



Recycled youths, or, the reproduction of ecology of culture

Thomas Burø

abstract

The note is a case study of youth recruitment to cultural labour. The main protagonist is MJ, a young woman who has been engaged in doing culture for more than 10 years. The note traces her path from early participation in a local writer's school for young people to serving as senior editor of a national major cultural magazine. MJ's path is entangled in numerous ways with cultural institutions, festivals, temporary projects, local cultural leaders, and she thinks of herself as a youth 'recycled' by local cultural institutions. The note applies ecology of culture as a conceptual framework to explore and describe a mechanism of cultural reproduction. The note contributes to the study of ecology of culture by describing in detail how youths are groomed for entrepreneurial, cultural labour, and by conceptualising how the work of cultural reproduction effectively transcends singular cultural organisations as youths move between organisations.

Introduction

I suggest you read this note as an exploration of how ecologies of culture reproduce cultural labour. The main protagonist is MJ, a young woman who has been engaged in doing culture for more than 10 years. I have traced her career path and paid attention to some things that she learned to do along the way. As I will explain later, I claim that the set of thresholds she passed during her learning process should be understood as a mechanism that conditioned

and prepared MJ for cultural labour. I use the singular case of MJ's experiences with cultural organisations to highlight this particular ecological mechanism which I call 'grooming'. Some readers may find the term uncomfortable, perhaps inappropriate, given the term's close association with sexual abuse. However, I hope to demonstrate that it is a concept that may help us understand a supple and subtle mechanism of cultural reproduction. We begin on a bright September day, in a sleepy provincial Danish town.

Recycled youth

'The same young people are recycled by the culture organisations', MJ remarked. She spoke wryly, reflecting on her experience and mocking those culture organisations that had 'recycled' her. I have known MJ for years and collaborated with her on a handful of projects: a literature event, some festivals, and a learning program on cultural entrepreneurship. Her remark occurred during an ethnographic interview in 2019 when I, as part of my fieldwork for my PhD dissertation, was mapping her experiences with the cultural organisations in the rural province where she lived (Burø, 2020). We had explored the ways she had used and produced culture, described the ways she had participated in creating culture. She quickly discerned the pattern. MJ interpreted herself as an example of a young person who had been spotted, motivated, recruited, engaged, and integrated into the strategic efforts of culture organisations looking to connect with young people. The cycle had begun when she was 13 years old. At 22 years, she could look back at ten years of productive relationships with theatres, festivals, community centres, concerts, refugee asylum centres, and a publishing organisation. During this time, to honour her local efforts as a cultural entrepreneur, she received the annual 'culture award'. She also published a debate post on culture in a national newspaper, and she became editor in chief of a youth culture magazine. She never expressed resentment towards the culture organisations she had engaged with, even if she used the term 'recycled youth' in a critical tone. It is neither my intention nor my right to second guess MJ's interpretation. Instead, I intend to explore the idea that when the ecology of culture recycled her, she was *groomed for generalised cultural labour*. The verb *to groom* is ambiguous. It means to make pretty, to fashion up, like brushing one's hair, and it means to prepare someone for something, like taking over

leadership. It also means preparing someone for abuse, particularly sexual abuse. I use the term in the sense of preparing someone for something. I do not mean to imply that the ecology of culture is inherently *abusive*, even if it exploits labourers and is ripe with precarious working conditions (and, certainly, cases of abuse). We shall return to grooming later on.

Ecology of culture

Given that the word ‘culture’ is somewhat overdetermined, it is at the risk of failure that I define *ecology of culture* as a set of ‘complex interdependencies that shape the production of and demand for cultural offerings’ (Markusen et al., 2011: 8). An ecology of culture is composed of relationships of co-function that condition cultural offerings for use within a given place such as theatre, music, cinema, writing classes, et cetera. Whatever counts as a cultural offering. Culture, understood through the lens of ecology, is a set of diverse organised practices of aesthetic expression and ways of making sense of life. Some of these practices have attained highly institutional forms and are embedded in specific organisations (e.g., theatre, music, cinema, literature, etc.) while other practices lean towards informal organising and do-it-yourself ethics (e.g., skate, parkour, folk music). However, when this heterogeneous set is thought of as an ecology, we can appreciate that they compose a complex system of cultural production, use, and circulation of a variety of resources. According to John Holden (2015: 3):

An ecological approach concentrates on relationships and patterns within the overall system, showing how careers develop, ideas transfer, money flows, and product and content move, to and fro, around and between the funded, homemade and commercial subsectors.

