

**Creativity Inc.: Globalizing the Cultural Imaginary
in New Zealand**

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Creativity Inc.
Globalising the Cultural Imaginary in New Zealand

Jennifer Lawn

I don't have to prove that I am creative.

Talking Heads, "Artists Only"

In 2002 and 2003, two articles on New Zealand cultural policy appeared in back-to-back issues of the arts journal *Landfall*. In "Going Mad without Noticing: Cultural Policy in a Small Country" Lydia Wevers and Mark Williams express disappointment that the Labour-Alliance coalition government elected in New Zealand in 1999 has "continued policy directions going back to the mid-'80s," in particular affirming the "traditional" assumption that "culture produces the nation."¹ This desire of policy-makers to "find a stable point of identification for everyone" (17) has led to a lamentably "happy consolidation of opinion about how the 'creative industries' contribute to the economy and arts practitioners enrich all our lives" (15). The cultural sector serves as an instrument for the hegemonic submerging of difference, threatening the creative autonomy of the arts, from which they derive their power to provoke new registers of thought and feeling (17). In "Against Creativity" Tim Corballis attributes the lack of passionate debate about cultural policy in New Zealand to a wider loss of discursive agonism in the Western world following the perceived triumph of neoliberalism as "the most successful ideology in world history."² Astutely observing that "democracy is rapidly becoming redefined as fiscal technocracy, and politics is becoming redefined as policy" (59), Corballis pursues as an example the incorporation of the term "creativity" into neoliberal discourse, where it is "increasingly articulated with ideas of individualism, risk and ambition" and with "optimistic national slogans ('New Zealand is a great place full of creative people' etc.), reminding me of nothing so much as the desperate, repeated 'affirmations' ('I am a great person and I deserve love' etc.) of the chronic anxiety--sufferer" (62).

¹ Lydia Wevers & Mark Williams, "Going Mad Without Noticing: Cultural Policy in a Small Country," *Landfall* 204 (2002): 16.

² Perry Anderson, cited in Tim Corballis, "Against Creativity," *Landfall* 205 (2003): 58.

In this paper, more analytical than programmatic, I want to triangulate, document, and contextualise this productive exchange of ideas. On the face of it, Wevers and Williams' undifferentiated claim that the government of 1999 continued policy directions of the previous 15 years seems factually unsustainable. In contrast to the fiscal austerity of the 1990s, Labour coalition governments since 1999 have provided at least NZ\$138.2 million in additional funding for arts and cultural industries.³ Labour has thus presided over a spectacular conversion in the status of the New Zealand cultural sector from the grudgingly state--protected *Oliver Twist* of market forces to poster kid for global market innovation. In 1998 the Ministry of Cultural Affairs discussion paper Government's Role in the Cultural Sector defensively justified government's continuing financial support of the arts in aesthetic, expressive, collective, and preservationist terms. By 2002, the Labour government applauded the "creative industries" -- a word on this phrase later -- solely in commercial terms, noting their potential global reach, their ease of reproduction allowing advantageous economies of scale, their fit with the government--driven integrated branding of New Zealand as creative and entrepreneurial, and their horizontal impact across other industries. Neoliberal doctrine thus appears to have been reversed: where arts agencies were encouraged to behave more like businesses during the 1990s, businesses are now encouraged to act more like arts agencies, for "creativity is at the heart of innovation."⁴

Yet Wevers and Williams' assertion of fundamental policy continuities does, I believe, hold up to deeper scrutiny, and Corballis' jeremiad against corporatised creativity helps explain why. By positioning creativity at the intersection of national identity, commerce, the arts, and subjectivity, government policies can knit together globalisation and nationalism -- discourses that in other contexts run counter to each other -- to acclimatise the population to the continual shocks of technological change, instability, and cycles of self-refashioning in the era of deregulated markets and global competition. Labour government cultural policies thus dress the wolf of neoliberalism, so to speak, in the sheep's clothing of cultural nationalism. This deployment of creativity as a

³ This sum comprises: an \$86.6 million Cultural Recovery Package for the arts in May 2000; increased baseline funding to Creative New Zealand by \$11.6 million over four years from 2003--2006; and subsidies totalling up to \$40 million a year for large budget film producers who spend at least 70% of their production budget in New Zealand. Ministry staff numbers have also risen from 12 in 1998 to 70 in 2003. See Government's Role in the Cultural Sector: A Survey of the Issues (Wellington: Ministry of Cultural Affairs, 1998): 16; Statement of Intent 2003-04 (Wellington: Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2003): 18.

⁴ Growing an Innovative New Zealand (Wellington: Office of the Prime Minister, 2002): 56.

regulatory mechanism has been influentially theorised and promulgated by Anthony Giddens as an element of third way politics.

