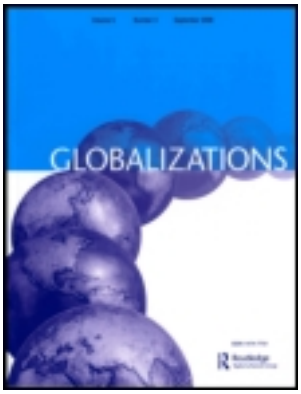

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Toronto's Distillery District: Consumption and Nostalgia in a Post-Industrial Landscape

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Toronto's Distillery District: Consumption and Nostalgia in a Post-Industrial Landscape

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ABSTRACT *This paper explores the adaptive reuse of the Gooderham and Worts Distillery, a 13-acre historical site located adjacent to downtown Toronto. It asks what our fascination with industrial ruins tells us about North American and European cities in the twenty-first century. The transformation of the world's largest distillery into an upscale leisure destination illustrates many of the forces that are reconfiguring cities: commodification, gentrification, the city as theme park and spectacle, post-industrialism, and the consumer preferences of the creative class. But it would be wrong to dismiss the Distillery District simply as a Disneyified version of industrial history. Whereas typical urban entertainment destinations are places that 'synergize' nationally branded products, chain restaurants, and multiplex movie theatres, the Distillery District is a site for serious theatre, art galleries, and local artisanal production. The image promoted by the Distillery District could be described as the commodification of decommodification. Drawing on the concepts of nostalgia and ruin, this article suggests that the Distillery District is best understood not only as a strategy for maximizing the returns on investment capital but also as a cultural response to globalization and de-industrialization.*

Este artículo explora la reutilización adaptable de la destilería Gooderham y Worts, un sitio histórico de 13 acres, contiguo al centro de Toronto. Se pregunta lo que nuestra fascinación por las ruinas industriales nos dice sobre las ciudades norteamericanas y europeas del siglo veintiuno. La transformación de la destilería más grande del mundo, a un destino de esparcimiento de lujo, ilustra muchas de las fuerzas que están reconfigurando las ciudades: la mercantilización, la elitización, la ciudad como un parque temático y de espectáculo, el postindustrialismo y las preferencias del consumidor de la clase creativa. Pero sería un error descartar el Distrito de la destilería como una versión de un campo de Disney de la historia industrial. En tanto que los destinos urbanos de esparcimiento típicos son lugares que 'actúan en sinergia' con los productos de marca, restaurantes de cadena y teatros múltiples de cine, el

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Distrito de la destilería es un sitio para teatro serio, galerías de arte, y producción artesanal local. La imagen que promueve el Distrito de la destilería podría describirse como la mercantilización de la desmercantilización. En base a los conceptos de nostalgia y ruina, este artículo sugiere que el Distrito de la destilería se entiende mejor no sólo como una estrategia para optimizar los rendimientos de la inversión del capital, pero también como una respuesta a la globalización y la desindustralización.

本论文探讨了古德汉-沃兹酿酒厂的适应性再生，这是毗邻多伦多市中心区的一个13英亩的历史性场所。论文提出了这样一个问题，即我们迷恋于工业遗迹向我们传达了21世纪北美和欧洲城市的一些什么信息？世界上最大的酿酒厂区转变为一个高档的休闲地，这为诸多正在重新构造城市的力量：商品化、重建、作为主题公园和景观的城市、后工业主义，以及创造性阶层的消费偏好，提供了一个例证。但是，简单对待古酿酒厂区，将其作为工业历史的迪斯尼化版本将是错误的。典型的城市娱乐地点就是那些把国家品牌产品、连锁餐馆和多样化的影剧院协同起来的地方，而酿酒厂区则是一个融合庄重剧院、艺术长廊以及当地工匠作品的场所。本论文采用怀旧与遗迹两个概念，表明酿酒厂区不仅要作为一个最大化投资收益的战略，而且要作为对全球化和去工业化的文化反应，才能加以充分理解。

Keywords: commodification, gentrification, ruins, industrial, landscapes, post-industrialism, nostalgia

