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Gender and Creative Labour

Bridget Conor, Rosalind Gill & Stephanie Taylor

Introduction

The cultural and creative industries (CCI) present a paradox. On the one hand they are famously ‘open’, ‘diverse’, and ‘Bohemian’, ‘hostile to rigid caste systems’ (Florida, 2002) and associated with work in cultures that are ‘cool, creative and egalitarian’ (Gill, 2002). Yet on the other, fields like film, television, the music industry and the arts more broadly, are marked by stark, persistent and in many cases worsening inequalities relating to gender, race and ethnicity, class, age and disability. The aim of this collection is to examine this paradox, focusing particularly on gender, to interrogate both the myths of equality and diversity that circulate within the CCI, and the distinctive patterns and dynamics of inequality and exclusion. Whilst gender inequality characterises almost all sections of the labour market, it takes different forms—and may have different drivers—in different fields or settings. There are, as Acker (2006) has argued, different ‘inequality regimes’. Inequalities in creative work have been relatively underexplored until recently, and we seek to illuminate the distinctive features of working in fields such as arts and media that might help to understand the persistence of inequality in the CCI.

The general failure to address inequalities in these fields is particularly striking and dissonant given the prominence attached both to ‘creativity’ in general, and the CCIs in particular, in national policies across the world. Creativity has become so elevated as a characteristic of individuals and nations in recent years that it has taken on a status almost beyond critique. Banks (2007) talks of ‘the creative fetish’; Osborne (2003) argues that creativity has become a ‘moral imperative’; whilst Ross (2009) contends that creativity is the ‘wonderstuff’ of our time, the ‘oil of the 21st century’. The CCI are hailed in policy documents for their capacity to stimulate national economies, to regenerate depressed urban areas, to aid in attempts to build social inclusion and cohesion, to challenge unemployment, and even to improve nations’ health (eg Cunningham, 2009; Keane, 2009; Power, 2009). There is nothing they cannot do, it seems. At one point it seemed that such celebratory discourse might have peaked around the turn of the century, for example with Australia’s championing of a ‘Creative Nation’ policy, and the UK’s attempt under New Labour to make Britain ‘the world’s creative capital’ (DCMS, 2008). However, in retrospect, this may turn out to have been just the beginning of a global trend that now includes BRIC nations and developing economies – viz ‘post-socialist’ countries’ aggressive inward investment policies promoting their ‘vast supply of creative labour’, and China’s attempt to shift its self-branding from ‘Made in China’ to ‘Created in China’. Moreover, the enthusiasm for CCI in developed economies shows no sign of waning, and, indeed, as we write in June 2014, the UK Prime Minister David Cameron has just announced his intention to host another ‘Cool Britannia’ party at his Downing Street residence, with pop stars, actors and fashion designers at the top of the list of guests.

In this context of relentless celebrations of ‘creativity’, and promotion of the CCI within policy discourses, the lack of attention to *work* in these fields is particularly disturbing – and stands in stark contrast to areas such as bio-science or engineering which are rightly deemed to require investment and a properly trained and rewarded

workforce. Not so the CCI it would appear. Into the vacuum formed by a lack of serious discussion of the CCI, a powerful stereotype has taken root and flourished. This sees the typical ‘creative’ as driven by passion to Do What You Love (DWYL), prepared to work for long hours for little or even no pay, and requiring minimal support. It is significant to note the potency and pervasiveness of this personalized figuration of the ‘creative’ and how profoundly it has displaced important questions about working conditions and practices within the CCI, let alone issues of equality, diversity and social justice.

This collection, then, aims to start a conversation about these issues that will speak to the concerns of academics, policy makers, activists and people working within the CCI. Whilst attempting to address concerns across domains as diverse as architecture, museums and theatre, it is focussed most centrally upon film and media industries - including on screenwriters, production staff and stunt men and women. In part this reflects the existing small but important literature on which the collection builds, and to which it also contributes articles on classical musicians, travel writers and creative entrepreneurs. Above all, the collection is animated by an interrogative that questions the similarities and differences across the varied fields designated as ‘creative’. What do ‘creatives’ in advertising, in heritage and in television have in common – if anything? To what extent is it meaningful to mark out a territory called ‘creative labour’?

The aim of this introductory article is to define key terms, to outline and take stock of gender inequalities within the field of creative labour, to review existing research and to highlight the thematic areas to which this collection makes a contribution. The remainder of the introduction is divided into four sections. First, we report on some of the ‘headline figures’ relating to gender and other inequalities within the CCI. Next we move on to examine some of the existing research about work in the CCI, exploring definitions of creative labour, and issues about the informality, precariousness and ‘bulimic’ working patterns (Pratt, 2002) which characterise much creative endeavour. The third section discusses the key areas to which this volume contributes an understanding. It focuses on questions about freelancing, informality and ‘network sociality’ (Wittel, 2001); on new contributions to the understanding of sexism; on identity-making and self-representations of workers within the CCI; and on questions about boundary crossing – including the boundaries of home and work, above the line and below the line labouring, paid and not paid work, amongst others. We draw together the threads of the distinctive contributions of the volume, highlighting our intersectional approach, our interest in questions about the dynamics of inequality as a psychosocial phenomenon (Gill, 2007, 2014a; Taylor, 2015), and our aim to contribute to understanding labouring subjectivities in neoliberalism. Finally we offer a brief summary of each article in this collection.

The creative and its associations

Various terms have been deployed to describe the work that is undertaken in the production of art and forms of culture, two primary categories being cultural work (Banks, 2007) and creative labour (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011). Various neologisms have proliferated which situate work between or across previously discrete categories of production and consumption, including produsage, prosumption, playbour and co-creation. These are now often conflated in the term ‘cultural and creative industries’ which we use here, and in the term ‘creative labour’.

