Nice Work If You Can Get It

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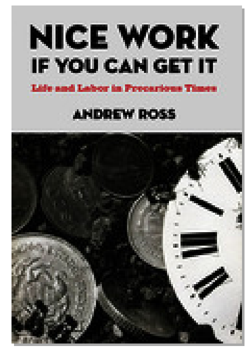

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The Mercurial Career of Creative Industries Policymaking in the United Kingdom, the European Union, and the United States

TRADE DEREGULATION HAS brought down barriers to the movement of capital and jobs, but it has not freed up movement of people in pursuit of a better livelihood. The upshot is that work is allowed to circulate around the globe with impunity, but workers themselves are not—in fact, many are criminalized if they cross borders (Bacon 2008). The higher up the skills curve, the less strictly this rule applies, if only because it has not proven so easy to separate skills from employees. Nonetheless, corporate strategies loosely known as "knowledge transfer" have been devised to migrate brainpower from the heads of well-paid employees to a cheaper labor pool offshore. Increasingly sophisticated work-flow technologies can now slice up the contents of a job into work tasks, assign them to different parts of the globe, and reassemble the results into a meaningful whole. Most recently, trade liberalization, in India and China in particular, has enabled large amounts of skilled, professional work to be performed in discount offshore locations. As more and more countries strive to enter the upper reaches of industry and services, the competition to attract high-tech or knowledge-rich investment has intensified, and so these skill-intensive sectors are now seen as key to the game of catch-up. In response, new trade policies are being rolled out in the global North to keep wealthy nations ahead of the game.

Most readers will be familiar with how this contest is played out in the technology industries. First Japan, then Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and, most recently, China, have all taken their place, whether by invitation or by self-propulsion, in the hierarchy of global production chains for advanced technology. In the meantime, the United States has strained to preserve its traditional dominance in innovation and top-end design, in large part by manipulating property law, tax codes, patent procedures, export controls, and immigration regulations. Brainpower is now organized on an international basis, with engineers and their knowledge circulating between Silicon Valley and East Asian nodes: Hsinchu, Penang, Singapore, and Shanghai (Saxenian 2006). Managers at each of the Asian locations have to wheel and deal to leverage technology transfers that will maintain their position in the chain, while all are trying to steal the fire from the United States.

Software follows a similar pattern, but its cultural character and easy replicability feeds into an economy where intellectual property (IP) and other legal efforts to retain traditional monopoly rents play an ever-growing role in capital wealth creation. In such an economy, the competition to capture value mutates more rapidly. During the dot-com years of the late 1990s, the adolescent surge of Internet-based operations appeared to offer a different model of valuation and innovation from the customary patterns in the technology industries. Internet-based development was rooted in content, ideas, and humanistic creativity, as opposed to purely technical invention. This shift in focus, toward skills that had hitherto been quite marginal to the productive economy, promised to open up untapped sources of financial value. For a while, talk about unleashing creativity was all the rage in managerial circles, giving rise to the folie de grandeur known as the New Economy.

The hothouse environment of these years proved to be a heady incubator for the fledgling efforts at creative industries (CI) policymaking. The fiscal windfall promised by the burgeoning new media sector prompted government and corporate managers to imagine that the traditional and emergent creative professions could also be brought into the same orbit of financialization as IT start-ups. The result was a new composite "creative economy"; and because the self-directed work mentality of artists, designers, writers, and performers was so perfectly adapted to the freelancing profile favored by advocates of liberalization, this new arrangement occupied a key evolutionary niche on the business landscape. Cultural work was nominated as the new face of neoliberal entrepreneurship, and its practitioners were cited as the hit-making models for the IP jackpot economy. Arguably more important, the visible presence of creative lifestyles in select city neighborhoods, now designated as cultural districts, helped to boost property value in these precincts and adjacent others in accord with well-documented, and by now formulaic, cycles of gentrification (Smith 1996; Ley 1996).

After the dot-com boom faded, and as offshore outsourcing began to take its toll on technology jobs, the creative sector held out the promise that its skill-intensive jobs would not be transferred elsewhere. Unlike high-end manufacturing industries, which require expensive technical infrastructures and customarily lavish tax incentives, creative occupations do not entail costly institutional supports and they can endow a city or a region with a kind of unique distinction that helps attract investment. The combination of low levels of public investment with the potential for high-reward outcomes was guaranteed to win the attention of managers on the lookout for a turnaround strategy for their faltering urban or regional economies. Accustomed to seeing corporate investors come and go, they seized on this rare opportunity to capitalize on a place-based formula for redevelopment. Governments, both local and national, were quick to provide support with policies aimed at stimulating the entrepreneurial energies of activities now loosely grouped under the rubric of "creative industries" (CI). Under the new policies, which were adopted or emulated in countries around the world, urban and regional hubs would be groomed as centers for unleashing the latent creativity of individuals and communities, and the image of the nation would be irradiated with the wonder stuff of innovation.

It was far from clear whether these policies could support a productive economy with an engine of sustainable jobs at its core. Much of the evidence so far suggests that the primary impact is on rising land value and rent accumulations, which are parasitic side effects, to say the least, rather than transmissions of the ideas originated by creative workers (Harvey 2001). For those who want to see sustainable job creation, the rise of CI policymaking presents a conundrum. The guiding consensus is that culture-based enterprise can be promoted as a driver of economic development for cities, regions, and nations that want to catch up, or else be left out of the knowledge society. At the very least, then, the policy spotlight ought to present some new, long-term opportunities for creative workers accustomed to eking a makeshift living out of art, expression, design, or performance. So far, however, the kind of development embraced by policymakers seems guaranteed merely to elevate this traditionally unstable work profile into an inspirational model for youth looking to make an adventure out of their entry into the contingent labor force. If the creative industries become the ones to follow, all kinds of jobs, in short, may well look more and more like musicians' gigs: nice work if you can get it.

The relevant shift in CI nomenclature—from the rusting coinage of "cultural industries" to the newly minted "creative industries"—is usually credited to the United Kingdom's incoming pro-business New Labour administration of 1997. Prime Minister Tony Blair's zealous modernizers renamed the Department of National Heritage as the Department of Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS), and promoted, as its policy bailiwick, an entrepreneurial model of self-organized innovation in the arts and knowledge sectors of the economy. In this chapter, I will summarize how this policy paradigm has fared in the years since the establishment of the DCMS. Focusing on its career in the United Kingdom, Continental Europe, and the United States, I will describe some of the reasons for its enthusiastic reception, assess its model of job creation from a qualitative standpoint, and analyze the politicized reaction to its implementation.

Not surprisingly for a policy-intensive paradigm, statistics generated about CI have been legion. By contrast, there has been precious little attention to the quality of work life with which creative livelihoods are associated. Job gratification, for creatives, has always come at a heavy sacrificial cost—longer hours in pursuit of the satisfying finish, price discounts in return for aesthetic recognition, self-exploitation in response to the gift of autonomy, and dispensability in exchange for flexibility. Yet there is nary a shred of attention to these downsides in the statements and reports of CI policymakers, save a passing concern that the "instrumentalizing" of culture might bring undue harm to the nobility of aesthetics, as evinced by Tessa Jowell, Blair's second DCMS minister (2004). No doubt, it is commonly assumed that creative jobs, by their nature, are not deficient in gratification. If anything, their packaging of mental challenges and sensuous self-immersion is associated with a surfeit of pleasure and satisfaction. Proponents of this line of thinking may well concede that the life of creatives, in the past, has often been one of misery, frustration, and deprivation, but the given wisdom is that those pitfalls were primarily the result of economic neglect and social marginalization. In a milieu where creativity is celebrated on all sides, such drawbacks, it is assumed, will evaporate.

Yet the ethnographic evidence on knowledge and CI workplaces shows that sacrificial labor, market overexposure, and self-exploitation are still chronic on-the-job characteristics (Ross 2002; Gill 2002, 2007; Reidl, Schiffbanker, and Eichmann 2006; Huws 2003; Ehrenstein 2006; Perrons 2003). If policymakers were to undertake official surveys of the quality of work life, they would find the old formula for creative work very much alive and well in its newly marketized environment. In this respect, arguably the most instrumentally valuable aspect of the creative work traditions is the carryover of coping strategies, developed over centuries, to help practitioners endure a feast-or-famine economy in return for the promise of success and acclaim. The combination of this coping mentality with a production ethos of aesthetic perfectibility is a godsend for managers looking for employees capable of self-discipline under the most extreme job pressure. It is no surprise then that the "artist" has been seen as the new model worker for high-risk/high-reward employment (Menger 2002; McRobbie 2004).

It would be a mistake, however, to see the CI sector as simply a marketized uptake of these longstanding traditions of painstaking endeavor and abiding forbearance. The precariousness of work in these fields also reflects the infiltration of models of nonstandard employment from low-wage service sectors. The contingent conditions braved by low-skill workers and migrants are more and more normative at all occupational levels, whereas before, in the Keynesian era, they were characteristic of a secondary labor market, occupied primarily by women working on a part-time, contractual basis (Beck 2000). A broad spectrum of employees—brainworkers, adjunct teachers, temps, low-end service workers, migrants—are now existentially subject to these uncertain circumstances. But what are the prospects, if any, for these different class fractions to make common cause on the basis of this shared insecurity? And even if they did so, what would they be striving for?

