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## *Creative industries, its critics, and some answers*

Arguments as to just what should be included under the definition of «creative industries» have limited their acceptance and the adoption of suitable policies. There are opposing analyses and statistical categories, such as the copyright industry, the content industry, the cultural industry, the digital content industry, the arts and entertainment industry, etc. that make it difficult to gather accurate, reliable, timely data on this mega-sector. Another major criticism is that «creative» work is idealised and that the exporting of the concept outside its country of origin may be tantamount to imperialism. However, the creative industries have evolved in the past ten years from being limited to specific sectors to becoming seen as creative agents that can generate change and innovation, and have achieved high levels of acceptance and significance in many different countries.

*Las discusiones sobre qué debe incluirse bajo la definición de «industrias creativas» han limitado su aceptación y las políticas adecuadas. Existen categorías estadísticas y analíticas opuestas, tales como la industria del copyright, las industrias de contenidos, las industrias culturales, las de contenido digital, las industrias de las artes y el entretenimiento, etc. que hacen muy difícil reunir datos precisos, fiables y oportunos sobre ese megasector. Otra importante crítica es que idealizan el trabajo ‘creativo’ y que la exportación del concepto fuera del país que las originó puede constituir un imperialismo implícito. Sin embargo, las industrias creativas han evolucionado en los últimos diez años, pasando de estar limitadas a sectores específicos a ser consideradas agentes creativos generadores de cambio e innovación y han conseguido niveles de aceptación y relevancia considerables en muy distintos países.*

«Sorkuntza-industrien» definizioaren barruan zer dagoen azaltzen duten eztabaiden ondorioz, horien onarpena mugatu egin da, baita politika egokiak bideratzea ere. Aurrez aurre dauden kategoria estatistiko eta analitikoak daude, esaterako copyright-aren industria, edukien industriak, kultura-industriak, eduki digitalekoak, arteen eta entretenimenduen industriak, etab., eta horrela oso zaila da megasektore honi buruzko datu zehatz, fidagarri eta egokiak biltzea. Beste kritika garrantzitsu bat ere egiten da: lan ‘sortzailea’ idealizatzen dutela eta kontzeptua sortu zituen herrialdetik kanpo esportatzeak inperialismo inplizitua ekar dezakeela. Hala ere, sorkuntza-industriek aldaketak izan dituzte azken hamar urteetan: lehen sektore jakin batzuetarako zeuden mugatuta, eta orain aldaketa eta berrikuntza dakarten sorkuntza-eragiletzat hartzen dira, eta kontuan hartzeko moduko onarpen- eta garrantzi-mailak lortu dituzte herrialde oso ezberdinetan.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The development of the creative industries 'proposition' has caused a great deal of controversy: media, cultural and communication studies' critique of the concept has been as consistent as it has been negative. The critique can derive from an anti-statist suspicion of 'talking to the ISAs' (Ideological State Apparatuses) in Bennett's (1998) inimitable words. There may be an in-principle opposition to 'creativity' (which can imply bourgeois individualism and essentialism) displacing 'culture' (in the classic British cultural studies tradition, code for solidarity and collectivity). For analysts such as Angela McRobbie (2002), there are grounded worries about the types of work and work cultures encouraged by such discourse. At the level of political economy, creative industries is neo-liberalism in a pure form (Miller, 2002).

The broader controversies raised by creative industries have had much to do with the fact that the policy proposition had been examined and adopted by a wide range of government and other actors in the ten years since the framework was first outlined by the British government in 1998. The gap between the enthusiasm with which it has been taken up in policy circles across many parts of the world and at many levels (national, state, regional, inter-governmental), and the depth of opposition to it academically, marks it out as a major contemporary instance of the gap between policy and critique about which I wrote in the early 1990s (Cunningham, 1992).

The critiques can be brought together (by, for example, Banks and O'Connor (2009)) under the charges of an economistic account of culture; definitional incoherence and the consequences for data and evidence; the utopianisation of 'creative' labour; and, most dramatically for adaptation of creative industries outside its originating country, an implicit imperialism in the export of the notion internationally.

