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THE IMPACT AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF THE AUDIENCE-CENTRIC APPROACH.



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Audience Development & Social Innovation
OR
Culture, Audiences and Democracy
OR
What Next for Audience Development?



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We live in a time of unprecedented change:

Technological
Political
Demographic
Human Migration
The nature of Truth

Q.
***Does anybody here believe
we don't need change?***

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON



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***“It is not necessary to change.
Survival is not mandatory.”***

W. Edwards Deming



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The relationship of Audience Development to discourses of democracy in European cultural policy.

There is an implicit *theoretical* relationship between public cultural subsidy and the broadening, or democratising of access.



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Audience Development embodies the aspiration of cultural policy to deliver a different material reality in the consumption of the publicly funded arts.

Such a moral imperative is implicit in any system of public cultural subsidy operating in a modern liberal democracy.



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Why, and how, publicly subsidised arts and culture must be both democratic and democratised.

“A democratic state cannot be seen as simply indulging the aesthetic preferences of a few, however enlightened”.



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Governments in democratic liberal societies cannot force people to engage with subsidised culture, but there are things that they can do:

- ❖ to widen access to existing culture
(the Democratisation of Culture)
- ❖ to enable a more democratic culture base
(Cultural Democracy)



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THE DEMOCRATISATION OF CULTURE

Refers to processes where the ‘official’ culture, typically represented by large and well-funded institutions, is made accessible to non-participating communities, often in the belief that it will do them good.



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THE DEMOCRATISATION OF CULTURE

It is

“a plan of action based on the belief that cultural development proceeds from the improved distribution of the experiences and products of high culture”.



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THE DEMOCRATISATION OF CULTURE

Is underpinned by a long-standing belief in the value of the civilising aspects of art and culture and thereby a concomitant desire to democratise access to it.

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Antonio Gramsci – ‘Common Sense’: *Senso comune*

The disparate set of ideas and beliefs that are held commonly within a certain community.

It is the result of institutions and producers of knowledge which, often in a sedimentary manner, promote a particular vision of the world.



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Antonio Gramsci – ‘Common Sense’: *Senso comune*

Capitalism, Gramsci suggested, maintained control not just through violence and political and economic coercion, but also through ideology.

The bourgeoisie developed a hegemonic culture, which propagated its own values and norms so that they became the "common sense" values of all.



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As a policy, the democratisation of culture relies upon **general agreement** on the culture to be democratised

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the universal values of European High Art.

It was the High Arts which were subsidised, yet the majority of the population remained stubbornly uninterested in them.

+

The assumption that everyone should be interested in them was challenged.



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The impact and policy implications of the audience-centric approach.





