Editorial for special issue

Diversifying the Creative: Creative Work, Creative Industries, Creative Identities

The call to 'diversify the creative' invokes critical engagements with both the concept of 'diversity' and that of the 'creative'. The two have been yoked together in policy discourses which positioning creative industries as a panacea for economic decline, especially in regions where traditional industries were failing (DCMS 2001). These have migrated from the United Kingdom across a range of other national and regional spaces, mutating as they travel (Flew 2012; Prince, 2010). In the United Kingdom, diversity policies have been explicitly linked to the hope that creative industries would provide employment to marginalised groups, addressing social diversity in terms of equal access to work and of cultural inclusion and exclusion (Oakley, 2006). Creative labour has increasingly been recognised *as* work, with governmental technologies accounting for creative subjects x in data sets where earnings and occupations can be surveyed. The evidence so far – drawing on this same official data - is that this hope has largely been unfulfilled (Hesmondhalgh, Oakley, Lee, and Nisbett, 2015). Critical diversity scholars have addressed this failure and the nuanced processes by which it is achieved across a range of creative occupations. Triumphalist claims about a new

'creative class' (Florida, 2002), are undercut by critical empirical studies showing continuing patterns of class, gender and racial inequalities (Leslie and Catungal, 2012). In gender terms, women do not have equal access to creative work, are not equally rewarded, and are subject to various forms of occupational segregation that reinforce these inequalities of both recognition and reward, while hegemonic masculinities continue to be reproduced (Sang, Dainty and Ison, 2014). Intersecting with gender are constructions of class, race/ethnicity, age, disability and sexuality, which complicate and extend privilege and inequality (Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012). Such research recognises that struggles over the creative are also struggles over the control of cultural production (Dean, 2008; Hesmondhalgh and Saha, 2013). Diversity scholars in the fields of film and media studies point to the connections between the exclusion and marginalisation of certain bodies in cultural representation, as in for instance on the screen, and the exclusion and marginalisation of those bodies in creative workforces which produce those representations, multiplying and reproducing inequalities (Jones and Pringle, 2015).

Critical scholars have also engaged with the politics of the creative to address how certain bodies, certain work practices, and certain identities come to be counted as 'creative', while others are excluded (Banks, 2007). The rhetoric of creativity

encompasses specifically designated 'creative industries' and 'creatives' (Caves, 2000), as well as a much wider idea of 'the creative' as an essence that can be sprinkled like 'magic dust' (Jeffcutt and Pratt, 2002) over all kinds of work and organisations (Osborne, 2003). Inherent in some formulations of industrial and organisational creativity, and in the notion of creative cities regions and workforces, is the proposition that diversity as difference is required in order to cultivate the creative (Bilton, 2006; Florida, 2002). Paradoxically, representations of diversity as integral to new creative industries have the effect of reinforcing the marginalisation of those recognised as 'diverse' by underlining their otherness or rendering their inequalities as unspeakable (Gill, 2002; 2011; Proctor-Thomson 2013). At the individual level, the contemporary notion of the 'creative' incorporates a nostalgic, bohemian romantic framing of arts and artists, based on a historic distinction between the creative and the industrial, and linked with ideas of art as a vocation and of the artist as a distinctive kind of individualised genius (Becker, 1974; Jeffcutt and Pratt, 2002; Gibson and Klocker, 2005). The creative must also labour as a creative entrepreneur, extending creativity into an effective engagement with the economic, and managing self-branding in a creative habitus and networks of creative sociality (McRobbie, 2016). Critical scholars have argued that, as well as extending older forms of exploitation into new kinds of creative work, cultural labour is also associated with new subjectivities (Banks and Milestone, 2011; Nixon

and Crewe, 2004; Proctor-Thomson, 2012). In gender terms, for example, there are new tensions to be negotiated in constructing creative female selves through post-feminist forms of 'self-making or actualization through work' (Taylor, 2011: 368). At the same time, new creative spaces can operate as sites where claims to cultural citizenship can potentially be contested by marginalised identities such as sexual minorities (Yue, 2007) and people with disabilities (Darcy and Taylor, 2009).

