problems; and the implication in the term 'culture industry' that analysts were addressing a unified field governed by one single process, rather than a complex and diverse set of industries competing for the same pool of disposable consumer income, time, advertising revenue and labour. However, there is another distinction crucial to understanding the term. The term 'cultural industries' was not just a label for a sector of production, it was also a phrase that came to signify an approach to cultural production based on these and other principles, developed by Miège and other French sociologists, but also by influential British analysts, notably Nicholas Garnham.

This cultural industries approach was connected to a broader set of approaches to culture that had come to be known as the *political economy of culture*. Political economy in its widest sense is a general term for an entire tradition of economic analysis which differs from mainstream economics by paying much greater attention to ethical and normative questions. The term is prefaced with the word 'critical' by analysts who wish to differentiate their work from conservative versions. Critical political economy approaches to the media and culture developed in the late 1960s amongst sociologists and political scientists concerned by what they felt were increasing concentrations of communicative power in modern societies – whether in the form of state control or business ownership. Proponents and opponents of political economy of culture often portray the field as a single unified approach but it is more complicated than that. In other work, building on Vincent Mosco's important overview (Hesmondhalgh, 2007: pp. 33–37; Mosco, 1995: pp. 82–134),

I have distinguished between, on the one hand, a tradition of North American political economy of culture, exemplified in the work of Herbert Schiller, Noam Chomsky, Edward Herman and Robert McChesney, and on the other, the cultural industries approach, introduced above. The latter tradition is more nuanced than the former, more able to deal with contradiction, and with historical variations in the social relations of cultural production, and most importantly of all, it provides – and indeed is founded upon – an analysis of the specific conditions of cultural industries. This is significant because it means that the cultural industries approach has been able to offer *explanation* of certain recurring dynamics, rather than polemically bemoaning the processes of concentration and integration that are a feature of capitalist production – including media production.

Drawing upon industrial economics, cultural industries writers such as Garnham outlined the problems of capital accumulation distinctive to that sector. Their definition was restricted to those industries that use characteristic forms of industrial production and organization to produce and disseminate symbols. This was very much centred on the media. The problems of accumulation they identified included the especially high risks associated with capital investment in this area, which in turn derived from the difficulty, even in cases where substantial promotional and marketing budgets were available, of predicting which products (whether individual films, TV programmes or books) or creators (performers, musicians, writers, etc.) would achieve success. All capitalist production involves risk to a greater or lesser degree, but there was a substantial case for believing that the cultural industries were riskier than most. The cultural industries sociologists forefronted other important features too. Cultural goods had relatively high production costs, because each recording, each film, each book, is a kind of prototype, involving considerable amounts of investment of time and resources, even at the cheaper, low-budget end. However, reproduction costs are usually very low. This high ratio of

production to reproduction costs means that big hits are disproportionately profitable in cultural production, which helps explain such phenomena as 'the blockbuster syndrome', where massive amounts of money are spent in order to generate a mega-hit which can subsidize a company's (inevitable) misses. Another feature of many cultural industries is the tendency for the cultural commodities they produce, not to be destroyed in use, but to act as what economists call 'public goods' – goods where the act of consumption by one individual does not reduce the possibility of consumption by others. This public good tendency creates particular problems for cultural producers concerning how to control the circulation of their goods. The recent furore over digitalization of content, heard most loudly in the debates over the sharing of music files over the Internet (sometimes known in the early 2000s as the 'Napster' phenomenon after the most famous early file-sharing site), is a manifestation of this feature of the cultural industries.

According to cultural industries analysts, capitalists seeking profits from culture respond in various ways to these various problems of accumulation in the sector. To counteract these conditions, many cultural industries build up a repertoire or list of products, in the hope that the hits will cancel out the inevitable failures. Because it is hard for consumers to know what kinds of pleasures will be available from cultural products in advance of experiencing them, cultural industries use 'formatting' (Ryan, 1992) in order to identify products with particular stars, or as particular genres, or as part of a serial. In order to counteract the public good nature of most cultural products, cultural businesses and governments try to impose artificial scarcity, through the careful control of release schedules, and via limitations on copying (copyright law is crucial in this respect). In particular, the cultural industries approach emphasized the importance of control of circulation – the distribution and marketing of products as opposed to their creation. This was the crucial nexus of power in the cultural industries.

In contradistinction to some versions of the critical political economy of culture, and to a great deal of left discourse about media production, the cultural industries approach avoids portraying cultural producers as monolithically powerful actors. Instead, there is an emphasis on contradiction and complexity. This arguably makes it more applicable to interventions in public policy than some other critical approaches. Unlike many of the economistic approaches that have come to dominate policy formation in recent years, however, the cultural industries approach does not lose sight of issues of power and inequality. I trace some of the ways in which the idea of the cultural industries has been applied in the next section.