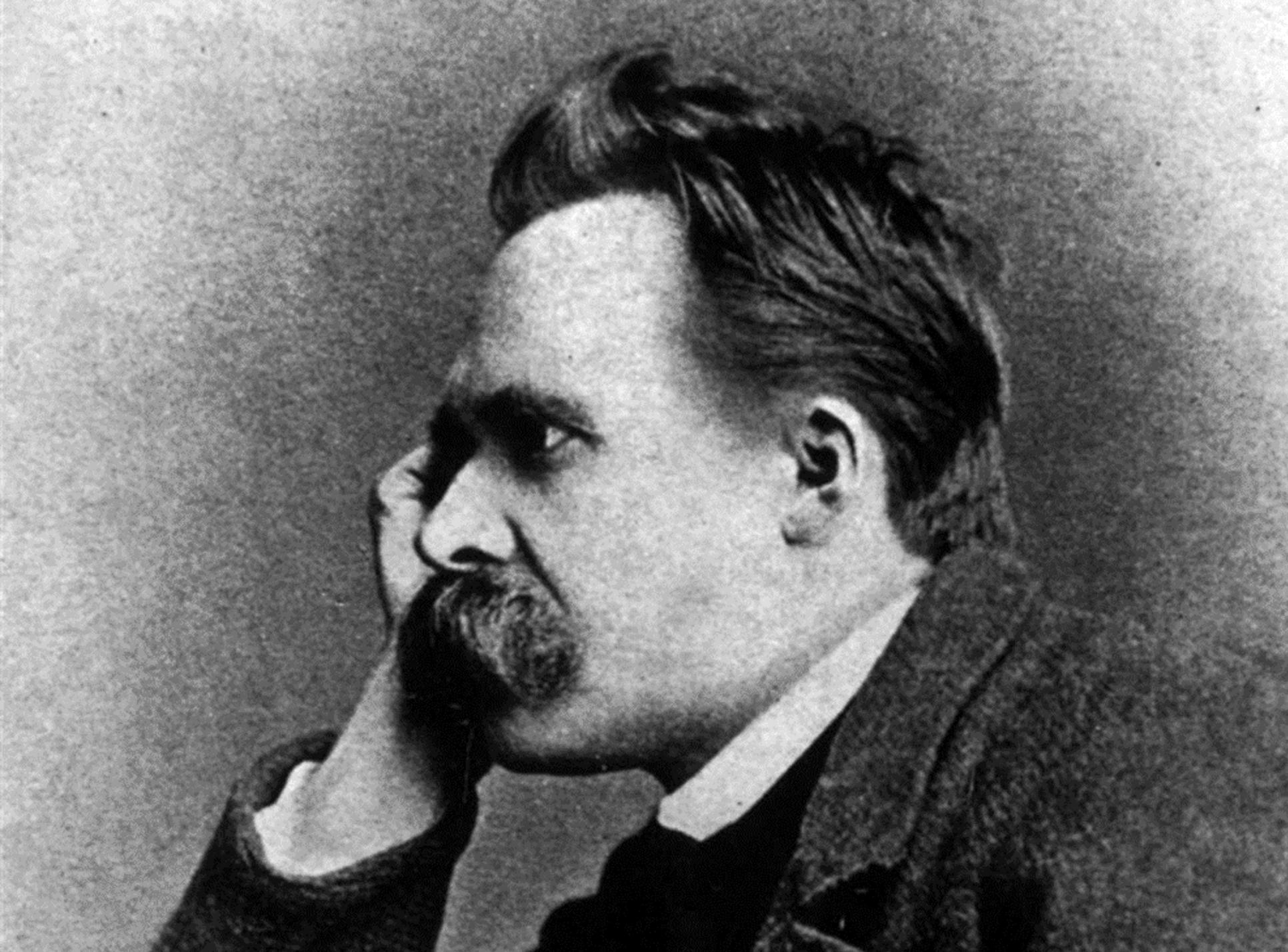
GOD IS DEAD

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Cultural Democracy

Cultural Democracy can be seen as presenting as valid the public's chosen forms of cultural expression and engagement, rather than promoting a prescribed definition of what is included in "the arts".



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What does Cultural Democracy look like?

- ❖ A genuine cultural pluralism
- ❖ People should have rights of access both to cultural outputs, and the means of cultural input
- ❖ Does not oppose the high arts
- ❖ Not concerned with producing the 'right art'
- ❖ Wants to produce the right conditions within which communities can have their own creative voices recognised and given sufficient space to develop
- ❖ Seeks an inversion of our current cultural institutions.



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“Audience Development is not about developing audiences, but much more about developing cultural organisations”

Alessandra Gariboldi



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The key question is how to differentiate an ‘audience-centric approach’ from a market (as opposed to product) focus.

Challenges to the product-led focus of publicly subsidised culture highlight a point of fundamental differentiation between the practice of arts marketing/Audience Development and its commercial predecessor.

In its focus on artistic product, the ideology of the Democratisation of Culture runs counter to the fundamental tenets of marketing management practice.



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This presents a leadership challenge both in dealing with this policy tension and in delivering value to the people we serve.

You don't work for an arts organisation.

You work for the people.



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The leadership challenge is about **giving up power**

The leadership challenge is about **fighting vested interest**

The leadership challenge is about **changing both culture and cultures**

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Significance in EU cultural policy arena:

Calls to establish a European Agency and/or Observatory on Audience Development to act as a focus for future EU funded activity

The practice of Audience Development should properly be considered as an ideological project situated within the wider cultural policy discourse of democratisation.

European Commission Final Report: Study on Audience Development – How to place audiences at the centre of cultural organisations (2017) published online at: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/news/20170421-new-study-audience-development_en

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↑ Nowhere

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A much wider project, concerned with redefining Audience Development as a vehicle for cultural democracy (alongside its role in the ongoing democratisation of culture) would be a fitting ambition for the European project.



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**It's your
world.
Change
it.**





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END