As policy analysts and management academics have developed new accounts of the creative as work in a creative economy, critical scholars have increasingly paid attention to theorising creative labour (e.g., Banks and Milestone, 2011; Banks, Gill, and Taylor, 2013; McKinley and Smith, 2009). They reframe creative work in relation to other kinds of exploitative or precarious work, while maintaining a focus on the distinctive features of the creative (Gill, 2002). But people working in creative fields often refuse such analyses. Identifying as artists with a vocation, they often work in what they see as non-creative jobs, perhaps part-time or intermittently, to fund their creative practice (Menger, 1999). The distinctions between paid and unpaid work and amateur and professional are blurred (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011), and unpaid positions such as internships are institutionalised as a way to get a foot in the door of a creative industry (Siebert and Wilson, 2013). Outside larger cultural institutions or companies, work is typically organised as a series of projects,

often with extreme conditions in terms of hours, intensity, and the requirement to be mobile. Work is therefore precarious and must be sought again and again through social relations. Even if they are in paid creative work, creatives may accept low pay, extremely demanding working conditions and precarious employment (Haunschild and Eikhof, 2009). The language of workplace rights is frequently marginalised or silenced altogether, and forms of collective organising such as unionisation are often unavailable or rejected (Blair, Culkin and Randle, 2003). Diversity strategies and policies that may work to some extent in large organisations, or where unions are active cannot even be initiated in such settings (Jones and Pringle, 2015). In this context, it can be very difficult to articulate claims about diversity and (in)equalities within creative work, such as concerns about pay, status, recognition, or acknowledgment of family responsibilities (Thynne, 2000). The construction and negotiation of personal and professional identities compound the complex understanding of what it means to be a creative 'worker' in a neoliberal regime (Allen, Quinn, Hollingworth, and Rose, 2013). The construction of 'diverse' identities takes varying forms in relation to the creative. A critical examination of creativity and diversity therefore allows us to interrogate and denaturalise both of these concepts: we can ask how the 'creative' comes to be seen as a kind of essence inhabiting particular kinds of bodies; and also how the creative 'diversity' that is supposed to generate the creative works seems to often rewrite traditional

relations of power.

It is in this context that this special issue seeks to make a contribution by examining how diversity and creativity are mobilised across a range of contexts, and opening up possibilities for change by articulating how inequalities are produced and also resisted. We now turn to each of the seven papers and briefly highlight the unique and compelling features and particular contributions of each.

Special Issue Papers

Eikhof and SECOND NAME's paper, *Analysing decisions on diversity and opportunity in the cultural and creative industries: A new framework,* begins with an overview of the seemingly intractable problem of (lack of) diversity and (un)equal opportunity in cultural and creative industries in the United Kingdom. This is a useful starting point for readers new to this field of diversity. The key contribution of the authors is to offer a 'shift in perspective' on a familiar problem. They conceptualise inequality as generated by 'decision making' processes, requiring a close examination of organisational micro-practices, embedded in and productive of social structures at meso and macro levels. This approach works against the grain of creative industries narratives which naturalise individual talent and entrepreneurial agency. Instead, it de-naturalises the 'creative persona' of cultural workers, and locates them within the contexts where their 'opportunities' are

generated by the decisions of others. Eikhof and SECOND NAME's method is to re-view the existing research through a new conceptual framework which integrates multidimensional and interactive factors in three key dimensions. First, they identify key points where decisions are made about workers that influence their opportunities (e.g., entry to higher education; offers of work); second, they identify characteristics of individuals that influence whether they get to be considered (e.g., apply for training) and how they are perceived (e.g., relationship between class and the 'creative persona'); and third, they identify who the decision-makers are and the contexts in which they are embedded. This approach emphasises the specific roles of decision makers steeped in cultural canons that privilege white, male and middle class visions and embodiments of the creative, in contexts where their power is accentuated by the scarcity of work and the high frequency of critical decision points. This framework develops the critique of creative work as a space for open opportunity, and points to specific moments where change is possible.

In their paper *Rethinking Cultural Diversity in the UK Film Sector: Practices in Community Filmmaking,* Sarita Malik, Caroline Chapain and Roberta Comunian theorise cultural diversity as itself always a mediated process. Attention to the mediation of diversity is intensified in creative work such as filmmaking, with its

focus on representation of diversity on the screen, as well as the diversity of bodies working off screen. Drawing on the work of Stuart Hall, they see filmmaking by marginalised communities as a process that can constitute new kinds of cultural subjects and therefore new 'places from which to speak' (Hall, 1990: 236-7). They position community filmmaking as consisting of participatory production practices at the edges of the film economy. Cultural diversity is realised when communities and practices are culturally varied, reshaping the identities of media workers and the business models which emerge from this process. Malik et al. distinguish between the top-down prescriptive models of cultural diversity, which policy-makers attempt to impose on and produce from cultural programmes, and the bottom-up mobilisation of mediated cultural diversity by community filmmakers. Their qualitative study across three regions in England privileges the perspectives of filmmakers as they interpret and engage with cultural diversity in terms of representation onscreen and of their own practices. They argue that participatory community filmmaking supports the creation of new symbolic spaces where meanings of cultural diversity can be generated, and where the business practices of film-making are re-positioned to emphasise civic agency and cultural aspirations. While marginal, community filmmaking practices act as a bridge which connects to wider film communities and provides alternative models of mediated cultural diversity from the bottom up.