The third way broadly situates itself within what Diana Crane describes as the “cultural flows or network model” of globalisation.⁵ Contemporary communications are deemed to create multidirectional openings in international trade and cultural exchange, enhancing growth in nations that open their economies to international markets.⁶ While acknowledging the decentered nature of globalising processes, the third way rejects the passivity and hysterical tinge of the view that “no one seems now to be in control” as “nation--states turn more and more into the executors and plenipotentiaries of forces which they have no hope of controlling politically.”⁷ Instead, Giddens argues, “control” rightly passes from centralised bureaucracies to small agents, such as local and community bodies and ultimately individuals themselves, that can respond most flexibly and effectively to many aspects of global change. Governments should thus manage their own transformation from protector and controller to facilitator, passing over to civil society “tasks which can’t be effectively run by the state.”⁸ Government continues to assert regulatory force over such aspects of national infrastructure as financial markets, the environment, and human rights, but directs its energies toward empowering and mobilising citizens through “life politics.” An anglicisation of Michel Foucault’s term “biopolitics,” this self--actualisation programme helps individuals to develop conceptual resources and technologies of the self to “respond to a world in which tradition and custom are losing their hold over our lives, and where science and technology have altered much of what used to be ‘nature’” (40). Investment in culture, as “the most important form of social inclusion,”⁹ aids this purported revolution in subjectivity from “dull conformity” to “creativity, diversity and achievement” (6).

Bearing in mind Saskia Sassen’s view that “the global is not simply the non-national, that global processes materialize in national territories and institutions,”¹⁰ I will offer a case study

⁵ Diana Crane, “Culture and Globalization: Theoretical Models and Emerging Trends,” in Global Culture: Media, Arts, Policy, and Globalization, ed. Diana Crane, Nobuko Kawashima & Ken’ichi Kawasaki (New York: Routledge, 2002): 3.

⁶ Anthony Giddens, Runaway World: How Globalisation Is Reshaping our Lives, 2nd ed. (London: Profile, 2002): xxviii.

⁷ Zygmunt Bauman, Globalization: The Human Consequences (Cambridge: Polity, 1998): 58, 65.

⁸ Anthony Giddens, The Third Way and Its Critics (Cambridge: Polity, 2000): 20.

⁹ Massimo D’Alema, cited in Giddens, The Third Way, 5.

¹⁰ Saskia Sassen, Losing Control?: Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization (New York: Columbia UP, 1996): 108.

tracing the rapid convergence of the cultural sector with corporate values in New Zealand, focusing particularly on the years 1998--2002. In what specific ways, and through what agencies, is the state instrumentalising cultural policy to “produce the nation” in contemporary New Zealand? How are the terms “culture” and (particularly) “creativity” imbricated with processes of economic globalisation? As Virginia R. Dominguez has demonstrated with the term “culture,” in this discussion I will be less concerned with what creativity is so much as with asking “what is being accomplished socially, politically, discursively” when the concept of creativity “is invoked to describe, analyze, argue, justify, and theorize.”¹¹

To place these issues in context, I start in 1984, when the incoming fourth Labour government radically dismantled the protectionist economic nationalism that had characterised the previous five decades. The programme of export substitution and economic internationalisation -- the most far-reaching in the OECD¹² -- was widespread, rapid, and unmandated.¹³ The unilateral opening of the New Zealand economy to international competition, it was believed, would press industries to diversify both the range and the market destinations of exported goods and services. Under the neoliberal principles of wealth creation through free market competition, individualism, mobility of capital, and devolution, these governments slashed agricultural subsidies; deregulated financial markets, service sectors, and employment laws; reduced real funding to higher education by one third; fully or partially privatised the national airline, railways, telecommunications, and energy infrastructure; and instituted commercial imperatives for state television. Foreign ownership of New Zealand businesses increased to 51% of shareholding of New Zealand's Top Forty publicly listed companies by the mid-1990s.¹⁴ In 2002, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development ranked New Zealand the most “transnationalised” country in the OECD.¹⁵

¹¹ Virginia R. Dominguez, “Invoking Culture: The Messy Side of ‘Cultural Politics’,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 91.1 (1992): 21.

¹² Paul Dalziel, “‘Third Way’ Economics: What Might This Mean in New Zealand?,” in *The New Politics: A Third Way for New Zealand*, ed. Srikanta Chatterjee et al. (Palmerston North, NZ: Dunmore, 1999): 75.

¹³ On the unmandated nature of the reforms, Simon Walker comments: “The Lange Government was elected almost by accident. It did not publish its manifesto until after the election. The electorate knew what it was voting against -- it had little idea what it might be voting for.” See Walker, “The Politics of Rogernomics,” in *Rogernomics: Reshaping New Zealand’s Economy*, ed. Simon Walker (Wellington: New Zealand Centre for Independent Studies, 1989): 210.