THE CULTURAL INDUSTRIES IN POLICY

The first impact of the cultural industries idea in public policy was through the auspices of UNESCO, which produced a substantial volume on the cultural industries in 1982 (UNESCO, 1982). Miège produced a report on 'Problems which the development of national and international cultural industries presents for artistic and intellectual creation' for that organization in 1983. Here the context was international inequality in cultural resources, exacerbated by the formidable investment in culture being undertaken by Western businesses (an issue to which we shall return). The most lasting legacy of the term 'cultural industries' in government policy, however, has been in *local* rather than international cultural policy.

In advanced industrial countries after World War II, government cultural subsidy tended to go mainly to the 'classical', legitimated arts, the principal exceptions being public broadcasting and film. There were various struggles to include more groups in the ambit of funding, in the interests of democratization (see Looseley, 2004, on the French version of this). In the UK, for example, funding for the 'fine arts' was gradually expanded to the arts, and then to include

traditional crafts such as pottery and 'folk' arts. In the 1970s, there were 'community arts' movements, and in the 1980s an increasing emphasis on multiculturalism. As a result of such battles, the content of subsidized 'legitimated' culture has shifted over time: for example, arts cinemas came to be subsidized alongside the opera and regional theatre houses. One of the reasons that Jack Lang became an internationally famous Minister of Culture in the 1980s and 1990s was that he attempted to extend French cultural policy funding to forms previously excluded, such as rock, hip hop and raï (Looseley, 2004: p. 19). The seminal introduction of the concept of the cultural industries to cultural policy in Britain represented a more radical revision of cultural policy than this democratic spreading of arts funding. This took place at the left-wing Greater London Council (GLC) from 1983 until the Council's abolition by the British Conservative government in 1986. The GLC's cultural industries policy was directed against elitist and idealist notions of art but it also was a challenge to those activists and policy-makers who had concentrated on expanding the field of arts subsidy to include new groups. Instead, it was argued by some at the GLC, cultural policy should take full account of the fact that most people's cultural tastes and practices were shaped by *commercial* forms of culture and by public service broadcasting. The aim was not to celebrate commercial production but simply to recognize its centrality in modern culture. One key position paper (written by Nicholas Garnham, and reprinted in Garnham, 1990) argued that, rather than on an artist-centred strategy that subsidized 'creators', policy should be focused on distribution and exhibition – the reaching of audiences. This argument reflected the emphasis on the centrality of circulation in the cultural industries tradition of political economy, and the importance of thinking about the distinctive characteristics of primarily symbolic production and consumption, as opposed to other forms (see above). The practical implications of such thinking, according to Garnham's paper, were that 'debates, organizational energy

and finance' ought to be redirected towards broadcasting, the 'heartland of contemporary cultural practice', towards the development of libraries (the recipient of over 50 per cent of all public expenditure on culture) and in providing loans and services to small and medium-sized cultural businesses in London for the marketing and dissemination of their products (Garnham, 1990: p. 166).

There was a second major element to GLC cultural industries strategy, which saw public investment in this sector as a means to economic regeneration. As Garnham pointed out in a later retrospective (2001), this had no necessary connection to the quite separate argument about shifting the focus of policy from the artist to the audience. It was also less novel, in that the use of cultural initiatives to boost the image of cities was under way elsewhere (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993). Such policies were often directed towards the boosting of tourism and/or retail in an area, or towards making an area attractive as a location for businesses, rather than towards the democratization of cultural provision. In the late 1980s and 1990s such strategies boomed and spread across the world. Notable cases included Glasgow's remarkable success in becoming European City of Culture for the year 1990. Expensive flagship projects often based around adventurous architecture proliferated, the best-known of which was probably the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, opened in 1997, which succeeded in making post-industrial Bilbao a tourist attraction. Such projects have been controversial locally, but voices of criticism are rarely heard internationally.

Because the GLC was abolished in 1986, its cultural industry policies were never implemented in London. Nevertheless, local cultural policy under the banner of the cultural industries was to have a big impact over the following decade. In many cities, cultural industries policies became bound up with broader strategies to use culture for urban regeneration. But the rise of local cultural industries policy, initially in the form of 'cultural quarters' in post-industrial cities, was not entirely a result of the appeal of GLC's