The Concept Rollout

The antecedent concept of "cultural industries," as David Hesmondhalgh has argued, was initially developed in response to the overly reductive analysis of the "culture industry" by the Frankfurt School (despite their sophisticated blend of neo-Marxist critical theory, social research, and philosophy) (Hesmondhalgh 2007; Adorno and Horkheimer 1972). In the United Kingdom, policies to support cultural industries at grassroots levels were formulated by the Greater London Council (GLC), during Ken Livingstone's term of office, before it was abolished by Margaret Thatcher in 1986. The term *creative industries* was initially introduced in Australia by Paul Keating's government in the early 1990s, but its definitive expression, in the founding documents of Blair's DCMS, bore all the breathless hallmarks of New Economy thinking: technological enthusiasm, the cult of youth, branding and monetization fever, and ceaseless organizational change (DCMS 1998). Regardless, the paradigm survived the New

Economy burnout and was further endowed by statistical and fiscal backing from the Treasury and the Department of Trade and Industry.

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

It may be too early to predict the ultimate fate of the CI policy paradigm. But skeptics have already prepared the way for its demise: it will not generate jobs; it is a recipe for magnifying patterns of class polarization; its function as a cover for the corporate IP grab will become all too apparent; its urban development blueprint will price out the very creatives on whose labor it depends; its reliance on self-promoting rhetoric runs far in advance of its proven impact; its cookie-cutter approach to economic development does violence to regional specificity; and its adoption of an instrumental value of creativity will cheapen the true worth of artistic creation (Hesmondhalgh and Pratt 2005). Still others are inclined simply to see the new policy rubric as "old wine in new bottles"—a glib production of spin-happy New Labourites, hot for naked marketization but mindful of the need for socially acceptable dress. For those who take a longer, more orthodox Marxist view, the turn toward CI is surely a further symptom of an accumulation regime at the end of its effective rule, spent as a productive force, awash in financial speculation, and obsessed with imagery, rhetoric, and display (Arrighi 1994, 2005).

Scholars and activists with ties to the labor movement can ill afford to be quite so cynical or high-minded in their response to these developments. Industrial restructuring over the last three decades has not been kind to the cause of secure or sustainable livelihoods, and indeed liberalization has often been aimed directly at destroying the power of trade unions. In OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries, the traditional cultural industries (in entertainment, broadcasting, and the arts) have been a significant union stronghold with a long and fruitful history of mutual support among craft-based locals. While capital-owners in these industries have succeeded in offshoring production wherever possible, the power of organized labor has held on in core sectors, especially those dependent on a localized supply of skills and resources that cannot be readily duplicated offshore. In some cases, the migration of an industry to new regions has even helped to generate a pioneer union presence. To cite one example, when Walt Disney created Disney World in Central Florida in the 1960s, he had little option but to bring along the unions from California, instantly making his company not only the largest union employer in Florida but also a wage regulator for the state's tourism and hospitality industry.

Certainly, new patterns of investment, rapid technological change, and global production have all taken their toll on employees' capacity to engage in collective bargaining. But fair labor at union rates and conditions remains an institutional feature of the commercial cultural industries (film, radio, television, theater, journalism, and musical and other performing arts) as they were classically constituted from the 1930s. By contrast, the noncommercial arts have long been a domain of insecurity, underpayment, and disposability, interrupted only by those few who can break through into a lucrative circuit of fame. CI mappings, as pioneered by the DCMS, include the traditionally unionized commercial sectors, but the entrepreneurial paradigm touted by the policymakers defiantly points away from the fair standards commonly associated with a union job. The preferred labor profile is more typical of the eponymous struggling artist, whose long-abiding vulnerability to occupational neglect is now magically transformed, under the new order of creativity, into a model of enterprising, risk-tolerant pluck. So, too, the quirky, nonconformist qualities once cultivated by artists as a guarantee of quasi-autonomy from market dictates are now celebrated as the key for creative souls with portfolio careers to integrate into the "global value-chains" central to the new topography of creative markets.

Even more challenging, from the perspective of organized cultural labor, are the rapid flourishing of activities tied to self-publication or amateur content promotion. The most admired artifacts on the new information landscape are Web 2.0 sites like YouTube, Flickr, Twitter, Friendster, Second Life, Facebook, and MySpace, which, along with the exponentially expanding blogosphere, attest to the rise of amateurism as a serious source of public expression. Hailed as a refreshing break from the filtering of editorial gatekeepers, these social networking sites are also sources of free or cut-price content—a clear threat to the livelihoods of professional creatives whose prices are driven down by, or who simply cannot compete with, the commercial mining of these burgeoning, discount alternatives. The physical construction of the World Wide Web was itself a mammoth enterprise of free or under-compensated labor (Terranova 2000); its adoption as a commercial delivery model (based on the principle of "disintermediation," or cutting out the middle men) has taken its toll on jobs and small businesses in the brick-and-mortar world of sales, distribution, and retail; and its use for unauthorized file sharing has been legally opposed by all the entertainment unions as a threat to their industries' workforce. In many other respects, the rapid flowering of Internet amateurism has hastened on the process by which the burden of productive waged labor is increasingly transferred to users or consumers—outsourced, as it were, to what Italian autonomists like Mario Tronti and Raniero Panzieri described as the "social factory" at large (Tronti 1966; Panzieri 1973).

Nor is the Web-enabled "liberation" of individual creators an easy escape from corporate capture. Self-generated Internet buzz has been hailed as a viable avenue for artists looking to market their work independently of the entertainment majors. The most well-known examples include the musical careers of Sandi Thom, Arctic Monkeys, Lily Allen, and Gorillaz; films like *The Blair Witch Project* and *Snakes on a Plane*; and a variety of Chinese Internet celebrities, including brazen bloggers (Muzi Mei, Sister Hibiscus, Zhuying Qingtong), lip-syncing bands (Hou She Boys), and more exotic, provincial commodities like the Sichuanese mountain girl known as Tianxian MM. Arguably, the long-term beneficiaries of all these innovations are the corporate majors, for whom the profitable co-option of amateur strategies has long been a studied preoccupation: as in "cool hunting," the adoption of "indie" aesthetics and attitudes, the manufacture of microbrews, and the tactic of viral marketing among college students. In traditional media sectors, the related discount practice of reality-based programming is by now an indispensable principle of profit. Nothing has more radically undermined union efforts to preserve the integrity of pay scales for talent in the media industries than the use, in television and radio, of amateurs on reality (and talk) shows of every genre and description.

Wherever unions side with corporate employers—in the IP clampdown against file sharing, for example—there is every justification for lamenting the conservative character and outcome of business unionism. But in nonunionized industries like IT and software design, the labor implications of nonproprietary activities waged against the big corporate powers are equally fraught. For example, the cooperative labor ethos of the FLOSS (Free/Libre/Open Source Software) networks of engineers and programmers has been lauded as a noble model of mutual aid in the service of the public good (Stallman, Lessig, and Gay 2002; Weber 2004). But FLOSS, as I will argue at length in chapter 4, has been much less useful as a model for sustainable employment. Indeed high-tech multinationals, seduced by the prospect of utilizing unpaid, expert labor, have increasingly adopted open source software like Linux, reinforcing concerns that the ethical principle of free software for the people equals free labor for corporations.

Like corporations in pursuit of nonproprietary public goods, national economic managers are keen to discover fresh and inexpensive sources of value—hidden in off-the-chart places or unexploited cross-industry connections—that can be readily quantified as GNP. The biggest returns are in high tech, of course, and so it is not surprising that the CI bandwagon is being driven by the much-lionized experience of lucrative fields like software design. Indeed, the original inclusion of this sector in the DCMS map of the creative industries helps explain why governments were so willing, initially, to promote CI policies.[1] Wherever convenient, IT statistics can be used to embellish metrics in technology and cultural fields alike.

But what if the newfound interest of states and corporations were a genuine opportunity for creative labor? After all, the demand for creative, meaningful work in factories and offices was a rallying cry of the 1970s "revolt against work" that eroded the foundations of industrial Fordism. Ever since then, calls to humanize the workplace by introducing mentally challenging tasks and employee innovation have been pushed as an alternative to the humdrum routines of standard industrial employment (Fairfield 1974). However co-opted by management fads, the underlying desire for stimulating work in decent circumstances persists as a goal of nearly any employee. Could some of those hopes be realized through the elevation of creativity to a keystone of a genuinely progressive industrial policy, one that is rooted in public health rather than private profit?

If that is to happen, then critics of the new policy paradigm have an obligation to look for emerging profiles of qualitatively good work that might stand the test of time in an economic environment where the ground now shifts underneath workers with disturbing regularity. At the very least, and from a purely pragmatic perspective, as long as policymakers are open to information and ideas that they can turn into a rising index, then they are likely to be attentive to such qualitative input. But the higher goal must be not simply to generate GDP but to build livelihoods worth writing home about, and to fully realize the loose rhetoric about the creativity of ordinary people.