¹⁴ Priyatosh Maitra, “The Globalisation of Capitalism and Economic Transition in New Zealand,” in *The Political Economy of New Zealand*, ed. Chris Rudd & Brian Roper (Auckland: Oxford UP, 1997): 33.

¹⁵ Jane Kelsey, *At the Crossroads* (Wellington: Bridget Williams, 2002): 37.

Cultural policy was sheltered from this economic storm, temporarily, by the disjunction in the fourth Labour government between its foreign policy and its “economic fundamentalism.”¹⁶ While New Zealand’s economic sovereignty was eroding, political sovereignty was compensatorily aroused through Prime Minister David Lange’s highly popular anti-nuclear campaign against the “goliaths” of Australia, the United States, and France. Lange envisaged the cultural sector as a complement to foreign policy, in particular favouring a “New Zealand feature film industry” encouraged to “make statements about New Zealand overseas which are worth immeasurable amounts to us in focusing attention on New Zealand.”¹⁷ However, some arts sector restructuring was undertaken: from 1987, the Arts Council and Film Commission received bulk funding grants from Lotto proceeds, and under the State Sector Act 1988 arts bodies were split between policy making/funding agencies and service provider agencies.¹⁸

Lange’s interventionist sympathies alienated him from the right-wing factions of Cabinet, leading to his resignation in 1989 and Labour’s failure in the 1990 election. The incoming National government implicitly aligned state-funded writers and artists with other welfare “bludgers,” or fraudulent dependents. As occurred in other Western countries, cut-backs in state funding for the arts paralleled constraints in welfare provision.¹⁹ Tightened fiscal “incentives” induced arts bodies to seek increased alternative revenues from individual and corporate sponsorship, from earned income, and from merchandising and marketing initiatives. During the 1990s, state funding fell in real terms from 1990–2000 for all national arts institutions except the New Zealand Historic Places Trust and the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, the latter being the amalgamation of the National Museum and the National Art Gallery, which opened in 1997.²⁰ The state-owned television network was corporatised and required by statute to return a profit to the government as

¹⁶ Jane Kelsey, Economic Fundamentalism (London: Pluto, 1995).

¹⁷ Cited in Gregory A. Waller, “The New Zealand Film Commission: Promoting an Industry, Forging a National Identity,” Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television n.s. 16.2 (1996): 251.

¹⁸ Government’s Role in the Cultural Sector, 40.

¹⁹ Stefan Toepler & Annette Zimmer, “Subsidizing the Arts: Government and the Arts in Western Europe and the United States,” in Global Culture: Media, Arts, Policy, and Globalization, ed. Diana Crane, Nobuko Kawashima & Ken’ichi Kawasaki (New York: Routledge, 2002): 29.

²⁰ The Heart of the Nation: A Cultural Strategy for Aotearoa New Zealand (Wellington: McDermott Miller, 2000): 62. The government publication Government Spending on Culture 1990-1999 (Wellington: Statistics New Zealand and the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2000) records a different story, highlighting an increase of 54% in public expenditure on culture between 1990 and 1999 (9). However, this figure is unadjusted for inflation. It also includes \$290 million spent on early childhood education in 1998/99 and funding of \$17 million in the same year for Te Papa, which did not exist in 1990/91 for a viable budget comparison.

sole shareholder; the Broadcasting Commission (now New Zealand on Air) was deregulated; cultural policy development became fragmented across sixteen departments;²¹ and demand-side rationales such as community outreach and the development of sustainable new markets were introduced into the grants application system administered by Creative New Zealand, formerly the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council.²²

These policies did not yet amount to a concerted globalisation of the New Zealand cultural sector. Although charged with “the development of cultural industries’ potential particularly with regard to export and tourism earnings,” the Ministry of Cultural Affairs formed in 1991 took few material steps to implement this objective.²³ As late as 1999, the arts community “continued to use the rhetoric of the pre-1984 framework” regarding returns from state funding of the cultural sector that include “outcomes higher than just material output,” such as the cultivation of taste, national pride, or bicultural identity.²⁴ However, a series of unheralded documents stepped towards the discursive convergence that Fredric Jameson formulates as “the becoming cultural of the economic, and the becoming economic of the cultural.”²⁵ The 1990s saw a series of joint documents between the Ministry of Statistics and the Ministry of Cultural Affairs published under the Cultural Statistics Programme, establishing definitions and methodologies for quantifying the economic contribution of cultural activities.²⁶ On the one hand, this statistical framework served a defensive purpose for arts practitioners who could now prove to skeptical detractors of state funding that “cultural businesses are real businesses, art is real work.”²⁷ On the other hand, the framework renders cultural sector “outputs” calculable, accountable, and comparable to other sectors of the economy, and thus subsumes them within a managerialist ethos.