Just east of the glass condominium towers of downtown Toronto lies the Portlands, a post-industrial 'no-man's-land' littered with rusting tugboats, oil drums, debris, and abandoned warehouses made of corrugated steel. Between downtown and the dystopian Portlands is another former industrial area known as the Distillery District. The Distillery District, however, is made up of dozens of impressive brick buildings constructed in the late nineteenth century by the firm Gooderham and Worts. After alcohol production stopped in 1990, the abandoned 13-acre site was the backdrop for hundreds of movies and television shows, including the musical *Chicago*. Widely considered an important example of Victorian industrial architecture, the Gooderham and Worts site was well situated for reconfiguration as a cultural centre and tourist destination. In 2003 a flurry of publicity celebrated a new cultural destination that housed art galleries, performance venues, studios, restaurants, and bars. The main draw, however, was the distinctive industrial architecture, which not only featured the now iconic exposed brick and polished concrete but also displayed intact industrial equipment: huge distilling vats, fermentation tanks, pipes, filters, centrifuges, and rotary bottle fillers.

There is an extensive literature in urban studies that has treated similar projects with skepticism. Sharon Zukin has argued that loft conversions have adverse effects on industrial production furthering the centrifugal tendencies of modern cities that create elite zones of middle-class consumption in the centre and industrial districts in the exurbs (Zukin, 1982). According to M. Christine Boyer, heritage projects such as Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco, South Street Seaport in New York, and Faneuil Hall in Boston obliterate history and undermine our ability to read the city as a meaningful text (1992, p. 184). A number of commentators have noted that heritage projects frequently employ the techniques of Disney's 'Imagineering' to evoke nostalgia for the past and pleasure in the present while diminishing the critical capacities that facilitate meaningful urban citizenship. It is possible to see the Distillery District in these terms. The Distillery District is a commercial venture, and part of its business model was to create enough buzz about the arts community in the neighborhood to inflate the value of the

surrounding land and sell condominiums at a significant profit. Yet it also provides below market studio space to artists and leases exclusively to local businesses.

What does this type of redevelopment project tell us about cities in the twenty-first century? One possible answer is that the transformation of the world's largest distillery into an upscale leisure destination illustrates some of the forces that are reconfiguring cities: commodification, gentrification, the city as theme park and spectacle, post-industrialism, and the consumer preferences of the creative class (Florida, 2002; Smith, 1986). The Distillery District, however, is not exactly one of the urban entertainment destination (UED) projects that brought international finance capital into cities in the 1990s (Hannigan, 1998). Whereas typical urban entertainment destinations are places that 'synergize' nationally branded products, chain restaurants, and multiplex movie theatres, the Distillery District is a site for serious theatre, art galleries, and local artisanal production. It was designed and marketed as an authentic, local alternative to the homogenous spaces of consumption.

When it first opened in the summer of 2003, the Distillery District was a raw space with crumbling brick and massive, rusting machinery. It was precisely this feeling of improvisation, disorder, and even decay that was part of its appeal. A number of architects and theorists have reflected on this allure. Ignasi de Solà-Morales used the term 'terrain vague' to describe abandoned sites and obsolete buildings. Instead of seeing them as sites in need of remediation, he celebrated their emptiness, ruin, and lack of productivity. Their strangeness made them alternatives to the dominant logic of the capitalist city. Similarly, Tim Edensor argued that the fascination with ruins stems from their impurity, danger, disorder; these qualities are fissures or cracks in the image and experience of the city as a highly controlled environment. According to Edensor, urban dwellers desire both security and transgression, the Apollonian and the Dionysian. Industrial ruins can be wild zones, places of uncertain value that are open to temporary, contingent forms of occupation (Edensor, 2005). They are taken over by homeless encampments, decorated by graffiti artists, and inhabited by nocturnal revelers. The Distillery District project turned the Gooderham and Worts site from a terrain vague into a more conventional space of commerce and consumption, but it did not efface all traces of its past. The image promoted by the Distillery District could be described as the commodification of decommodification. While the refurbished site gradually came to resemble a festival marketplace, the conspicuous industrial artifacts continue to function metonymically, evoking the transgressiveness of the ruin. Moreover, the wares, entertainment, and buildings all emit the aura of the original, the local, and the relational. This article suggests that the Distillery District is best understood not only as a strategy for maximizing the returns on investment capital but also as a cultural response to globalization and de-industrialization.