Drawing on Hirsch (1972), Banks and Hesmondhalgh define 'creative labour' as that work which 'is geared to the production of original or distinctive commodities that are primarily aesthetic and/or symbolic-expressive, rather than utilitarian and functional' (2009: 416). A 2001 publication from the UK government's Department of Culture, Media and Support (DCMS, 2001) offered a specific list of the 'creative industries':

Advertising, architecture, the art and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film and video, interactive leisure software, music, the performing arts, publishing, software and computer services, television and radio.

This already broad reference is extended in a recent academic source which claims:

'Creativity', once associated with the 'natural' or 'acquired' fits of the artist, has expanded to include virtually all the performative labours producing the information economy, from computer coding to legal research' (Fuller et al., 2013: 144).

One critical question here might be: how do we define what or who is creative and therefore, what or who is included and excluded from creative labour? Mato (2009) presented this critique in an argument that 'all industries are cultural' and questioned prevailing creative labour scholarship which privileges film and television production over toy or garment production for example. More radically and following particularly from innovations in media technologies which are central to many CCI, there have been challenges to the classic distinction between production and consumption, signalled by terms like 'produsage', 'prosumption', 'playbour' and 'co-creation'. Mato (2009) similarly argued that it is at the myriad point(s) of consumption that products (and arguably any products) can be analyzed as cultural as well as material entities. Miller (2009) rebutted with his own question: 'Are all industries primarily cultural?' He noted that Mato's assertion sits very closely alongside neoliberal and celebratory creative industries policy discourses which de-contextualize terms such as 'creativity' in order to mobilize them 'through the neo-classical shibboleth of unlocking creativity through individual human capital' (Miller 2009: 94). So just as studies of creative labour could be argued to be unintentionally aligned with those who fetishize creativity and privilege 'creative' occupations, the opposite tendency is just as visible: the assertion - through picking particular occupations and arguing they are creative or cultural - that *anything* can be creative, that anything which turns a profit can be creative and cultural. Creativity again seems beyond critique. What is particularly galvanizing for the authors in this collection is that whilst creativity and creative labour are often framed as open to all, by dint of their universalism ('everyone is creative!') in fact, inequalities are rife in these industries and at times of economic crisis and instability, are worsening.

Further to these points, it is useful to attempt to re-contextualise some of the multiple terms in play by looking more closely at their reference and associations. One common point here and elsewhere, for instance in Florida's now-classic reference to the creative class, is that creative people, creative work and creativity itself are all positively valued. This valuing derives partly from the association with specially talented, even genius figures, particularly from the 'high culture' fields of the arts, as in Fuller et al.'s definition (above). A number of writers have reviewed the transitions by which the creative and the cultural came to be viewed not as aesthetic but as economic 'goods' (eg. Hesmondhalgh, 2007; O'Connor, 2007); nonetheless, the

earlier associations remain and continue to shape many of the expectations and conflicts around creative work. Psychology has played an important part in expanding the reference of creativity. Brouillette (2013: 43) describes the contributions of US-based psychologists in the 1950s and 60s to a model of a new economic actor as a 'flexibly creative individual', based on a non-conforming artist figure. These psychologists included Abraham Maslow, who famously proposed self-actualisation as the apex of a hierarchy of human needs, and Teresa Amabile who investigated the contexts and factors that facilitate and promote creative activities. Their work became important in organisational psychology and management theory, including through the 'guru' Tom Peters. As Brouillette's (2013) account indicates, both the creativity and non-conformity of the artist were celebrated as qualities that supposedly enable the ideal worker to contribute to business innovation while tolerating the flux and uncertainties of the economic conditions of the late 20th century. The focus on an individual artist matched well with the rising popularity of liberal economic theories centred on an individual economic actor. Yet Amabile's (1983) social psychological model of the creative individual also emphasises the importance of context, including relationships with others. Subsequently, sociocultural psychologists have extended this to encompass the importance of creative collaboration (eg. John-Steiner, 2000) and the creative productivity of groups, including in business and other organizational contexts (eg. Sawyer, 2007). Their work therefore undermines a focus on the individual. In addition, Amabile's (1983) model of 'creativity in context' challenges the elite figure of the gifted artist by suggesting, first, that creativity is a capacity which is applicable to a huge range of human activities (she cites chess playing as one example) and second, that it is a universal potential. Although some people may have special, even extraordinary talents, a premise of her model is, seemingly, that anyone can be creative, given the right circumstances.

This complex background has contributed to still-current notions. Creative work retains some of its elite associations as positive and special; it is understood to offer the possibility of personal fulfilment or self-actualisation, albeit in return for considerable hard work and an absence of financial security. The imagined individuality of the artist or auteur figure (McRobbie, 1998) remains central to the personalized associations of creative work (Taylor and Littleton, 2012); however, in departures from the elite image, the reference of the creative has expanded to a wide range of fields, as already noted, and the capacity for creative work is assumed to be widespread, extending to (raced, classed, gendered) categories of people who were traditionally excluded from 'high culture'. This, of course, is one basis for myths of equality and diversity in the CCI. Moreover, in a further twist, education systems have tended to promote academic subjects over supposedly creative ones so that a creative career is often regarded as the less prestigious alternative to the conventional professions (medicine, law and so on) and therefore one more accessible to students who are less successful at school, including of course those who are from less privileged backgrounds (Taylor and Littleton, 2012). Contributions to this collection explore some of the continuing implications of these conflicting associations. For example, David Hesmondhalgh and Sarah Baker consider the persistence of the stereotype of 'masculinist creativity' (Nixon, 2003) in relation to sex segregation in the music, magazine publishing and television industries. George Morgan and Pariece Nelligan discuss how for aspirant creatives the flexibility to tolerate employment uncertainty is difficult to reconcile with a personal commitment to a vocation and hard-won skills.