In their paper *Unveiling the subject behind diversity*: *Exploring the micro- politics of representation in ethnic minority creatives' identity work,* Annelies Thoelen, Patrizia Zanoni and Sierk Ybema examine the ways in which creative practitioners construct their ethnic backgrounds in relation to their creative work. They challenge the idea of ethnicity as a collective creative identity, and reclaim the place of the agentic subject in the process of constructing creative identity in relation to minority ethnic backgrounds. Using self-reflexivity and individual agency, the creative practitioners in this study purposely construct the discourses of these backgrounds as integral to their creative identity in three main ways: as 'hybrid', 'exotic' or 'liminal'. Through this process they claim ethnicity as a source of their creative selves. The authors draw on in-depth interview data with established creative professionals from minority ethnic backgrounds in Belgium. The study draws on a variety of creative sectors such as design and fashion, theatre and dance, film and photography, architecture, journalism and publishing, music, media and advertising. The paper contributes to our understanding of diversity and creativity by revealing the role of individual agency and identity work in constructing and understanding ethnicity as a source of creativity. It looks at identity work at a micro-level and demonstrates the continued prominence of ethnic discourses and individual struggle in the construction of what constitutes

creativity and creative work.

Joanne Duberley, Marylyn Carrigan, Jennifer Ferreira and Carmela Bosangit explore a particular creative cluster in their analysis of the gendered aspects of creative labour. In *Diamonds are a girl's best friend...? Examining Gender and Careers in the Jewellery Industry*, they focus on an underexamined sector within the creative or cultural industries, namely, jewellery production. In particular the submission focusses on the Birmingham Jewellery Quarter in the United Kingdom. Doing so presents an opportunity to examine gendered creative labour in a creative cluster which has seen a decline since its peak in the early 1900s. Duberley et al. draw on Joan Acker's concept of gender regimes (Acker, 2009), departing from previous work by examining inequality regimes within a creative cluster, rather than specific organisations. Empirically the paper is based on interviews with men and women working in various roles in the Birmingham Jewellery Quarter, with most working for small to medium size enterprises. The data reveals that despite a rhetoric of progressive thinking within the creative industries, the jewellery sector is conservative in its practices. Examples include gendered divisions of labour, with certain tasks restricted to men, and reliance on essentialist views of men and women to justify this organisation of labour. The inter and intra organisational networks reveal a creative cluster which is built on

inequality regimes which privilege men and disadvantage women. Duberley et al.
argue that Acker's concept of gender regimes has the potential to explain gender
inequality outside the traditional boundaries of a single organisation. We hope this
paper will inspire future research to examine clusters of organisations to
understand the persistent privileging of men, and oppression of women.

Ana Alacovska's paper, *The gendering power of genres*, focuses on the role of the
genre of crime fiction in perpetuating gender inequalities and causing an 'anxiety
of authorship' within the production of Scandinavian crime fiction in Denmark.
This is a male-dominated genre, where Alacovska finds that gender inequalities are
so normalised and ingrained in creative labour that experiences of gender
exclusion and discrimination remain unarticulated, and women authors must
justify their right to the crime fiction genre. Thus, Alacovska argues that women
crime fiction authors are seen to engage in boundary-negotiation and boundary-
contestation practices as part of their creative identities. This emphasis on genres
generates research and empirical possibilities currently underexplored in creative
labour studies. The paper applies 'structural hermeneutics' to grasp the persistent
and unarticulated gender inequality in creative labour, an original approach which
elaborates on the pragmatist and anti-representationalist analytical frame of
structural hermeneutics. This research shows empirically how a female-gendered

sub-genre of crime fiction, called 'femikrimi', functions as identity work that female writers do to cope and engage with masculine genre norms and values, while negotiating gendered boundaries, affirming and sustaining a woman's right to authorship in a masculine genre. Alacovska's work advances creative labour research by extending its conceptual toolkit with an analytical category important for understanding gender inequalities and the unconscious gender bias that permeate creative industries, in spite of concerted efforts at policing fair access and equal opportunities.