A Very UnBritish Coup

At the dawn of the postwar Labour government, its policy architect, Aneurin Bevan, depicted Britain as "an island of coal surrounded by a sea of fish." It was a memorable image of the nation's natural assets, and it captured his own party's mid-century sharp appetite for nationalizing them. Fifty years later, in the wake of Thatcherite denationalization, film honcho David Putnam offered an update: Britain was to become "an island of creativity surrounded by a sea of understanding" (Ryan 2000: 16). Not a winning phrase, for sure, but Putnam's characterization was an equally faithful reflection of the temper of the New Labour government that he would shortly join as an adviser to the DCMS on science and culture. More than a touch of Hollywood glitz attended the proceedings. From the outside, Tony Blair's "Cool Britannia" looked like a massive PR campaign to persuade the world that the country Napoleon once mocked as a nation of shopkeepers was now a nation of artists and designers, with the future in their enterprising bones. "Creative Britain" was rolled out under the klieg-light scrutiny of the tabloid media and, for several years, resembled one never-ending launch party, with artists and arts grandees playing front-page Eurostar roles ordinarily reserved for sports and movie celebrities.

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

As far as cultural policy went, almost every feature of the old dispensation was now subject to a makeover. When the Arts Council was established in 1945, its first chair, the serenely mischievous John Maynard Keynes, described the evolution of its famous "arms-length" funding principle as having "happened in a very English, informal, unostentatious way—half-baked, if you like" (1945: 142). He purports that Britain acquired its arts policy, like its empire, in a fit of absentmindedness. In truth, it was simply falling in line with every other Western social democracy by acknowledging that the market failure of the arts should be counteracted through state subsidies. Keynes's batty boosterism—"Let every part of Merry England be merry in its own way. Death to Hollywood"—was a far cry from the regimen of requirements demanded fifty years later by Chris Smith, the first DCMS minister, who declared ex officio that he did not believe in "grants for grants' sake" or "something for nothing" (1999: 14). Wherever possible, the thirteen industries included in the government's 1998 mapping document (film, television and radio, publishing, music, performing arts, arts and antiques, crafts, video and computer games, architecture, design, fashion, software and computer services, and advertising) had to be treated like any other industry with a core business model. While it was acknowledged that some institutions and individuals would still require public support to produce their work, this would be spoken of as an "investment" with an anticipated return, rather than a "subsidy" offered to some supplicant, grant-dependent entity. Moreover, much of the arts funding would come through a source—the National Lottery—widely viewed as a form of regressive taxation.

To qualify for public funding from Smith's department, artists had to show a demonstrable return on this investment; they had to prove that their work furthered public goods like diversity, access, relevance, civic pride, community innovation, and social inclusion. DCMS policies asked artists to play directly functional roles in society: assisting in the improvement of public health, race relations, urban blight, special education, welfare to work programs, and, of course, economic development (Smith

1998). Politicians began to recount visits to homeless shelters or hospitals where the introduction of some worthy arts program had transformed the lives of residents. Soon, they were speculating on how a savvy application of arts skills could help reduce crime, truancy, teenage pregnancy, poverty, and neighborhood degradation. According to this mentality, the only problem seemed to be how to measure the actual impact so that it could be chalked up as a government success.

Not surprisingly, most working artists, suspicious of their newly designated role as naked instruments of government policy, saw these functions as more appropriate to glorified social workers than to traditional creative practitioners. For those who had never subscribed to arts for arts' sake, and who were committed to the more progressive ethos of service to political ideals, New Labour was demanding that artists be socially conscious in passive and compliant ways. None of this was compatible with a posture of real opposition to the state. In the 1930s in the United States, Harold Rosenberg spearheaded a similar complaint when he declared that the New Deal's WPA programs, offering a government wage in return for socially useful art, heralded the death of the bohemian avant-garde as a radical force (1975).

But to see the policy changes simply as a way of reining in artists' often-rebellious citizenly energies, or of exploiting their conscience, is to miss much of the rationale for the shift in government focus. Nicholas Garnham, for example, has argued that the new policy paradigm was driven, in large part, by innovation fever around IT development, and therefore should be seen primarily as an extension of information society policy as formulated around the impact of computerization (Garnham 2005). The key creatives and the highest economic performers in this scenario were the engineers and technologists whose entrepreneurial efforts as change agents in New Economy start-ups rode the trend of business management away from the stifling, cumbersome domains of the large hierarchical corporation. The IT industry buzz around creativity caught the imagination of British politicians who saw a convenient bridge to other sectors that were potentially rich in IP exploitation. Indeed, by 2003, the figures for software, computer games, and electronic publishing clearly dominated (at 36.5 percent) the revenue statistics for the CI as a whole (Prowse 2006).

With the Creative Industries Task Force lighting the way, every region of Britain soon had its own Cultural Consortium, along with designated creative hubs and cultural quarters. Pushed as an all-purpose panacea, the development formula was even embraced as common sense by left-leaning academics weaned on critical cultural policy studies (Hartley 2004). Most conspicuously, the triumph of the paradigm was achieved in the absence of any substantive data or evidence to support the case for culturally led regeneration (Oakley 2004). After all, what quantitative measures are useful in assessing the impact of cultural activity, in any given community, on reducing crime, binge drinking, adult illiteracy, or sexual intolerance? Common sense observation tells us that these results are much more likely to be offshoots of the gentrificated demographic changes that typically result from cultural quartering.

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

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

The Creative Economy Programme was launched in the last year of the Blair administration to ensure that his policies carried over into his successor's term. The day before Blair stepped down in the summer of

2007, the Work Foundation (top consultants to the DCMS) released a report that boosted the UK sector as the largest and most productive in the European Union—though it was by no means clear how the productivity of arts practitioners can or should be measured. In the preface, outgoing DCMS minister Tessa Jowell noted that the size of the thirteen creative industries, at 7.3 percent of the economy, was equivalent in volume to financial services, and that it employed 1.8 million people, if those working in related creative occupations were included (2007). In his years as Blair's heir apparent, Gordon Brown dutifully acknowledged that the creative sector was the vital spark of the future national economy, but there was widespread skepticism that the overhyped creative economy would fare so well under a new leader who so prudently promised financial reality over things like breathless celebrations of the value of entertainment.

Europa, Europa

In the interim, CI policy had become an entrenched part of EU treaties, and there were few members without their own national and regional agendas. According to *The Economy of Culture in Europe*, a 2006 EU-commissioned report, the creative sector turned over more than €654 billion and contributed 2.6 percent of EU GDP in 2003, employing at least 5.8 million people, equivalent to 3.1 percent of the total employed population in Europe (KEA European Affairs 2006). While these overall figures lagged behind those of the United Kingdom, the explosive rate of growth was similar and that rising index is what captured headlines. From 1999 to 2003, the growth of the sector's value added was 19.7 percent. Largely on account of such favorable data, CI policymaking was coordinated into the European Union's Lisbon Strategy, adopted in 2000 to address economic development in neglected regions and vaingloriously aimed at making Europe, by 2010, "the most competitive and the most dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" (European Council 2000).

The Lisbon Strategy was primarily focused on R&D investment in the flagship information and communications technology (ICT) industries of the digital economy. Though the cultural sectors were seen as natural allies and contributors to the creative economy, contention over whether and how their performance and productivity could be assessed shielded them initially from the full attention of regional managers. The statistical tools and data collection techniques developed for the 2006 EU report were touted as the first comprehensive effort to gauge the socio-economic impact of the cultural and creative sectors. Why was this so important? Within the relatively informal culture of arts policy, peer professionals were entrusted with assessing the worth of candidates and their proposals, and the details of grant outcomes were rarely recorded, let alone evaluated. Industrial policy, by contrast, had more direct oversight from career bureaucrats, and it required an evidence base in the form of serviceable data and measurable outcomes, which would then justify investment. Ever since the DCMS map of 1998, the authoritative mapping of cultural sectors that traditionally eluded statistical capture ("evidence-free zones") had been viewed as a bureaucratic triumph and a prerequisite for formal accounting of the process of investment and outcome evaluation. Submitting to these measurements was the "price to be paid," as Sara Selwood put it, "for increased funding and proximity to mainstream politics" (2003).

But there was more to it than that. In complying with these requirements, the arts were not only brought into the orbit of economic assessment, but their practitioners were more and more inducted into the purview of the state as *productive* citizens: too busy or else too responsible to cause trouble. In like fashion, EU policy in this area is aimed at much more than simply the raw economics of culture-driven development. Policymakers have also seen an opportunity to promote and cement the idea of Europe itself and have seized on the potential to mold citizenly identity. From the standpoint of a bureaucracy geared toward binding its constituents to a common purpose, if not a cohesive mentality, culture is still a great divider. The stubborn uniqueness of their local cultures encourages member nations to withhold their own assets from incorporation into the conglomerate. This is especially the case when it comes to affective entities like national customs and national heritage.

In 2007, a new Culture Programme (2007–2013) was initiated by the European Commission, in part, to counteract this parochial outlook and push for a more federal view: "The general objective of the programme shall be to enhance the cultural area common to Europeans through the development of cultural cooperation between the creators, cultural players and cultural institutions of the countries taking part in the programme, with a view to encouraging the emergence of European citizenship" (European Commission 2007). Faced with the challenge of EU integration, the CI model emerged as an expedient vehicle for the making of European citizenship. The manipulation of culture has long proved useful as a top-down tool of citizen formation, but its newfound fiscal value also now promised that native cultural assets—the heritage of the "glories" of European civilization along with its modern updates—could prove serviceable as a core component of a forward-looking economy.