This paper seeks to respond to these criticisms.

## 2. A CRASH-MERGE OF CULTURE AND ECONOMICS?

Two of the most trenchant critics, within cultural, media and communication studies, of the 'simplistic narrative of the merging of culture and economics' are Nicholas Garnham (2005) and Toby Miller (2009; 2002).

Garnham's critique centres on an extensive commentary on the core intellectual lineage of the information society and its fatal links to creative industries: Daniel Bell and post-industrialism, Schumpeterian theories of innovation, information economics; services and post-Fordism, and the 'technologies of freedom' argument of de Sola Pool. Creative industries ideas are a kind of Trojan Horse, secreting the intellectual heritage of the information society and its technocratic baggage into the realm of cultural practice, suborning the latter's proper claims on the public purse and self-understanding, and aligning it with inappropriate bedfellows such as business services, telecommunications and calls for increases in generic creativity. Garnham rests his case on the normative imperative to return to the 'cultural industries' policy focus on distribution (critique of multimedia conglomeration) and consumption (smoothing of the popular market for culture for access and equity) of which he was a main proponent in the 1980s (Garnham, 1997/1987).

Garnham is right to say that the creative industries idea is about linking culture to discourses of information, knowledge and innovation. He is wrong to assume that the latter trumps the former in each and every case, or indeed that it has to be seen at all as a zero sum game. There are two key variations on Garnham as we look at the take-up of creative industries around the world. The first is a dramatic shift from an alleged top-down, central government-directed, triumphalism. In almost all instances of its take-up elsewhere, it has been more tentative and exploratory, allowing for more regional variation, and adaptive to local circumstances. It is the very lack of certainty - despite Garnham's 'It assumes that we already know, and thus can take for granted, what the creative industries are, why they are important and thus merit supporting policy initiatives' (Garnham, 2005, p. 16) —that has meant constant definitional wrangling, regular recasting of what counts in the creative industries— in general, a productive ferment, rather than preordained certainty.

The second is that the ‘unquestioned prestige that now attaches to the information society and to any policy that supposedly favours its development’ (Garnham, 2005, p. 20) is quite unevenly engaged. When it is, it takes two forms. In the first, in developed countries, it is as much about softening the technocratic orientation of the information society as it is about taking the creative industries discourse beyond the cultural and media sector and into digital content and the creative economy fields. In the second, in the global south, it is to leverage support for the development of basic infrastructure, the ‘unquestioned prestige’ of which absolutely cannot be taken for granted but it still very much in the process of being laid in. I identify four main global variations on the creative industries theme as it has travelled around the world in the US, Europe, Asia, and the global south, in the section of the paper ‘Policy adaptation: an international hegemony?’, below.

For Miller, the position of a critical cultural policy studies has become the benchmark from which now to judge the extent to which a creative industries approach has fallen short of posture of an acceptable criticality. Miller is in concert with Garnham in charging that creative industries is a ‘neo-liberal’ sell-out. However for Miller the alternative is not necessarily a return to the cultural industries moment of the 1980s in the West, but a spatial displacement to what he regards as the exemplary cultural politics of Latin-American cultural activism. He recommends programs of education and engagement through ‘the lens of subalternity and transterritorial as well as local social identities with an emphasis on cultural policy’. In a clarion call to remain ‘vibrantly independent’, Miller enjoins the cultural studies community to engage with social movements and their potentially positive articulation to government rather than having any truck with corporate capital.

Such critiques are directed at the political or ideological implications of the creative industries discourse. It seems to me that the crude binary of an acceptable criticality and a posture of ‘neo-liberal’ capture prevents a productive engagement with the wide range of shades of ideological colour of governments, corporations, social movements and bureaucracies. This is in part to take up what Garnham himself argued in the inaugural issue of the key journal *Cultural Studies* in the 1980s: most people’s cultural needs and aspirations are being —for better or worse— supplied by the market as goods and services.