pragmatic anti-idealist egalitarianism. In fact, in many cases, the idea of cultural industries policy chimed with a fast-growing desire in the 1980s and 1990s to think about all areas of public policy, including culture and media, in terms of *a return on public investment*. The key context here is the steady rise and general acceptance of neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism is a word that is sometimes used too easily and too glibly. But it is still a useful term to describe an underlying rationale for government policy which proposes that 'human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade' (Harvey, 2005: p. 2). Cultural industries policy was founded on a recognition, ultimately derived from a properly sophisticated reading of Marx, of the *ambivalence of markets*. This linked up with an increasing questioning, as a result of broader sociocultural changes, of the legitimacy of 'high cultural' forms. In this context, the use of money to promote 'ordinary' culture was seen as anti-elitist – and this contributed to the popularity of cultural industries policies with many left-wing councils in Europe. The problem was that, by the 1990s, as neoliberalism emerged triumphant, recognition of the importance of cultural markets could soon be turned, in practice, into an accommodation with the market, as the critical elements in the original GLC vision were lost. The roots of such policies in a more hopeful early 1980s context, based on bottom-up, grassroots interventions, gave a democratizing sheen to policies with very different aims.

So it was that in the 1990s, the notion of the cultural industries or the cultural sector became increasingly attached, in a new era of local and regional development policy, to the goals of regeneration and employment creation. It was the second element of GLC policy that was often emphasized, not the first, now bound up not only with culture-led urban regeneration strategies, but also with an increasing emphasis on entrepreneurialism, in the private and public sectors. In a pamphlet

written for the think tank Demos, for example, Kate Oakley and Charles Leadbeater (a figure associated with the GLC, who by the late 1990s was closely linked to the British 'New Labour' project personified and led by Tony Blair) outlined their view that entrepreneurs in the cultural industries provided a new model of work and a key basis for local economic growth, in that their local, tacit know-how – 'a style, a look, a sound' – showed 'how cities can negotiate a new accommodation with the global market' (Leadbeater and Oakley, 1999: p. 14). The view that independent cultural production might be connected to wider movements for progressive social change, implicit in at least some of the GLC work, was by now being steadily erased, in favour of a view much more compatible with contemporary British neoliberalism.

A very important further connection was with new developments in arts policy, whereby institutions increasingly sought to legitimize their funding on the basis of its contribution to a somewhat uncomfortable and potentially contradictory mixture of economic and social goals. An influential though controversial report by economist John Myerscough (1988), for example, put the cultural industries together with the arts, and analysed how they contributed to job creation, tourism promotion, invisible earnings and urban regeneration (see Belfiore, 2002, for a survey of arts policy developments in this domain in the UK). Alongside such developments, many arts policy-makers also sought to justify arts subsidy on the basis that the arts, and the cultural industries increasingly linked to them in policy discourse, could contribute to combating social exclusion – a new term which spread like wildfire through European social policy in the 1990s. Some analysts see social exclusion as a term which allows those who use it to avoid consideration of deep-seated structural inequalities, including class (see, for example, Levitas, 1998). These developments were to have an important effect at the national policy level, as we shall see.

This is not to say that all such local cultural industries policies were ineffective,

that they all represented an accommodation with neoliberalism, or with new centrist forms of policy. In some cases, policy-makers with a genuine desire to promote new and interesting forms of cultural activity within an area, and to provide support for struggling entrepreneurs and practitioners, could persuade local government to provide funding by talking about the regenerative possibilities of cultural industries development. In some cases (for example, in Sheffield, in the north of England) such policies were able to support local infrastructures, to the lasting benefit of symbol creators who wanted to work in the city (see Frith, 1993). But the economic and social effectiveness of local cultural policies oriented towards the cultural industries remains controversial. It surely made sense to emphasize the importance of the cultural industries to a news and entertainment hub city such as London, and such a policy direction may have had some coherence in some smaller but substantial cities where the cultural industries have some growing presence, but in other places the idea that investment in the cultural industries might boost local wealth and employment has proven more problematic. Mark Jayne (2004), for example, has written about the difficulties a local council had in developing an effective cultural industries development policy in Stoke-on-Trent, in the English Midlands, a city with an overwhelmingly working-class population. The issue of class is significant here. Much of the burgeoning policy discourse (and associated academic literature) seems implicitly to portray working-class populations as regressive, as holding back cities from entering into competition with the thriving metropolises of the West. This has led some commentators to wonder about the dangers of foisting inappropriately metropolitan policies on predominantly working-class or rural places.

Nevertheless, cultural industries policies have made a contribution to people's lives in 'unlikely' areas. Chris Gibson and Daniel Robinson (2004) have written about a small entertainment industry association on the far north coast of New South Wales, hundreds

of miles from Sydney and other urban areas further south. They acknowledge that the effects of such an association on employment and economic activity are very hard to ascertain, because of the perennial data problems in this area. But they say that the association's campaigns (keeping venues open, putting on events, getting better remuneration for musicians, publicizing activity through awards, and so on) helped to encourage young aspiring creative workers to stay, and thereby encouraged a sense that there might be an interesting and rewarding cultural life in the region. In other words, funding such grassroots cultural industries institutions may have other, less directly economic but nevertheless positive benefits.