Fantasy City

Critiques of the Disneyification of public space sometimes give the impression that the transformation of the city into a site of spectacle is a relatively recent phenomenon. But, as John Hannigan points out in *Fantasy City*, the early twentieth century metropolis was already a popular leisure destination. During 'the golden age' of popular urban entertainment in the early twentieth century, the new urban masses flocked to the phantasmagorias of the World Fairs, seaside amusement parks, and vaudeville theatres (1998).

Although the production of urban space as a site of entertainment, leisure, and consumption is not new, it has experienced a resurgence in recent years. This was driven in part by the strategy of real estate investors who confronted diminishing returns in the suburbs and sought opportunities for profit in under-capitalized urban cores (Hackworth, 2007). Although major cities had

lost jobs in heavy industry and retail, they still had a certain aura as sites of history, culture, and innovation. This image and infrastructure served as the basis of a new urban economy based on tourism, leisure, and consumption. Cities across North America partnered with private developers to create urban entertainment destination projects (Hackworth, 2007). According to Hannigan, these projects had several distinctive features (Hannigan, 1998, p. 3). They were organized around a scripted theme drawn from sports, history, or popular entertainment; they were designed to promote a certain brand (e.g. Nike World) and to draw visitors based on the visibility of nationally and internationally recognized chains such as the Hard Rock Café. These new urban entertainment districts appealed to the middle classes' desire for excitement and novelty without risk or uncertainty. To fulfill these contradictory longings, these sites were packed with stimulating spectacles that were concentrated into areas that were physically and geographically adjacent to, yet isolated from, the surrounding city. The architecture of these sites tended to mimic features of the suburban shopping mall. Restaurants and shops were seldom accessible from public streets; instead they were accessed through private interior courtyards and connected by skyways to luxury hotels, convention centers, or sports stadiums. Unlike typical shopping malls, however, they featured late-night activities such as nightclubs and cultivated an image of intensity and excitement.

Historical theming was a feature of some early variants of the urban entertainment district model. In the 1960s, two large industrial sites in San Francisco—the Cannery and the Ghiradelli chocolate factory—were redeveloped as waterfront tourist destinations with shops, restaurants, souvenirs, and crafts. The best-known project, however, is Faneuil Hall, the festival marketplace designed by the Rouse Company in 1976 and imitated throughout the United States. Faneuil Hall demonstrated the commercial viability of attracting suburbanites and tourists to the downtown centre through a mix of historical atmospherics, entertainment, and distinctive shopping opportunities. Faneuil Hall had originally been a marketplace and public forum. Built in 1741 and donated to the city, the original hall was used for political debates and discussion, and it served as an important meeting place during the American Revolution. The new, revitalized Faneuil Hall expanded the commercial space but replaced the political forum with a lively entertainment program of street performers, jugglers, and clowns.

The Political Economy of Adaptive Re-use

The distinctiveness of the Distillery District becomes legible against the backdrop of the festival marketplace. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, every major city had some version of Faneuil Hall.[1] Instead of evoking the particularity of local history, these formulaic projects began to feel like interchangeable tourist destinations. In fact, the aura of history seemed to lose appeal as Downtown Disney (Orlando), Citywalk (Los Angeles), and Las Vegas demonstrated that the copy could be more fascinating than the original (Baudrillard, 1995). In order to appeal to blasé tourists who were no longer fascinated by Victorian gas lamps and brick façades, new projects had to create a distinctive identity in order to stand out in an over-saturated market. The distinctiveness of the Distillery District comes from the raw character of the space, especially the buildings that display the massive ruins of industrial machinery. The Distillery District also eschews national brands and rejects the formulaic combinations of chain restaurants, bars, and stores. The raw space, serious art, and local retail all combine to convey a sense of a place apart from the neoliberal city. The literal and metaphorical signs of global capital are notably absent. Yet global economic structures and the neoliberal conception of the public good still played an important role behind the scenes in the production of this space.

The redevelopment of the Distillery District was a creative solution to the challenge of turning an abandoned industrial site into a profitable investment. The historic architecture presented an opportunity to brand the area as an alternative to the predictability of the downtown shopping mall and urban multiplex experience. Furthermore, the proximity to downtown meant the site had potential for commercial uses and high-density residential construction, but this required that the city waive existing zoning laws to allow the construction of profitable high rises. At the same time, the developer faced the challenge of attracting high-income residents and consumers to a marginal location. By providing low cost studio space to visual and performing artists, the developer was able to win favorable treatment from the city planning board. Furthermore, by promoting the image of a unique arts community, it attracted tourists and professionals, two highly sought after consumer demographics.