One way through this ideological stand-off is to focus on a key feature of creative industries discourse: an ‘enterprise’ approach to business development. This seeks to take account of the vast preponderance of small business or small business-like entities that populate the sector in most countries, and addresses what we might call the ‘economic subalterns’ in our midst. This is a sector running on tight margins and facing high rates of failure, in need of flexible and in many cases experimental forms of state facilitation, and which rarely figures on governments’ cultural policy radar. The point is that much of the independent creative enterprises sector (games, design, web development, fashion, music, audiovisual) is organised in this way and

spans the commercial and the subvented, complicating the binary thinking that seeks to exclude the commercial from anything other than critique. Small business enterprise or entrepreneurship, and policies to support it, often has to run the gauntlet against much more powerful vested interests which I have nominated previously as Big Culture, Big Business and Big Government (Cunningham, 2002).

From this perspective, the limits of the cultural Marxist critique come into sharper relief. I would argue that the problems that capitalism gives rise to are not the result of the classic exercise of power and hegemony characteristic of the monopoly phase of capitalism, but of the 'creative destruction' of such a phase. Schumpeter's famous phrase is reflective of Lash and Urry's (1987) notion of 'disorganised capitalism', or of Robert Reich's (2007) claim that large corporations have significantly less power now than three decades ago.

The consequence is that there is a need to explore an economic 'middle way' in debates about the emergent nature of the creative economy, between the arts subsidy and political economy models of the 'narrative' of the relationship between culture and economy. This involves a Schumpeterian emphasis on entrepreneurial or enterprise economics (Cunningham, Banks & Potts, 2008). Schumpeter, in 1942 in *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, argued that Marx had 'no adequate theory of enterprise' and failed to 'distinguish the entrepreneur from the capitalist'. Schumpeter 'told of capitalism in the way most people experience it: as consumer desires aroused by endless advertising; as forcible jolts up and down the social pecking order; as goals reached, shattered, altered, then reached once more as people try, try again'. He knew that 'creative destruction fosters economic growth but also that it undercuts cherished human values.' Schumpeter's most recent biographer, Thomas McCraw, says that he elucidated what capitalism 'really feels like' (quoted in McCraw, 2007, p. 349; McCraw, 2007, p. 6).

This approach gives us a better handle on what is happening at this present moment of challenge to the time-honoured models of production, dissemination and consumption in the media and cultural fields offered by new, mobile and interactive digital media and Internet-based modes of communication and distribution. There is now a veritable wave of proposal, analysis and prognostication addressing this question. Chris Anderson (2006) and Mark Pesce (<http://www.mindjack.com/feature/piracy051305.html>) exposit the limitations of the mass market mentality that can be addressed by Internet-based harvesting of the 'long tail' and exploitation of 'hyperdistribution'. Charles Leadbeater (2008) explores diverse domains where the power of socially networked collective creation and communication are at work. Recent studies by Henry Jenkins (2006) and Yochai Benkler (2006) suggest that consumers' participation in new media production practice now generates significant economic and cultural value. Media production may be shifting from a closed industrial model towards a more open network in which consumers are now participatory co-creators of media culture product. Henry Jenkins is careful to remind us

that this is not only a direct outcome of technology but a significant cultural phenomenon in which we're seeing what happens when the means of cultural production and distribution are co-evolving between producer, aggregator and user.

Rather than foreclose the question of how significant a challenge to business-as-usual with the political economy nostrum that monopoly capitalism will always-already triumph, there is a need to explore new opportunities for content creation and distribution that arise in this turbulent space and explore new theories which attempt to deal with these new emergent realities.

