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**Paquette, J. (2012) *Cultural Policy, Work and Identity: The creation, renewal and negotiation of professional subjectivities*. Ashgate Publishing: Surrey. 234 pp. ISBN: 9781409438717, £55.00 (hbk)**

The last twenty years have seen a significant increase in the discussion of professionalism in arts and cultural management. This discourse occurs at a paradoxical time for these industries in relation to their provision and the value of professional authority. On the one hand, there has been a deprofessionalisation of certain roles with cuts to funding in these sectors meaning a greater reliance on contingent and unpaid labour. There has also been a devaluing of certain cultural work as the boundaries between professional and amateur become blurred. On the other hand this is a time when the contribution and functions of the arts and cultural industries is growing (both in real and political terms) and intervention within these industries continues to evolve. This edited volume engages directly with this debate examining the role policy plays in the construction and negotiation of professional identity for those working in arts, heritage and culture industries. It focuses specifically on how power dynamics come to shape professional cultures and experiences.

The volume begins from the position that for many of those engaged within cultural and arts industries professionalism has often been a difficult and ambivalent concept. Often it has been, and it continues to be in many areas, a 'quest' (p.11) for professional recognition rather than an established and accepted understanding of what it means to be professional in these sectors. Along with the elements mentioned above, the growing emphasis on community-based and participatory practices, and the structural pressures encountered by the industry add a further layer of complexity to this quest for professional identity. As a result the editor argues for the reader to see past professional identity as simply the performance of professional actions, viewing this as a limiting approach to the field. In its place he reasons that professionalism is influenced by a range of social and political factors and that the concept should be engaged with through a range of worker subjectivities – it is these subjectivities which characterise all the contributions in this volume.

Having helpfully charted the different theoretical approaches to the study of professional identity, the editor adopts Lacan's classification of identity to broadly divide the collection into three sections. Each has a different viewpoint (though in their application in this volume there is a notable overlap between these levels): the symbolic, the imaginary and the reality of agents of cultural policy (p.16).

The first level of analysis is the 'Symbolic'. Contributions in this, the largest section of the book, examine the social and political power of policy to create and redefine cultural agency and the tensions which emerge at a professional level. The role of the state in that relationship is a common theme in this section. The contributions range from an analysis of the tensions in the definition, custody and regulation of Great War artefacts by different heritage stakeholders, to a historical account of the

transfer of power within the museum sector in France in order to democratise these national institutions.

'Professional Imaginaries' is the next categorisation and it focuses on the organisation of cultural policy as a means of constructing identity and commodifying labour, and the resistances to certain structures (like contingent/precarious labour) which are formed. Here another diverse set of contexts and case studies are explored, though the unifying theme is the application of 'community' by each. Amongst these are a critical discussion of some of the newly founded aims for museums towards social intervention and knowledge transfer, and how in the specific case considered this has resulted in a shift in the power dynamic and a conflict for museum volunteers with their newly formed identity. The search for legitimacy in fan communities, and arts management as a new professional identity and the role of philanthropists in enabling this, are two further contributions in this section.

The final section deals with 'Realities'. This examines policy as it shapes professional ethos, effectively using policy as a 'normative anchor' (p.2). The narrative dimensions of identity, the different realities experienced by various professionals and how these individual and groups use cultural policy as material for identity construction and negotiation are the foundations for the third part of the book. The UK Labour government's policies as articulated in the biographical narrative of an individual arts professional in Northern England as he transitions from furniture maker to cultural entrepreneur, works well alongside a further chapter on cultural policy as it shapes minority and community identity. The book ends with the question of authenticity and the tensions between local policy concerns and artistic identity.

Clearly the collection is multidisciplinary drawing on a range of perspectives including arts management, heritage studies, museum studies, policy studies, cultural studies and organisational studies, and as a result the volume will undoubtedly contribute to these fields acting as a helpful bridge between disparate disciplines. Taken as a whole, the chapters usefully transition between a range of institutions (including the BBC and Musées de France), occupational practices (such as cultural mediation, curatorship, fandom, journalism, social media, and cultural pedagogy), policies (ranging from policies relating to cultural democracy, education and training, urban regeneration and minority representation) and national contexts (including France, Sweden, the UK and Canada). As a result of this diversity a more unifying discussion of the themes across the chapters and a signal of the future direction of this emerging area of interest, especially having highlighted its importance on some many levels, would have been welcomed. That said the volume overall and its individual contributions certainly enhance our understanding of the diverse professional subjectivities in the arts and cultural industries, and how these identities are tied to and enabled/disabled by policy.

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