A second initiative, The Heart of the Nation: A Cultural Strategy for Aotearoa New Zealand (2000) presented by a taskforce of arts practitioners, analysts, and economists, represents the

²¹ Michael Volkerling, “Death or Transfiguration: The Future for Cultural Policy in New Zealand,” Culture and Policy 6.1 (1994): 9.

²² Dennis McEldowney, “Publishing, Patronage, Literary Magazines,” in The Oxford Encyclopedia of New Zealand Literature in English (2nd ed.), ed. Terry Sturm (Auckland: Oxford UP, 1998): 685--86.

²³ Government’s Role in the Cultural Sector, 16.

²⁴ Brian Easton, The Whimpering of the State: Policy after MMP (Auckland: Auckland UP, 1999): 183.

²⁵ Fredric Jameson, “Notes on Globalization as a Philosophical Issue,” in The Cultures of Globalization, ed. Fredric Jameson & Masao Miyoshi (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1998): 60.

²⁶ New Zealand Framework for Cultural Statistics (1995); Household Spending on Culture (1996); Employment in the Cultural Sector (1998); Government Spending on Culture 1990--1999 (2000).

²⁷ Judith Tizard, cited in the government press release “Economic and Social Benefits Continue Two Years on from Government’s Cultural Recovery Package,” issued 22 May 2002.

creative industries as an under-realised export industry. Although rejected by government,²⁸ the report theorised the cultural sector in precisely the globalising terms now espoused by the government. The authors dismiss the “policy legacy of nineteenth century civic welfarism” that has “positioned cultural institutions and programmes as social services rather than economic assets” (103). The Heart of the Nation report supports the government’s two-pronged policy to “nurture and sustain” cultural activities “through which a strong and confident cultural identity can emerge,” and to “back a strong creative industry sector which provides sustainable employment and is able to contribute to economic growth and prosperity” (20). No tension is presumed to arise between these twin imperatives, culture and commerce. Heritage is defined in a self--reinforcing and relativist manner as “a current cultural resource, continually reinvented to meet present needs” (16). Using the language of the marketplace, identities -- whether based on national affiliation or transnational categories such as indigeneity, sexual orientation, or gender -- are represented as “primary cultural assets” (16). Globalisation is theorised according to the network model as a two--way traffic of cultural products, allowing New Zealand creative entrepreneurs to develop niche export markets in cultural products and services (30).

In effect, The Heart of the Nation embraces a cultural internationalism analogous to the post-1984 process of economic internationalisation. In broad terms, settler nationalist and postcolonial cultural paradigms might be regarded as import substitution programmes, to the extent that they share the desire to substitute metropolitan and colonial modes and representations with those deemed more fully representative of reality as locally experienced (however contested the content of “the local” might be). Cultural policy as export substitution, by contrast, regards the saleability of any representation in the global entertainment market as the most salient criterion, furthering the government’s aim to reduce reliance on bulk commodity trading. “In essence,” as the strategy document Growing an Innovative New Zealand (2002) puts it in tones reminiscent of a personal trainer, “our exports need to reduce in weight and become heavier in knowledge and value” (32). A blockbuster such as The Lord of the Rings trilogy, produced in New Zealand, provides the model weightless foreign exchange earner for a nation located 2,200 kilometres from its nearest export market. The film can be quickly distributed (through simultaneous multiple cinema releases, for example) and it can be replicated many times over. Production techniques can adapt technology from other industries (as director Peter Jackson's special effects company Weta Workshop adapted

²⁸ Martin Matthews, “Report to the Minister on the Heart of the Nation Document” (Wellington: Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2000).

3D imaging techniques developed in the meat packaging industry to make digital body doubles of principal characters). In turn, production innovations can themselves be saleable (such as Weta's development of Massive software for staging large-scale fight scenes). Copyright and royalties generate income for decades after production; international tourism benefits from fan pilgrimages; film premieres and other star appearances boost the events management sector; museums can cash in with special exhibitions (the Lord of the Rings: The Motion Picture Trilogy exhibition attracted 200,000 visitors to Te Papa in Wellington and has toured venues in Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Singapore). Merchandising and cross-marketing initiatives add value by encouraging consumers to extend their filmic experience into their selection of clothing, restaurant meals, toys, décor, toiletries, and leisure reading. Finally, through their global distribution networks, cultural exports profile Brand New Zealand, currently marketed under the tagline "100% Pure New Zealand."²⁹ Under the principle of integrated branding, this cohesive national projection should be "supported, reinforced and enriched by every act of communication between the country and the rest of the world."³⁰