It is important to articulate, in the light of these critiques, a value orientation that connects theoretical debate to the practical domain of policy development. This might be summed up as: what are the policy frameworks that can assist emerging, as much as established and dominant, culture to thrive? Answering that question requires a recognition that governments and state policy apparatuses are typically technocratic in their orientation, and controlling in the way that they interact with non-government players, including policy analysts —and they must deal with well organised, effective big business lobbies, especially in the media and communications space. Policy and industry also often have little understanding of the dimensions of social and cultural change in the sphere of cultural consumption and production. Such change is posing increasingly large challenges for policy and industry today, and not only in the media and cultural fields. There is also a blurring of the previous structural boundaries between consumption and production of the old linear model on which pretty much all cultural, media and communication studies had relied. These burgeoning cultures clearly threaten big business models, as well as many professional production cadres, which usually depend on big business distributional clout to transmit their product to market.

These principles and insights can be informed by a value orientation of tracking and promoting cultural and social change that embraces consumer-citizen empowerment, while not perpetuating a doctrinaire divide between the consumer and citizen aspects of such empowerment. This position, of course, evokes the shades of many core debates in political economy and cultural studies. The work of John Fiske (1989), John Hartley (2002), Nicholas Garnham (1990), Peter Golding and Graeme Murdock (1997), and many others, are the reference points here about where the balance between the area of content and social agency, and the area of ownership, control and structure, exists. It is the nature of such foundational debates that they are not summarily resolved; indeed, they are usually structured as to be effectively unresolvable.

But the social and cultural policy point is to promote, and build, alignments of interest between small business enterprise cultures, the not-for-profit sector, state supported culture in the communication and cultural field, such as public service broadcasting and other elements, corporates committed to good citizenship, pro-

gressive investment strategies and labour practices; and social or participatory DIY culture movements.

The many critics of the creative industries concept see it as a kind of Trojan horse, suborning the integrity of the case for support for culture through an untoward economism. It could, however, be viewed as opening up the hitherto ossified relation between economics and culture; a relationship no longer to be limited to questions of the arts and market failure (cultural economics), or of rationales for cultural regulation. Instead, there is a focus on the role of media, culture and communications in generating change and growth in what Schumpeter called the capitalist 'engine'. Engaging with the heterodox school of evolutionary economics (the intellectual source of much innovation thinking) can, perhaps ironically, bring us back to many animating questions of our field—what are the genuine advances in the communications and media sectors (including aesthetic advances), how would we measure them, and what have been their impact? These are indeed questions of cultural value, from which the debates have rarely veered.

Indeed, the appropriate relations between the economic and the cultural might be best traced as the evolution of cultural forms as social and industrial norms themselves evolve. The state developed a role, from mid-twentieth century, to address market failure by asserting the ameliorating and elevating role of the arts (the values expressed in the arts can never, finally, be reconciled with those of the market). It then engaged in regulation and support of what came to be dubbed the 'cultural' industries (popular cultural value was significantly embodied in the products and services of these industries but they needed protection from the market's levelling of cultural value). Then the high relative growth in the creative sector led to 'creative industry' development strategies based on the healthiness of traditional macroeconomic (GDP, employment, export growth) and microeconomic (enterprise sustainability) indicators and the beginnings of the mainstreaming of cultural activity in the knowledge-intensive services economy. Then, the crisis in mass media business models and the rapid co-evolution of the market and household sectors (the pro-am revolution, social network markets, creativity as a social technology, contemporary innovation policy focused on creative human capital) suggests that addressing future potential sources of value creation and the nature and structure of future markets will have much to do with emergent cultural resources at the population level.

Each of these models of the relation of the cultural to the economic accretes and overlays the others in the contemporary situation. Each has an account of cultural value. Each stood in a critical relation to the dominant formations of their time, and each had, and has, a potentially emancipatory function.

### 3. COHERENCE AND THE QUESTION OF DATA

There is no question that definitional wrangling over what counts as creative industries has limited its uptake. There is almost exasperation in Simon Roodhouse's survey of what he calls the 'tortuous and contorted definitional history' of the arts, cultural and creative industries (Roodhouse, 2001, p. 505). There are contending analytical and statistical categories such as copyright industries, content industries, cultural industries, digital content, the arts or entertainment industries, and more. This category confusion means that it is difficult to gather accurate, authoritative and timely data about sectors and that it is subject to unfocused analysis and intervention.