Seen from the level of ecology, culture is composed of so many ‘ways of life’ (cf. Williams, 1960), each one using and producing cultural offerings, that mesh in the form of complex patterns that transcend the barriers between the domains of commercial, publicly funded, and homemade culture. Seen from the perspective of an individual person, culture as a way of life involves using and producing a variety of aesthetic goods as a part of the ‘practice of ordinary life’ (cf. de Certeau, 1984): reading a newspaper, listening to music while commuting to work, watching a tv series, doing a sport, attending live music, cooking, playing tabletop games, knitting. The list goes on. Each person is

engaged in using and producing culture. Individual behaviour may be analytically sub-ordered to generalised types of 'consumer culture.' However, ecological thought appreciates that behaviour at the level of individuals may have consequences at the level of the ecology (Morton, 2019), just as the major patterns of an ecology conditions as much as it enables the 'production of and demand for cultural offerings' (Markusen et al., 2011: 8). One particularly interesting system property is what Reckwitz (2018) calls the *creativity dispositif*, that is, a demand and desire for creativity that plays out at the level of individuals, institutions, and ecology. What the individual experiences as inducement to being and doing creativity, the ecology of culture contains as an immanent rationality that supports and drives organising for creativity, and fosters new ways of enabling individual, collective and systemic creativity. In other words, an ecology of culture has the properties of a complex adaptive system, and has, as such, the capacity to maintain and develop the conditions for the unfolding of cultural life (Holden, 2015; Holden, 2016; Koefoed, 2016; Kagan, 2011). One such condition is the demand for creativity, and, consequently, its continued renewal and reproduction.

Ecological studies of culture emerged in the beginning of the 21st century, spearheaded by Holden's (2015) report 'The ecology of culture'. Some precursors should be mentioned: already in 1972, Hope (1979) suggested applying ecology of culture as a framework for empirical inquiry. Later, others called for conceptualising culture as ecology or ecosystems (Bachmann et al., 2012; Barnhill, 2002; Gallasch, 2004; Gollmitzer and Murray, 2008). Also, the philosophy and sociology of the arts paved the way for ecology of culture as a mode of thought (Danto, 1964; Passmore, 1976; Albrecht et al., 1970). Becker's (1974; 1982) classic inquiry of art as collective action corresponds with ecology style inquiry, though not articulating itself as ecological. Thus, thinking about arts and culture in ecological terms was not entirely alien and it did resonate with more than 100 years of ecological thinking in the social sciences (Burø, 2020). Ecological thinking provided a novel framework to explain what makes culture possible, as it enabled culture researchers to understand arts and culture as complex socio-material systems and to engage with the problem of cultural sustainability (Mijatović et al., 2017). Proper ecological studies of culture emerged fully in the second decade of the 21st

century (Barker, 2020; Blackstone et al., 2016; Borin, 2015; Borin and Donato, 2015; Courtney, 2018; Crossick and Kaszynska, 2014; Dovey et al., 2016; Getz and Anderson, 2016; Jamieson, 2016; Stern and Seifert, 2013). These studies have in common that they analyse and conceptualise culture in transdisciplinary ways that place it in contrast to studies of culture as experience economies, creative industries, tourist destinations, and so on (cf. Bakhshi et al., 2009; Cunningham et al., 2008; Gibson, 2012; Pine and Gilmore, 1999).

In previous work, I have applied cultural mapping to study ecologies of culture, youth culture, and the ecological mechanisms for cultural reproduction (Burø, 2020; Burø and Koefoed, 2021; Koefoed and Burø, 2022). Cultural mapping is a qualitative method for studying the tangible and intangible elements of a culture (Duxbury et al., 2015). Ecological researchers have often employed forms of mapping (Kreidler and Eng, 2005; Owens, 2012; Palmer, 1928) and cultural mapping is an eminent method of ecological inquiry that describes the multiple layers of meaning and matter in a particular setting (Steward, 2010). The method increases the ability to discern and appreciate a given ecology of culture's diverse ontology and the dynamics of its complexity. Building upon insights from prior fieldwork, a particular question keeps emerging: *How do cultural labourers learn to labour?* This is where MJ's case becomes interesting. I use the singular case of her learning to do culture as indicative qualitative research, that is, to explore the idea of ecological reproduction. I am interested in how cultural labourers are trained for generic, generalisable organisational skills that make it easier for them to circulate (and easier for organisations to replace), to accept, and cope with precarity as they seek and take up work where they can organise and manage the diverse creative flow of others. Specifically, how do culture labourers enter the ecology of culture, that is, what happens *before* they take up formalised training as a culture professional or before they enter the ranks of the 'grassroots'?

