

Two Warring Flipsides In the Industrial Promotional Surround

TOP-DOWN CORPORATE PROMOTIONAL SURROUND (CPS)

(Branding, Marketing, Making-Ofs, Meta-Texts, Franchises, DVD Extras, EPKs, etc.)

Corporate Logic

Industrial Leveling Strategies:

- To level hierarchies in market/distribution chain (fulfills the pre-digital notion of direct-to-consumer marketing)
- To level distinctions in production/labor chain (lower costs, eliminates union entitlements, creates inter-craft conflict)

Specific Film/TV Tactics:

- To create information cascades on multi-platforms (publicity, buzz about 'special' blockbuster properties)
- To cross-promote conglomerate properties (advertising unexceptional content in the clutter)

General Corporate Goals:

- To externalize risk (through co-productions, presales, outsourcing, merchandizing)
- To cultivate flexibility (through outsourcing, contract labor, project-based incorporation)

Impact/Results

<u>UNRULY WORKWORLD</u>	<u>UNRULY TECHNOLOGIES</u>	<u>UNRULY AUDIENCES</u>
CPS stimulates volatile labor contestation while creating over-supply of content (and workers) at industry's 'input boundaries.' Economic anxiety fuels excessive 'spec' project creation. As costs and revenues decrease, and markets become more uncertain, theoretical justifications in ephemeral texts circulated by management to employees increase.	CPS industrially rationalizes new tech as 'user-friendly' to collapse existing, costlier workflows. CE disciplines new tech by theorizing them within traditional aesthetic standards and conventional business practices (but apart from existing labor arrangements). The greater any new tech's disruptiveness, the more extreme the theorizing in ephemeral texts needed to tame it.	CPS brands corporations emotionally by creating psychological relations with fans via viral marketing, multiple platforms, and immersive, ancillary content. Fan loyalty is keyed to relative extent of corporate disclosure and organizational transparency as evidenced by corporate ephemeral texts circulating in viewer's promotional surround.

CPS tries to intellectually manage and monetize instabilities through self-referencing as labor and consumption distinctions are leveled

WPS resuscitates leveled distinctions through self-referencing to maintain professional communities, craft survival, and career advantage

<u>UNRULY WORKWORLD</u>	<u>UNRULY TECHNOLOGIES</u>	<u>UNRULY AUDIENCES</u>
WPS constantly negotiates worker & craft identities for survival. The histories, socio-professional hierarchies, and cultural symbolism of any craft represented in ephemeral texts increase in prominence as the oversupply of production of labor increases.	WPS is used to legitimize one technical or craft group over another competing craft group, and to establish competence and exclusivity. Craft and worker theorizing, self-referencing, and cultural activities in and through ephemeral texts increase as the conveyor belt of technical obsolescence and uncertainty accelerate.	Users and fans increasingly share production and aesthetic competencies with commercial film/TV workers. Thus, worker discourses of "professionalism—vs—amateurism" in ephemera become acute and more exclusionary in the era of prosumer social media and amateur user-generated content (UGC).

Labor's Cultural Practice

Craft Strategies

- Make craft, union or guild self-perpetuating through medieval system of protracted mentoring.
- Maximize and codify degree to which production is distributed across department area and crew.

Cultural Tactics/Contradictions

- Cultivate ideal of unified industry with management to protect incomes after contracts are signed.
- Convert work into cultural capital, via socio-professional rituals, ancestry, and meritocracy.
- Buffer underemployment by displaying and leveraging cultural capital via credits, craft awards, and demo reels.

General Work Goals

- Network to survive morphing, nomadic system of short-term production start-ups/shut-downs in 'gift economy'
- Maintain high-costs of entry and exclusivity. Preach collectivity in trade fora and texts, but bar aspirants from entry.

Labor Logic

GROUND-UP WORKER PROMOTIONAL SURROUND (WPS)

(Mentoring, How-to Panels, Trade Stories, Technical Retreats, Comp Reels, Craft Meritocracy)

(JohnCaldwell, 21 July 09)