Toward that end, 2008 was declared a European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, and a new series of prizes was announced for the arts, architecture, and heritage. (The public media buzz around prizes, like the Man Booker, Turner, Pulitzer, Oscar, and Pritzker awards, has become a huge promotional element of the creative economy.) Also placed under the auspices of the new program was the competition for the prestigious European Capital of Culture (along with European Culture Months, initiated in 1992). This annual designation (formerly European City of Culture and begun in 1985 with Athens as the first choice) had been one of the earliest efforts to stimulate the impact of culture-led regeneration on the image of cities and regions. These days, in the many cities that compete, the campaign to win the title starts earlier and earlier, and is used to attract attention and investment. Indeed, the campaign, which can endure for several years, more often becomes the primary vehicle for investment and promotion, regardless of whether the bid is successful. It is enough for city managers to claim that they are in the running in order for this development strategy to kick into top gear.

One of the most celebrated, and well-studied examples, was that of Glasgow, which held the title in 1990. Under the funding rubric of the program, this "workers city," which had seen the steepest decline of its industrial base and suffered some of the worst socio-economic urban deprivation in Europe, got a downtown makeover (the grime on buildings was literally scrubbed clean) and an injection of funding that endowed it as an arts mecca open for all sorts of related enterprise (Landry 1990). The laboring classes, now severely underemployed, who had given the city its renowned salty character, were "socially cleansed" out to the urban periphery lest their blunt conduct and customs offend tourists and upper-middle-class arts audiences. The transition from a city famous for its slums and razor-wielding gangs to one that could host genteel culture vultures, if not the glitterati themselves, was a rough one for the populations excluded from the party (McLay 1990; Nesbitt 2008).

Business cartels organized to profit from the focus on iconic city-center investment proved to be the biggest beneficiaries. Like the Victorian mercantile elites who flourished in the "Second City of the Empire," it was the downtown real estate elites who prospered in its newly rebranded life as the "Second City of Shopping." The familiar lopsided footprint of neoliberalism made itself visible in a system of labor apartheid that displayed an ever-firmer spatial demarcation between the residences, workplaces, and playgrounds of the ascendant professional service classes and those of the low-wage and unemployed populations at the city margins. From the standpoint of arts practitioners themselves, a 2004 study showed that the progressive legacy of 1990 was widely perceived to have been squandered by the data-focused bureaucracy in charge of cultural policy in the intervening years. An obsession with audience numbers and quotas had inhibited the sustainable growth of jobs in the sector (Garcia 2005).

Despite the patterns of uneven development across city neighborhoods, and the low level of sustainable impact on cultural workers' livelihoods, its emulators have lionized the "Glasgow renaissance" as a shining example of culture-driven revitalization. If Glasgow was able to pull it off, the story went, then any city could. Yet by 2006, city boosters who followed the model were locked into what a Demos report (on social inequality in Glasgow) called a "cultural arms race," competing for finite pools of investment resources, cultural workers, audiences, tourist streams, and signature architectural icons (Hassan, Mean, and Tims 2007). A 2004 EU-commissioned report acknowledged that the failure to ensure social inclusion had emerged as a consistent problem associated with the legacy of the European Capitals of Culture program. Attention to cultural inclusion—addressing alternative subcultures and minorities—had been impressive, but there was no mistaking the class polarization that had occurred in most cities that hosted the title (Palmer Rae Associates 2004).

Regardless of whether they were accorded the annual title and undertook a makeover on the scale of Glasgow's, most sizable European cities have adopted the model of the cultural district—the fashioning and promotion of an urban quarter that houses significant institutions and populations in the creative field. Examples include the creation of museum quarters in cities like Vienna and Rotterdam; or the arts-based conversion of disused industrial sites like the Cable Factory in Helsinki, the Veemarktkwartier in Tilburg, Westergasfabriek in Amsterdam, Manchester's Custard Factory, and the Manufactura textile factory complex in Lodz; or the marketing of districts like Barcelona's Poble Nou, Hoxton/Spitalfields in London, Temple Bar in Dublin, the Ticinese Quarter in Milan, and the Northern Quarter in Manchester. Creative clusters are perceived to be especially important to medium-sized cities, which suffer a brain drain to the larger urban centers. Signs of cultural activity are expediently promoted as soft location factors for recruiting investor interest. Small quantities of high-octane cosmopolitan fuel fed into engines of local boosterism are perceived to go a long way. Citizenly concerns about the social harm of uneven development can be mitigated when a broad cross section of middle-class residents are profiting from rising housing prices. As long as the booming property market held up, belief in the expedient use of cultural policy as a catalyst for revitalization could be sustained. The single biggest proven factor in attracting investment in the CI model is rent extraction from the perceived boost in land value.

In a few instances, it is possible to argue that the results have been relatively benign. In Helsinki, for example, unemployment skyrocketed to 18 percent after a sharp recession in the early 1990s, but the city was able to mold its cultural policy around a strong ICT sector and used its timely 2000 selection as European Capital of Culture (its advertising slogan was "Culture Does You Good") to build on this mix without sacrificing its social commitments to the general population (Castells and Himanen 2002; Kelly and Landry 1994; Landry 1998, 2000; Florida 2005). As a result, Helsinki began the new millennium with a cosmopolitan profile as the rapidly growing hub of a small nation that had long subsisted on the periphery of Europe but was now widely renowned for innovation. It was an ascendant city, with most of its Nordic welfare state and social-inclusion policies intact, and gentrification was relatively contained to the most obvious, eligible neighborhoods, like the liberal, bohemian district of Kallio.

But in many other instances, the CI formula, as it is applied, is little more than thin camouflage for gentrification. In Amsterdam, for example, urban planners have used the conventional branding of a "Creative Knowledge City" as a rubric to convert large sectors of social housing into luxury residences for prized beneficiaries of the creative economy. At the same time, neighborhoods are actively encouraged to compete for the attention of these much sought-after talents. Unlike the urban renewal schemes of the postwar period, undertaken in the spirit, at least, of addressing poverty, the new top-down effort on the part of the national government to mix class by transplanting middle-class housing into poor neighborhoods has resulted in the removal of poverty from sight (Oudenampsen 2006, 2007). In more ways than one, this new geography has been ushered in through "creative destruction," to use the phrase most associated with Joseph Schumpeter, the anti-Keynesian economist who is lionized both by neoliberal CI policymakers and the framers of the Lisbon Strategy (1942).

As the European Union's programs for the economization of culture pick up pace, driven by the urgency of meeting the Lisbon Strategy goals, Schumpeter's ideas about the creative entrepreneur are increasingly dominant over other, more socialized models, though it is a much tougher contest than Tony Blair's government faced. Compared to the United Kingdom, most Western European policymakers, influenced by UNESCO traditions, are inclined to pay more lip service to the concept of culture as a public good, which is quite at odds with its capacity to be marketized. The defiant French custom of protectionism—whereby cultural goods are protected from market forces and considered exempt from free trade agreements—holds some sway in this respect, while most Western European states have maintained intact their high levels of state subsidies for the arts. Envy of the United Kingdom's economic growth profile has been tempered to some degree by skepticism about the Anglo-Saxon model of marketization as it has been developed under neoliberalism. But as the "jobs and growth" components of the Lisbon Strategy increasingly take precedence over its initial social and ecological aspirations, the focus on grooming for market competitiveness has become an unstoppable force (Minichbauer 2006). As a result, self-organizing entrepreneurs, committed to incubating small start-ups and responsible for their own exploitation, are more and more cited and admired as the Schumpeterian heroes of national development. So, too, some of the earlier concerns of policymakers about social security, job quality, and sustainable income have given way to more naked recognition of the economic gains to be generated from a sector with such an apparently high growth record.

There is an ever-widening gap between the wild, but organic, profiles of creativity forged by Europe's rich avant-garde traditions—nurtured by radical politics and bohemian rents—and the flat world (suits-but-no-ties) of CI policymaking—where self-styled consultants broker the conversation between government bureaucrats, arts entrepreneurs, and investors. In the last decade, many forms of homegrown resistance have sprung up from within that gap to question and combat the march of neoliberalism. Prominent among them are the social movement groupings loosely organized around the agitprop slogan of precarity. First adopted by antiglobalization demonstrators at the Genoa G7 countersummit of 2001, subsequently precarity became a mobilizing concept for grassroots protests against the European Union's policy drift toward liberalization (Foti 2004; Raunig 2004).