We know from Bourdieu and Willis' well-known research how some kinds of cultural reproduction work. Bourdieu studied how the dominant economic and cultural classes of mid-20th century France reproduced themselves via the education system (Bourdieu, 2018). Willis suggested rooting the study of reproduction in ethnographic accounts of how a given class at a given time

produces its specific culture, in this case, working class in the UK (Willis, 1981). To both, cultural reproduction ties to the problem of how class power and privilege transfers between generations. At the same time, being ethnographers, they understood that a one-size-fits-all theory of cultural reproduction would be abstract to the point of having next to little explanatory power. Instead, as Geertz phrased it, theory would have to ‘stay rather close to the ground’ (Geertz, 1993: 24). Theory should describe how concrete people create actual culture to understand how systems of culture organise their own future. Cultural ecologists Wilson et al. (2017) argue that when people acquire skills to do ‘everyday’ culture as well as become engaged with culture as a profession, they become culturally ‘capable’. Children and young people learn to do culture in formalised teaching programs, like learning the piano, or informally, like listening to live music and watching others play (Wilson and Gross, 2017). We may call learning, or ‘enculturation’, a mechanism of cultural reproduction (Patterson, 2010: 140). Existing values, discourse, practices, and skills are transmitted from existing members to potential new members of the ecology. This is supported by Poprawski (2016), who argues that transmitting cultural values between generations is necessary to sustain ecologies of culture. In field studies of small Polish communities, Poprawski (2016: 7) finds that

... cultural activities with an intergenerational dimension were numerous... Co-creative activities facilitate shared experience between generations, which in turn cultivates collective memory, of places, people, facts, processes...

Learning to do culture is a mechanism of cultural reproduction of a system that oscillates between introduction of the new and repetition of the same.

I use the concept ‘grooming’ to conceive of how a particular kind of labour force is reproduced, how it ‘learns to labour’ (Willis, 1978) before it takes up formal training. As shown in the below, there is a difference between professional artists and cultural labourers. The latter is engaged in *generalised cultural labour* such as facilitating creative processes, event organising, project management, fundraising, communication and marketing, economics, and so on –generic skills that can all be applied to organise any form of aesthetic production. Their competencies are useful and necessary whenever a process of aesthetic production needs staff to handle the

organisational tasks of making art. The labour force's skillset cannot be too specialised and tied to a singular art form, but must be generalisable within the ecology of culture. This requirement is reflected in MJ's learning progression and enabling experiences. It is not a single experience that grooms; on its own a singular experience provides a distinct skill at best. Grooming is an emergent effect of multiple engagements with cultural production which makes it a supple and subtle mechanism that works because of its vagueness. The individual that follows such learning progression is merely prepared. She is neither *determined* by, *induced* by, or *conditioned* by her engaged experience with the ecology of culture, nor is she *selected for succession*. If she decides to labour within the ecology of culture, she has been prepared for what that means; she has already learned to do the labour before becoming a professional labourer. Let us return to MJ.

Tiny footprints on a map of culture

In the 6th grade, a teacher had suggested MJ might enjoy joining the local writer's school for young people. She gave it a shot. She thought the other students were weird. One girl had blue hair. The first session took place at the main library in the region. The class was taught by a charismatic local author. After two years of attending the school, it had grown on her. She liked writing, she liked their classes, she and the blue haired one had become friends. The class had taken part in a local literature festival at a folk high school. They had authored the script and helped stage a musical in collaboration with a youth theatre association. This introduced MJ to the theatre, to the youth culture centre, and to cultural consultants from the municipality. Her experiences with culture then motivated her to change school from the public primary school she hated to a private school with more liberal, creative values and people. Her new friends were into music, writing, theatre, and events. At the age of 14, she was invited to participate in a project on cultural entrepreneurship and mentoring. The project was a collaboration between a folk high school, a culture festival, the youth culture centre, a theatre, and the municipal department of culture. A small group of young people learned project management, creative processes, teamwork, and as their apprenticeship test they should produce a public event. They founded the creative collective *Poiesis* and went to work. Producing the event was fun and

a process of learning: set design, booking, organising, PR. The whole shebang. A half dozen people working in and across various cultural organisations knew her name now. A festival hired her to hand out festival programs and to present the program to people. Then, a year of boarding school. When MJ returned, she started studying business economics and got involved in cultural projects: she volunteered to work with Syrian refugee children in the local Red Cross centre; she took part in the operations of a youth council; and she was involved in a project to create a film school in the region. Personal ambitions unhinged, she felt other young people needed to participate in culture and in the making of their own life, their town, their place. She formed the creative collective dB RUCKUS, intent on sharing her experience with cultural participation to other young people. The collective operated independently of organisational backup and support, created events and reached out to other young people. By then, she was a well-known and respected character among local culture organisations. Then, off to folk high school and then off to Copenhagen where she became managing editor of a magazine for youth culture. Last I heard from her, she had enrolled at university, intent on studying political science (and jokingly, ‘becoming the next minister of culture, since someone’s gotta do it!’).