This export-oriented imaginary judges cultural production in terms of successful or unsuccessful market performance rather than aesthetic, moral, or intellectual qualities. Splatter movies, Maori kapa haka (traditional performance), and opera are all good as long as they find an international audience.³¹ If the product enhances production across several economic sectors, all the better. The Heart of the Nation report rather weakly attempts to revivify value by citing Casson's view that "the success of any economy depends on the quality of its culture" (85), but the circular logic is apparent: if economic success is the primary index of quality, then quality has little or no content beyond the economic. Nor has national identity: witness Rod Oram's complaint that "the unfocused enthusiasm for The Lord of the Rings suggests we [New Zealanders] still don't have a clear idea of who we are and what we're trying to sell the world," which implicitly equates "knowing we who are" with "knowing what we're trying to sell."³² Yet this conflation of branding

²⁹ See Nigel Morgan, Annette Pritchard & Rachel Piggott, "New Zealand, 100% Pure. The Creation of a Powerful Niche Destination Brand," Journal of Brand Management 9.4--5 (2002): 335--54.

³⁰ Simon Anholt, Brand New Justice: The Upside of Global Branding (Oxford: Butterworth--Heinemann, 2003): 11.

³¹ For further discussion on the process in which New Zealand cultural production is fashioned toward a kind of modularisable, hyperreal global market, see: Patrick Evans, "Spectacular Babies: The Globalisation of New Zealand Fiction," Kite 22: 4--14; Chris Prentice, "After the Maori Renaissance: Riding the Whale?"

³² Rod Oram, "Brand New Zealand," Unlimited Dec. 2001/Jan. 2002: 42.

with identity can advantage the arts to the extent that they raise or maintain national brand “profile” and so justify state funding. Just as the language of economics can be applied to rationalise subsidies for products that are not commercial in the sense of profit--making, marketing is also capable of measuring and analysing non-pecuniary values. Loss--making products such as a national ballet or symphony orchestra may continue to be subsidised if they are deemed to enhance total brand equity -- the “values, assets, properties and perceptions of a product, service, or idea assigned to it and promoted by its creator”³³ -- for both domestic and international markets.

The cultural sector’s new confidence with the language of global economics was matched by the business world’s discovery of creativity during the 1990s. Thomas B. Lawrence and Nelson Phillips develop the managerial implications of the observation that “it is not just advertising that is the art of the capitalist world but a broad range of goods and services that have taken on an important symbolic dimension and that make up the fabric of signs that characterizes modern society.”³⁴ Under post-Fordist patterns of specialised consumption, a wide range of goods becomes subject to the process that Tom Peters terms “fashionisation,” the capacity to go in and out of style. As capitalist production in general comes to resemble cultural production, goods become increasingly valued for their meaning rather than their intrinsic quality or purpose, so that “a city is turned into an event, a commodity into an experience, a way of life into a style, ethics into icons, [and] everyday life into design.”³⁵ Managers in a range of sectors should now emulate cultural industry workers who constitute an emergent “creative class”:³⁶

organizations now need to manage their relationship with communities of consumption rather than simply with aggregates of individual consumers. This is because the concept of style is one that is constructed in social settings among groups of people. What constitutes cool, beautiful, or exciting are decisions made socially rather than in isolation as an individual.³⁷

³³ Daniel L. Yadin, The International Dictionary of Marketing (London: Kogan Page, 2002): 53.

³⁴ Thomas B. Lawrence & Nelson Phillips, “Understanding Cultural Industries,” Journal of Management Inquiry 11.4 (2002): 435.

³⁵ Orvar Löfgren, “The New Economy: A Cultural History,” Global Networks: A Journal of Transnational Affairs 3.3 (2003): 244.

³⁶ Richard Florida, The Rise of the Creative Class (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

³⁷ Lawrence and Phillips, “Understanding Cultural Industries,” 437--38.

The cultural industries thus excel in perpetual newness, “imagineering,” energy, passion, responsiveness to transitory consumer whim, and innovation through an essentially metaphorical process, the “meeting of surprising combinations.”³⁸

Such “surprising combinations” include the oxymoronic concepts “work play” and “creative entrepreneurship.” The Ministry for Culture and Heritage demonstrates the purchase of “work play” in current policy when it offers as one of three “commonly cited purposes” for government’s support of the cultural sector the idea that “cultural activities have the potential to be much greater employers of people doing the jobs they love.”³⁹ Creativity heals the wounds of alienated labour, as all work becomes intrinsically satisfying and self--motivated no matter who owns the means of production. Rather than basing cultural policy on time--use studies showing that New Zealanders divide their time almost equally between paid work, unpaid work, and leisure, as Michael Volkerling proposes, the government has even further entrenched “the image of homo economicus [as] rational utility maximiser on which current New Zealand economic policy is based,”⁴⁰ by subsuming play within post-Fordism’s “highly Calvinistic moralism.”⁴¹ As for “creative entrepreneur,” Corballis asks whether the phrase is a tautology or an oxymoron, and implicitly sides with the latter option as he rejects the contentless, vague, and unfalsifiable corporate appropriation of creativity.⁴² Löfgren agrees: “Here is the striking paradox of trying to domesticate the imagination while at the same time trying to preserve its magic aura as an unbridled energy,” for “in order to become a creative person or setting one might institutionalize creativity in ways that make it disappear.”⁴³ Ironically, the Prime Minister herself showed a lack of creative leadership in the “paintergate” scandal of May 2002, in which a sketch signed by Clark and auctioned at a community fund--raising event for \$1,000 later proved to have been drawn by somebody else. Clark had -- in an offence against the very concept -- delegated her own creativity.