The activism of the anti-precarity groups resulted in "a long season of protests, actions, and discussions, including events such as EuroMayDay 2004 (Milan and Barcelona), 2005 (in seventeen European cities), Precarity Ping Pong (London, October 2004), the International Meeting of the Precariat (Berlin, January 2005), and Precair Forum (Amsterdam, February 2005)" (Neilson and Rossiter 2005). Organized groups like the Chainworkers in Italy and Les Intermittents in France captured headlines with their inventive actions, and feminists like the Colectivo Precarias a la Deriva in Spain have been effective in underlining the highly gendered dimension of the landscape of precarity (Colectivo Precarias a la Deriva 2004; Fantone 2007). In France, government plans to introduce labor policies that discriminated against youth (making it easier to fire those under twenty-six years old) generated massive student resistance and occupations of universities in 2006, and again, in the fall of 2007, when efforts to marketize the university system were introduced. In 2006, the reappropriated May Day was marked by mass rallies of immigrants in the United States. This event has been claimed as part of the precarity movement, as have a broad spectrum of labor protests and organizing efforts on the part of low-wage temporary workers in various parts of the global economy. As one typically combative declaration put it: "MayDay! MayDay! We are the precarious. We are hireable on demand, available on call, exploitable at will and fireable at whim. We have become skillful jugglers of jobs and contortionists of flexibility. But beware! We are agitating with a common strategy to share our flexfights" (*Greenpepper* 2004).[2]

As derived from the Latin verb *precor*, the literal meaning of precarity is to be forced to beg and pray to keep one's job. It is most often used as shorthand for the condition of social and economic insecurity associated with post-Fordist employment and neoliberal governance, which not only gives employers leeway to hire and fire workers at will, but also glorifies part-time contingent work as "free agency," liberated from the stifling constraints of contractual regulations. Low-wage immigrant service workers and high-tech consultants alike might share these conditions, and this commonality has inspired activists who see the opportunity for cross-class solidarity. Theorists of Italian post-*operaismo* (Lazzarato 1996; Hardt and Negri 2000; Virno 2004) who see the cognitive workforce of "immaterial labor" as harboring a potential source of power are often invoked to lend heft to the political consciousness of anti-precarity activists.

Unlike in older models of the primacy of the proletariat, and despite the fact that precarity affects migrants and low-waged women in vastly disproportionate numbers (Parrenas 2001; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002), the vanguard of the precariat is perceived to lie with the high-wage brainworkers, whose conscientious core consists of creative workers for whom irregular employment has long been a customary way of life. The most politicized of their ranks see themselves on the front line of capitalist accumulation, whether in the copyfight over intellectual property or against the industrialization of bohemian cultural activity. While the acceleration of offshore capitalist investment has boosted the rate of primitive accumulation in labor-intensive sectors, accumulation in the more advanced onshore sectors of the service economy is based, in part, on the CI policy of incorporating arts, crafts, and other creative practices into profit centers. Many of those involved in the struggle over this newfound attention to creative sectors have predicted, with good reason, that the future shape of skilled livelihoods is being hammered out on the anvil of CI policymaking. The voice of resistance is most plainly exemplified in the slogan "No Culture Without Social Rights," adopted by Les Intermittents, the French organization of part-time theater and audiovisual workers who have loosely coordinated their actions with the Chainworkers in Italy, Kanak Attak and Preclab in Germany, and Precarias a la Deriva in Spain.

The Great American Bootstrap

In the case of the United Kingdom and the European Union, CI policymaking has seen the state take a more active role, elbowing aside the old arm's-length tradition of arts policy, but only to ensure that reliance on state assistance will recede as rapidly as possible. Government action, in the CI model, is aimed at stimulating and liberating the latent, or untutored, entrepreneurial energies that lie in reserve in every pocket of cultural activity: a hand-up, in other words, rather than a hand-out.

The American case history is complicated, from the outset, by the selective lip service paid to the First Amendment. As Toby Miller and George Yudice have argued, the widely accepted claim that the United States does not dabble in cultural policy because it strives to maintain a strict constitutional separation between the state and cultural expression is more than a little disingenuous. The state, for example, has long nurtured the entertainment industries—especially Hollywood—through tax credits, a range of other subsidies, and lavish trade promotion (Miller and Yudice 2003). These myriad forms of market protection have been extended, more recently, to the U.S.-based media Goliaths—General Electric, Disney, Time Warner, Viacom, Liberty Media, and News Corporation—whose conglomerate operations and properties dominate almost every sector of cultural expression in the United States. Their ability to secure government-granted monopoly franchises brings untold wealth and power (McChesney 2004). Who could maintain that this long-established reliance on government largesse does not amount to cultural policy in all but name?

Nor is the practice limited to domestic operations. Though the United States took the best part of two centuries to become a net IP exporter, its strong-arm overseas efforts to enforce the IP rights of Hollywood and other content exporters through international agreements such as TRIPS (Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights), along with those brokered by the WTO, have been a driving preoccupation of U.S. trade policy since the 1960s. Indeed, from the perspective of many developing countries, IP protection ranks with the projection of preemptive military force as the dual face of U.S. power abroad. In the case of the conflict in Iraq, for example, State Department plans to privatize that country's economy gave undue prominence to the sanctity of IP rights.

While the state's market protections for these industries are not necessarily content specific, cultural content has long been an active component of U.S. foreign policy. This was especially the case during the era of the Good Neighbor policy in Latin America, when Nelson Rockefeller headed up the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (Yudice 2004). It would be impossible, moreover, to ignore the explicit use of targeted cultural policy in the Cold War in the broad range of activities sponsored by CIA fronts like the Congress for Cultural Freedom (Saunders 2000). While more formally abstract, the profile of free artistic expression promoted by government agencies like the USIA (U.S. Information Agency) to highlight the virtues of living in the free world was no less ideological (Von Eschen 2004). With the end of the Cold War, the propaganda value of the autonomous artist evaporated overnight; the spectacle of American artists strenuously exercising their freedoms was no longer serviceable. In 1997, the same year as the New Labour turnaround, the National Endowment for the Arts's policy document *American Canvas* laid out a remarkably similar template for applicants to follow, applying their work to socially useful ends, "from youth programs and crime prevention to job training and race relations" (Larson 1997). Just as in the British case, the artist was reconceived as the model citizen-worker—a self-motivated entrepreneur able to work in a highly flexible manner with a wide range of clients, partners, and sponsors.

While American fine arts policy, strictly speaking, has been mired in the moralism of the Culture Wars, the commercial cultural industries have been consumed with the gold rush to secure ownership of IP rights in every domain of expression. For the most part, they have enjoyed a first-mover advantage in global markets, and so there has been little need, if any, for the change in nomenclature—from culture industries to creative industries—that New Labour initiated. Nor is there much pressure on institutional authorities to view creativity as a national development strategy for catching up. Instead, in the United States, the creative industries are more routinely, and bluntly, referred to as copyright or IP industries, and the emphasis is on business strategies to guarantee that they hold on to their lead.

Rhetoric used by Ronald Reagan in his 1966 California gubernatorial campaign has been cited as an American origin for the current neoliberal turn toward CI policies (Holmes 2008; Reagan 1966). Reagan's proposition that California's native talent could generate a "Creative Society" was explicitly intended as a corrective to the federal government programs launched by the Johnson administration under the rubric of the Great Society. The libertarian strain of this innovation rhetoric, often termed the Californian Ideology, has helped to bolster development policy and secure government patronage for the state's dominant regional industries, centered in Hollywood and Silicon Valley. In the rest of the nation, and more recently, the most visible expression of the turn to creativity has been in urban policymaking.

Urban renovation anchored by sites of cultural consumption was pioneered in the 1970s by the Rouse Company in the form of "festival marketplaces" (Baltimore's Harborplace, Boston's Faneuil Hall, New York's South Street Seaport) while the arty retrofit of vacant industrial buildings after the SoHo (New York) model has more and more been incorporated into the real estate industrial cycle (Zukin 1989, 1994). The creative cluster was widely adopted in the 1990s as a development strategy for cities that had lost their industrial job and tax base (Landry 2000). This often involved public investments in museums or heritage centers, in hopes of attracting a steady tourist stream, if not the kind of destination pay dirt eventually achieved by the Bilbao Guggenheim. In the United States, this strategy dovetailed with the fiscally disastrous policy of building downtown stadiums, mostly at taxpayer expense, for major league sports teams

(Rosentraub 1997). In the world of interurban competition, managers of second- and third-tier cities were persuaded that they had no alternative but to enter into this beggar-thy-neighbor game of attracting prestige (Cagan and deMause 1998). Unlike the sports teams, the museums and heritage centers were not nomadic franchises of a monopoly cartel, but they were often a harder sell in provincial cities.

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

Civic leaders rushed to embrace Florida's vision, express ordering a creative city strategy from his private consultancy group. Announcing that Detroit, Dearborn, and Grand Rapids would soon be "so cool you'll have to wear shades," Michigan governor Jennifer Granholm commanded her state's mayors to adopt hipsterization strategies that were part of a new Cool Cities commission (Michigan 2004). A hundred signatories from almost fifty cities gathered in Tennessee in May 2003 to draft the Memphis Manifesto, a blueprint for turnaround communities willing to compete for creative talent (Creative 100: 2003). In 2004, the U.S. Conference of Mayors passed a resolution on the role that CI could play in revitalization. Jobs in these sectors, it was agreed, were unlikely to be outsourced to other countries and could prove more sustainable than the high-tech employment that cities had spent so much money trying to attract in the previous decade. Aside from the domestic impact, the mayors also acknowledged the potential for global export: overseas sales of creative product was estimated at thirty billion dollars (U.S. Conference of Mayors 2004).