Inequalities in the cultural and creative industries: mind the gap

The late 20th and early 21st centuries have seen dramatic changes in work and employment in affluent Western economies. With the shift from Fordism to post-Fordism, workers have been required to adapt to less secure employment and relinquish any expectation of a career for life (Sennett, 1998). A seemingly more positive change has been a major increase in women's participation in labour markets but, as Adkins notes, this has not brought about the social and political changes which feminists had once anticipated; the hope that 'paid employment may offer women emancipation or liberation from problematic arrangements of gender' has not been realised (2012: 623) (see also McRobbie, 2011). One complication was the end of the 'family wage' associated with Fordism and another, the associated expectation that women with childcare responsibilities will now also be earners. The rise of the CCI has therefore taken place in a context of general employment change and in this sector too, hopes have not been realised, even outside the period of the recession.

Despite the myths of the CCI as diverse, open and egalitarian, inequalities remain a depressingly persistent feature of most fields. Whatever indices one considers – relative numbers in employment, pay, contractual status or seniority – women as a group are consistently faring worse than men. This is true in advertising, the arts, architecture, computer games development, design, film, radio and television; it is also true in 'new' fields such as web design, app development or multimedia. Of course, caution is needed in making such an assertion, in part because the picture varies transnationally, with some countries (not surprisingly) doing better than others – and the articles presented here provide some insight into that. But care is also needed for a second reason, because of the shortage of relevant data which, we argue, both reflects and contributes to enduring inequalities. If what governments choose to measure and audit is a reflection of their concerns and priorities for action, then inequalities in the CCI seem to be low on the list. Contributors to the collection have collected and explored the currently available evidence but gaps remain. The lack of national (let alone cross-national) statistics and information about, for example, the numbers or pay of women compared to men in the CCI is symptomatic of a lack of interest and care in a postfeminist moment in which, as Jane Holgate and Sonia Mackay (2009) argue, even the relatively hollow statements of good intentions – such as 'working towards equality' – seem to have all but disappeared. But it also reflects a genuine difficulty in collecting data about businesses and organisations that are predominantly small-scale, temporary and which rapidly recompose for different projects.

The sources which contributors have been able to access – the data variously collected by universities, foundations, or trade unions, by the United Nations or national bodies (such as skills sector councils or SSCs in the UK) and NGOs – offer a bleak picture of gender inequalities in the CCI. In the UK, the Fawcett Society's annual Sex and Power (2013) audit report indicates that there is not a single female Chair or Chief Executive of a Television company; men outnumber women by more than 10 to 1 in decision-making roles in media companies; and women constitute only 5% of editors of national newspapers. The only senior roles where women outnumber men are in women's and lifestyle magazines. Similarly, the British Film Industry's Statistical Yearbook (2013) records that only 7.8% of films were directed by a woman and 13.4% written by a woman – figures that resonate with Lauzen's annual Celluloid Ceiling report auditing the top 250 films made in Hollywood. Lauzen's US research is

valuable in offering not only a snapshot of the stark inequalities in key creative roles but, crucially, in highlighting how little these fluctuate year on year. As she summarises it, ‘Women comprised 18% of all directors, executive producers, producers, writers, cinematographers, and editors working on the top 250 domestic grossing films of 2012. This percentage represents no change from 2011 and an increase of 1 percentage point from 1998’ (Lauzen 2012: 1). These figures are not dissimilar from those in industries as diverse as architecture and classical music. Sang *et al.*, 2007 noted the percentage of women architects in the UK was 14% in the mid-2000s and this figure has not risen above 20% since and Stead and Roan (2013) write that 23.3% of architects were women as reported in the 2006 Australian census. Christina Scharff discusses the parallels in classical music (this volume)

Both horizontal and vertical segregation by gender are striking. For example women dominate in wardrobe, hairdressing and make-up roles in film and television but are dramatically under-represented in sound and lighting departments as well as key creative roles such as screenwriter, cinematographer and director (Skillset, 2012). Another emerging axis of stratification that has gendered implications is that between ‘above the line’ and ‘below the line’ workers in a range of industries (eg. film, advertising, television) (Scott 2005: 121; Miller *et al.*, 2005). More complex intersectional inequalities are also emerging as significant. For example, it is becoming increasingly clear that gender is mediated by age and parental status, with women concentrated in the youngest cohorts of the CCI workforce, and less likely than their male counterparts to have children. An optimistic explanation might be that gender inequality has become a problem of the past, and the current unevenness is simply a matter of women not yet having had time to work their way into older cohorts or more senior roles. However, not only is this not supported by the evidence, but it also relies upon a problematic ‘progress narrative’ (Edley and Wetherell, 2001) which suggests that progress towards equality is somehow inevitable and requires no active intervention. In fact, this is far from the situation indicated by the available evidence: some inequalities are getting more rather than less pronounced year on year (for example in computer games), and, moreover, the global financial crisis and associated recession and austerity in some countries has disproportionately impacted on women (Fawcett, 2009). In the UK, for example, the resulting contraction of the TV industry saw women lose their jobs at a rate of six times that of men, falling to only 27% of the workforce in 2010 (O’Connor, 2010). Although during the slow economic recovery women’s overall employment increased, the way in which recessionary pressures were mediated by gender cast a long shadow on women in – or trying to get into - some fields, resonating with an existing sense of women as somehow more ‘disposable’ to the (creative) workforce than men.