As political economy, the scramble for creativity engages New Zealand in competition to secure niches in the design and merchandising segments of commodity chains, those most reliant on the generation and exploitation of intellectual property. Industries most subject to fashionisation,

³⁸ Löfgren, “The New Economy: A Cultural History,” 245.

³⁹ Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Statement of Intent, 6.

⁴⁰ Volkerling, “Death or Transfiguration,” 17.

⁴¹ Mike O’Brien & Chris Wilkes, The Tragedy of the Market: A Social Experiment in New Zealand (Palmerston North, NZ: Dunmore, 1993): 21.

⁴² Corballis, “Against Creativity,” 63.

⁴³ Löfgren, “The New Economy: A Cultural History,” 246, 247.

such as fashion and entertainment, may also be characterised as “buyer--driven commodity chains,” in which “large retailers, brand name merchandisers, and trading companies play the pivotal role in setting up decentralized production networks in a variety of exporting countries.”⁴⁴ Transnational companies such as Gap and Nike contract out production and devote an increasing portion of their investments to market research, advertising, and promotion to shape consumer taste and excite demand. The corporate call to creativity addresses itself primarily to the perpetual development and renewal of such distributional networks, rather than to the debased earth-- and time--bound arena of production.⁴⁵ However, pan-creativity suffers from the paradox that the more states and localities claim unique attributes of innovation, dynamism, and so on, the more their efforts appear indistinguishable from each other. “Mimicry, after all, has always been a by-product of competition.”⁴⁶ Weta Workshop boss Richard Taylor, for example, attributes his Oscar--winning inventiveness to growing up in a rural area of New Zealand remote from the hyper-consumerism of the United States: “Unlike the American kids,” he reminisces, “we couldn’t go out and buy [toys] in a blister pack,” but rather tinkered with “the cotton reel, the rubber band, the matchstick and the wax candle.”⁴⁷ Yet, in a kind of performative contradiction, this claim to creative specialness itself manifests most powerfully the Americanisation of cultural identity in New Zealand through imitation of enterprise mythology, irrespective of whether American kids actually play with rubber bands and wax candles.⁴⁸ The risk for marginal economies such as New Zealand, however, is that competition to create unique national and local identities may end up collapsing distribution--based economies of space into production--based economies of time, such as “low labor costs, unrestricted work hours, expediency and efficiency of production, micro-regulation, and infrastructural investments favorable to the continuous flow of production.”⁴⁹ “We Kiwis” may be just as creative as “you Aussies, Americans, and Brits,” in other words, but our creativity carries a cheaper price tag, as those who enviously compare the economic benefits of the Lord of the Rings production to the New Zealand economy (up to \$NZ352.7 million) with New Line’s gross earnings

⁴⁴ Gary Gereffi, cited in Aida A. Hozic, Hollyworld: Space, Power, and Fantasy in the American Economy (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2001): 23.

⁴⁵ Naomi Klein, No Logo: Taking on the Brand Bullies (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2000): 195--97.

⁴⁶ Hozic, Hollyworld, 121.

⁴⁷ “Taylor an Honorary Teaching Fellow,” Massey News [Palmerston North, NZ] 24 Feb. 2003: 3.

⁴⁸ See Ruth Brown, Cultural Questions: New Zealand Identity in a Transnational Age (London: Kakapo, 1997):

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⁴⁹ Hozic, Hollyworld, 114.

to date (approximately \$NZ4.6 billion) are aware.⁵⁰ In a further irony, in the domain of international competitiveness New Zealand's own late arrival at Creative Capital only displays the nation's policy--making derivativeness. Australia became a Creative Nation in 1994 when a document announcing the restructuring of federal funding was published under that title;⁵¹ Great Britain in 1997 with the establishment of the Blair government's inter-departmental Creative Industries Task Force.⁵² And at any rate the creative economy may already be on the decline -- Löfgren discusses it in the past tense -- as new concepts such as the hydrogen economy and cultural ecology theorised as the sustainability of a community's cultural capital stock emerge on the policy scene.⁵³