The zeal for jumping onto the creativity bandwagon was also inspired by some supporting data. A 2004 mapping of the country's creative industries by the nonprofit Americans for the Arts showed almost three million people working for 548,000 arts-centric businesses (2.2 percent and 4.3 percent, respectively, of U.S. employment and businesses). One in twenty-four U.S. businesses were estimated to be arts-centric—and they belonged to the fastest growing sector of the economy (Americans for the Arts 2004). The World Bank reported that more than half the consumer spending was on CI outputs in G7 countries, and that creative industries account for 7 percent of world GDP (Nabeshima and Yusuf 2003). The export data encouraged the view that the competition for creative talent was being waged on a global scale. In 2005, Florida published his alarmist sequel, *The Flight of the Creative Class*, warning that the Bush administration's domestic and foreign policies were driving the best and the brightest overseas (Florida 2005). City officials in Europe and East Asia responded by rolling out the red carpet for Florida's consultancy. In tune with the hapless efforts of midwestern mayors to attract gay college graduates, the government of Singapore relaxed the city-state's prescriptions against homosexuality (*Economist* 2004), furthering its ham-fisted effort to sex up a culture long associated with a rigid observance of the morally censorious side of "Asian values" (Tan 2003). Today, it is more likely to be known as the gay, rather than the creative, capital of Asia.

The solutions being prescribed for strivers hoping to move up in the creativity rankings are easy to satirize: Jamie Peck has described them as "another variant of the Papua New Guinean cargo cults, in which airstrips were laid out in the jungle in the forlorn hope of luring a passing aircraft to earth" (2005: 752). Nonetheless, the cures are advertised as low-cost, and almost pain-free, often consisting of little more than image regeneration around public amenities, such as the creation of bike paths, the makeover of some center-city ex-industrial warehouses, or the stimulation of hip entertainment and consumption zones. Compared to the lavish tax exemptions and infrastructural outlays used to attract large corporations, creativity initiatives are soft budget items, requiring minimal government intervention with little risk of long-term commitments from the public purse. Moreover, traditional chamber of commerce businesses can rest easy that no significant public resources will be diverted away from serving their interests. As Peck observes, "For the average mayor, there are few downsides to making the city safe for the creative class—a creativity strategy can quite easily be bolted on to business-as-usual urban-development policies. The reality is that city leaders from San Diego to Baltimore, from Toronto to Albuquerque, are embracing creativity strategies not as *alternatives* to extant market-, consumption- and property-led development strategies, but as low-cost, feel-good *complements* to them" (2005: 763).

Left-wing critics of these development strategies have pointed out that cities high in the creativity rankings also top out on indexes of class polarization and social inequality; that the gentrification of creative neighborhoods drives out those most likely to innovate; and that Potemkin cultural zones too obviously staged for consumption scare away the precious recruits (Marcuse 2003; Maliszewski 2004; Peck 2005). Moreover, those unlucky enough to be designated as uncreative have little to look forward to but trickle-down leavings since they will almost certainly be performing the low-wage service jobs that support their lifestyling superiors. Right-wingers have been even harder on the Florida cult, seeing nothing but a policy to elevate liberal havens as models of growth (Malanga 2004; Kotkin and Siegel 2004; Kotkin 2005). In fact, they argue, Republican cities that don't rate as particularly creative—low-tax, business-friendly suburban cities, like Phoenix, Houston, or Orlando—are the ones with the best performance on job and population growth.

If the creative city is a liberal plot, it is a far cry from the liberal city of the postwar economy, which relied on federal block grants to oversee the basic welfare of its citizens. With budgets cut to the bone, and the citizenry increasingly cut off from institutional protections, U.S. urban policymakers have all but embraced the accepted neoliberal wisdom that self-sufficient entrepreneurial activity is the best, if not the most just, stimulant to growth. The individual career portfolio of the young, freelancing creative is a perfect candidate for this profile of self-reliant productivity. Whether the policies will generate employment remains to be seen. They cannot do worse than their stadium-based predecessors. Surveys over the last three decades have shown that the presence of professional sports teams or their facilities failed to register any significant impact on employment or city revenue (Noll and Zimbalist 1997). Indeed, Allen Sanderson, a University of Chicago economist, famously estimated that if the public money expended on a typical stadium project were dropped out of a helicopter over the city in question, it would probably create eight to ten times as many jobs (Noll and Zimbalist 1997: 37).

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

Most of the urban neighborhoods considered eligible for a creative makeover were downtowns still struggling with the legacy of disinvestment; others were classic artist-pioneer quarters, for which SoHo's much-lionized rehabilitation is still the gold standard worldwide. The biggest risks were in inner-city areas ravaged by poverty and underdevelopment, but, of course, they also promised the biggest rewards from rent accumulations. As part of the assistance it offered to the rollout of neoliberalism in cities, the Clinton administration, in 1994, established a series of Empowerment Zones (EZ) and Enterprise Communities in distressed communities around the country. Public funds and tax incentives were made available as catalysts for revitalization through private investment. Quickly labeled a "third way antipoverty program," the EZ initiatives were intended to replace publicly financed community development in the inner cities with incentives for private enterprise. The most conspicuous was in New York City, where the EZ was targeted for the Upper Manhattan neighborhoods of Harlem, East Harlem, Washington Heights, and Inwood. These neighborhoods comprised "a city within the city" that was poor in resources and employment but rich in cultural assets, having led the world in setting popular trends in music, fashion, and lifestyle for decades. The city and the state each matched the federal commitment of one hundred million dollars to create a three-hundred-million-dollar pool of funds, all targeted at existing or start-up businesses, but especially solicitous of non-local investment.

Harlem, in particular (and to the detriment of the other districts, like East Harlem—see Davila 2004), was considered eligible for repositioning as an arts tourism mecca because of its high international recognition as the capital of black culture and its array of cultural icons—the Apollo Theater, the Studio Museum, Sylvia's restaurant, the Boys Choir of Harlem, the Dance Theater of Harlem, Harlem School of the Arts, the National Black Theater, and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. The neighborhood already occupied a place in the global imagination. Its assets just needed to be exploited to highlight the potential for investment in this newly labeled cultural district. Accordingly, in 1998, the Upper Manhattan EZ established its own Cultural Investment Fund, aimed at supporting the more prominent museums or performing arts institutions and at stimulating heritage tourism. While these grants helped to stabilize the larger, more efficiently and professionally run organizations (such as Museo El Barrio in East Harlem), they bypassed the edgier, more experimental outfits and did little to stimulate the kind of grassroots initiatives that lend cohesion to a community's social life (but which do not generate revenue or audience data).

No less significant, as an aesthetic pull for mobile, moneyed professionals pushed out of Manhattan's other real estate markets, was Harlem's attractive, but rundown, housing stock of brownstones built for affluent dwellers in the nineteenth century. As the EZ grants flowed in (along with ex-president Clinton, who established his offices on 125th Street), housing prices leaped up. "Harlem is the last great frontier of Manhattan real estate," declared Barbara Corcoran, manager of the city's leading real estate brokerage ("Corcoran Group" 2000). Sotheby's International set up shop and, within a decade of the launching of the Upper Manhattan EZ, was advertising, and briskly selling, multimillion-dollar properties. National retail chains, gourmet groceries, and corporate developers steadily moved in (Maurrasse 2006). More and more residents questioned who exactly was being empowered by the Empowerment Zone (Taylor 2002; Pitman Hughes 2000). Gentrification was now a fact, and those who were not part of the creativity or property bandwagon were further marginalized, further cut off from social services, and further alienated from the street life that had been the soulful core of Harlem. Overall, the strategic nature of the EZ funding had put communities literally in the position of selling their culture and heritage—and potentially losing control over the destiny of the neighborhood.

The outcome was a familiar footprint. The use of the arts as a tool for place-based development and marketing had helped price the poor, and arguably the most authentically creative, out of the neighborhood. With the gentrification of Upper Manhattan, the island was no longer affordable for the traditional creative soul, thriving on low rents, peer stimulation, and institutional access. More than any other large urban center, Manhattan was well on its way to maximizing its creative economy, but it could no longer offer residential haven to those traditionally associated with artistic expression, let alone to any functioning member of the once-famous American middle class.

Good Jobs, Bad Jobs

The conditions for the emergence of CI policy differs from nation to nation, as do the resources available in any country, region, or city to fit the policy requirements. At the very least, the quicksilver international adoption of the concept can be taken as evidence of the ready globalization of ideas about governance and citizenship. But there are other, more tangible reasons for its mercurial career: its core relationship with the exploitation of IP; its connection, in urban development, with property revaluation; its potential for drawing marginal cultural labor into the formal, high-value economy; and the opportunity to link dynamic IT sectors with the prestige of the arts. Most mundane of all, the creative policy requisites are generally cheap to implement, involving relatively small investments on infrastructure and programs, and even smaller outlays on human capital, because the latter rely mostly on stimulating the already proven self-entrepreneurial instincts of creative workers, or on mining the latent reserves of ordinary people's creativity. The returns on these slight investments, if they are realized, promise to be substantial, even though they are more likely to be reaped from collateral, or parasitical, impacts like rising land value. In sum, it is fair to observe that all the above-mentioned attributes are familiar features of capital formation, whose managers and investors are ever on the lookout for fresh sources of value, labor, and markets.