Gender inequalities are not the only inequalities in the CCI.; these fields also demonstrate stark patterns of exclusion, segregation and inequality in relation to class, disability and race and ethnicity (Holgate and McKay, 2007; Randle *et al.*, 2007; Thanki and Jeffreys, 2007). Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals are dramatically under-represented, leading to accusations of ‘institutional racism’ (Thanki and Jeffreys, 2007.) Far from having a better representation of minority ethnic groups than other sectors, as early research and policy visions suggested (Peck, 2011; Oakley, 2013), the CCI are in fact performing worse. In London, perhaps the ‘creative city *par excellence*, BAME individuals represent more than a quarter of the workforce, but fewer than one in ten of the creative workforce. This proportion has declined systematically over the last few years, and is now, at 5.4%, the lowest since

records began. In 2014, a BAFTA speech by black actor and comedian Lenny Henry vividly summed up this sobering picture:

Between 2006 and 2012, the number of BAMEs working in the UK TV industry has declined by 30.9%... The total number of black and Asian people in the industry has fallen by 2000 while the industry as a whole has grown by over 4000. Or to put it another way – for every black and Asian person who lost their job, more than two white people were employed (quoted in Khaleeli, 2014).

An appreciation of the extent to which inequalities are entangled and cross-cut by different axes of identity contributes to the adoption of an intersectional ethic in many articles in this volume. By this we mean an understanding that multiple axes of oppression constitute distinct experiences and subjectivities. As Brah and Phoenix put it, the concept of intersectionality signifies ‘the complex, irreducible, varied and variable effects which ensue when multiple axes of differentiation—economic, political, cultural, psychic, subjective and experiential—intersect in historically specific contexts. The concept emphasizes that different dimensions of social life cannot be separated out into discrete and pure strands’ (2004: 76)

In the next section we turn to research on the CCI more broadly, highlighting how some of its distinctive features may contribute to inequalities in the CCI.

Creative labour: informality, precariousness and the bulimic career

Over the last decade, a substantial body of research on fashion, digital games design, film and TV production, theatre and music performance, museums, advertising and web design has produced a relatively consistent picture of ‘creative’ labour – whilst also noting significant differences within and between different fields and occupations (Banks, 2007; Blair, 2001; Caldwell, 2008; Deuze, 2007; Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011; McRobbie, 2002; Ursell, 2000). One of the shared experiences of growing numbers of people working in the cultural and creative field is of precariousness and job insecurity. Increasingly, cultural and media workers are freelancers or work on extremely short term contracts that are counted in days or weeks rather than months or years. Zero hours contracts are not unusual. For large numbers of people in the CCI pervasive insecurity and precariousness are therefore the norm, with individuals very often unsure how they will survive beyond the end of the next project, and living in a mode that requires constant attentiveness and vigilance to the possibility of future work. This has been well-documented in recent years (Gill 2009, 2010; McRobbie, 2002; 2004; 2007; Neff *et al.*, 2005; Taylor and Littleton, 2012) with cultural workers becoming the poster children of ‘precarity’ (Neilson and Rossiter, 2005; Ross, 2009), iconic exemplars of a group that lives individualised, ‘risk biographies’ (Beck, 2000), in which all the uncertainties and costs are borne by them rather than by employers or the state (Sennett, 1998, 2006).

The absence of social security benefits to tide people over periods of unemployment, and the lack of sick pay or pension are major sources of anxiety. In most European countries, not being in employment also profoundly impacts on entitlements to maternity benefits, a factor that contributes to the under-representation of women, and particularly mothers, in fields like media, where freelancing or extremely short

contracts predominate. As one freelance scriptwriter, quoted by Skillset (2010) put it 'I dream about having sick pay, never mind maternity pay'.

One of the consequences of this pervasive work insecurity amongst cultural workers is the prevalence of second-jobbing or indeed multi-jobbing – frequently in teaching or in the hospitality industries. This is necessitated by insecurity and by low pay, as well as by the deeply entrenched culture of 'working for free' (eg Figiel, 2012; Hope and Figiel, 2012; Kennedy, 2010), not only in unpaid internships at the start of a career (eg Perlin, 2011) – which represent the most well-documented example – but *right across working lives*. The 'privilege' of working in a particular orchestra, theatre or media production is frequently presented as reward in its own right, and silencing mechanisms include the commonly held view that it would somehow be in 'bad taste' to ask about money/pay, implicitly calling into question one's commitment to the project—whether it be performance, recording, film or new online publishing venture (Ross, 2000).

Generally speaking, freelancers in the media and creative fields live by the aphorism that 'you can't say no to a job'. This in turn leads to extremely long hours and to what Pratt (2002) has termed 'bulimic' patterns of working – feast or famine, stop-go, long periods with little or no work followed by intense periods of having to work all the time, in some cases barely stopping to sleep. These characteristic working patterns have also been accompanied by a general marked intensification of work across the cultural and creative field so that patterns that were once associated with 'crunch times' – such as getting a game into production or finishing editing a film – are increasingly normalised (de Peuter and Dyer-Witford, 2006). All the time is 'crunch time' now. As Gregg (2011) puts it, workers are expected to be 'always on' and 'always connected'.

One of the most enduring and powerful images of creative organisations is that they are 'hip' and informal. From the legendary environments of Google and Apple, through well-known games companies and web design agencies, all the way down to tiny start-ups, creative workplaces are held to be 'funky', 'Bohemian' and playful (Lloyd, 2006; Ross, 2003.) McRobbie (2002) talks about an ethos from 'club to company', and Florida (2002) famously argued that 'creatives' dislike 'rigid caste systems' and prefer flat and informal organisations, without obvious hierarchies. This principle of informality is not just a feature of working *environments*, but also – crucially – of *hiring practices* which largely exist outside formal channels and are enacted through contacts and word of mouth.