Thresholds, career path, and integration

Some things are striking. First, MJ passed a set of thresholds. According to Varela et al. (1991) an organism must be able to pass thresholds of survival in order to be a member of and thrive in an ecological system. There are things they must be able to do. At the heart of the popular notion of ‘survival of the fittest’ is the idea that species are *optimised* (they are made fit) by the environment. This is false. A species is not optimised by, but rather adapts to surviving and living, in the specificities of an ecological setting. We may understand thresholds as mechanisms that regulate entry and membership. The kind reviewer of this text pointed out that the suggested causal link between passing thresholds and learning process can easily be read as Darwinist survival of the fittest. This is a valid reservation. Particularly since MJ’s case is neither about survival nor about being the fittest, but about acquiring capacities to do culture in a fitting manner. If the concept of regulatory thresholds is transferred from natural systems and applied to the study of ecology of culture, then a set of thresholds is interesting. MJ’s first

threshold: she learned to thrive in the school for young authors. She interacted with people like the blue haired girl, writers, theatre people, musicians, and she learned to participate in events. She learned to *thrive in a group organised for creative expression*, facilitated by cultural professionals. Passing this threshold also enabled her to learn to thrive in other groups organised for creative expression. MJ passed the next threshold when she learned to *be part of a self-organised collective* and she learned to *assume responsibility for her cultural activity*. She learned that she could receive offers to participate in culture, paid and unpaid; she learned to accept those offers even without knowing exactly what they implied. In other words, she passed a threshold of *being able to thrive with uncertainty*. Then, a threshold of autonomy: she learned to thrive with *independently seeking out projects* and with *doing culture on her own accord*. Finally, MJ passed a threshold when she learned to thrive with *managing a culture organisation*. In sum: she passed thresholds that taught her how to thrive in groups, to self-organise, to assume responsibility, to cope with uncertainty, to act autonomously, and to manage.

Second, regarded as a career path, she started as a volunteer newbie writer and ended as managing editor. With each project she took on, the level of difficulty increased, and she learned new skills. The path from member, via organiser, to manager meant she would navigate increasing complexity, increasing uncertainty, and increasing demands for autonomous decision competence.

Third, regarded as increased integration into the ecology of culture, her various projects increased her degree of connectivity. She was connected to members of publicly funded, market driven, and grassroots culture organisations, and to a series of other 'entrepreneurial' young people. In other words, she learned to connect with the ecological longitude and the organisational latitude. When she founded dB RUCKUS, she had become a person who connected other people, and she knew people who connected. A threshold, perhaps, in its own right: the passage from being connected to learning to *act as a connector*. Gaining the ability to connect is conditioned by two factors: she herself is well connected, and she has become well connected because she has circulated within the ecology of culture, in contrast to developing skills within the limits of one organisation and one aesthetic form only. MJ started with literature, then moved to theatre, to music, to

community organising, and then to publishing. She circulated through various organisations, both those founded to work with young people and those that were not. With an increase in connectivity came exposure to complexity. Even if her own projects were not necessarily complex in nature, then she had been exposed sufficiently to the ecology of culture to know it was made up of people and organisations connecting in multiple ways. MJ learned that culture was made of producers who connected. In MJ's case, adapting meant learning to create, produce, organise, and manage as practices and as experiential modes of being. This raises a question: did the lived experience with doing culture organised in time limited projects teach MJ to expect, accept, and cope with the precariousness of working temporary jobs in culture?

Labouring artists and cultural labourers

We should distinguish between those pathways that lead to becoming a labouring artist and those that lead to doing culture. Studies have analysed how attending visual art, theatre, music, film, design, architecture and literature schools relate to making a life and living off doing particular kinds of aesthetic work (Alper and Wassall, 2006; Blackwell and Harvey, 1999). We know that art students often struggle at the beginning of their career to make a living out of art labour (Throsby and Hollister, 2003), their social networks often become their professional network (Wittel, 2001), they often rely on 'day jobs' (Lloyd, 2006) and often labour without pay to get their career started (Terranova, 2000). We also know that arts institutions and universities form systems that circulate talented students and graduates (Salazar-Porzio, 2015). Formalised training provides the art student with the credentials to make a jurisdictional claim to the status as 'professional artist' (Abbott, 2014), and the formal and informal relationships between schools, art institutions, and culture industry provide the students with opportunity for passage and integration. In other words, this part of the ecology of culture trains young people for professional labour within a particular aesthetic genre with well-defined competencies: actor, writer, dancer, film, production designer, illustrator, etc. For cultural labourers, it is different. There are formalised programs for event management and creative, entrepreneurial work, and these are also part of the 'food chains' and passageways between