While the rage for CI policy has sparked no end of skepticism, and even contempt, from radically minded artists and artist groups (Wallinger and Warnock 2000), the larger cultural organizations have gone along with it in general, seeing the potential for greater economic leverage, more direct access to patronage, and an expanded range of partners and clients. To the degree that the policy returns are envisaged as a high-stakes lottery—with hot tickets in the hands of those quickest to market—there are indeed likely to be some handsome winners, reinforcing the residual

Romantic concept that creativity resides in select geniuses (albeit a genius for business). The "single, big hit," as Angela McRobbie has pointed out, is the breakthrough project that lifts prospects above the exhausting micro world of multitasking and social networking and into the attention economy of key global circuits (McRobbie 2007). Yet, for most of the players, the lottery climate of sharpened risk will only accentuate the precarious nature of creative work—its endemic cycles of feast and famine—and generally reinforce the income polarization that is by now a familiar hallmark of neoliberal policymaking.

So, too, the rhetoric about taking creativity seriously has won admirers in unlikely places. For one thing, it feeds into longstanding demands for humanizing the workplace. Who would pass up the promise of inventive, mentally stimulating alternatives to the repetitive routines of assembly lines, data entry pools, and cubicle farms? A self-managed work life free from rigid supervision and conformity, where independent initiative was prized above all? For those who value this kind of flexibility, sympathetic, qualitative assessments of work life are desperately needed.

Indeed, policymakers would do us all a favor if they put aside the productivity statistics and solicited some hard analysis about what it takes to make a good creative job as opposed to generating opportunities for finding occasional "nice work."

To do so, we must first acknowledge the taint acquired by the concept of quality of work life because of its association with managerial responses, in the course of the 1970s, to the broad manifestations of the "revolt against work" earlier in the decade. In the first of a long series of management innovations designed to stimulate a jaded workforce, employers like GM introduced quality of work life (QWL) programs to inject some participation into decision-making and deliver more personal fulfillment to employees. These efforts to make work more feel-good, meaningful, and flexible also marked the onset of a long decline in job security as managers stripped away layers of protection and accountability (Fraser 2002). Just as the corporate workplace became more inclusive, free, or self-actualizing for employees, it became less just and equal in its provision of guarantees. This rule applied to production workers, reorganized into teams exercising a degree of decision-making around their modules; white-collar employees, encouraged to be self-directing in their work applications; and the ever-growing army of temps and freelancers. In most cases, the managerial program to sell liberation from drudgery was accompanied by the introduction of risk, uncertainty, and nonstandard work arrangements. As far as corporate conduct went, it is fair to say that one hand gave while the other took.

This two-handed tendency reached its apotheosis in the New Economy profile of the free agent, when the youthful (and youth-minded) were urged to break out of the cage of organizational work and go it alone as self-fashioning operatives, outside the HR umbrella of benefits, pensions, and steady merit increases (Pink 2001). By this time, large corporations were being scorned by management gurus for their bureaucratic stagnancy, just as their work rules, hierarchies, and rituals were condemned for stifling initiative and creativity. The small, entrepreneurial start-up was hailed as a superior species, likely to adapt more quickly and evolve further in a volatile business environment (Henwood 2003). These were the roots of the much-hyped face-off between the Old Economy and New Economy in the 1990s. The former was seen as risk averse, coddling employees with a sheltering raft of benefits and securities, and smothering their sense of individual purpose and potential. The latter was risk-tolerant and tested employees with an endurance course of challenges and edgy feats, rewarding their mettle and initiative with jackpot-style wealth.

The legacy of this face-off is clearly visible in the breathless business rhetoric applied to the creative economy, often portrayed as the rule-defying guarantor of the next bonanza. Temporarily homeless in the wake of the dot-com bust, corporate lip service to the powers of creativity quickly found a new haven. Because the creative industries are, in part, a construction of the state's making—policymakers routinely lump together a motley range of professions under that rubric—this rhetoric has also become the language of government, at federal, regional, and city levels. In place of exhortations to think outside the box addressed to systems analysts, sales agents, project managers, and other corporate echelons, politicians and policymakers now proclaim that the future of wealth generation might lie in the hands of bona fide creative practitioners.

As before, however, the condition of entry into the new high-stakes lottery is to leave your safety gear at the door; only the most spunky, agile, and dauntless will prevail. This narrative is little more than an updated version of social Darwinism, but when phrased seductively, it is sufficiently appealing to those who are up for the game. The unpredictable tempo of effort required of the players is far removed from the gospel of steady, hard work and thrifty gain glorified in the nineteenth-century work ethic (Rodgers 1978). It is more like the survivor challenge of an action video game, where skills, sense of timing, and general alertness to the main chance enables the protagonist to fend off threats and claim the prize. Neoliberalism has succeeded wherever its advocates have preached the existential charge of this kind of work ethic and the virtues of being liberated from the fetters of company rules, managerial surveillance, and formal regularity.

The low-wage equivalent is a different kind of limbo. For one thing, the rungs on the ladder of social mobility have almost all been knocked out, so there is little chance of upward advancement for those in the vast majority of low-end service jobs. While there are no prizes to be won, the prospect of being trapped in a dead-end job further lubricates the labor markets in employment sectors already characterized by churning. High rates of turnover, stagnant wage levels, and chronic disloyalty are characteristic features of a formal service economy where intermittent work is more and more the norm. Casualization, driven home by market deregulation and neoliberal labor reform, has placed an ever-growing portion of the work force on temporary and/or part-time contracts. In the informal economy, migrant workers occupy more and more of the vital positions; without their contingent labor, the whole machinery of services would grind to a halt. While their rights and work conditions are degraded by off-the-books employment, their freedom of movement is also prized. Migrancy is what guarantees their remittances, their transnational options, and their ability to evade state scrutiny and capitalist discipline.

To insist, today, on the quality of work life is certainly to call attention to these precarious conditions, both in high-end and low-income occupational sectors. But the ingredients of that demand require careful consideration. It would be a mistake, for example, to simply hark back to the diet of security enjoyed by a significant slice of white collars and core manufacturing workers in the Fordist era. It should be remembered that the revolt against work was, in part, a protest against organized labor's championship of members' security at all costs (Zerzan 1974). Because the labor chieftains of the era so obviously disciplined the workforce, delivering strike-free productivity in return for a steady regimen of wage and benefit increases, dissident workers had to resort to independent action to call attention to the inhumanity of an industrial work process that treated them like cogs in a machine.

So, too, it would be misguided to dismiss the hunger for free agency as a mere product of market ideology; the flexibility it delivers is a response to an authentic demand for a life not dictated by the cruel grind of excessively managed work. Autonomy is a critical goal, and while its attainment is more approachable for the self-employed, there is no reason why it cannot be nurtured inside organizations where the work process has been genuinely humanized. In either case, the ability of individuals to take pleasure in freely applying their skills depends on a just social environment that supports and rewards all the players and does not stigmatize those who fail to land the most glittering prizes.

Contrary to market dogma, basic cultural freedoms can only be secured through regulation. Media deregulation, to take one example, has resulted in a drastic reduction in the range and quality of available public opinion. (Conversely, the power of the dominant culture industry corporations depends on the lavish support of several government agencies.) Regulation of creative work need not stifle innovation (another marketeer myth); rather, it just formalizes its conditions of possibility, outlawing the kind of hypercompetitive environment where most of the players turn into losers, along with all those declared unfit for the contest, for reasons of age, attitude, or unreadiness. Consequently, it is harmful to perpetuate the belief that innovation is solely the product of preternaturally endowed individuals. All creative work is the result of shared knowledge and labor; originality springs forth not from the forehead of geniuses but from ideas pooled by communities of peers and fellow travelers. Aesthetic champions are good at what they do, but we cannot promote the assumption that they alone should be beneficiaries of a winner-takes-all culture of creativity centered on the acquisition of intellectual property.

Among the other resident dogmas of the creative life is the longstanding equation with suffering—as expressed in the stereotype of the struggling artist—but there is no natural connection there. Personal sacrifice is not a precondition of creativity, though widespread acceptance, or internalization, of this credo is surely one of the reasons why employees in the creative sectors tolerate long hours, discounted compensation, and extreme life pressure in return for their shot at a gratifying work product. Few things are more damaging to the quality of work life than this belief that physical and psychic hardship is the living proof of valuable mental innovation. When compared to the ravages of heavy industrial labor, this may appear to be a lesser threat to public health, but its lionization in cutting-edge sectors like high-tech design has accelerated its spread to an alarming range of workplaces and occupations.

In place of this debilitating ethos, we need to see creative work as a basic human right, or entitlement, of the workforce. Of course, to speak of rights and entitlements is also to speak of obligations on the part of the state and employers. Yet most governments and firms have been withdrawing from their obligations for over two decades now through a combination of (a) welfare provision reforms and weakened labor regulation on the part of the state and (b) subcontracting, offshore outsourcing, and benefit offloading on the part of corporations. The latest retreat has been in the privatization of and/or reduced state payments to pension plans, even to the most securely employed. As a result, the ever-aging retiree population in advanced economies will soon be joining the ranks of their precarious brethren in the developing world (Blackburn 2007a, 2007b).