In these settings reputation becomes a key commodity, and networking and maintaining contacts a key activity for nurturing it. This is achieved face-to-face at regular drinks and other social occasions, but also in the affective labour of updating profiles, tweeting, blogging and engaging in diverse self promotion activities (Cote and Pybus, 2011). One characteristic of cultural work labour markets is their 'network sociality' (Wittel, 2001) – thin, shallow relations. In such 'reputation economies' wherever you go, whoever you meet, represents a work opportunity. 'Life is a pitch', as one of Gill's (2010) interviewees put it pithily.

In this introduction we have discussed the contested definitions of creativity, creative labour and the CCI, outlined a broad picture of inequalities in these fields – particularly those relating to gender and offered an overview of some of the existing

literature about the distinctive nature of work in the CCI. In the next section we turn directly to four broad themes to which this volume makes a particular contribution. Our contributors represent a broad range of interests, industries and national contexts (though with particularly strong representation of film and media, as noted above). The articles refer to work in Western Europe, the UK, USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, offering both theoretical and empirical analyses. They are organised under four thematic headings: informality and flexibility; new approaches to understanding sexism; identity making and representation; and boundary-crossing. In addition to these key themes, the volume is distinctive in its psychosocial focus, and in its attention to the intersectional nature of inequalities.

Gender and creative labour: taking the debates forward

As already discussed, a key theme of research on the CCI concerns the extent to which work environments, work organisations and working practices are governed by notions of informality and flexibility. The collection builds on the insights of this research to consider how these much vaunted and in many cases highly valued (see Taylor this volume) features of work may also be implicated in the persistence of inequalities in the CCI.

The problems of informal recruitment are becoming increasingly well-documented, with evidence that women fare better in settings in which there is both greater formality to the hiring process and greater transparency. In the CCI, outside large organisations, this is relatively atypical, with ‘word-of-mouth’, reputation-based decisions by far the most common way of securing or distributing work. These practices lead to what Thanki and Jeffreys (2007) call a ‘contacts culture’ that disadvantages women, people from BAME groups and working-class backgrounds.

In this volume, informal hiring practices are discussed in some detail. Natalie Wreyford considers the process through which screenwriters get taken on and commissioned, arguing that informal networking is a key mechanism for reproducing gender and other inequalities. Her work is valuable in featuring those who do the ‘hiring’ or selecting as well as those who are seeking work. Her article illuminates how homophily works in practice, She demonstrates the way that notions of ‘the market’ and of ‘risk’ and ‘trust’ together come to constitute a situation that reproduces the status quo (see also Conor, this volume).

Leung Wing-Fai, Rosalind Gill and Keith Randle highlight similar issues in relation to film production. Noting the dominance of freelancing in this field they unpack the significance of networking, to understand what one interviewee described as ‘men... feeling more comfortable with their own... The peer on peer thing, and the stories they relate to’. Deborah Jones and Judith Pringle’s article (discussed further in the next section) highlights the way in which inequalities become ‘unmanageable’, existing as they do in an informal and unregulated zone, despite all the relevant instruments and statutes designed to protect equality of opportunity.

A number of articles discuss how the ‘flexibility’ of flexible work is designed around the needs of the job rather than those of the worker and, like risk, is transferred onto individuals. As Perrons (2000) has noted acerbically, there exists a ‘very flexible’ account of freelance working in fields like these (her own focus is on new media).

George Morgan and Pariece Nelligan look at how responses to this demand may be both gendered and classed. Flexibility may, they suggest, be particularly challenging for young working-class men steeped within the cultural codes of blue-collar manual work, and struggling to become what they term 'labile labour'. Morgan and Nelligan's work highlights nicely the psychosocial dimensions of working in the CCI – the notion that in order to thrive it is not only particular skills but also particular kinds of subjectivity that are needed: flexible, networked, adaptable and entrepreneurial. The collection as a whole offers different vantage points into the psychic life of neoliberalism (see also Gill, 2014a; Scharff, under review)

A second set of themes, closely related to the above, concerns how we understand gender inequality, and its connection to sexism, an issue which is the focus of a newly revitalised interest, seen in popular culture in the Everyday Sexism Project and in energetic campaigns around sexual violence and media representation. The prominence of sexism as a focus is striking, especially compared with writing about gender and work from a decade ago, and may be part of what Gill (2011) has described as the need to 'get angry again.' Sexism, gender roles and segregation are connected concerns in this collection and Hesmondhalgh and Baker and Jones and Pringle all contribute articles that address these issues.

Many writers have noted the extra difficulty that women confront around combining precarious employment with parenting responsibilities, yet this may not be the only issue, and there are dangers in perpetually reinforcing the women-childcare link (Gill, 2014a). As theorists we have to be aware of both the 'realities' of gendered lives, and, simultaneously, of how our own stories may cement or challenge these. Moreover, the expectation that women will maintain responsibility for caring roles conflicts with the immersion required for creative making and conventional female orientation to the needs of others. Taylor (2011: 367-8) has argued recently: 'Creative working, as unbounded immersion and personalized, emotional labour, demands the masculine selfishness of the conventional creative artist and this conflicts with long-established gendered positionings of women as other-oriented, attending to the needs of others and heeding their preferences'.

The CCI, it has been observed, are better at recruiting women than at keeping them (O'Connor, 2010) and the contributions across this volume offer some insight into why this might be the case. Hesmondhalgh and Baker take as their topic the persistent segregation found within media work, a segregation that often seems underpinned by stereotypes, including positive ones such as the notions that women are caring or are good listeners. They assert the need not simply to challenge the stereotypes, but to move beyond the very dichotomies themselves. In this way their work contributes to a growing body of analyses that explore the flexibility and dynamism of sexism (Gill 2011, 2014a & b, 2015; Kelan, 2009; Scharff, 2012) revealing it to be far more malleable, agile and subtle than traditional definitions allow. Gill's work on 'new sexism' also informs Fai *et al.*'s article which is notable in considering motherhood not only as presenting practical challenges for women but also in constituting a central theme of sexist discourse—in such a way as to present discrimination as 'reasonable' and 'rational'—albeit regrettable.

