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almost dismantled welfare state. The population within these new estates of pedagogy is, however, unruly and resentful of this mode of control, even when it has a superficial appeal. They are aware that they are being trained up and then left to their own devices to create a living for themselves. This new force of critique can be seen across the pages of the New York based online magazine e-flux (see http://www.e-flux.com/). The artist subject is intended to be a symbol of labour reform, someone willing to 'live on thin air'. It is an ironic re-working of Joseph Beuys to say that today 'everyone is an artist'. And yet the logic of the précarité movement is to take up this challenge and reclaim this slogan from the policy-makers into something more in keeping with Beuys' egalitarian intent. We can conclude then with the argument that the point where toolkits, instruments and new entrepreneurial pedagogies find their institutional (and non-institutional) home, those spaces in which they are introduced and become embedded as new orthodoxies, also become sites of antagonism and tension. Ideally the entrepreneurial university would see something of an erosion of the old intellectual 'freedoms' of the university and art-school system, and its replacement by what we might call the 'business-school model'. It may even be that the actual outcome of policy, such as the formulation of instruments and toolkits, is less important to contemporary power than the push to expel from the academy and to expunge from popular memory, the traces of lines of flight that memorialize previous moments such as those characterized by a radical social democratic agenda for arts, which made culture a public good and which supported free education, across all three sectors, primary, secondary and university level. This would be to argue that the creativity dispositif is charged also with the task of de-historicizing those institutions whose existence was at least partly due to decades of post-1945 political struggle waged across a range of sites including the trade unions, school teachers and academics, the UK Labour Party prior to New Labour, the women's movement, anti-racist organizations, as well as the educational departments of the art galleries and museums sector.

The Gender of Post-Fordism: ‘Passionate Work’, ‘Risk Class’ and ‘A Life of One’s Own’

Risk Class and Mobility of Gender

In this chapter I make partial use of two of the concepts from my previous feminist writing. One is the assemblage of forces that together construct a ‘post-feminist masquerade’ as a way of revoking on putative equality by inscribing young women within a series of elaborate body rituals defined by the fashion-beauty-complex. This suggests, with a ‘post-feminist’ ironic touch, a femininity that defers, in the end and somewhat reluctantly, to male privilege and hence to the status quo (following Joan Rivière), and thus serves ultimately if ambivalently to uphold existing gender hierarchies despite the suggestion otherwise (Rivière 1928/1986; McRobbie 2008). The second concept is that of ‘working girl’ (McRobbie 2008). This helped refine an analysis of what happened or rather what would ideally happen when these new (active but docile) subjects of post-feminist times entered the labour market with their good qualifications (thanks to the meritocratic efforts of New Labour). What would happen, I hypothesized, was that, having abandoned the idea of a new feminist politics, on the urging of powers that be, these young women, at that point at which they became mothers, while also wanting to maintain a career, would adhere to the principles of the ‘work—life’ balance, which shared some elements in common with the post-feminist masquerade insofar as it assumed a kind of ‘sexual compromise’ or settlement; that is, a way of reneging on ideas of gender equality in both home and workplace, and thus foregoing any feminists' demand for equality in favour of a strategy that entailed conventionally feminine
practices of self-management and planning. By and large women would compromise in their careers, by stepping back from so-called normal career progression, so as to fit in the demands of busy motherhood, and they would relinquish the need to request full participation of their male partners in domestic duties, thus avoiding conflict, the danger of becoming a stereotypical 'nagging' or complaining wife, or else a confrontational angry feminist. In searching for ways of dealing with such obvious inequalities, women could turn to the feminine media and popular culture and the quality press and TV, which would provide an endless supply of household and workplace 'solutions' and managerial strategies for dealing with these post-feminist crises. Most important, in this regard, across these channels of media, is the attention paid to maintaining a vibrant and sexually attractive appearance. At no point in time can the busy young working woman afford to 'let herself go'. For New Labour this agenda of self-management provided an alternative to the feminist debates from previous times within the Labour Party, which challenged male partners and husbands to share household duties. It also meant that male careers were not to be forestalled by domestic duties beyond tokenistic periods of paternal leave. Bearing these concerns in mind, in this chapter I focus on both working girls and working mothers through the lens of post-Fordism and the modern work society. In keeping with the thematics explored in previous chapters I try to decipher the fine lines between acquiescence and accommodation to the various forms of regulation and control that shape the new world of work, in this case creative work, and those openings to opposition or 'lines of flight'. For women, new forms of feminism connected with the politics of precariousness provide such a space for antagonism to the new work regime, but as I shall show this is countered by the prevailing and powerful ideology of 'passionate work', which, although it has a long legacy in the history of feminine popular culture, comes now to stand as the female version of the more macho Steve Jobs (of Apple) ethos of 'love your work', which in turn reduces the potential for new forms of labour organization and even justifies wage stagnation and regression (Gregg 2011; Adkins and Devers 2014).