In 1988 the federal government designated the Distillery District as a site of 'National Historical Significance' (Caulfield, 2005, p. 87). The City of Toronto made it clear that redevelopment would have to preserve at least the façades of many of the buildings. The owners commissioned a study that emphasized both historic preservation and economic viability as the key parameters for future redevelopment. They proposed a mixed use, residential–retail–commercial development integrated into the existing site. To make room for new construction, they planned to demolish the structures built in the twentieth century and to adapt some of the warehouses to serve as podiums for new multistory buildings. By the time the city and provincial planning boards had approved a modified version of this plan, the market for office and commercial space downtown was in a slump and the project stalled. During the 1990s, the Distillery District was used primarily as a backdrop for historical films and television series. In 2001, the owners decided to sell the property to Cityscape, a local firm specializing in loft conversions.

On a modest budget, Cityscape managed to turn a derelict industrial site into a successful leisure destination. It carefully orchestrated a process that is usually associated with gradual, piecemeal gentrification. First, it partnered with Artscape, a local non-profit organization committed to fostering the arts and 'building authentic and dynamic places by connecting creative and cultural resources'. Artscape leased the one twentieth century building—the Case Goods Warehouse—and created below-market rent studio spaces for artists and offices for non-profit cultural organizations. This had two benefits for the developers. First, it established the Distillery District as an arts centre, which was an important marketing tool in luring consumers who imagined themselves part of the 'creative class' (Florida, 2002). Second, Cityscape used this leasing arrangement as a bargaining chip to gain approval for zoning exemptions necessary to accommodate new high rise residential development. According to Section 37 of the Planning Act, existing zoning laws can be waived for developments in return for 'community benefits'. In theory, this meant public parks or low-income housing. The idea that private art studios constitute a community benefit is certainly an expansion of the concept, but one that has an obvious appeal because of the unique status of the arts as both an alternative to market capitalism and, conveniently, a highly profitable marketing tool.

Cityscape tried to make sure that the Distillery District was not just another festival marketplace. It decided not to rent space to any chains or franchises, instead actively recruiting art galleries and creating several performance venues. It organized music festivals on the weekends, which drew crowds of people to the restaurants, cafes, bars, and a microbrewery. Cityscape also saved money and maximized authenticity by doing minimal renovations to provide heat, light, and sewerage, while leaving most of the original features of the buildings—including all of the old industrial boilers, kilns, aging racks—intact.

In a short time, this strategy paid off. Even though some tenants complained that the heating and sewage of the raw space were inadequate, the atmosphere contrived, and the walk-by traffic disappointing, the Distillery District was generally considered a success. It won numerous awards including the Best Large Project Award from the Canadian Urban Institute and the Governor General's Award for Historic Renovation. It established a brand name with recognition across the city, ensuring strong demand for its new condo projects. These included a 32-story luxury high-rise condo and several low-rise conversion buildings, which sold briskly at prices comparable to the downtown core.

The atmosphere of the Distillery District is very different from the urban entertainment districts, which promote national brands and openly celebrate an urban space remade by global capital. Yet they are similar in so far as both models use public funds to support private developments that seek to maximize return on capital (Hackworth, 2007). In the case of the Distillery District the government support included direct government subsidies as well as modifications to existing zoning regulations. It also reflected a distinctively neoliberal understanding of the public good. The term 'neoliberal' here is meant to signal a free-market ideology that sees the state as a tool of private enterprise and defines the public good as maximizing profit rather than redistributing it. The social-democratic approach to the city, on the other hand, uses tax revenue, innovative leasing arrangements, and regulation to provide for the basic needs of urban dwellers by building high quality public housing and public spaces on a massive scale. The best examples of this integrated social-democratic approach to the city would include Red Vienna during the interwar years and postwar Amsterdam (Blau, 1999; Fainstein, 1997). Although Toronto city planners hoped that section 37 of the planning act would encourage developers to build low-income housing, they conceded to developers' requests that things like ravine preservation or artist studios be construed as 'community benefits'.[2] These benefits, however, can also be interpreted as amenities and marketing tools that help draw the appropriate consumer demographic rather than providing any benefits to less affluent members of the community.