Jones and Pringle also make a novel and important contribution to understanding sexism in their study of below the line workers in the New Zealand film industry. Their analysis highlights both continuities and breaks: on the one hand there are

traditional sexist stereotypes of ‘gung ho jocks’ and ‘girly girls’, etc., yet on the other there is an acceptance of sexism as just how it is—in a context in which inequalities are largely ‘unmanageable’. These pieces (as well as those by Conor, Scharff and Wreyford) point to the distinctiveness of the operation of sexism in the current postfeminist moment—a moment in which feminism has been both taken into account but also repudiated (McRobbie, 2009) and in which an ‘overing’ (Ahmed, 2012) or ‘gender fatigue’ (Kelan, 2009) makes inequalities increasingly unspeakable.

A third, key set of themes for this collection relate to identity making and self-representation. Late 20th century market-focused accounts of work emphasised the importance of cultivating ‘Brand You’, in Tom Peters’ term (cited in Brouillette, 2013: 41) and a recent account of ‘new work’ proposes that gender has now become ‘an act, one which moreover is fused into production, indeed should be understood to be part of what is produced’ (Adkins and Jokinen, 2008: 143). Both points would suggest that enacting gendered occupational identity is a requirement for all contemporary workers. However, we argue that these themes have an additional and special relevance for contemporary creative workers.

This is partly because of the general importance of representations and presentation in the media, advertising and many other industries in sector. But an additional reason is the absence of collective workers’ organisations in the CCI. This absence both follows from and reinforces the precariousness and informality of employment in the sector, in that people in short term and informal employment are less likely to form collective organisations, and without such organisations they will have less protection from informal and irregular employment practices. Traditionally, both the professional organisations associated with higher status fields of employment and the unions associated with workers’ ‘trades’ have played an important role in defining and conferring occupational identities. Professional organisations did this, first, by ratifying formal training and entry requirements, conferring professional recognition on entrants to a profession, and second, by policing standards, for example, through the threat of expulsion for non-compliance with regulations or behaviour deemed to discredit the profession as a whole. Within the CCI, architecture is probably the most prominent field to have retained this model of a profession. Trade unions, although weakened during approximately the same period that the CCI have come to prominence, have had a similar role in defining particular employment roles and setting conditions for membership. For example, in the UK context, entry to journalism or acting depended on obtaining membership of the relevant union (the National Union of Journalists, NUJ; Equity). In the absence of such organisations, the collective definition of what it means to be a (particular kind of) creative professional or practitioner will be replaced by *individual* claims. In other words, in the absence of some ratified qualification or certification, there will be a greater requirement for an individual project to construct and enact a particular creative occupational identity, for instance, by conforming to the stereotypes and myths attached to it, including by looking the part.

One distinctive feature of contemporary creative work may therefore be the *extent* to which it depends on self-presentation (in person, through websites, on *Twitter* and so on) as part of an individual claim to a professional status (see also Conor, 2014: 7-8) and occupational identity. This opens as an area for investigation how creative workers must negotiate received and accepted (gendered, raced, classed) images, practices and personae. Conventionally, the artist/creative maker is male and in

addition, areas of creative practice often divide into a professional or elite form, dominated by men, and the domestic version(s) carried out by women (such as chef versus home cook; fashion designer versus home dressmaker). Taylor and Littleton (2012) have previously suggested that these domestic associations can carry over to stigmatise women's creative work. In this collection, the articles by Bridget Conor, Christina Scharff, Ana Alacovska, and Miranda Banks and Lauren Steimer discuss the problems faced by women presenting themselves as, respectively, screenwriters, classical musicians, travel writers and stunt workers, including problems related to the requirements for 'self-mythologising' (Conor, 2014: 7) and 'representational strategies' (2014: 8) which prevail in a particular field. These contributions all signal that it is crucial to consider the vigilant self-monitoring needed to maintain or expand individual professional biographies, and the impact of conventional representations on such biographies. One issue becomes the extent to which images, representative figures and other depictions of a creative worker become a barrier to the recognition of particular categories of people, including women, as creative practitioners or professionals, perpetuating their exclusion and under-representation. Another is the conflicts around psychosocial identification which occur when occupational self-presentation must be reconciled with other values and identities. As examples, Scharff discusses how the requirement to 'sell' themselves professionally is problematic for women musicians, and Morgan and Nelligan consider the conflicts between 'brittle' working class masculinities and the fluid self-presentation required to get on in the new economy of the CCI.

The new circumstances of the contemporary cultural and creative industries thus return us to the problems which have been named in relation to more conventional occupations and areas of work: prejudice, glass ceilings and 'sticky floors' so that, for example, women are required to be exceptionally good in order to receive the notice and reward which would be granted to a man for more ordinary achievements. For women in precarious creative employment, there is often no redress through formal appeals and an additional problem, discussed by Wreyford in her article, becomes the need to avoid looking like a trouble maker so as to avoid 'scaring off' those who might offer work in the future.