THE RISE OF CREATIVITY: CITIES, CLUSTERS AND UK NATIONAL POLICY

By the mid-1990s in Europe, two related concepts had begun to grow out of cultural quarter policies, each of which was the subject of a great deal of policy interest: *creative cities* and *creative clusters*. These terms represent an important shift in the policy vocabulary surrounding the cultural industries. The former idea was strongly associated with the Comedia consultancy group. In Comedia booklets and policy documents (for example, Landry, 2000), creativity was presented as the key to urban regeneration and the main reason given was that 'the industries of the twenty-first century will depend increasingly on the generation of knowledge through creativity and innovation matched with rigorous systems of control' (Landry and Bianchini, 1995: p. 12). In this new creativity discourse, television, software and theatre were examples of such industries, but so was dealing in stocks and shares – and they all needed creative cities to help them thrive. A number of examples of creativity in local planning and policy were offered by Landry and Bianchini, including the culture-led urban regeneration strategies referred to above. How these were to induce creativity in a city's inhabitants was not made clear.

But by the turn of the century, the cultural industries were being thoroughly incorporated into a more general notion of creativity as a boon to a city's ills.

The idea of *creative clusters* has been even more significant in local policy than that of creative cities. The concept of the business cluster is derived from the work of US economist Michael Porter, which attempts to explain how nations and regions gain competitive advantage over others. An important element, which distinguishes it from older theories, such as that of the nineteenth-century economist Alfred Marshall, of why firms from the same industry tend to gather in the same places, is its emphasis on the notions of innovative entrepreneurialism and competitiveness fetishisized in neoliberal discourses of the 'new economy' (Martin and Sunley, 2003). This has made 'business clusters' a hugely influential concept in national and regional government policy across the world. Unsurprisingly perhaps, in the late 1990s, policy-makers concerned with the development of the cultural industries adapted the term by linking it to the rising cult of creativity in management, business and government and using the term 'creative clusters'.

For Hans Mommaas (2004: p. 508) 'cultural clustering strategies represent a next stage in the on-going use of culture and the arts as urban regeneration resources'. Once all major cities had developed their festivals, major museums and theatre complexes in the culture-led urban regeneration boom of the 1990s, the action moved on to creating milieux for cultural production. However, like 'business cluster', the creative cluster is an idea built on a shaky conceptual foundation. Mommaas distinguishes between a number of discourses, which have tended to be merged together in policy discussions of the benefits of creative clusters, and which in his view are in danger of undermining and contradicting each other. These include promoting cultural diversity and democracy, place-marketing in the interests of tourism and employment, stimulating a more entrepreneurial approach to the arts and culture, a general encouraging

of innovation and creativity, and finding a new use for old buildings and derelict sites. Mommaas notes that while some clustering strategies are limited to artistic-cultural activities, most of them incorporate many other leisure and entertainment elements – bars, health and fitness complexes and the like.

Development strategies based on the cultural industries have proliferated across the world in the late 1990s and early 2000s. It cannot be automatically assumed that such strategies are entirely about a dubious form of gentrification. They need to be assessed case by case and it remains important to distinguish between top-down versions of such strategies, which come close to simply making cities more accommodating for business-people who want a funky lifestyle, and bottom-up approaches which take account of the needs of people across a range of social classes and ethnic groups. Nevertheless, it seems to be the case that the democratizing intent in the original GLC strategy by this stage of cultural industries policy had become deeply submerged.

Cultural policy analyst Justin O'Connor has recently reflected on this latest stage in local cultural industries strategy (manifested in initiatives across much of the world). He seeks to correct a number of misconceptions in what he sees as an overly celebratory literature concerning the insertion of local – especially urban – sites of cultural production into the global circulation of cultural products. One is the view that clusters of local cultural producers derive their success from creativity and other forms of local, tacit knowledge (including the *genius loci*). According to such views, which can be found in the work of the Comedia consultancy and elsewhere, cities and regions can gain competitive advantage because such knowledge cannot easily be codified and therefore transferred. In fact, says O'Connor, successful clusters are increasingly predicated not so much on the much-vaunted 'creativity' but on access to a range of formal knowledges, about global markets, about larger companies and about distribution networks. To miss this, says O'Connor, is to miss the reality of local

policy: few of the agencies set up to help nascent cultural industries have this kind of knowledge (O'Connor, 2004: p. 139). But O'Connor is making a broader point too. The emphasis on using 'creativity' and urbanity for the competitive advantage of cities risks going beyond a reconciliation of economics and culture to being an annexation of the latter by the former (O'Connor, 2004: p. 146).