A survey of the data challenges faced by the creative industries notes the 'extremely difficult statistical measurement issues to overcome' (Pattinson Consulting, 2003, p. 6). These issues are part of the broader challenges of measuring effectively domains undergoing substantial change through the progressive convergence of the computer, communication, cultural and content industries. This is the subject of a growing academic and policy literature (eg., Burns Owens Partnership et al, 2006; Pattinson Consulting, 2003; Pratt, 2000, 2004, 2008; Wyszomirski, 2008). New hybrid occupations and industry sectors emerge that do not comfortably fit into standard statistics classifications. The 10–15 year gap between updates of these classification schemes means there is almost no comprehensive, standardised employment or industry data available during the critical emergence period of many sectors. Measuring the production and purchasing of physical products is difficult enough but measuring the number, size and value of the delivery of services is an order of magnitude more difficult. The challenges in seeking to measure the flow-on impact of emergent digital creative industries services to other sectors of the economy are even greater.

Having readily conceded the degree of difficulty—one faced by all jurisdictions, supra-, inter- and sub-national as well as national—it must also be said that progress is being made on better data that is statistically robust and of value in the development of policy (see Higgs & Cunningham, 2008). Productive effort has been made at the intergovernmental level at organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Science & Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). At the national level, there have been substantial mapping exercises in the UK, Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, France and in other locations at the sub-national and local levels. Specific sectors of the creative industries have been the focus of concerted work to map their size and impact on the wider economy (for example, design in Ontario, Victoria, New Zealand and the UK).[1] And at the cutting edge

of policy-relevant data analytics, there is progress being made on defining the ‘creative economy’, which can be taken to mean the contribution which the creative workforce and/or the creative industries sectors themselves are making to their national or regional economies (Higgs, Cunningham & Bakhshi, 2008; Higgs, Cunningham & Pagan, 2007; Bakhshi, McVittie & Simmie, 2008).

The data challenges faced by policy makers and analysts seeking to grasp the size, growth rates, economic impact and links with the wider economy of the creative industries are an integral part of the productive ferment evidenced as economies and societies undergo rapid change due to digitisation, convergence, the growth of knowledge-intensive services and services-based economies more generally. The very difficulties are themselves an indicator of significance.

#### 4. PRECARIOUS LABOUR

A robust and burgeoning literature has developed recently around the notion of precarious labour-much of it focussed on the specific condition of ‘creative labour’ (for example: McRobbie, 2002; Terranova, 2004; Deuze, 2007; Scholz, 2008; Rossiter, 2007; Gill & Pratt, 2008; Ross, 2002, 2006, 2009). This debate has largely been conducted in the mode of a wide-ranging ideology critique. Criticisms of the presumed overly-celebratory accounts of the increased significance of creative labour in contemporary economies have focussed on so-called neoliberal concepts of human capital and of labour which inform such panglossian endorsements of glamorous and attractive, but volatile and precarious, forms of work.

Indeed, in his panoramic overview of the state of play in media and cultural studies, Toby Miller (2010) characterises the future of these disciplines as lying in just such a focus on labour. Characterising the dominant paradigms as ‘misleadingly functionalist on its effects and political-economy side’, and ‘misleadingly conflictual on its active-audience side’, Miller argues that.

Work done on audience effects and political economy has neglected struggle, dissonance, and conflict in favour of a totalizing narrative in which the media dominate everyday life. Work done on active audiences has over-emphasized struggle, dissonance, and conflict, neglecting infrastructural analysis in favour of a totalizing narrative in which consumers dominate everyday life (2010, p. 50).

Miller’s third mode should ‘should synthesize and improve’ the dominant paradigms by its analytical concentration on the status of labour. He reminds us in the most ringing of tones, ‘There would be no culture, no media, without labour. Labour is central to humanity’ (2010, p. 50).