Our final theme is boundary-crossing and here, contributors have highlighted the myriad ways in which gendered work in creative industries travels across and within established (but perhaps, shifting, morphing, even disintegrating...) boundaries: home and work; paid work and unpaid work; production and reproduction. The 'boundary crossing' potentialities of creative labour may be a potential attraction for women, both as a turning away from the perceived banality or suppression of individuality associated with conventional workplaces, and also as an unconfident response to anticipated difficulties. Creative work may therefore be attractive to women as 'not work' (Taylor and Littleton, 2012) – a concept which links up to Banks' (2007) notion of the morality of cultural work. There is also a resonance here with the 'refusal of work' movement in parts of Europe in the 1960s and 70s, a movement that heavily influenced Operaismo authors (such as Hardt and Negri, 2000 and Virno, 2003, those authors criticised by McRobbie for neglecting gender as a definitional category). We note that Weeks (2011) has recently called for a utopian form of 'anti work politics' as a feminist response to excessive neoliberal productivism. Stephanie Taylor, Ursula Huws and Leslie Regan Shade and Jenna Jacobson all contribute articles that consider the blurring of traditional boundaries in creative work, forms of blurring which then illuminate the gendered dynamics of those boundaries.

Structure of the volume

The first section in the volume focuses on sexism, segregation and gender roles. **David Hesmondhalgh and Sarah Baker** look beyond industry-wide statistics on the under-representation of women in the cultural industries in order to investigate how women and men are disproportionately concentrated, or confined within particular roles, such as ‘the creative side’ or marketing. The article suggests that this gendered segregation is sustained by stereotypes. For example, claims that women are more caring and better organised or superior listeners and communicators can justify their presence in administrative and PR departments. Similar stereotypes can function oppositionally when set against various modes of masculinity, including the ‘masculinist creativity’ noted by Nixon (2003), so that the very ‘qualities’ that women supposedly bring to the non-creative roles, such as their capacity to mother or nurture, become evidence that they are not suited to more prestigious creative work.

Deborah Jones and Judith Pringle draw on their research in the New Zealand film industry to demonstrate how gender inequalities are produced and reproduced in this profession, especially ‘below-the-line’ professions. Drawing attention to a ‘deficit model’ in statistical reports on discrimination and gender inequality in creative industries which can imply that ‘women are the problem’, they argue for the usefulness of a case study approach of an industry in which there few of the traditional indices by which sexism might be identified. Their research reveals a number of patterns: workers accept inequalities as par for the course, as simply a matter of ‘getting on’ in the ‘blokey’ worlds of film production, and as not easily enabling life choices such as parenthood. Below-the-line professions fuel very traditional forms of sexism and classism and stereotypically gendered job roles (for instance, ‘technical’ roles are masculine, make-up is feminine). Jones and Pringle argue that a film industry suffused with the connected language(s) of national pride and creative freedom is, ironically, still apt to perpetuate gendered forms of discrimination.

The next section of this volume is focused on themes of informality and flexibility in creative work and the gendered consequences of these working conditions and practices. In their article, **Leung Wing-Fai, Keith Randle and Rosalind Gill** discuss the gendered nature of freelancing in the film and television industries, using the term ‘scramblers’ to evoke the challenges faced by freelancers as they attempt to ‘get on’ and stay in these sectors over time. Rather than only focusing on gender, the authors highlight that an analysis must also be attentive to other personal characteristics of industry ‘scramblers’: age, class, marital and family status. They examine the ways in which freelancing exacerbates exclusions in this industry across these different axes. Bringing together data from over 100 interviews, the authors are able to identify consistent patterns that affect current and future working practices around freelance screen production work and render it unsustainable for many, especially women.

George Morgan and Pariece Nelligan discuss the gendered nature of vocational identities and the constraints experienced by aspirant creative workers negotiating the forms of self-presentation which are required in the new economy of ‘post-modern capitalism’. The article argues that success in contemporary creative careers, for instance in the design world, requires fluidity, ease of self-presentation and a

readiness to dissimulate. For young working class men, these behaviours conflict with the cultural codes of manual labour, craft and apprenticeship, in which authenticity is based in skills acquired over time, and masculinity is taciturn, protecting its integrity through a refusal to perform to the crowd. A case-study approach is used to present the conflicts between the working class masculinities of Fordist production and its associated communities of practice, on the one hand, and the requirements for new workers to become ‘labile labour’, ready to transfer and re-brand their skills, adopt an individualistic and competitive ethos, and grasp serendipitous opportunities as they arise.

Natalie Wreyford argues that the film industry offers an exemplary case for understanding the dynamics of inequality and exclusion that are seen right across the cultural and creative industries. Whilst most research focuses on the production side of filmmaking, with its project based networks, Wreyford (like Conor in this volume) is interested in screenwriters – a group, she argues, who (theoretically) can work from home and arrange their working lives and schedules autonomously and therefore should be equally open to women and men. Why, then, are contemporary screen productions in the UK so dominated by male writers? To explore these questions Wreyford draws on more than 40 interviews with contemporary screenwriters and those who commission or hire them. This article shows compellingly how ideas of ‘meritocracy’, of ‘what the market wants’, of ‘trust’ and of ‘risk avoidance’ systematically work to disadvantage women. Indeed, even when the film industry considers itself to be searching for ‘new talent’, ‘something different’ or ‘the next big thing’, its informal practices of choosing screenwriters most frequently mean that the ‘new’ looks remarkably like the ‘old’.

In the third section of the volume, the focus is identity making and representation. **Christina Scharff’s** article investigates the lives of classical musicians – an underexplored occupational group in the context of the CCI. She argues that they face many of the same challenges as other cultural workers; the field is casualised, precarious, characterised by low pay and scarcity of work, and requires multiple jobbing. It is also deeply shot through by sexism, heterosexism and by intersecting class and racial inequalities, including newer forms of inequality that relate to the informal and entrepreneurial nature of the classical music sector. Discussing the requirement for them to become entrepreneurial subjects, Scharff considers the implications for musicians of having to see themselves and their work as ‘businesses’ in need of constant promotion. She explores the gendered difficulties inherent in the need for musicians to see their work and their selves as products to be sold. Whilst most musicians – irrespective of gender – disliked ‘selling themselves’ women negotiated particularly fraught relationships with branding and self-promotion.