Nostalgia and Amnesia

Despite the very different array of retail tenants, the Distillery District shares some features with the 'festival marketplace' urban redevelopment.[3] It is a profit-driven initiative that uses the aura of history to create an oasis in the city, a space of leisure, culture, and consumption. The Distillery District is also a gated community. The perimeter of the site along Mill Street is marked by a brick wall, an iron gate, and a small guardhouse. The interior is a pedestrian zone and the back of the property, adjacent to the highway is a parking lot. Glossy brochures advertise both the condos and the industrial history and include a color-coded map identifying the location of different retail shops, art studios, restaurants, and galleries. The marked perimeter, parking, and maps all help make the space legible to the visitor. Typical urban neighborhoods can seem confusing and opaque to outsiders, who are unable to read subtle cues and therefore have difficulty identifying boundaries and appropriate destinations. The Distillery District manages to convey a sense of both accessibility and inaccessibility. The guardhouse and gate signal to street people that they are unwelcome, while the color-coded maps and signs help visitors find their way around the industrial landscape.

The Distillery District also departs from the festival market place model in important ways. Five years after its debut, the Distillery District still excludes national and international chain stores. Instead of selling mass produced products, there are over a dozen galleries featuring original art works and the retail shops tend to feature upscale, artisanal products like jewelry

or ceramics. The Mill Street Brewery and SOMA Chocolate, which sell products produced on-site, are particularly popular. If the retail landscape of the Distillery District seems familiar, it is not due to the chain stores but rather the opposite—the 'bobo' (bourgeois bohemian) penchant for the unique, local, and handcrafted is the same everywhere (Brooks, 2001).

It is more complicated to assess whether the Distillery District is a nostalgic rendering of industrial history and what the political effects of such nostalgia might be. Nostalgia is often seen as a negative attribute. Today the term connotes a sense of longing for an illusory or imagined past. But this was not always the case. As Margaret Farrar (2008) points out, 'nostalgia' was originally the term used to describe a physical condition caused by intense longing for home. The term was coined in 1688 by Johannes Hofer, a physician who studied displaced persons including guest workers and soldiers. The symptoms included nausea, heart trouble, high fever, and loss of appetite. In the eighteenth century it was a synonym for a particularly intense form of homesickness (Boym, 2001; Farrar, 2008).

The concept of nostalgia has played an important role in urban studies where it is used to assess the adaptive reuse of historical sites. It has also been a trope in debates about communitarianism and participatory democracy. Political theorists have criticized communitarianism as nostalgic because it relies on a model of small-town, face-to-face politics that is neither viable nor emancipatory (Ehrenberg, 1999, pp. xv, 184). Often the term nostalgia is invoked but not really explained or defined; by working backwards, however, it is possible to understand the negative attributes that nostalgia may entail. First, nostalgia is often associated with conservative or reactionary politics. In the United States, for example, many retail developments and theme parks are designed to evoke a sense of loss for turn-of-the-century or postwar America, a period also associated with patriarchy and unquestioned white privilege. To mourn the passing of this era may also be a way of identifying with these values and the conservative policies that aim to restore a more hierarchical polity. Nostalgia may also involve some type of distortion or selective memory. When critics fault places for being 'nostalgic' they typically mean that these places elicit a longing for a time that did not really exist. This misrecognition of the traces of the past in the present (or, more frequently, the re-creation of signs and symbols) induces a misunderstanding of the past. Nostalgia may also be depoliticizing. Christopher Lasch characterized nostalgia as a placebo that allows one to accept the status quo uncritically and inhibits deeper social criticism (Bellah, 1995/1996).

These criticisms strike me as convincing, yet this does not mean that nostalgia can or should simply be dismissed. Nostalgia does not have to serve reactionary politics. Throughout history, democratic and egalitarian political movements have been inspired by images of Ancient Athens and Republican Rome. Even though these images were probably highly selective and idealized, they animated struggles against authoritarian, exclusive, and hierarchical forms of government. Of course, longing for past glory and order has also inspired attachment to nationalist and racist movements, such as Nazism and fascism (Mosse, 1995). It is important to understand what elements of history are evoked and how they are interpreted and mobilized in the present. As Walter Benjamin (1978) reminded us, artifacts from the past may contain traces of alternative ideas and practices that break the discursive lock of the present. To discard the past entirely is to endorse a teleological, triumphalist view of history.