organisations (Oakley, 2007). Students learn to manage creative processes; they learn to ideate, conceptualise, fund, manage, produce, and evaluate. Aesthetic specialists and organisational generalists: both groups face precarious work life with low wages, temporary positions, and dependence on diversified personal and professional networks for paid work (Abbing, 2008; Bille, 2011; Mangset et al., 2018; Oakley, 2009). Same same, but still different.

In MJ's case, had she opted for formalised training in event management, or, say, *art history* at the University of Copenhagen, *experience economy* at University of Aarhus, *performance design* at Roskilde University, *creative business processes* at Copenhagen Business School, or any other cultural analytical university bachelor's program, a nice argument could be made for how her experiences conditioned and determined her choice of career. But her pathway did not lead to formalised training as a culture professional. A distinction between levels of analysis: what the individual person experiences by participating in art and culture is, at the level of ecology, a supple and subtle mechanism for reproducing its labour force. Having participatory experiences integrated MJ into the ecology of culture, but it did not determine her future choices. The ecological system is not conscious, mechanisms and functions are not intentional in nature. There are no master plans or strategies, only ecological level effects at work, emerging as a result of multiple singular events. To be sure, one young person's participation in culture is not a general pattern. I have treated MJ's case as indicative of a possible pattern of a set of young persons participating in culture. I claim that the function of youth participation in culture is to prepare young people for cultural labour, that is, the function is to *groom*. Perhaps they will use this experience with culture to do everyday creativity better. However, if young people desire to pursue 'doing culture' as a trained and paid professional or as a hard ass grassroots volunteer, then they have been *prepared*. It is by virtue of this grooming mechanism that cultural labourers early in their career learn to accept the working conditions of the cultural sector. Grooming for precarious labour enables heightened exposure to exploitation, harm, and abuse, and teaches novices that it 'comes with the territory'.

Cultural participation is cultural reproduction

Ecologies are complex adaptive systems characterised by functional autonomy of the parts and macro-determinations of the whole (Laszlo, 1996). Ecological analysis should study both what takes place at the level of the individual person and what takes place at the level of the entire ecology (Burø, 2020). The organising efforts of singular cultural organisations function as opportunities for young people to participate in culture. At the level of the whole, then the general function of the pattern of grooming is to reproduce the ecology of culture. The ecology of culture is challenged with reproducing the population of producers and users of culture, not singular individuals. Cultural participation translates to cultural reproduction. Why is that, and MJ's case, even remotely interesting? The answer has to do with the kinds of conceptual imaginaries we have at hand. If we study organisations as social and cultural systems, then we study how their power relations, practices, politics, structures, ideas, sense-makings, and so on are meaningful to people. If we study organisations as functional systems, then we study how they work, how their mechanisms make elements cofunction. In one analytical imaginary we think with the concept of *meaning*, in another we think with *function*. To study meaning as well as function is valid to an ecologically sensitised analytical imaginary, but one needs to be careful to not reduce one to the other. Rather, relative to the level of analysis the same element changes conceptual status. The meaningfulness of cultural participation is also the functionality of cultural reproduction.

Grooming, or, learning to do culture

I do not have the right nor the wish to contest MJ's interpretation of having been a youth 'recycled' by culture organisations. MJ's interpretation resonates with what she experienced. However, there is more to the story. Interpreted from the macro level of the ecological system, I would suggest a distinction between *recycling* and *circulation*. Recycled elements are used elements brought back into a system of usage to be reused or repurposed; circulated elements continuously shift position in the system and are themselves altered in the process. Circulating elements develop as they enter relations of cofunctioning with other elements. A recycled element changes being, a circulating element develops functionality. Murray Bookchin argued that

within the context of ecological thinking it is appropriate to conceive of 'development' in contrast to 'change' (Bookchin, 1978). Growth and learning do not happen overnight, it takes time. Recycled youths are reused, but they also circulate and develop along the way. From the perspective of singular organisations, young people are literally recycled for the immediate benefit of the organisation's concrete interests and needs. Positioned as a functional element in a larger ecology of culture, these youths are developed, integrated and prepared, ultimately serving the need of the ecology to reproduce itself. Reproduction is a tricky thing: since ecological resilience is conditioned by the ability to adapt (Holling, 1973), then reproduction means both repetition of the same and differentiation. As new members do new stuff, the system is reproduced through transformation.

