



Reclaiming culture: Challenging the 'experience economy'

Discourse Power Resistance (DPR) Conference 2014

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Rise of the 'experience economy'

- Decline in manufacturing plus rise of globalisation
- 'Creative industries' discourse (DCMS)
- Making money from leisure
 - Reverses classical view of human needs (e.g. Maslowe)
- Consumption oriented:
 - The 'visitor economy'; The 'night economy'
- From censorship and regulation to instrumental use of culture as a driver of urban economic growth

Intrinsic vs instrumental

- Sustained attack on the intrinsic value of the arts and culture in society.
 - Though I argue instrumentalism is not a new phenomenon
- Since New Labour and the rise of "Cool Britannia" the cultural sector has found itself increasingly subsumed in neo liberal discourse
- Culture has been reduced to its instrumental value, for example in the interests of regeneration/gentrification, to attract tourism pounds/euros/dollars and to attract knowledge workers, the so-called "creative class".
- See Flew 2012

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Press release

Creative Industries worth £8million an hour to UK economy

Organisation: [Department for Culture, Media & Sport](#)
Page history: [Published 14 January 2014](#)
Policy: [Making it easier for the media and creative industries to grow, while protecting the interests of citizens](#)
Topics: [Media and communications](#) and [UK economy](#)
Minister: [The Rt Hon Maria Miller MP](#)

Official statistics published today reveal that the UK's creative industries are now worth £71.4 billion per year to the UK economy.

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/creative-industries-worth-8million-an-hour-to-uk-economy>

"EXPERIENCE" > Gifts (clear)

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reset Update results

By Type

- Couples (9)
- Driving (8)
- Food and drink (4)
- Outdoor (2)
- Spa and pampering (7)
- Sport (4)
- Ultimate choice (2)
- Weekend breaks (7)

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Minimum £12.5 Maximum £199.99



Quick view

Historic Towns and Cities.

£174.00

+ Free Delivery

Compare



Quick view

Classic Cities Break.

£149.00

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Quick view

★★★★★ (1)

Supercars Gift Experience.

£139.99

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Pamper Indulgence Day for Two.

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Silverstone vs Brands Hatch Gift Experience.

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Quick view

Driving Mega Choice Gift Experience.

£119.99

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- http://www.argos.co.uk/static/Search/ID72/33005782/c_1/1%7Ccategory_root%7CGifts%7C33005782/pp/50/q/EXPERIENCE.htm

Creative and Cultural Labour

- The 'exceptional' economy of the arts (Abbing)
 - 'romantic' notion of the economically aloof artist persists
- The 'creative class' (Florida)
 - Empirical and logical inconsistencies

Cutting edge creatives...



...or precarious cultural workers?

CARROTWORKERS' COLLECTIVE

ABOUT US COUNTER INTERNSHIP GUIDE ON FREE LABOUR PHOTO-ROMANCES
ORGANISING: WHAT STANDS IN OUR WAY? THE LAW'S AN ASS...