It is not hard to see why this focus has developed. It goes to the heart of Marxism’s theory of labour as surplus value. This analysis, based on increasing im-

miseration of the masses through decreasing returns to scale, and so powerful in the mid-nineteenth century when the industrial revolution was wreaking its greatest 'creative destruction', has not largely been borne out. While later versions of Marxist analysis have theorised immiseration being pushed out firstly to the imperial world's colonies, then more generally to the developing world, the labour force in the developed West have largely benefitted from the growth of the capitalist 'pie'. It is therefore essential for that theory that aggregate improvements in the conditions for labour be interrogated to reveal their hitherto hidden precarity.

Studies of the creative workforce undertaken by the Centre which I direct place these matters in an empirical frame.[2] Broadly speaking, the nature of work in the cultural, media and communication fields are typical of much knowledge work today. It is characterised by the increasing occurrence of contract labour requiring high degrees of mobility, by multiple career pathways, by increasingly global opportunities and challenges, and by the diminution of the market organiser roles played by many large (often public sector) agencies in mentoring, apprenticeship and structured whole-of-career pathways for creative workers. In most cases, 'learning-by-doing' apprenticeship opportunities, such as these organisations used to provide, have declined significantly.

Certainly the creative workforce is distinctive along some key axes. I will use some Australian data to illustrate this. Across all people employed in the Australian creative industries at the 2006 Census, for example, 12% are sole-practitioners compared to 7% overall for all other service industries. 60% of employment in the industry classification for Creative Artists, Musicians, Writers & Performers is self-employment. There are four other creative industries sectors having self-employment rates twice the average: photography, craft jewellery, music (and other sound recording activities) and other specialised design services.

This might support claims for distinctive precarity, but other findings complicate such a picture. Compared with other employment, particularly in the traditional professions, creative employment disproportionately occurs outside the creative industries themselves. In other words, creatively trained people are more likely to be working outside the specialist creative industry sectors than inside them, and this is the case in most countries, and has been the case for a long time. As we have seen, the degree of embeddedness is greatest in the many 'design' occupations: 60% of the employment for design occupations in Australia occurs outside of specialist design industry sectors.

As we have seen in the Australian data, while there has been a slowing of growth between 2001 and 2006, when viewed over a longer time period, the creative industries have grown at a significantly faster pace than the aggregate economy. The Centre for International Economics (CIE, 2009, p. 7) has shown that, over the eleven years to 2007-08, the creative industries expanded at an average annual rate of 5.8

per cent, compared to average GDP growth of 3.6 per cent over that period. Growth is spread across a broad range of industry sectors (there are more creatives employed outside the creative industries than inside them), and creatives are well paid (all segments are above the national average except for music and performing arts). Outside these studies, it has also been established that creative workforce has a significantly higher level of formal qualification than the workforce as a whole.

If we can generalise at all from these data, it would be to conclude that the creative workforce shares a number of the characteristics of knowledge workers generally. While it may be somewhat distinctive in the degree of 'flexibility' seen in its labour market, creatives are also generally remunerated well for their services (which significantly complicates the picture usually painted about creative workers based on the typicality of the independent artist), and have 'options' and mobility due to their qualification levels and experience in project-based work. However, this, as we saw in the discussion of the arts trident, in no way obviates the need to address the endemic problems of artists' incomes.

A more holistic picture of precarity in contemporary labour would balance these characteristics of the creative workforce against the problems faced by those working in sectors with declining demand for labour (agriculture), or faced with major restructuring due to long-term challenges like climate change (mining), or face exploitation due to low qualification-and-wage structures (migrant labour, piece workers, low wage service sectors). It is arguable that these sectors of the workforce face a much more precarious future than do creatives. In addition, our studies suggest that embedded creatives do not generally exhibit the profiles attributed to creative labour by the precarity school of critical media and cultural studies. A great many creatives, we must assume, have managed precarity by working outside the creative industries.