MJ studies political science now. She learned to do culture. This was a process of grooming, not by singular individuals nor by a single experience, but by a series of enabling experiences. I started by claiming that MJ is the protagonist of this story. If there is an antagonist, then grooming for accepting exploitation would be its name. MJ has effectively faced the system level property of reproduction of exploitable, precarious labour every time she engaged with a well-meaning culture professional (like myself). She had learned that 'doing culture' is both a matter of producing aesthetic goods and a matter of organising the process of production. She learned to write and to stage theatre. But she also learned to organise the frames of other people's aesthetic labour. These are distinct kinds of labour, involving different 'bundles of work' (Hughes, 1971) that MJ learned by instruction; by watching professionals and non-professionals do culture; and by doing herself. She could have used that as a steppingstone to making a life as a labouring artist; instead, she used it to organise cultural production. In her path, the earliest observable point of bifurcation between artist and organiser was when she learned to form an event collective, that is, when she experienced the tasks involved in organising events. Her learning progression from there on groomed her for cultural labour as an organiser. Whether she used, uses, and will use that capability to do culture as a 'professional' or as 'everyday creativity' (Wilson et al., 2017) is at the level of the ecology less relevant because both are producing culture, and because in the end, cultural labourers typically circulate between the public, commercial, and homemade culture

domains (Jackson et al., 2006). Grooming for cultural labour reproduces the capability of ecological members to do culture. The difference between mechanisms that reproduce institutions, structures, and singular organisations, and mechanisms that reproduce cultural labourers reveals something peculiar about the ecology of culture. At the level of social groups and classes, the cultivation of taste creates social distinctions (Bourdieu, 1987). At the level of ecology, the cultivated qualitative differences between cultural productions leads to specialisation and diversity that enhance system resilience. Likewise, at the level of ecology, grooming individuals for cultural labour is a mechanism for reproducing a specific resource: organisers, those who make the patterns of creativity connect.

Finally, the implied ethical point is not to argue for avoiding or minimising grooming, but to advocate for *critical reflexivity*. The conceptualisation of the ecological function of grooming youths for cultural labour leads to a normative two-fold implication: 1) the professionals that scout, recruit, integrate, and teach youths should also teach them the politics of cultural labour as part of the practical curriculum of learning. Individual practitioners are de facto functionaries of the cultural ecology, so they should consider themselves the best to *reflexively* groom youths on how to navigate the system of neoliberal cultural production. This obviously implies that well-meaning culture professionals should calibrate their moral compass and revise the values they operate by and under; 2) experienced and novice cultural labourers should develop class consciousness, organise accordingly, and learn to avoid reproducing in youths' tolerance, acceptance of, and respect for labour conditions that should be considered intolerable and unacceptable. As long as individual cultural labourers remain individual, the system of cultural production will continue to exploit labour undeterred and unchecked. Organisation could take any form from unionisation to affinity groups, all aimed at enabling mutual support, mobilising resistance, and organise direct action against precarious, stressful, unsustainable, and abusive labour conditions.

references

- Abbing, H. (2008) *Why area artists poor?: The exceptional economy of the arts*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Abbott, A. (2014) *The system of professions: An essay on the division of expert labor*. Chicago: University of Chicago press.
- Albrecht, M., J. Harwood Barnett and M. Griff (1970) *The sociology of art and literature: A reader*. New York: Praeger.
- Alper, N. and G.H. Wassall (2006) 'Artists' careers and their labor markets', in V.A. Ginsburg and D. Throsby (eds.) *Handbook of the economics of art and culture, vol. 1*. Amsterdam: North-Holland.
- Bachmann, G., J. Dovey, J. Monaco and B. Sharpe (2012) *Cultural value networks research findings. AHRC Connected Communities*. University of the West of England: Digital Cultures Research Centre.
- Bakhshi, H., A. Freeman and G. Hitchen (2009) *Measuring intrinsic value: How to stop worrying and love economics*. London: Mission, Models, Money.
- Barker, V. (2020) 'The democratic development potential of a cultural ecosystem approach', *Journal of Law, Social Justice and Global Development*, 24: 1-14.
- Barnhill, D. (2002) 'An interwoven world: Gary Snyder's cultural ecosystem', *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology*, 6(2): 111-144.
- Becker, H.S. (1974) 'Art as collective action', *American Sociological Review*, 39(6): 767-776.
- Becker, H.S. (1982) *Art worlds*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bille, T. (2011) 'Creative labor: Who are they? What do they do? Where do they work? A discussion based on a quantitative study from Denmark', in C. Mathieu (eds.) *Careers in creative industries*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Blackstone, M., S. Hage and I. McWilliams (2016) 'Understanding the role of cultural networks within a creative ecosystem: a Canadian case-study', *Journal of Cultural Management and Policy*, 6(1): 13-29.
- Blackwell, A. and L. Harvey (1999) *Destinations and reflections: Careers of British art, craft and design graduates*. Birmingham: Centre for Research into Quality, University of Central England.