In her paper *"It's a man's man's man's world"*, Gretchen Larsen discusses the so-called 'groupies' in rock music. She looks at how the term 'groupies' was constructed to 'other' women from music production through elements of their social identity: they were labelled as a particular type of female fan, and as unauthentic consumers. Thus, the paper argues that groupies are othered in two ways: both as women and as consumers. It is in the intersection of the two which has shaped the identity of the groupies and so maintains the patriarchy of rock. So looking at them in terms of gender and marketplace roles, where consumers and producers are understood in a hierarchical way, the paper reveals how groupies are marginalised. The author has used rhetorical analysis to interrogate the five most popular biographies of groupies and rock wives. The analysis reveals three

discursive mechanisms of othering: groupies were stereotyped as female fans interested predominantly in non-creative elements of rock (usually sex); groupies were constructed as unauthentic consumers; and the intersection of these two served to reinforce cultural stereotypes of women as sex objects and passive popular culture recipients. This historically and culturally embedded analysis is a fruitful way of revealing the processes of othering. The paper thus contributes to our understanding of the exclusionary mechanisms in the creative field by looking at the intersection of gender and marketplace roles (the distinction between work and non-work, between production and consumption), and the ways in which these are framed by popular discourses. By revealing how female music fans were excluded from the music field, it demonstrates mechanisms by which marketplace roles are constructed in a gendered way, and identifies the othering processes which perpetuate the patriarchy of rock.

Cameron Duff and Shanti Sumartojo's contribution to the special issue, *Assemblages of Creativity: Material Practices in the Creative Economy,* marks a departure from traditional approaches both to empirical work and to existing theoretical frameworks in the study of creativity. Based on data collected from one participant, Melissa, Duff and Sumartojo draw on Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the 'assemblage' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) to critique the absence of the

nonhuman in our understandings of gendered creativity. The assemblage allows for the use of a different unit of analysis for understanding organisational processes and phenomena, a unit of analysis which extends beyond the human. Doing so advances understandings of creativity beyond an ontologically distinct human subject, and blurring any (false) boundaries between the human and the nonhuman. As Duff and Sumartojo argue, an assemblage approach which neither refuses nor centres an essentialist notion of the human subject, allows for a revisioning of creativity which moves away from notions of innate ability or traits, or the creative star individual. Melissa, a creative worker, imbues nonhuman actors with agency, for example, the organisational space which obscures natural light and prohibits interaction between human actors. Further, Melissa articulates the (agentic) role of technology in shaping and forming the creative communities she seeks out online. Duff and Sumartajo's contribution is to reveal the potential of understanding the human actor and nonhuman actors within creative organisations. We hope this paper will act as a foundation for future research which explores the gendered and perhaps speciesist aspects of creative assemblages.

One of the key variations across these papers is the authors' framing of agency. For instance, Eikhof and SECOND NAME's analysis presents creative workers as

objects produced by the decisions of others, emphasising the points in the life course where a creative persona is shaped to meet the requirements of others. In opposition, Thoelen et al. present ethnic minority creatives as agentic workers on their own identities, splicing and reworking the intersection of the creative and the ethnic to further their careers. This difference is not merely one of research perspective, of whether the focus is on individual accounts of creative work as opposed to a focus on structural processes. The women crime writers in Alacovska's study provide individual accounts, but describe a sense of anxiety, and their agency as constrained both creatively and in terms of career success by a gendered creative genre.

The location of creatives within specific collectives is central to the work of Malik et al. and Duberley et al. For Malik et al., cultural difference is recognised as a mediated product which can be shaped by cultural production, and, as a participatory process, community filmmaking is an intentional and collective action which repositions and reshapes marginalised identities, as well as the filmmaking process itself. For Duberley et al., the emphasis is not on the creative product as such, but on the gender regime operating within another kind of collective, a creative cluster. The concept of gender regime is used as a way to look beyond individuals to a gendered creative community in a specific location.

Larsen's paper on 'groupies' in rock culture opens up a set of relationships usually positioned as 'outside' the cultural production of music, but central to the reproduction of rock culture as patriarchal space. Larsen's framing of these women as consumers, as opposed to producers, of music shows us how their marginalisation is compounded by gendered understandings of consumption as well by as their sexual status. In doing so she also shows us the importance of making diversity visible beyond the bright spotlight on the creative producer. Finally, Duff and Sumartojo push the boundaries of diverse creative identities further by working across the boundaries of the human and nonhuman. While all the papers question the notion of the essentially creative individual, and locate creatives in specific kinds of collectives, Duff and Sumartojo take this questioning past the limits of the creative as a human phenomenon and draw the attention of researchers to the nonhuman assemblages of creativity.

All the authors here are concerned with changes in practices, via new discourses for imagining, re-negotiating and managing diversity in creative production. This research opens up in turn new opportunities for marginalised groups to lead, collaborate and develop skills in creative spaces of greater equality.

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