Canadian Metropolis 2
Last Time

- Issues of the power and function of Canadian cities
- The idea of landscapes within the city connecting to the broader space-economy of the city, changing as it changes
This Time

• The role of the city as a centre of creativity and innovation
  • Economic creativity
  • Cultural creativity

• Important to its economy, culture and landscapes
Reading

- Hracs et al (2011) on musical talent in Toronto and Halifax
- Richard Florida et al (2010) on the creative urban economy
- Cummins-Russell & Rantisi (2012) on Montreal’s music industry
Urban Creativity

• Cities generate innovation, generate change
  • The most advanced parts of the economy tend to be found somewhere urban
  • Cities trigger change in their urban fields, their rural hinterlands
Urban Innovation/Creativity

• Example of car-sharing and cycling
• These two emerging forms of transportation emerge first in cities
  • Especially in inner-city Toronto
Car2Go Toronto Car-sharing:
Cycling

- Toronto’s inner city has adopted cycling as a major form of transportation
  - Bloor bike lanes
- Suburbs much slower to adopt/adapt
Cycling in Whitby

• Emphasis is on recreational cycling along the waterfront etc.,
• Motor vehicles can cross highway 401 safely via bridges
• When cyclists ask for cycle lanes on those 401 bridges they get laughed at
• GO train use limited by the size of the GO station parking lot
  • But town making it difficult to cycle to the GO train
Cycling in Toronto

• Toronto cyclists make 3 million trips/week in summer months
• Approx 20% of population (390,000) are ‘utilitarian’ cyclists [non-recreational]
• Rates higher in city core
• 30% of Montrealers commute by bike now (540,000)
• Bike Share:
  • 3,750 bikes and 360 stations
Gentrification in Toronto

• Another example of urban creativity
• Toronto one of the first N. American cities to develop residential gentrification
• Early phases based on the culture and social networks of bohemian creatives
Bloor-Yorkville

• A residential area abandoned by the wealthy circa 1910
  • They head to the suburbs

• Becomes a fashionable shopping area for wealthy suburbanites from 1910s
  • Retail gentrification

• Retail gentrification and TTC subway anchors a transformation into residential gentrification in late 1950s/early 1960s
  • Led by bohemian creatives
Concerto Café,
89 Bloor St W

A birthday is celebrated at the Concerto: Left to right, Zoltan Tariczky, Shelagh Gilmour Stene, Max Hoyos, Claude Dewhurst, Peter Munk and Dave Gilmour.
Concerto Café, 89 Bloor St W

- Opens June 1955
- One of the first 5 coffee houses in Toronto to have an espresso machine
- A hit with Yorkville crowd
- Helped launch Toronto’s coffee house culture
George Herczeg

- Jewish, Hungarian, holocaust survivor
- Realtor c1960, notices a demand for inner city housing from creatives
- Begins to buy & renovate inner city homes
- Starts with 82 MacPherson Ave, 1961
- Herczeg renovates and sells 200+ inner city properties by 1970
  - Financed by vendor take-back mortgages
The Colonnade

- Completed 1963
- 161 Bloor St W., E of Avenue Rd, W of Bay St
- Billed as the first Mixed-Use high-rise development in Canada (it wasn’t: 11 Yorkville Ave, 1958)
- 2 floors of commercial, 12-floor office building, 11 floors of high-end rentals
Urban Creativity

• These examples help establish that cities (and Toronto) are centres of innovation

• Toronto-Kitchener tech corridor with its 13000+ tech startups last year
Urban Creativity

- A key figure in this debate is Richard Florida
  - US urbanist and consultant, now based in Toronto
- Argued that the creative side to the city is vital to its economic and cultural survival, prosperity
- How to measure, stimulate urban creativity?
Richard Florida

• Argues that creativity is a key attribute of the urban economy
• Suggested that the more bohemian and cosmopolitan cities are more creative
  • More open to innovation
  • Attempted to gauge urban creativity by looking at a city’s gay bars
Richard Florida

• Most big North American cities have comparable infrastructure
  • Acceptable communications networks
  • Adequate education systems and facilities
  • Adequate shipping and transportation
But to land and keep footloose high-tech industries you need something extra

- An attractive lifestyle
- An interesting urban nightlife
- Fulfilling ways to live
Richard Florida

• This suggests that to build economic creativity you need
  • To build and maintain the ordinary infrastructure which other cities will have too
  • To foster a good quality of life, night-life, lifestyle
Toronto’s Entertainment District