- Bookchin, M. (1978) 'Utopia, not futurism: Why doing the impossible is the most rational we can do', lecture presented at Toward tomorrow fair in Amherst, Massachusetts [http://unevenearth.org/2019/10/bookchin_doing_the_impossible/].
- Borin, E. (2015) 'Local participation for the enhancement of cultural heritage: the UNESCO candidature of the Climats du Vignoble de Bourgogne', in *The ecology of culture: Community engagement, co-creation, cross fertilization*. Book proceedings 6th Annual Research Session, ENCATC, October 21-23.
- Borin, E., and F. Donato (2015) 'Unlocking the potential of IC in Italian cultural ecosystems', *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, 16(2): 285-304.
- Bourdieu, P. (1987) *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Cambridge: Harvard university press.
- Bourdieu, P. (2018) 'Cultural reproduction and social reproduction', in R. Brown (eds.) *Knowledge, education, and cultural change*. London: Routledge.
- Burø, T. (2020) *Land of light: Assembling the ecology of culture in Odsherred 2000-2018*. PhD dissertation. Frederiksberg: Copenhagen Business School.
- Burø, T. and O. Koefoed (2021) 'Organising spirit', *Culture and Organization*, 27(2): 171-190.
- de Certeau, M. (1984) *The practice of everyday life*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London. University of California Press.
- Courtney, R. (2018) 'Network governance in the heritage ecology', *Journal of Management and Governance*, 22(3): 689-705.
- Crossick, G., and P. Kaszynska (2014) 'Under construction: Towards a framework for cultural value', *Cultural Trends*, 23(2): 120-131.
- Cunningham, S., J. Banks and J. Potts (2008) 'Cultural economy: The shape of the field', in H. Anheier and Y.R. Isar (eds.) *The cultural economy*. London: SAGE publications inc.
- Danto, A. (1964) 'The artworld', *The Journal of Philosophy*, 61(19): 571-584.
- Dovey, J., S. Moreton, S. Sparke and B. Sharpe (2016) 'The practice of cultural ecology: Network connectivity in the creative economy', *Cultural Trends*, 25(2): 87-103.

- Duxbury, N., W.F. Garrett-Petts and D. MacLennan (2015) 'Cultural mapping as cultural inquiry: Introduction to an emerging field of practice', in N. Duxbury, W.F. Garrett-Petts and D. MacLennan (eds.) *Cultural mapping as cultural Inquiry*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Gallasch, K. (2004) 'The arts, ecologically', *RealTime*, 61: 4-5.
- Geertz, C. (1993) *The interpretation of cultures*. London: Fontana Press.
- Getz, D. and T. Andersson (2016) 'Analyzing whole populations of festivals and events: An application of organizational ecology', *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*, 8(3): 249-273.
- Gibson, C. (2012) 'Cultural economy: Achievements, divergences, and future prospects', *Geographical Research*, 50(3): 282 - 290.
- Gollmitzer, M. and C. Murray (2008) *From economy to ecology: A policy framework for creative labour*. Ottawa: Canadian Conference of the Arts.
- Holden, J. (2015) *The Ecology of Culture*. London: Arts and Humanities Research Council.
- Holden, J. (2016) *Organism not mechanism: An ecological approach to cultural learning*. A New Direction.
- Holling, C.S. (1973) 'Resilience and stability of ecological systems', *Annual review of ecology and systematics*, 4(1): 1-23.
- Hope, A.D. (1979) 'Suggestion for a study of the ecology of the arts', in A.D. Hope, J. Passmore and D. Brooke (eds.) *The ecology of the arts*. Occasional paper/Australian Council for the Arts.
- Hughes, E. (1971) *The Sociological eye: Selected papers on work, self and the study of society*. Chicago: Aldine
- Jackson, M.R., F. Kabwasa-Green and J. Herranz (2006) *Cultural vitality in communities: interpretation and indicators*. Washington, DC.: The Urban Institute.
- Jamieson, E. (2016) *From dance culture to dance ecology. A study of developing connections across dance organisations in Edinburgh and North West England, 2000 to 2016*. Doctoral Dissertation, Chester: University of Chester.