With these counterposing forces of passionate versus precarious work, I propose in this chapter that the gender of post-Fordism is female and that, at least in the UK, since the shift to a post-industrial, service-sector led economy, women have participated in work (albeit often in a part-time capacity) across the boundaries of social class and ethnicity, to the point that this wage-earning capacity marks both the 'sense of equality' and some of the limits of liberal feminist gains in the struggles for equality. In a real sense, such battles came to be fought with the idea of gaining economic independence from a husband or partner as an objective, and this providentially fitted with some of the concessionary gestures that could, from the late 1970s, be made to the rising tide of feminist demands. Work marks the spot. Young women are addressed as enthusiastic 'career girls'. This 'settlement to women' then stands as a backdrop against which many major socio-economic changes are played out. Such a notion of settlement has certain national characteristics, with the result that what pertains in the UK does not necessarily exist similarly in seemingly comparable western European countries such as Germany or Italy, or indeed in the rest of the Western world, and comes consequently to act as a marker of cultural differences. Alongside this consideration of women as a driving force for the UK work-society I also, in this chapter, go against the grain of a good deal of sociological thinking in regard to questions of gender, class, work and ideas of social mobility. There is much current sociological writing that dispels the myth of social mobility and points to the widening gap of wealth and poverty in the UK, and which also shows that there are greater chances for decreasing social mobility than politicians across the party spectrum wish to acknowledge (Savage et al. 2013). My emphasis here is that, under the impact of two decisive forces, those younger women who would typically have been seen as working class, come to be symbolically severed from the socio-economic and cultural context of working-class life. These forces are the expansion of further and higher education, in particular the new universities and art schools, and the shift to a service economy, with post-Fordism changing the modern work economy, so that it now is at least partly organized around 'immaterial labour', 'emotional labour' or, in my own parlance, 'passionate work'. So, social inequality undoubtedly increases under the conditions of contemporary neoliberal society, but at the same time there is an expansion of the middle classes, especially the lower middle classes, with the illusion (or sense, or affective condition) of mobility being key to the achievement of successful femininity. Perhaps this paradox is actually the point. Women remain disadvantaged in comparison to their male counterparts in the labour force (e.g. they have low pay, wage gap, glass ceiling, part-time work), but despite their actual income or material life circumstances, young women are now propelled by strong ideological forces in media and popular culture, into a more nebulous social terrain.
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that can be described as 'aspirational' and so they feel themselves to be 'on the move', to be overcoming past obstacles, which held them back. They are lifted out of the entanglements of race, ethnicity and class, and addressed simply as a population of women. These young (formerly working-class) women do not disavow their class or ethnicity of belonging; instead, they simply see the potential for a more exciting life, or as Ulrich Beck puts it a 'life of one's own' (Beck 2000). Beverley Skeggs' writing on respectability most accurately captures one important dynamic in this seeming de-classification process (Skeggs 1997). She shows how normative femininity comes to be attached to the need to dis-identify with traditional female working-class values and lifestyle. This becomes more sharply marked within the politics of neoliberalism pursued from 1997 under the New Labour government. There is an unmooring from working-class identity, as young women increasingly orient themselves towards jobs that bear some of the trims of the service sector, especially those focusing on self-presentation, on being well groomed, on body-work and on media and culture industries, even if at the lower reaches of these hierarchies, such as fashion retail or hairdressing. Such jobs do not mark out a decisive improvement in life chances; nevertheless, they rely on an understanding of the attractive, well-groomed body as being a key part of the job, and this in turn becomes a mark of pride, a sign of self-responsibility and a way of 'feeling good' about the self. Self-perception, in an individualized society, is directed towards a less class-defined existence. These young women want to 'uproot' themselves and go somewhere. Entrance into a new swollen middle class does not, however, come with any promises of economic security or stability, even with the possession of a degree qualification. Indeed as the process of expansion occurs so also does the idea of 'middle-classness' come to be equated with increasing insecurity.