I believe that the debate about precarious labour has deep implications for pedagogy in our disciplinary field. It seems to me to be a matter of core pedagogical ethics to refine critical stances in the disciplinary traditions in cultural, media and communications studies traditions to take account of vocational aspirations, workplace trends and the broader structure of the economy into which students will be moving and will be looking for career opportunities. Engaging students in the nature of work and labour, involving the exploration of the notion of the portfolio career, self employment, and the expected multiplicity of career directions in any one person's working life, especially in these fields, is *sine qua non*. There must be a balance between a 'glass half full' and 'glass half empty' analytics. The conditions of precarious labour, which is a growing focus of research in critical communication studies, needs to be addressed as a current reality, neither to be celebrated nor critiqued tout court.

The key textbook in the creative industries field is edited by a team led by John Hartley (2005). Along with the more celebratory or dispassionate analytics, the book features Angela McRobbie on exclusionary employment trends in the creative in-

dustries, Toby Miller and colleagues on some of the lessons on the politics of labour to be learned from their study of global Hollywood, as well as the links of the creative industries discourse to social movement politics (Graham Meikle, Geert Lovink) and multiculturalism (Canclini). It might equally have featured Andrew Ross (2002, 2006) on the exploitative nature of labour in the new economy.

However, much of the critique of labour conditions in the creative industries (and other areas of knowledge-intensive services) carries a little-examined presumption that conditions in the past were clearly superior and that it should be possible to return to such conditions —if only the dynamics of global political economy could be done away with. But I don't think the toothpaste can be squeezed back into the tube, the egg unscrambled. The nature of work in the cultural, media and communication fields, as fields typical of much knowledge work today, are characterised by the increasing occurrence of contract labour, by multiple career pathways, by increasingly global opportunities and challenges, and by the diminution of the market organiser roles played by many large (often public sector) agencies in mentoring, apprenticeship and structured whole-of-career pathways for creative workers. In most cases, 'learning-by-doing' apprenticeship opportunities, such as these organisations used to provide, have declined significantly.

Critique of precarious labour strikes me as a bit like David Gauntlett's (2000; and see Gauntlett & Horsley, 2005) acerbic point about media studies academics belatedly discovering what has been obvious to their student populations for some time about online worlds. It seems to me that building into cultural, media and communications studies curricula the analytical and practical skills (including 'left' knowledge and skills about rights at work and critical knowledge of corporate citizenship or lack of it, for example, and 'right' knowledge and confidence of global 'creative class' opportunities) is a self-evidently necessary balance between critique and vocational realism.

## 5. POLICY ADAPTATION: AN INTERNATIONAL HEGEMONY?

I have earlier referred to Garnham's charge of hegemonic triumphalism in the creative industries discourse: 'It assumes that we already know, and thus can take for granted, what the creative industries are, why they are important and thus merit supporting policy initiatives' (Garnham, 2005, p. 16). However, when looked at more closely, in almost all instances of its take-up elsewhere, it has been more tentative and exploratory, allowing for more regional variation, and adaptive to local circumstances. Rather than a Trojan horse, it might be better thought of as a Rorschach blot, being invested in form varying reasons and with varying emphases and outcomes. Policy discourse, particularly that which has travelled so extensively so quickly as creative industries, will inevitably assemble differing evidence bases, inter-

ests and explanatory schema. (I have called this ‘ideas-thick’ rather than ‘ideas-rich’ language (Cunningham, 1992, p. 35).) It is the interactions amongst the contending elements that determine whether a policy discourse can be said to have useful or deleterious effects —effects which should not be presumed in advance.