- Kagan, S. (2011) *Art and sustainability: Connecting patterns for a culture of sustainability*. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.
- Koefoed, O. (2016) 'Into the fringe: On cultural interventions for sustainability and resilience', in M. Ziehl, C. Rabe and T. Haupt (eds.) *City linkage: Art and culture fostering urban futures*. Hamburg: Taschenbuch.
- Koefoed, O. and T. Burø (2022) 'Sowing the seeds of the Pollination Academy: Exploring mycelic pedagogies in the Anthropocene', in M. Paulsen, M. Jagodzinski, S. Hawke (eds.) *Pedagogy in the Anthropocene*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kreidler, J. and M. Eng (2005) 'Cultural dynamics map: Exploring the arts ecosystem in the United States', National Arts Strategies, March 2005 [http://www.artstrategies.org/downloads/CulturalMap_v1.pdf].
- Laszlo, E. (1996) *The systems view of the world: A holistic vision for our time*. Cresskill: Hampton Press.
- Lloyd, R. (2006) *Neo-bohemia: Arts and commerce in the post-industrial city*. New York: Routledge.
- Markusen, A., A. Gadwa, E. Barbour and W. Beyers (2011) *California's Arts and Cultural Ecology*. Markusen Economic Research.
- Mijatović, L.R., N. Duxbury, J.T.C. Dieleman, H. Dieleman and S. Schröder (2017). *Culture in sustainability: Towards a transdisciplinary approach*. University of Jyväskylä: SoPhi 139.
- Morton, T. (2019) *Being ecological*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Oakley, K. (2007) *Better than working for a living? Skills and labour in the festivals economy*. London: Equal Works.
- Oakley, K. (2009) 'Art works' - *Cultural labour markets: a literature review*. London: Creativity, Culture, and Education.
- Owens, R. (2012) 'Mapping the city: Innovation and continuity in the Chicago school of sociology, 1920–1934', *The American Sociologist*, 43(3): 264–293.
- Palmer, V. (1928) *Field studies in sociology: A student's manual*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Passmore, J. (1976) 'The ecology of the arts', *Quadrant*, 20(6): 23–32.

- Patterson, O. (2010) 'The mechanisms of cultural reproduction: explaining the puzzle of persistence', in J.R. Hall, L. Grindstaff and M. Lo (eds.) *Routledge handbook of cultural sociology*. London: Routledge.
- Pine, J. and J. Gilmore (1999) *The experience economy: Work is theatre and every business a stage*. Boston: Harvard Business Press.
- Poprawski, M. (2016) 'Intergenerational transmission of values and cultural sustainability: The cultural participation of local, small town communities in Poland', *Law Social Justice and Global Development Journal*, 20(1): 1-10.
- Reckwitz, A. (2018) *The invention of creativity: Modern society and the culture of the new*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.
- Salazar-Porzio, M. (2015) 'The ecology of arts and humanities education: Bridging the worlds of universities and museums', *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 14(3): 274-292.
- Stern, M. and S. Seifert (2013) *Cultural ecology, neighborhood vitality, and social wellbeing - A Philadelphia project*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Social Impact of the Arts Project and The Reinvestment Fund.
- Steward, S. (2010) *Cultural mapping toolkit*. Legacies Now.
- Terranova, T. (2000) 'Free labor: Producing culture for the digital economy', *Social Text*, 18(2): 33-58.
- Throsby, D. and Hollister, V. (2003) *'Don't give up the day job': An economic study of professional artists in Australia*. Sydney: The Australia Council.
- Varela, F., E. Thompson and E. Rosch (1991) *The embodied mind: Cognitive science and human experience*. Cambridge and London: the MIT press.
- Williams, R. (1960) *Culture and Society 1780-1950*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Willis, P. (1978) *Learning to labour*. London: Routledge.
- Willis, P. (1981) 'Cultural production is different from cultural reproduction is different from social reproduction is different from reproduction', *Interchange*, 12(2-3): 48-67.
- Wilson, N. and J. Gross (2017) *Caring for cultural freedom: An ecological approach to supporting young people's cultural learning*. London: A New Direction.

Wilson, N., J. Gross and A. Bull (2017) *Towards cultural democracy: Promoting cultural capabilities for everyone*. London: King's College London.

Wittel, A. (2001) 'Towards a network sociality', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 18(6): 51-76.

the author

Thomas Burø, PhD, is assistant professor at the Technical University of Denmark. He is interested in organisation, culture, and ecology. Thomas Burø also sings for the punk band tvivler and is actively trying to commit commercial suicide every chance he gets.

Email: tbur@dtu.dk