The policy field is itself subjected to fashionisation, as successive administrations repackage attempts to accommodate the public to the perilous knowledge that governments can no longer "guarantee outcomes for their citizens."⁵⁴ In Thatcherite mode, National and Labour governments of 1984--99 in New Zealand entrenched a new élitism based on economic technocracy, dismissive of industry representatives, voters, and the general public.⁵⁵ Third way life politics, by contrast, favours carrots rather than sticks to coax the mulish workforce along much the same policy track. What Löfgren calls "the cult of creativity" thus serves as a more effective subjectivising vehicle for

⁵⁰ The figure of NZ\$352.7 million derives from a scoping report released by the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research in 2002. However, the report does not take into account the tax break negotiated with New Line prior to 1999, which allowed one third of the production costs, approximately NZ\$219 million, to be written off in lost tax revenues (see John Barnett, "Shaky Statistics Don't Help Film," National Business Review 10 May 2002: 17). As the Heart of the Nation report also advises, what is often casually termed international "investment" in New Zealand film "can be described more accurately as the purchase of services and use of facilities (including scenery)," which does not return export receipts but rather "the development of creativity, skills, goodwill and new business opportunities" (68). The economic debate over foreign--funded screen production ("runaways") and coproductions becomes considerably more complex when potential threats to local production are factored in. See Gordon Campbell, "Lord of the Deals," NZ Listener 21 Oct. 2000: 18--24; Gordon Campbell, "Planet Middle Earth," NZ Listener 15 Dec. 2001: 16--24; Hozic, Hollyworld, 85--131; Greg Elmer, "The Trouble with the Canadian 'Body Double': Runaway Productions and Foreign Location Shooting," Screen 43.4 (2002): 423--31.

⁵¹ See: Jennifer Radbourne, "Creative Nation -- A Policy for Leaders or Followers? An Evaluation of Australia's 1994 Cultural Policy Statement," Journal of Arts Management, Law & Society 26.4 (1997): 271--83; Denis Cryle, "'Redefining Australia': Cultural Policy and the Creative Nation Statement," Southern Review 28.3 (1995): 283--88.

⁵² See Chris Smith, Creative Britain (London: Faber & Faber, 1998).

⁵³ See Jeremy Rifkin, The Hydrogen Economy (Oxford: Polity, 2002); David Throsby, Economics and Culture (New York: Cambridge UP, 2001).

⁵⁴ Giddens, The Third Way, 10.

⁵⁵ See Richard Mulgan, "State and Democracy in New Zealand," in The Political Economy of New Zealand, ed. Chris Rudd & Brian Roper (Auckland: Oxford UP, 1997).

the empowerment and mobilisation of individuals than the confrontational tactics of unalloyed neoliberalism or the faceless, white--coated researchers hailed by the Knowledge Economy. The so-called Knowledge Wave privileged the fundamental and applied sciences, deterred young New Zealanders from graduating in the non-productive fields of Law and Business, and essentially overlooked the Humanities and Social Sciences as outside its technophilic purview. However, as a Prime Ministerial adviser commented to Rod Oram, “the whole vernacular around the Knowledge Economy alienates people. They think it is about research, universities, innovation and entrepreneurship but not about them. They don’t get the concept of their own intellectual capital.”⁵⁶ Creativity, by contrast, anchors state policy to individual subjectivity through self--recognition, aided by the shift in rhetorical emphasis from the “arts” to “culture” to “creativity.”⁵⁷ “The arts” connote high culture and élite consumption, whereas “culture” more inclusively bridges the aesthetic and the anthropological.⁵⁸ Very few of us are professional artists, demonstrably, but 93% of us take part in cultural activities, according to the Cultural Experiences Survey of 2002,⁵⁹ and almost all of us could be flattered into believing that we have some creative capability waiting to bloom with the right tending and nourishment. This democratisation of creativity produces new heroes: where the New Zealand media profiled wealthy financiers such as Bob Jones, Michael Fay, and Ron Trotter during the 1980s, it is now ruffle--headed Peter Jackson who has become the “poster boy for fast capitalism.”⁶⁰

That cultural policy serves state interest in producing self--regulating subjects devoted to capital accumulation has become a commonplace of the cultural studies--based analysis of institutions.⁶¹ Indeed, Toby Miller and George Yúdice define cultural policy as “the merger of governmentality and taste . . . dedicated to producing subjects via the formation of repeatable styles of conduct, either at the level of the individual or the public.”⁶² Both neoliberal and third way cultural policies thus act as modes of microregulation, albeit with different emphases, seeking to

⁵⁶ Oram, “Brand New Zealand,” 45.

⁵⁷ For a detailed semantic discussion see Ruth-Blandina M. Quinn, Public Policy and the Arts: A Comparative Study of Great Britain and Ireland (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998): 59--94.

⁵⁸ Toby Miller & George Yúdice, Cultural Policy (London: Sage, 2002): 1.