Bridget Conor discusses the film *Adaptation*, written by Charlie Kaufman, as an example of identity making and self-representation in the ‘invisible’ creative profession of screenwriting. Conor draws out the implications of the film’s teasing depictions of a screenwriter called Charlie Kaufman, who has a more successful twin brother, also a screenwriter. She notes that these characters occupy a narrow range of subject positions that, although superficially negative (‘egotist’, ‘masochist’, ‘supplicant’), nonetheless reassert the masculinity of the professional screenwriter. Reviews statistics on Anglophone film industries, she draws parallels between the disproportionately low numbers of women who contribute to production, including through screenwriting, and the limited on-screen representations of women, in terms

of both the numbers and range of female roles. The article argues that Kaufman's depictions of screenwriting exemplify and reinforce the taken-for-granted 'unspeakable' nature of the gendered exclusions and inequalities of the film industry more generally.

In **Ana Alacovska's** article, gender inequalities in media industries are examined through the unusual lens of the concept of genre. This refers to the categories, such as romance or news and current affairs, through which products and their majority audiences are matched in industries like publishing and television. Alacovska notes that although creative and media research has tended to link genre to reception through audience studies, it is primarily a category of 'labour and production'. She argues that there are 'gendered and gendering' ideologies attached to media genres that result in occupational segregation within institutions so that, for example, women producers are under-represented in 'male' genres in television and film. More subtly, genres have biographical implications, resulting from gendered stereotypes of producers' professional identities and gendered norms and cultural prescriptions for life courses and behaviours. Alacovska discusses the example of women travel writers, presenting findings from an interview study to show how genre-related conflicts around production practices, professional standing and careers are experienced at the most personal and emotional level, for example, as anxiety and feelings of inadequacy.

Finally in this section, **Miranda Banks and Lauren Steimer** foreground the work of the female stunt double in Hollywood film, a figure who challenges traditional notions of on-screen femininity through the display of physical power and strength. This case study highlights the ways in which stuntwomen's identities and bodies are simultaneously displayed and erased, not only on-screen, but in media coverage of the work of female stars who rely on the work of their stunt doubles but seldom acknowledge it. Histories of stunting highlight the particular gendered dynamics of the profession, including: that the key position of the stunt coordinator (which often ensures career longevity) was traditionally white and male, and women were excluded from the profession until well into the 1970s. Women stunt doubles working today encounter ageism and a requirement to constantly diversify their portfolio of strengths and abilities.

The fourth and final section of this volume is centred on notions of boundary-crossing, between home and work, paid and non-paid work, production and reproduction. **Ursula Huws** firstly discusses how activities corresponding to cultural and creative labour have been envisioned in Utopian models of society, past and recent. Her comparison of Rousseau and Morris, among others, draws attention to recurring conflicts and still-relevant problems. A central issue is that prioritizing cultural and creative work inevitably raises the question of who will carry out less worthy or enjoyable activities. Utopian models generally choose one of two solutions. The first is to propose some mechanism for sharing out the good and bad or creative and non-creative tasks, which raises problems of allocation and enforcement. The second solution is a division of labour based on different categories of persons, with the less privileged doing the less desirable work. Either solution involves inequalities, between the enforcers and the enforced, or the creatives and non-creatives, or both, and most of the Utopian models replicate the gendered and classed inequalities of the modeller's own society, usually unwittingly. As Huws notes, there is a failure here and elsewhere to recognise how 'unpaid reproductive work' underpins both

productive work in a capitalist economy and ‘satisfying creative work’ in ‘an idealised pre-industrial economy’.

In her article, **Stephanie Taylor** takes as a starting point for discussion a newspaper article profiling people working for themselves and at home. The ‘working from home’ trend has increased in coverage and popularity and encompasses the self-employed, freelancers, small business owners and ‘mumpreneurs’. Taylor discusses the ‘discursive drift’ that has seen discourses of entrepreneurialism and new forms of creative working ‘converge’ on the workplace-in-the-home. She suggests that working for yourself, far from offering freedoms, potentially further excludes those who may already be on the margins of neoliberal workplaces and spaces because of: ‘caring responsibilities, maturity or work history’. Taylor argues that this drift is associated with a feminised creative figure and that the coverage of the ‘working from home’ trend is particularly insidious for women and for those who do not conform to a masculine creative and entrepreneurial ideal, encouraging a retreat to the home like that deplored by Betty Friedan in her original framing of the feminine mystique.

Lastly, **Leslie Regan Shade and Jenna Jacobson** discuss unpaid internships which have become ubiquitous in the CCI, regarded as key entry level positions. Previous criticisms have focussed on class issues but Regan Shade and Jacobson argue that ‘internship injustice’ (Perlin, 2011) is also connected to gender. This can be seen both in the kinds of industries that have unpaid internships (eg. publishing not techno-science), and in the kind of work expected of female (not male) interns. . The article examines young women's experiences of unpaid internships in Canada’s creative sector. Regan Shade and Jacobson’s interviewees spoke of the difficulties of finding work and the concomitant pressure to take on multiple unpaid internships, whilst also recognising that being able to do so was a sign of their relative privilege (eg. being able to rely financially on parents for food and rent, etc). Those with less support worked part-time alongside the unpaid internships, with little time off. The article offers a nuanced account of how young female interns navigate these difficulties and challenges and their high personal costs, in a world in which even getting an unpaid internship in the CCI has become extremely competitive.

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