8
OCT

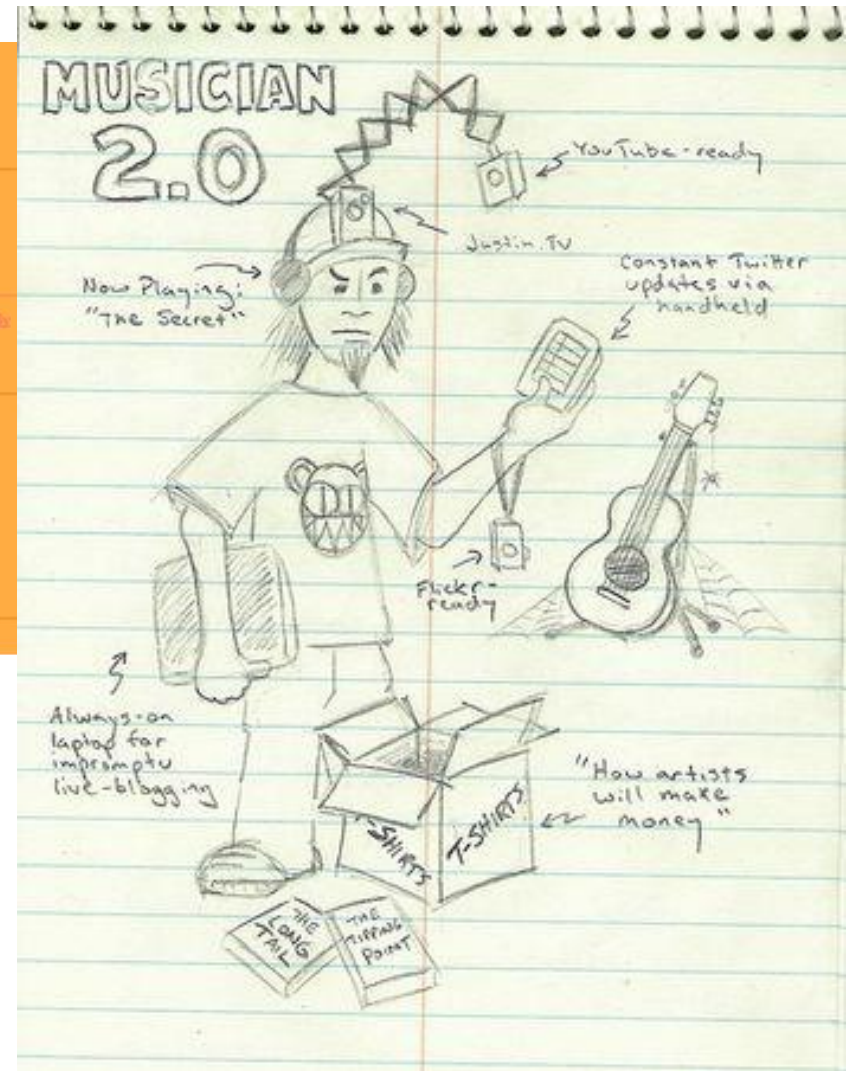
Precarious Workers Brigade in October!



We've got loads of opportunities to meet,

HOT TOPICS

"Previous experience a must" is
the most of your lives [Creative](#)
[Industries](#) [Events](#) [Free](#)
[Labour](#) I know what you did last
summer [News and olds](#)
from the world
[Uncategorized](#)



The gentrification contradiction

- The interplay between gentrification and the precarious employment in the creative and cultural industries
- Creative workers are priced out of the gentrified locales they helped to create (Zukin).
- Example: Westminster council
- <http://www.theguardian.com/housing-network/2012/jan/13/westminster-housing-west-end-workers>

New housing scheme offers west end workers their Fair Share

Westminster's living wage housing will see artists, traders and hotel staff share accommodation nearer to their employment

Ben Denton

Guardian Professional, Friday 13 January 2012 10.51 GMT

 [Jump to comments \(0\)](#)



Performing artists earning the London living wage will be among those to benefit from Westminster's new shared housing scheme. Photograph: David Sillitoe for the Guardian

As more of London's workers are priced out of the housing market, local authorities must think differently about how they can house the UK's lower

Unpaid internships

- Rampant unpaid labour presented as internships
- 'Pro-Am' debates



RE: the great intern debate

25 February 2014
Evening Standard Letters

RE the great intern debate: I have no problem with short unpaid work experience and encourage my own students to obtain as much experience as possible. However, longer internships (six weeks' full-time work or the equivalent) which are unpaid ultimately act to depress wages. **What message do we send young people at the start of their careers when we tell them their work is (literally) of zero value?**

There is the issue of supply and demand in the creative industries, and we need to be open and honest with students as to what working in such industries entails but there is no place for exploitation. The terms "internship", "work experience" and "volunteering" all need stricter definition.