We can broadly identify several global variations on the creative industries theme as it has travelled around the world.[3] In the United States, the broad sectoral field embraced by the UK definition remains resolutely divided into arts and culture on the one hand and the entertainment/copyright industries on the other. Wyszomirski reminds us that the US’ paradigmatic hegemony in entertainment exists normatively at the national level, while at the regional, state and local level, policies to support the creative industries struggle for space and acceptance as in most other countries. She shows that the debates around the creative industries (which many have assumed have not been needed or noticed in the US) have begun to make their mark: a language at once more focused than culture as a whole way of life but much broader than the traditional arts has effected a significant change in policy thinking ‘from a resource poor, cost diseased sector in need of subsidy to a set of community assets that can be engines of local development’ (2008, p. 203). The impetus for the adaptation of the creative industries idea, then, has come from the subsidised arts end of the spectrum and is resolutely sub-national in its implementation. This focus is often found combined with place-based, regional and municipal development strategies inspired by the work of Richard Florida (2002).

As a generalisation, European variations on the creative industries tend to stress a greater degree of communitarian benefit and strategies of social inclusion than is evident in the original UK settings. When ICT is considered in this context, it is its social and cultural uptake as much as its potential as an economic driver, that receives attention. The European Commission’s (2006) major study *The Economy of Culture in Europe*, explores the links between culture, creativity and innovation. Much of its emphasis is that cultural development serves as a tool of social integration and territorial cohesion. The tensions lie between city re-birthing strategies, UK creative economy discourse, and the deep cultural heritage of European regions, not around the prestige of the information society. While the latter is certainly in evidence at the level of the major supranational policy bureaux (European Commission, European Union, OECD), this kind of policy development is not, and cannot be, as directive (‘top down’) as central government creative industries policy and programs enacted in the UK.

Many Asian nations have adopted the idea of creative industries in ways that have definitively delivered it out of its Anglospheric embrace. Kong, Gibson, Khoo and Semple’s (2006) careful tracing of the way creative industries discourse has been adapted to the local contexts of China, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, China and India shows that creative industries works in intermittent, sometimes incoherent or contradictory ways, and emphasises especially the role of

national socio-economic and political circumstances. This, arguably, is a sign of dynamism, not of a failure to attain the standards of a Platonic ideal of a rational-comprehensive policy model. In the light of Garnham's argument, only Hong Kong explicitly includes software and computing as a key sector of the creative industries. In Singapore, for example, the discourse has been used to begin to displace, or at least supplement, the prestige of ICT—which has hitherto held unquestioned sway in a city state known for its normative technocracy. 'Creative industries' has come to mean a quite radical emphasis on creative thinking and problem solving and a challenge to time honoured Confucian educational models and an new inscription of the prestige of the artistic endeavour.

The creative industries discourse in the global South is one which must engage with cultural heritage, poverty alleviation and basic infrastructure, as preconditions for gaining leverage. In the global south, the discourse can be used to leverage support for the development of basic infrastructure, both cultural and ICT—the 'unquestioned prestige' of the latter absolutely cannot be taken for granted. It is to these regions that UN agencies like UNESCO, WIPO, UNCTAD, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for South-South Cooperation devote their attention. UNESCO's Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and its international initiative the Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity positions the creative industries as 'vehicles of cultural identity that play an important role in fostering cultural diversity' (UNESCO and Global Alliance 2005). UNCTAD and UNDP's mission of poverty alleviation through enhanced trade opportunity relies on procrustean and inalienable creative human capital as the fundamental economic driver. This much is made clear in the comparisons between developed and developing (most particularly the least developed) countries in the most recent major Creative Economy Report 2010 from the UN agencies tasked with tracking economic development opportunities for the developing world (UN 2010).

## 6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Rather than a Trojan Horse, the creative industries idea might be better thought of as a Rorschach blot, given its evolution from sector-specific mapping to economy-wide focus on creative inputs as generative of change and innovation, and its differing emphases and take-up in different regions over the last ten years. Rather than as a rational-comprehensive Platonic policy critic inveighing against inconsistency and incoherence, we might see in the discourse evidence of creative ferment as policy language tries to grasp both production and consumption in new economic conditions. Rather than fading out after the Blairite Cool Britannia 'spring', ten years on, the idea has evolved and spread: its take-up in economic powerhouses in Asia, its reframing around the 'creative economy', and its translation into UN agency-speak, suggest that its teenage years will be rambunctious.

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