In contrast to the neoliberal drift in Anglophone countries, some of the European social democracies have created new forms of welfare to protect workers in flexible labor markets. Termed *flexicurity*, the policy was pioneered in Denmark and the Netherlands in the 1990s and was subsequently adopted in other Nordic countries (Wilthagen, Tros, and van Lieshout 2004; Jørgensen and Madsen 2007). On the one hand, flexicurity acknowledges the advantages of flexibility for employers and so it deregulates the labor market, making it easier to hire and fire. On the other hand, it increases the pay and welfare entitlements of flex workers over time and it strengthens welfare provisions for those who are temporarily unemployed in flexible labor markets. The overall emphasis is on employment security—as opposed to job security—and, in its strongest versions, flexicurity preserves and extends core labor rights to all workers, regardless of contractual status. The successes of these strategies in reducing unemployment, sustaining growth, and reinforcing the state's obligations to protect and secure the most vulnerable members of the workforce have encouraged European legislators to take them up as a goal for the European Union as a whole (European Expert Group 2007; Cazes and Nespova 2007). No such entitlements apply to migrants, however, and as their numbers swell, the low end of the workforce is more and more awash with unregulated forms of flexploitation.

In the informal sector, where the perils of low-wage contingency are most acute, considerations of the quality of work life have to start with the demand for dignity and respect, and end with full recognition of equal rights and status. As for creativity, it does not take much for employers to enhance and reward workers' inherent impulse to extract meaning and pleasure from their idiosyncratic completion of the most routine tasks. Workers are ingenious about accomplishing such tasks—flipping burgers, performing checkout, cleaning apartments—with flair and individual panache (Kelley 1994). Moreover, a good deal of creativity on the job is devoted to employee resistance, in the form of slowdowns, sabotage, pilfering, and other petty acts that enable workers to win back from their employer some control over their time and effort. These everyday skirmishes give meaning to workplace routines and help sustain self-esteem.

In addition, the heated debate about immigration shows how a society's scrutiny of work connects to larger considerations of its quality of life. Advocates for immigrant rights argue that a host society owes a standard of life to all those who contribute their labor, and that this obligation should extend to family members, young and old, who may not be employed. Labor, in this paradigm, is a pathway to quality of life in general, as envisaged through the basic provisions available to regularized citizen-residents: access to public education and other services, social housing, labor and civil rights, living wages, social security, and, above all, amnesty for the undocumented. So, too, the moral clarity of this claim is buttressed by knowledge, on the part of workers and recipients of the services alike, about the essential utility of the jobs in question. Unlike vast slices of the economy that are devoted to producing unnecessary, and environmentally unsustainable, goods and services, immigrant-dominated sectors like agriculture, food processing and preparation, construction, trucking, textiles, and cleaning and janitorial services are rightly considered indispensable. In this respect, they satisfy some of the requirements of "useful toil" set by William Morris, the nineteenth-century British patron saint of quality work. In many others, however, they fall into the category of "prison-torment," which he reserved for burdensome toil that should be done only intermittently, for short periods of work time, and by a greater variety of individuals from different classes (1886).

The Cross-Class Challenge

Anti-precarity groups in Europe have made formative efforts to link student movements, service-worker struggles, immigrant rights, and proto-militancy in the new media sectors. The goal has clearly been to build a cross-class alliance—drawn from sectors of the service class, the creative class, and the knowledge class—that students and trade unions would come to support (Foti 2006; Mabrouki 2004). On the face of it, an alliance of farmworkers, domestics, Web designers, and adjunct teachers, just to cite some representative occupations, is an unlikely prospect. It is easier to imagine on paper, as a theoretically plausible construct, than as a fleshand-blood coalition in broad agreement on strategies and goals. For one thing, there is a sizeable imbalance in the social capital enjoyed by this range of constituents. Those in occupations with the most cachet would almost inevitably expect to be front and center; over time, they would surely sideline the others (Vishmidt 2005; Mitropoulos 2005; Shukaitis 2007).

So, too, many members of this putative coalition would like nothing more than to have the security of full-time work, with benefits thrown in. Others surely prefer the intermittent life and take part-time employment so that they can finance other interests, like acting, writing, travel, or recreation. Even among low-end service workers, there are reasons to favor flexibility over being locked into dead-end jobs. In this respect, precarity is unevenly experienced across this spectrum of employees, because contingent work arrangements are imposed on some and self-elected by others. In and of itself, precarity cannot be thought of as a common target, but rather as a zone of contestation among competing versions of flexibility in labor markets. Ideally, workers should be free to choose their own level of flexibility in a socially regulated environment where the consequences of such choices are protected against unwanted risk and degradation. Of course, the chances of realizing that ideal are much greater in regions where employment protection is still a matter for active governance, like the European Union. In countries with no tradition of social democracy, like the United States, the prospects are dimmer.

So, too, there appears to be a gulf between the highly individualizing ethos of creative and knowledge workers and the tolerance, even enthusiasm, for traditional, collective action on the part of service workers. Immigrant organizing in campaigns like the Service Employees International Union's Justice for Janitors has played a large, ongoing role in renovating the trade union movement in cities like Los Angeles (Milkman 2006) and may yet transform the U.S. labor movement as a whole. On May Day 2006, the mass mobilizations against repressive anti-immigrant legislation in a host of U.S. cities were a tribute to the power of collective protest and organization. These developments prove that "organizing the unorganizable" was not only feasible, but that the results far exceeded expectations and have given fresh hope to trade unions in decline (Milkman and Voss 2004). Indeed, the unions that are growing are the ones for whom immigrants are the backbone of organizing drives (Bacon 2007).

By that same token, creative and cognitive workers are often assumed to be incapable of organizing on account of their self-directed mentality.

Yet wherever they have turned to union-based action, they have been surprised to find how quickly a common sense of purpose emerges. Recent North American examples include the IT workers in the WashTech union (an affiliate of the Communication Workers of America), who have become a lobbying force on a range of industrial legislation; the adjuncts and graduate teachers who jumpstarted the academic labor movement by organizing at the margins of the profession; and even the most recent Hollywood writers strike, whose internal resolve was buoyed by prominent support from other industry professionals. In each case, employees were organizing in the teeth of industrial cultures that promote an individualist professional ethos, and each discovered that a little solidarity can go a long way. Not long after the writers strike was resolved, actors joined janitors and longshoremen in a twenty-eight-mile march, billed as "Hollywood to the Docks," as part of an LA campaign for good jobs.

Cross-class coalitions are not easy to envisage, let alone build, but there are instructive precedents (Rose 2000). One salient international example was the Popular Front of the 1930s. In the American version, the ecumenical spirit of the CIO challenged the craft exclusiveness of the AFL trade unions through its advocacy of organizing the unskilled alongside the skilled (Denning 1998). Creative-sector unions from the fields of entertainment, journalism, and the arts made common cause with proletarian interests and reached out to the unemployed, displaced, and destitute. The Popular Front was an antifascist formation, officially promoted by the Comintern and its fellow travelers from 1935, but it would not have been popular if the foundation for its cross-class relationships had not been laid in the years before. That the liberal version, at least—often termed the New Deal coalition—endured for several decades is a testament to the strength of these alliances.

The backdrop for the Popular Front was, of course, the Great Depression, whose widespread propagation of precarity was the result of a *collapse* of capitalist control. By contrast, today's precarity is, in large part, an *exercise* of capitalist control. Postindustrial capitalism thrives on actively disorganizing employment and socio-economic life in general so that it can profit from vulnerability, instability, and desperation. Some thinkers allied with the Italian autonomist school see this disorganization as an advantage, because it harbors the potential for pushing creative labor outside the orbit of disciplining institutions such as the state or the trade unions. One of the slogans that captures this tendency is the "self-organizing precariat." It speaks not only to the oppositional side of the free agent mentality lionized by liberation capitalists, but also to the longstanding traditions of grassroots democracy in worker movements.

In some respects, this autonomous tendency may be interpreted as a clear rejection of the path taken by New Left advocates who pursued the "long march through the institutions" from the early 1970s onward, with the goal of reforming the culture of power from the inside. But today's institutional boundaries are no longer demarcated so cleanly. The centrifugal impact of deregulation has shifted some of the balance of power toward *outlying* locations: renegade centers of accumulation in the economy (hedge funds, or start-ups gone global like Google, eBay, and Starbucks); civil society and outside-the-Beltway organizations in politics and welfare delivery (evangelical churches, human rights NGOs, corporate social responsibility divisions); and, in the sphere of ideology, the myriad "alternative" sites of cultural and informational activity that populate the busy landscape of attention. So, too, work has been increasingly distributed from sites of production to the realm of consumption and social networking. The outside is no longer extraneous, marginal, or peripheral to the real decision-making centers. Increasingly it is where the action is located and where attention to building resistance and solidarity might be best directed. The recent focusing of policymakers' interest in a heretofore-fringe sector like creative labor can quite rightly be seen as part of that story.