Peter Vlachos, University of Greenwich

A new twist on agglomeration theory

- Symbolic (cultural) value to extract monetary value. Cities have become playgrounds for conspicuous consumption.
- Increasingly, policymakers and property developers are interested only in the (historical) simulacrum of culture ('buzzy' and 'edgy' being common tags).

Example

- St Martin's School of Art former buildings in central London converted to luxury residential development
- Prices “from £2,000,000”

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- <http://www.homesandproperty.co.uk/property-news/new-homes/new-homes-are-brightest-stars-londons-west-end>
- <http://residential.joneslanglasalle.co.uk/property-search/property-details.aspx?t=d&id=JLLATD34383>

Compare cultural worker incomes

- Average **artists** salary in UK £19,876 (Artshub, Oct 2013)
- Over half (56%) of **musicians** surveyed earn less than £20k and 60% of musicians report working for free in the past 12 months (Musicians Union, 2012).
- *These salaries are low and compare unfavourably to other professionals who've invested similar amounts of time and money into education and training.*

Design and Artists Copyright Society (2010)

- photographer £15,000
- illustrator £15,723
- fine artist £10,000

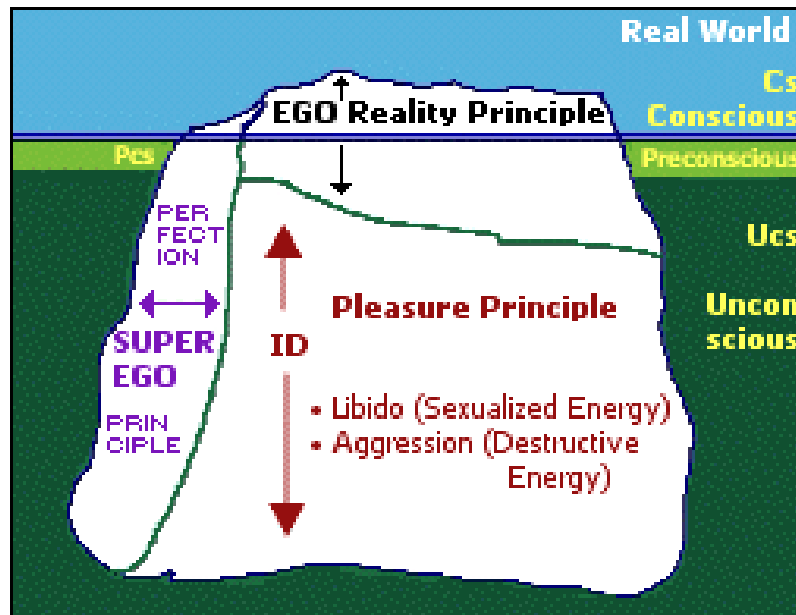
- 35% having a formal second job

- *Compare: UK national median wage of £21,320*

**WHAT MIGHT EXPLAIN THESE
ONGOING TENSIONS?**

Freudian perspective

- Repression of basic instinctual drives
- Sublimation to 'productive' ends, including aesthetic 'civilising'



Marxist perspective

- Art as ideology/superstructure, reinforcing class distinctions
- Cultural workers as oppressed labour (proletariat)...
- ... or cultural workers (and intermediaries) as petite bourgeoisie
- Socialist realist art as potential for raising class consciousness

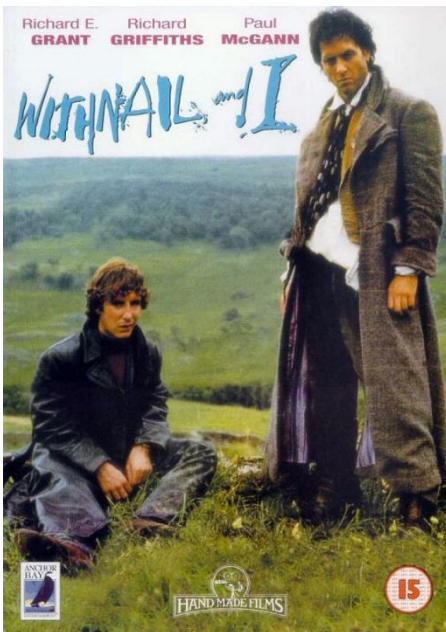
Herbert Marcuse

- 'Basic repression' vs 'surplus repression'
- What is 'surplus' repression in historically determined
- In the face of rising living standards, there are calls for liberation

