A Prehistory of the Sharing Economy

BY MRS. LUCKY

In 1979, when Lewis Hyde’s “The Gift: Creativity and the Arts in the Modern World” first appeared, the first Man burned on Baker Beach was still seven years in the future. The classic text on the sharing economy is backed by literary light Margaret Atwood as “the best work I know of for talented but unacknowledged creators. A masterpiece.”

Drawing on diverse influences, Hyde uses an anthropological lens to examine European folk tales, Pacific Island giving circles, and how the poor practices of the native people in the Pacific Northwest were channeled by European capitalism. A single carefully wrought Koaional copper became piles of mail produced wood trade blankets. Sort of like the stack of swag we’re all carrying home. Reading Hyde is like discussion around a theme camp dinner table as Burning Man—at its best, at least—wired, wondrous, and profoundly curious.

Hyde has a huge advantage over Ralph Waldo Emerson and Ayn Rand, the other two philosophers we’ve looked at I know of for talented but unacknowledged creators. A masterpiece.”

Material goods pull us down into their boxes unless their fat is singed occasionally. It is when the world flames a bit in our peripheral vision that it brings us jubilation and not depression.

We stand before a bonfire or even a burning house and feel the odd release it brings, as if the trees could give the sun return for what enters them through the leaf. Where property can move, there is no Moses. Pharaoh is plagued with hungry toads.

Our generativity may leave us empty, but our egotism then pulls gently at the whole until the thing in motion returns to replenish us.

Creativity and science is cumulative and collaborative, and it proceeds collective and it flourishes in conversation.

A Decade Ago, the Beacon Introduced Itself to Black Rock City, and We Also Talked to You About Playatech, the Fantasy Furniture Company that’s Been Searing Dusty bottoms ever since.


In Playatech’s Inaugural Year, the Burning Man Theme was “The Psyche” and Borg2 Challenged the Burning Man Organization to Increase Art Funding. Sunshine Inserted Playatech into Both, Paying out Burners by Promoting It like a Brand Where Brands Are Not Well known, and by Distributing the $5-per-payment to the Users’ Choice of the Birge’s Black Rock Arts Foundation (Which Funded off-Playa Projects) or the upstart Borg2.

Some of the Money Goes to Playatech Donations—Which Came to More Than $3,500 in the Past 12 Months, According to Sunshine—Are now Directed to Burning Man Arts, Following Bmorg’s Recent Merger with the Birge and Borg2’s Less-Recent Diamond. While Payments Were Initially Enforced only by the Honor System and the Threat of $5-per-payment to Users’ Choice of the Birge’s Black Rock Arts Foundation (Which Funded off-Playa Projects) or the upstart Borg2.

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BY BUENA CHICA

Everyone has their breaking point — when we sit in silence, break down, and cry on Playa. Sometimes we cry out of gratitude, in awe of the beautiful installations and experiences that have been so lovingly created for our entertainment. And sometimes we cry at the realization that we have been doing it all wrong for so long in our lives.

My own tears this year had a completely different base. I had long heard about these plug-n-play camps. Building a compound surrounded by giant RVs to keep the “peasants” out of the decked-out camps: Building a compound surrounded by giant RVs to keep the “peasants” out of the decked-out camps. I had long head about those plug-n-play camps then stay out of view and not partake in the comments they would direct to those workers.

From my own tent I heard on more than four occasions passengers of art cars driving by hurling insults such as “How does it feel to work for rich people?”, “Fuck your Burn, Sherpas,” and “Get out of my city.”

So not only were the Latinos brought in to serve a particular kind of people who do not abide by our Principles, but now they were being abused by our fellow Burners who did not understand the situation: They are NOT Sherpas, as at least Sherpas are invited to entertain at parties. The workers were particularly selected to build these kind of camps then stay out of view and not partake in the rest of our Burner experience.

We heart it every year. Why are there no minority Burners? Well, here is one answer for you. You bring people who look like me to serve you but not to be seen or integrated as equals.

Just yesterday I walked around Center Camp Café to see the amazing artist murals. There is a display of colorful pictures. As I stepped closer, I observed that everyone in those pictures looked like me – Latino, African-American, minorities, who had been killed by cops in the Default World. The workers set up their own camps, I was further appalled by the comments they would direct to these workers. We sit in silence, break down, and cry on Playa.

Let me be absolutely honest, my fellow Burners? Well, here is one answer for you: You serve a particular kind of people who do not abide by our fellow Burners who did not understand the situation. They are NOT Sherpas, as at least Sherpas are invited to entertain at parties. Everyone has their breaking point – when you are invited to entertain at parties. The workers were particularly selected to build these kind of camps then stay out of view and not partake in the rest of our Burner experience.

BY CARLOS VAQUERO

This Week In Pictures