• Emerges in the late 1990s in land banked for condo development
• Gives Toronto a big bar and club scene
• Now reduced, as redevelopment absorbs the sites
THERE ARE NO SINS BELOW THE EQUATOR.
Premier Mike Harris

• In the 1990s argued that Ontario needed to build the Internet
  • Argued that universities should be turning out engineers, computer geeks
  • Not geographers, philosophers, musicians, etc.,
• Saw no value in creative culture, just engineering
Po Shy
Do much she...
...and so I
my heart.
Richard Florida

• Argues that “creative workers” are becoming key figures in the present-day urban economy, a ‘creative class’
  • Knowledge-workers
  • Artists, musicians, artisans, cartoonists
  • Social scientists, planners, architects
• Suggests we keep these people happy, entertained, productive
The Creative Class

• Toronto’s public intellectuals who now mainly live downtown were keen on the idea of the creative class
  • They belong to it

• Early versions of the thesis saw little creative about Jane & Finch, or Scarborough
The Creative Class

- Christopher Hume in the Toronto Star derides Scarborough as a wasteland
  - Offers nothing creative in his opinion
  - A place where old strip plazas go to die
The Creative Class

• But Scarborough’s strip plazas accommodate
  • Afghan grocers
  • Indian clothing stores
  • Pakistani restaurants
• Vibrant ethnic creativity
  • But Christopher Hume and Richard Florida can’t see it
Jane & Finch

• Has plenty who know how to fill a dance hall with music for youth
  • Another kind of creativity
The Creative Class

• In its original form Richard Florida seemed to mean
  • “Inner-city upper income people who think their jobs are cool”
• Not surprising that Christopher Hume and the city’s public intellectuals often liked Florida’s ideas
• But ‘creative class’ is problematic class-situated language
But more Generally

• Florida is probably right to draw our attention to the creative side of the urban economy
  • Even if he gets some of it wrong
Toronto

• The Creative Economy is vital to Toronto:
  • A world-class role in mining finance and expertise.
  • Important knowledge-based financial, bio-tech, medical, and aerospace industries
  • Big computer animation and mobile-app industries
  • Inner-city creative economy active since the 1950s
Toronto

- Has become a major centre for cultural creativity and entertainment
  - The capital of Canada’s Anglophone print and electronic media
  - Huge musical and arts scene with fertile connections to multiculturalism, major festivals
  - Huge new media scene, games design, mobile App design
  - Global leader in AI research
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Price of Success

• Expensive real estate prices artists, musicians out of the market
  • Studio, rehearsal space expensive, difficult to find
• Some evidence of artists, musicians being displaced to Hamilton and elsewhere
  • Will Halifax, St John’s, Thunder Bay benefit?
Price of Success

• Expensive real estate raising costs of high-tech and creative labour
  • Some of the high-tech relocating to secondary cities: Kitchener-Waterloo-Guelph-Cambridge
Price of Success

• A tendency for many in Ontario, Toronto to see arts and culture as a frill
  • Nice to have, but not vital
• Quebec better at funding culture and the arts
  • Gives Montreal an advantage over Toronto
Creative Economy Strategies

• There are various ways of putting cultural creativity to work
Thunder Bay ON

• Needs to attract and retain highly-qualified talent despite being a small and somewhat remote city

• **Maintains a symphony orchestra, despite its small population size**
  • Using culture to retain/attract the creative talent
Winnipeg MB

• Trying to revitalise its inner city, and reconfigure its urban economy

• Building a new-media and knowledge economy on its centrality as a communications hub
  • Return of the Winnipeg Jets
  • New museum of Human Rights a showcase of the inner city
Toronto

• Decline in manufacturing created derelict zones along railway corridors
• 1990s Mayor Barbara Hall allowed redevelopment and re-use of these zones
• Rail corridors included two major telephone hubs vital for Internet data centres:
  • “The Two Kings”: King & Parliament, King & Strachan
Toronto

- Toronto’s inner city industrial land, grouped around the Two Kings became the basis for a condo-loft-conversion dot-com-new media landscape
  - Distillery District
  - Liberty Village
• Liberty Village, 2000
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THE CENTRE OF
Creative Toronto

• Did not invent **Nuit Blanche**, but probably now defines this festival in Canada

• Toronto produces **mobile gaming** apps

• Toronto is **important for EDM**
  • The Entertainment District was the ‘Yorkville’ for EDM
Critique

• The city as innovator is a well-established concept
• Creativity is part of its economy, culture
  • And the two support each other
• But how powerful is it?
• Bankers and the politicians still control the real power of the urban economy
  • Not the musicians and cartoonists