National creative industries policy

By the late 1990s, the term 'creativity' had spread to the national policy level in the UK. *Creative industries* is a concept that has since been widely adopted in the spheres of cultural policy and higher education. Its first major policy use appears to have been by the British Labour government elected in 1997, though there were important precedents in other countries, notably the Australian Labor government's *Creative Nation* initiative of 1994. In Britain at least, one basis for the adoption of the term 'creative industries' was that it allowed cultural policy-makers (whether concerned with arts, crafts or film production) to legitimize their concerns at the national level. This was an attempt to repeat at the national level the strategy of linking 'the arts' to the cultural industries, so that even these most refined of activities could be made to seem part of economic development, the *sine qua non* of most government policy in the era of neoliberalism. However, national creative industries policy goes further than this.

Nicholas Garnham (2001: p. 25; see also Garnham, 2005) has identified two major claims implicitly made by the mobilization of the term 'creative industries' in the British context: that the creative industries are the key new growth sector of the economy, both nationally and globally; and that they are therefore the key source of future employment growth and export earnings. For Garnham, the use of the term 'creative' achieved a number of goals with regard to these claims. In the first instance, it allowed a very broad definition. Various documents issued by the UK Department of Culture, Media and Sport

(for example, DCMS 1998, 2001) included the industries labelled the 'cultural industries' by the political-economy cultural industries analysts (essentially, the media – see above) but also dance, visual arts and the more craft-based activities of jewellery-making, fashion and furniture design. This made it possible to link these subsidized sectors to the supposedly booming commercial creative industries of music and broadcasting. It also, crucially, included computer software, which made it possible to present the creative industries sector as a much larger and more significant part of the economy than would otherwise have been possible.[2]

According to Garnham, this broad definition in turn had two valuable policy consequences for the interest groups involved. First, it enabled software producers and the major cultural-industry conglomerates to construct an alliance with smaller businesses and with cultural workers around a strengthening of intellectual property protection. Crucial here was the way that the defence of intellectual property became associated with 'the moral prestige of the "creative artist" ' (Garnham, 2005: p. 26). Second, it enabled the cultural sector to use arguments for the public support of the training of creative workers originally developed for the ICT industry. This argument in turn had much wider implications in that it pushed education policy much more strongly in the direction of a discourse of *skills*, on the basis that future national prosperity depended upon making up for a supposed lack of creative, innovative workers. The result for Garnham is that UK creative industries policy is more than ever based on an 'artist'-centred notion of subsidy, rather than an audience-oriented policy of infrastructural support – the very opposite, in other words, of the original GLC vision.

The key point here is that while the terms 'cultural industries' and 'creative industries' superficially share a rejection of forms of cultural policy grounded on subsidy for the fine arts, and a concern with the specific dynamics of symbolic production and circulation, the terms – in the Northern European context at least – tend to denote very different modes

of theoretical policy analysis. Those who prefer the term 'cultural industries' tend to be much more sober in their claims regarding the role of culture or creativity in modern economies and societies, and, as we shall see, considerably more sceptical about the benefits of marketization in the domain of culture, than what we might call the creativity or creative industries theorists.

In the 2000s, policy using the terms cultural industries and creative industries has spread across much of the world, both at the national and sub-national (local or regional) levels. There has been a relentless flow of mapping documents and development strategies. There is no space here to trace in any detail the many and complex ways in which the terms have been taken up outside Northern Europe. Some governments have followed the 'British model' of creative industries in terms of definition and policy orientation. Some have preferred the term 'cultural industries' even while pursuing policies more akin to what, based on the dominant Northern European uses, I am here calling 'creative industries policy'. Issues of translation and of local context mean that the terms have quite different connotations from Europe. The People's Republic of China (PRC) provides one significant example. The 16th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 2002 declared the development of cultural industries (*wenhua chanye*) as a key task in the tenth Five Year Plan. Jing Wang (2004: p. 16) explains that *wenhua chanye* has a very different set of connotations than its English equivalent, because *chanye* contains a double reference to *chanquan* (property ownership) and *shiye* (public institutions). The nearest equivalent to 'creative industries' (*chuangyi gongye*), Wang felt, lacked these connotations, and diverted attention away from crucial issues about stock-market flotation and privatization and towards a less immediately relevant agenda of small and medium-sized enterprises, and artistic creativity (rather than innovation). In policy discussions in China, the English term 'creative' is often preferred. Nevertheless, Desmond Hui (2006: pp. 317–319) reports

that the Beijing Party Committee adopted the term 'cultural and creative industries' for its development strategy in December 2005. Such a conjoined use is likely to become more common in many non-European contexts. But for all these complexities, it remains the case that many non-European governments have looked to Northern European policies for inspiration as they seek ways to expand their cultural or creative industries – and that the terms cultural industries and creative industries represent quite different lineages.