The Distillery District is an interesting illustration of the possibilities and limits of critical nostalgia. Unlike the paradigmatic projects of the historical preservationist movement—the antebellum plantation houses or the decaying mansions of captains of industry—the Gooderham and Worts site does not glorify the luxurious lifestyle of a small, rapacious elite (Farrar, 2008). It does not obviously aestheticize a built environment created by oppressive social relations, at

least if we believe an account published by *The Mail* on 23 April 1872. According to the newspaper, '(the workers) down there (in the Distillery District) *look* healthy enough, and healthy looking children fill the nearest school house'. It also noted that the 82-year-old Mr William Gooderham himself lived in the area, a testament to the quality of life in the neighborhood. Finally, the article highlighted the favorable working conditions: 'Many of the men are owners of the homes they live in, some have got "ahead" and have houses to rent, and the community down there, we must say, appears to be generally a thriving, prosperous, and healthy one' (*The Mail*, 1872, p. 2). This characterization may be a bit rosy, but it also reflects a view which is still popular in the present. It is a vision of our industrial past as an era of stable employment based on the manufacture of useful things, of industry rooted in local communities, a paternalistic connection between owner and workers, and general prosperity achieved though a family wage. The Distillery District does not rely on kitschy panoramas or period clothes or preachy signage to convey this message. For the most part, the industrial artifacts simply coexist alongside the accoutrements of the contemporary uses of the space. There is no effort at restoration to re-create a pristine moment of industrial glory. ERA architects, the firm responsible for the renovation, emphasized that the goal was to integrate the past and present rather than to create a static tableau of the past; this meant that new modernist buildings and elements were integrated into the site in numerous ways. The visitor can experience the past as an atmospherics of the past or take advantage of the heritage Web site, the brochures, and the tours to learn more about its history.

One of the defining characteristics of nostalgia is that it promotes selective memory and possibly a misrecognition of the past. It sanitizes the past so that its loss can be experienced as a source of pleasure. In the case of Gooderham and Worts, for example, one of the oral histories archived on the Web site mentions that the managers preferred to hire workers of British ancestry. Yet an afternoon stroll through the cobblestone streets lined with Victorian industrial architecture is unlikely to stimulate reflection on the homogeneity of pre-war Toronto, the racism of employers, or the efforts of craft unions to protect their wages by excluding new immigrants. But this selectivity is probably true of memory in general. We remember splashing in the backyard sprinkler more than trudging through the snow. We remember how the past should have been rather than how it actually was.

The auratic power of the past comes through powerfully at the Distillery District, at least on weekdays and evenings when the loud entertainment and crowds don't completely overpower the architecture. I do not think that this aura encourages conservative politics, at least if we define conservative as a political position rather than an attitude to the past. It elicits nostalgia for elements of the Fordist past: the production of things rather than financial speculation; the integration of manufacturing into the fabric of the city; stability and permanence rather than creative destruction; the intertwining of beauty and utility rather than the dismally utilitarian architecture of the big-box retailer and suburban office park. These are ideals that are still widely shared on the Left. The important question then, is whether the Distillery District and the many similar projects animate or undermine these ideals.

In *Loft Living*, Sharon Zukin argued that loft conversion advanced the process of deindustrialization by driving up the cost of industrial space in Manhattan. Ironically, the very people who were most enamored with the urban industrial aesthetic were the ones ensuring its final demise. While this may have been true in New York in the 1960s and 1970s, deindustrialization also occurred in areas where there was little competition from residential tenants. The relocation of industry was a response not only to the rising value of inner-city land but also to other factors such as the need for space for plant expansion, proximity to transportation networks, lower taxes, and the cost of labor. Governments turned to culture-based redevelopment strategies

after it became clear that deindustrialization could not be reversed (Caulfield, 2005). This was the case in the Distillery District and in another well-known project, MASS MoCA in North Adams. After industry had abandoned North Adams and a strip mall had failed to spur economic growth, the town lobbied for state funds to turn the Sprague Electric plant into the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (Zukin, 1995).