⁵⁹ A Measure of Culture: Cultural Experience and Cultural Spending in New Zealand (Wellington: Ministry of Statistics and Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2002).

⁶⁰ Thierry Jutel, “The Lord of the Rings: Landscape, Transformation and the Geography of the Virtual,” paper presented at New Zealand Studies Association Annual Conference. London, UK: 28 June 2003.

⁶¹ See Tony Bennett, “Useful Culture,” Cultural Studies 6.3 (1992): 395--408.

⁶² Miller & Yúdice, Cultural Policy, 12.

adapt the populace to a life unsheltered from the volatile weather of market competition. The neoliberal preference for separating service delivery from government policy--making ostensibly protected the “arm's length” principle of state funding of the arts in liberal democracies, in which fund distribution decisions are made by specialists and peers to ensure artistic freedom of expression. As has occurred in other state--funded sectors, however, tightening budgets and stringent accountability mechanisms have tended instead to render arts funding agencies more subject to surveillance. In Britain, “government influence has been increasing steadily since the early 1980s,”⁶³ to the extent where the cultural policies of the Blair government can be provocatively likened to the strategies of Soviet Socialist Realism.⁶⁴ Thus the arm's length principle is reversed: cultural agencies serve not to protect artists and their audiences from government, but rather offer a vehicle to disperse the form of social control that Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose term “government at a distance.”⁶⁵

The “stable point of identification” for the nation that Wevers and Williams refer to thus entails the governmental production of creative subjects who are not docilely regulated so much as adventurously risk--taking and deregulated. This programme, Corballis summarises dystopically, “fits neatly into constructions of nationhood devoid of citizenship: a nation understood as a collection of fully independent individuals, expecting no help from their compatriots, but each of whose creativity is claimed by the branded collective in the race for position in the world market.”⁶⁶ Together with Wevers and Williams, Corballis argues that art can only relocate its point of resistance by extracting itself from this attenuated yet compulsory mode of corporatised creativity and decolonising itself from the indiscriminate semantic spread of the term “culture.”

As a concluding thought experiment, and in the spirit of creative engagement with cultural policy, I have considered what narrative endings might be envisaged by the four theorists whose ideas have prompted and guided my own elaboration here. Giddens' projection of resourceful, mobile small units pooling their human capital toward enterprising goals chimes perfectly with the ending of Peter Cattaneo's film The Full Monty (1997), which has enjoyed continuing success as a Broadway musical since 2000. Five unemployed Sheffield men turn their discarded labour power into striptease performance, shedding their emotional insecurities, as well as their former wage

⁶³ Quinn, Public Policy and the Arts, 90.

⁶⁴ Andrew Brighton, “Towards a Command Culture: New Labour's Cultural Policy and Soviet Socialist Realism,” Critical Quarterly 41.3 (1999): 24--34.

⁶⁵ Peter Miller & Nikolas Rose, “Governing Economic Life,” Economy and Society 19.1 (1990): 1--31.

⁶⁶ Corballis, “Against Creativity,” 62.

dependencies, with their clothes. The grim converse of this jubilant vision appears in Ken Loach's film The Navigators (2001), in which The Full Monty's football team metaphor of a homosocial cooperative is replaced by the unidirectional impetus of the train, analogous to the acephalous representation of a globalised world without controls. Loach's intervention reverses The Full Monty's movement from community fragmentation to integration: when British Rail is split and sold to private companies, a gang of rail workers find themselves tendering for their old jobs and competing against each other. Compromises in safety lead to the death of one of the men, and where The Full Monty climaxes with bright lights, crowd adulation, and carnivalesque release, The Navigators trails off in isolation, darkness, internalised guilt, and unredeemed sacrifice. Loach's artistic vision thus realises Corballis' insistence on a critically reflective creativity, one which inhabits a point of tension and "encourage[s] the audience not to celebrate the work, but to look again, at length, at the world."⁶⁷ Wevers and Williams prefer to counter the politics of life with the aesthetics of death, appealing to Lacanian psychoanalysis. Where cultural policy models rational, profit--seeking subjectivity without remainder, Wevers and Williams insist on the unassimilable forces of art as the destabilising Real to the Imaginary projections of national consensus.⁶⁸ Their allegory of creativity might be Zoe Bryce's sculpture of a silver forest from cigarette packet foil in the concluding chapters of Janet Frame's The Edge of the Alphabet (1962). This creativity is surprising, incandescent, impossible. It tugs us towards that which is unassimilable and unaccountable, which in Frame's world is ultimately figured as death, to which Zoe consigns herself the night after this most isolating culmination of her expressive self.

⁶⁷ Corballis, "Against Creativity," 63.

⁶⁸ Williams & Wevers, "Going Mad Without Noticing," 17.

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