CREATIVITY AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES THEORY

In the next section, I will look at the work of cultural researchers who are broadly advocates of the kinds of creative industries policy delineated above; I then proceed to examine attempts to critique the idea of the creative industries.

These policy developments have meant that in recent years there has been a rising tide of academic interest in creativity and the creative industries. 'Creativity' is an even looser word than culture and there can be little doubt that this has enabled a number of analysts to put forward the kinds of claims summarized by Garnham, regarding the role of cultural production in modern economies. Policy consultant and journalist John Howkins, for example, claimed in an influential and widely read book that 'the creative economy will be the dominant economic form in the twenty-first century' (Howkins, 2001: p. vii). Howkins sustained this claim by defining the creative economy and the creative industries as those involved in intellectual property. This allowed him to include not only those industries based on copyright, which is the basis of the cultural industries as they are most usefully defined (as essentially the media industries – see above), but also those industries that produce or deal in patent. This meant that massive sectors such as pharmaceuticals, electronics, engineering and chemicals could be added into 'the creative economy' mix. Even the impossibly nebulous

categories of trademark and design industries were incorporated. Howkins was right to stress the importance of intellectual property in modern economies, across both symbolic and scientific domains, but he extrapolated from this to make dubious claims about a transition to a new economy based on creativity.

Perhaps the most ardent treatment of the role of creativity in modern economies has come from the US academic and policy consultant Richard Florida. Florida makes the cheering assertion that while most transition theories tend to see transformation as something that is happening to people, in fact society is mostly changing because we want it to, and the driving force of these desired changes is 'the rise of human creativity as the key factor in our economy and society' (Florida, 2002: p. 4). For Florida, the new centrality of creativity has led to a change in the class system itself, with the rise of 'a new creative class', comprising an astounding 30 per cent of all employed US citizens: a creative core of people in science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music and entertainment; and then an outer group of creative professionals in business and finance, law, health care and related fields. As will be clear from this, the inflated claims about creativity again derive from lumping together a very diverse set of activities. But such claims clear the way for Florida to address himself to policy-makers. In a version of the Comedia argument about creative cities, Florida says that creative people want to live in creative cities, and if cities want to attract these often wealthy and influential creative people to live, and to spend their hard and creatively earned money on local taxes and local services, then governments will need to foster 'a creative community' in their cities.

Florida is without doubt the most important academic popularizer and legitimator of the idea that creativity is central to new economies. A more substantial attempt to ground this idea has emerged from a group of researchers at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in Brisbane, Australia.

John Hartley and Stuart Cunningham have explained their adoption of 'creative industries' (Hartley and Cunningham, 2001) as a key term in cultural policy – and indeed in cultural education. First, they say, it offers an opportunity to move beyond the elitist wastefulness of arts subsidy. Second, it moves beyond limitations in the concept of cultural industries which in their view (a mistaken one in my opinion) is a term associated with the old arts-oriented form of cultural policy. For them, by contrast, the term creative industries fits with the political, cultural and technological landscape of globalization, the new economy, and the information society. Echoing writers such as John Howkins, creativity and innovation are presented as the basis of the new economy. But governments need to look beyond science and engineering conceptions of innovation, say Hartley and Cunningham. Policy needs to combine the promotion of this growing sector of local economies with the fostering of creative urban spaces. Education needs to change too: arts and humanities faculties should be reoriented towards training students in the production of content.

Cunningham and Hartley were writing a manifesto for policy-makers and higher education managers. Terry Flew, also at QUT, has provided a fuller rationale for an emphasis on creative industries in both cultural and educational policy (here I concentrate on one piece – Flew, 2005). Flew questions, from a perspective informed by Foucauldian governmentality theory, the emphasis on citizenship amongst social democratic policy-makers and academic advocates of reform. For Flew, 'there is a need for caution in too readily invoking cultural citizenship as a progressive cultural goal' (Flew, 2005: p. 244) because citizenship conceptions underestimate the degree to which culture has been used by states as part of top-down nationalist projects, and the degree to which rights have involved exclusions as well as reciprocal obligations between state and subject. Flew asserts that such policies – for example, in post-war France – have also tended to neglect the commercial sector in favour of elitist arts subsidy. What is more, globalization, the rise of new

media technologies such as satellite and the Internet, and the increasing incorporation of culture into economic life mean a new set of challenges for policy institutions. In Flew's view, rather than protecting national and local content, the aim should be to promote the ability of a nation to create content, in a way that avoids 'top-down nationalism and pre-ordained conceptions of cultural value' (Flew, 2005: p. 251). Rather than grounding cultural policy in an opposition to the market or in cultural protectionism, Flew offers the Open Source software movement as an alternative paradigm, based on the decentralizing force of the Internet and on new conceptions of the public interest, where the state acts as a guarantor of competition, innovation and pluralism, rather than a buttress against the market, and the idea is to let a million multicultural and globalized publics bloom, rather than to advocate particular directions for cultural policy.