'Repressive desublimation'

- Liberation ... but only to the extent that the interests of capital are served, both in terms of accumulation and ideology.
- Can this explain the rise of culture/creative oriented urban development policy?

- **“They're selling hippie wigs in Woolworth's, man. The greatest decade in the history of mankind is over. And as Presuming Ed here has so consistently pointed out, we have failed to paint it black.”**
 - Danny, “Withnail and I”, film, 1986



“Girl power”? Another case of repressive ‘freedom’?



Concluding thoughts

- The intensification of instrumentalism in culture
 - Consider ACGB ‘excellence and access’ origins
- What is the potential for cultural liberation in the face of Marcuse's pessimism?
- Reclaiming culture, pleasure, ritual (Aristotle)

Reclaiming culture

- We need to challenge consciously the current dominant ideology of culture as instrument
- Reclaim culture as shared social human experience.

Some references

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- Zukin, S (1989). Loft living: culture and capital in urban change. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press



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THANK YOU 😊
QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION

Case: Distillery District, Toronto

- <http://www3.thedistillerydistrict.com/>





RESTAURANTS|EATERIES

	BLDG	SUITE
Archeo	45	
Balzac's Coffee	60	
The Boiler House	46	
Brick Street Bakery	45 a	
Café Uno	32 - 102	
Mill Street Brewpub	63	
Pure Spirits Oyster House & Grill	62 a	
SOMA Chocolate & Gelato	48 - 101	
Stirling Room	36 - 101	
The Sweet Escape Patisserie	47 - 102	
Tappo Restaurant & Wine Bar	3	

EVENTS FACILITY

	BLDG	SUITE
Stone Distillery Fermenting Cellar	6	7
The Cannery Room	59	260

PERFORMANCE THEATRES

	BLDG	SUITE
Young Centre for the Performing Arts (Soulpepper Theatre/ George Brown College)	49	50
Dancemakers Centre for Creation	58 - 313	
Tapestry New Opera Works/ Nightwood Theatre Studio	58 - 315	

RETAIL

	BLDG	SUITE
A Taste of Quebec	32	100
Artemide	37	101
Bergo Designs	47 a	
Cabinet	32	104
Condominium Sales Centre	51	
Corktown Designs Jewellery Gallery	59	102
distill	47	103

Distillery Market	37 - 108
DOM Toronto	9 - 106
Elizabeth Munro Design	9 - 104
Euoko	55
Hästens	8
Horsefeathers Home at the Distillery	62
Lileo	35
Loopha	56
Mill Street Brewery	63
Pikto	59 - 103
Segway of Ontario	37 - 106
Shao Design	9 - 101
SOMA Chocolate & Gelato	48 - 101
Sound Designs	58 - 101
Spectacle	53
Sport Media Group	32 - 103
Varasmus	37 - 102
Vintage Gardener	57

GALLERIES

	BLDG	SUITE
Arta Gallery	9	102
The Blue Dot Gallery	47	101
Corkin Gallery	61	
Cubeworks	52	101
Deaf Culture Centre	5	101
Doll Collection	59	104
Engine Gallery	37	105
Jacob Grinberg Photography	47	105
Julie M Gallery	37	103
Kodiak Gallery	47	107
Clark & Faria	2	
Pikto	59	103
Thompson Landry Gallery	5	102
Thompson Landry Cooperage Gallery	32	101