While some visitors to the Distillery District or MASS MoCA may think about the social and economic consequences of deindustrialization, the project does not exactly encourage this response. And perhaps it is strange to even expect that such sites should function as mnemonic devices. After all, suburbs and central business districts do not promote critical thinking about the production of their own spaces. Yet the distinctiveness of projects like the Distillery District stems from the way that they bring together ruin and renewal, production and consumption, spectacle and festival. Critical theorists like Walter Benjamin realized that this type of juxtaposition could serve to awaken us from the slumber of commodity fetishism or deepen it (Benjamin, 2002; Buck-Morss, 1989). It could animate the longing for social relations that are not produced by the status quo and make us aware of their absence.

The Distillery District is not a place that is frequented by members of the working class and is not designed to highlight working class history or cater to working class tastes. The expensive restaurants, bars, galleries, and theatres appeal to the demographic that has benefitted most from deindustrialization and globalization. So what draws this audience to industrial ruins? It isn't a triumphant celebration of the decline of Fordist production but nor is it any personal connection to the city's industrial past. I suspect that it may reflect anxiety about the effects of globalization: the outsourcing of manufacturing work, unfettered market relations, and the vague sense that prosperity may be an illusion if it isn't rooted in the production of things. These underlying anxieties may explain the popularity of the artisanal, the local, and the sustainable. In the summer time, the Distillery District hosts an artisans' market, where local craftspeople can sell their wares, which must be displayed in distinctively decorated carts. The rules exclude anyone selling mass produced or imported items. The farmers' market, the working artists' studios, the galleries, and the on-site production of bread, beer, ice cream, and chocolate, together they evoke a world in which things are made locally rather than imported and crafted rather than mass produced. In this imaginary world workers are not alienated by the division of labor, and market relations foster social relations rather than destroying them. It is the commodification of decommodification. The artist and the artisan are figures that express this contradiction; they synthesize the logic of the market and resistance to it in one (Adorno, 1996).

There is an obvious irony to staging a tableau of pre-industrial modes of production and exchange among the ruins of a multinational corporation. Gooderham and Worts was hardly a microbrewery. The economies of scale achieved in its vast operation drove dozens of smaller brewers out of business in the late nineteenth century. From the perspective of the post-Fordist economy, however, these differences become less relevant. Fordist and artisanal production blend together as emblems of a more productive and self-sufficient past. They evoke a sense of ur-history, a timeless past of dreams and fantasies rather than a decodable history.

Conclusion

The fantasy city thrives only as long as it can produce sites that evoke a sense of novelty, distinctiveness, and displacement from the rhythms of daily life. These sites draw the consumers and condo dwellers who make these projects profitable. Initially, the festival marketplaces created a sense of history through architectural details, design features, and programming,

which distinguished them from suburban shopping malls. Not only did numerous other heritage sites imitate this model, but the new suburban malls themselves incorporated Art Deco or Victorian styles in order to create an aesthetic effect of past-ness and depth. According to Frederic Jameson, this form of quotation is one of the key illustrations of the cultural logic of late capitalism (1991, p. 20). The proliferation of pastiche, however, may also have created the desire for more convincing historicism conveyed through raw space, industrial fossils, and minimalist renovation. In the Distillery District, the effect of physical space is heightened by the presence of businesses that hearken back to an era before national branding, franchise stores, and global supply chains. It is tempting to read the Distillery District as simply a sophisticated form of escapism, a fantasy meant to obscure, if only briefly, the centrifugal tendencies that are remaking the city. Yet we should not forget that fantasy, like the city itself, can be a reservoir for the imagination.

Notes

1 A few other examples include Riverwalk (New Orleans), Harborplace (Baltimore), South Street Seaport (New York), Grand Avenue (Milwaukee), Union Station (St. Louis), and Waterside (Norfolk, VA). Nor is this form of development exclusive to North America. Gyeongju World Culture Expo Park in South Korea and Canal City in Japan are just two examples from a growing list of large-scale shopping-entertainment-culture projects in the Pacific Rim. See Hannigan (1998).

2 This information comes from an interview with Peter Langdon, cited in Matthew Buckingham, 'Section 37 of the Toronto Official Plan' (student paper).

3 This discussion of nostalgia and amnesia draws on work from an earlier article (Kohn, 2009). This is reprinted with permission from The Johns Hopkins University Press.

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