Such an account raises some difficult issues. First, Flew and other advocates of new conceptions of the public interest place great faith in the democratizing impact of the Internet; but there are good reasons to wonder whether the Internet can validly be seen in this way: including, not least, marked inequalities in access, both within individual nation-states and between nations and regions. Second, although the idea of a policy that would move beyond the dubious imposition of cultural value is likely on its surface to be attractive to anyone but the most ardent cultural conservative, the problem of aesthetic value will not simply go away. If the role of cultural policy (and arts and humanities education) is to act as an R&D wing of the creative industries – which is the QUT group's explicit goal – then it may well be that it is the market's (i.e. in this case, the cultural or creative industries) conceptions of value which will prevail. Like those of nation-states, these values are multiple and contradictory, and indeed this is something emphasized by cultural industries theory. But in a context where massive corporations still control the circulation and dissemination of culture (even in the era of the Internet) we

may be unwise to opt too quickly in favour of a strongly market-oriented system over a 'top-down nationalism' which is portrayed in monolithic terms, characteristic of much globalization theory, as a force for oppression and exclusion. Third, Flew shows the influence of post-structuralist cultural studies, by focusing on questions of difference and identity, to the exclusion of systemic economic processes. There is a lack of attention to the way capitalist markets repeatedly (though not in any pre-defined way) work with other processes to produce inequalities of access and outcome – in the domain of culture, as in many other aspects of society.

CRITIQUING CREATIVE INDUSTRIES POLICY AND THEORY

I have focused here on the work of a group of academic researchers based in Queensland because they provide the most coherent attempt to delineate what one might call a centrist or *accommodationist* position with regard to government policy on the creative industries. What I mean by this is that they broadly accept the position underlying the most influential forms of creative industries policy: that the creative industries are a key new growth sector of economies, both nationally and globally; and that they are therefore the key source of future employment growth and export earnings. The expansion of local cultural markets is therefore seen as the best way to combine both economic and cultural well-being. As I write, however, there is an increasing interest in developing critiques of the notion of the creative industries as it operates in contemporary policy discourse. In this next section, I want briefly to consider some versions of such critique, in order to assess how effectively they question developments in the role of cultural production in modern societies. My main concern here is theoretical – with criticism focused on the underlying principles and assumptions of policy. First, though, it must be recognized that theory is always, to a greater or lesser degree, based on empirical

assumptions, whether stated or not; and that therefore some of the empirical assumptions underlying creative industries theory need scrutinizing.

Kieran Healy (2002) has identified a number of questions that might be asked about the role of creativity in the new economy as identified by writers such as Howkins and Florida. In particular he separates out four claims concerning why the relationships between the so-called creative sector and the new economy might matter to policy-makers:

- Claim 1: The 'creative sector' will continue to grow, justifying more policy research in this area. This is the easiest claim to defend, says Healy, but it establishes little in itself. What kind of policies? Can there be any shared policy agenda amongst the very varied interests involved?
- Claim 2: The creative sector is a miner's canary for the wider economy because of its uncertain labour markets, flexible collaboration and project-based work. But, Healy asks, is the project work of a project-based stage actor really relevant to those of a project-based systems administrator? Is the artistic labour force a good model given problems of labour markets there?
- Claim 3: Creativity in general is becoming increasingly important to competitiveness. This, says Healy, is not established, and demand for different kinds of creative people will be very unequal across different industries and sectors.
- Claim 4: The so-called 'creative class' is intensely interested in cultural goods of many kinds, so cities should invest in culture. As Healy says, this is unlikely to be uniform.

Healy's scrutiny of the empirical claims underlying creative industries discourse is useful. However, such scrutiny leaves untouched a deeper set of questions concerning the way in which cultural production operates in modern economies, and this involves the status of culture itself, in relation to society and economy. What does the boom 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 avenue for critiquing these developments (not the only one, but there is limited space here) has

been to focus on the question of creative or artistic labour, which Healy draws attention to, above. There is certainly no space in the present context to address the detailed empirical and quantitative work that has been done on these labour markets (see Menger, 1999, for a very useful survey) but Ruth Towse (1992) has provided a neat summary of the findings of a wide range of studies of artistic labour markets. These have the following features, says Towse. 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 than other workers; and the workforce appears to be growing. By 'artistic', Towse means the subsidized 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 criticized.

In what follows, I will focus on three ways in which labour has become a part of a critical analysis of cultural policy under the sign of the creative industries: the idea of a 'new international division of cultural labour'; the focus on creative work in autonomist Marxism; and a more sociological approach that helps to show some of the limitations of even the most sophisticated political economy critiques. My emphasis is on the theoretical and political problems plaguing these critiques. At the moment, it seems to me, serious attention to cultural work represents something of a gap in the analysis of creative and cultural industries. Critiquing some of the critiques of cultural work may help to construct a more secure foundation for both theory and policy.

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

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* (Miller, Govil, McMurria, Maxwell and Wang, 2005) 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 harmonization of copyright law and practice; and run-away production – the practice of shooting Hollywood films overseas. 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' (Miller et al., 2005: p. 140). Miller, Wang and Govil recognize 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 some reason behind US cultural workers' problems: 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 casualization. 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 other divisions 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

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* (2000) and *Multitude* (2004). 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' (Hardt and Negri, 2000: p. 290) – 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 characterizes 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 towards the model of information and communication technologies. This means a homogenization of labouring processes. In this respect, Hardt and Negri are pessimistic about the 'informationalization' 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 labour thus seems to provide the potential for a kind of spontaneous and elementary communism' (p. 294).

It is this combination of rampantly optimistic Marxism, combined with a post-structuralist 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 basis of a serious critique of the creative industries. But the autonomist Marxian tradition they have both drawn upon and radically popularized 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 polarized, 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 (2005) 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 subjective demands for flexibility – demands that in many ways precipitate capital's own accession to interminable restructuring and rescaling' (Neilson and Rossiter, 2005: p. 1). The term they use for this state is precarity, 'an inelegant neologism coined by English speakers to translate the French precarité'. 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 casualization characteristic of modern forms of work – including the decline of welfare provision. Neilson 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.

A sociology of creative labour

Autonomist Marxism's greatest weakness is that it lacks an empirical engagement with the specifics of cultural production. 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 (see Hesmondhalgh, 2005, for a survey). The most 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* (1992). Ryan's perspective here is strongly influenced by the cultural industries version of political economy outlined earlier, but he analyses organizational dynamics in far greater detail than writers such as Garnham and Miège, using a Weberian framework. A Marxian influence is apparent 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 recognizable 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 generalizes 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' (Ryan, 1992: p. 44). Art must always appear as unique, and so 'artistic workers ... cannot be made to appear in the labour process as generalized, undifferentiated artists' (Ryan, 1992: p. 44). 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 arationality, 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 'commoditization of cultural objects erodes the qualities and properties which constitute them as cultural objects, as use-values, in the first place' (Ryan, 1992: p. 50), 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 *rationalize* 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 rationalization. This is achieved at the creative stage through 'formatting', and at the circulation stage through the institutionalization of marketing within corporate production, in order to

produce a more controllable sequence of stars and styles. .

Ryan's account of methods of rationalization 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, Ryan's strong emphasis on rationalization 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 rationalization 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-realization 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 routinized work remains a feature of a great deal of work, an important and growing stratum of jobs purports to offer what Andrew Ross (2003) has called a 'humane workplace' and self-realization through more autonomous forms of labour. Writing about work in the IT sector (a form of work which, as we have seen, is often unhelpfully blurred with artistic labour in the notion of the creative industries), 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 demoralized employees but as a valued asset to production' (Ross, 2003: p. 9). Angela McRobbie (2002) 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. Drawing upon her own work on

young fashion designers, and other empirical studies, McRobbie notes (in 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 organization 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-realization 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 of the cultural industries approach to the specific conditions of cultural capitalism. Such a synthesis would allow for a critique of arguments for the expansion of creative industries, at the local, national and international levels. This is not the only possible route of critique. 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 empirically 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 share 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'. And, as I have explained in this chapter, policy and theory using the term 'creative industries' tend to be based on arguments which all too often come close to endorsing inequality and exploitation associated with contemporary neoliberalisms.

NOTES

1 Because this is intended as an overview of the idea of the cultural industries, this chapter inevitably draws upon material published in the two editions of my book *The Cultural Industries* (Hesmondhalgh, 2002 and 2007). However, the argument has been substantially developed from that material.

2 This of course raises the wider question of how to *measure* the changing role of culture, or of the cultural industries, in modern economies (see Hesmondhalgh, 2007: chapter 6).

3 By far the best-known formulation of this idea is *The New International Division of Labour* (Fröbel, Heinrichs and Kreye, 1980).

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