For this reason I find the term 'risk class' recently proposed by Ulrich Beck to be a valuable tool to think through this process of movement or 'social mobility' (Beck 2014). I want to retain the idea of social mobility, using it against the grain to suggest something other than the projected movement upwards with which it is typically associated. This is mobility, which does not quite know where it is going. Social mobility as a result of women taking up the kinds of jobs that have recently become available in the new service sector may be notional, but symbolically it means a lot, because the alternative is equated with individual failure. Nowadays young women's feminine status depends on having an interesting, possibly creative and ideally glamorous job. As Sabine Hark has also argued,
was the dual role they had as wives and mothers (with pictures of weddings and babies decorating each woman's cramped work spaces) that provided an escape from unrewarding employment. Despite the occasional visibility of working-class women as active trade unionists (e.g. the Dagenham car factory walk-outs of 1968 and the Grunwick strike of 1976) it was more often the case that women were seen as supportive of their husband's militancy (such as the organizing of miner's wives during the miner's strike of 1984). The time needed for labour organization beyond working hours was seen as conflicting with the dual role they had as mothers and home-makers. Annie Phizacklea's important study of fashion manufacturing in the West and East Midlands drew attention to the inaugural moment of post-industrialization for Asian women whose husbands had been laid off from the car factories (Phizacklea 1990). With small pay-offs, these men were able to set up as small-scale fashion and clothing suppliers with their wives sewing for long hours, sometimes on a home-working basis, or else in small production units comprising just a handful of machinists, pressers and others involved in assembling cheap ready-to-wear items for market stalls and low-cost fashion retailers. Anna Pollert also moved to considering the emergence of post-Fordism through her important essay on the 'Third Italy', at that point seen as the exemplar of the shift to short runs, just in time systems of production, EPOS retailing and the use of highly skilled (female) producers scattered about the small towns and villages of the Emilia Romagna area of northeast Italy, with the Benetton company best exemplifying all the features of post-Fordist fashion (Pollert 1988). The question is, what happens to the younger generation of this female workforce whose lives were spent on the factory floor or at a sewing machine or knitting machine at home? Young women take flight. Updating the debate on the Third Italy, Hadjimichalis has recently made the point that the children of this Italian workforce adamantly do not want to carry on alongside their parents (or mothers) doing the same kind of job; instead they would rather be fashion models (Hadjimichalis 2006; see also www.businessoffashion.com). Old ways of working and producing (such as hand-working) are downgraded and fashion is the site for this kind of creative aspiration process. Today the daughters of the mothers look for other opportunities with higher status. This desire is then seen as accounting for the loss of skill in the fashion production sector, a loud refrain across the fashion sector. Young people do not want to work in a gloomy and possibly dirty factory environment, they prefer to work in a 'studio space'.

then that the development of post-Fordism finds symbolic expression through generation and the desires of working-class youth and their flight from unrewarding, mundane work. They take hold of this opportunity to do something different, giving rise to what the autonomist Marxists call 'the refusal of work'. The argument I make in this book is that this refusal is more of a desire and a yearning for rewarding work, something that is within sight and perhaps within reach through access to further and higher education. This 'flight' also acquires gendered characteristics. The impact of 1970s feminism made the idea of a career for young women something completely acceptable. Unlike the autonomist Marxists I do not make such fulsome claims for a new radical politics emerging from the 'social factory', instead I see a field of ambivalence and tension, where lines of flight connect past parental struggles with the day-to-day experiences of their children in the modern work economy. Labour anxieties are refracted through ideas of creativity and the demands of self-organized work. What we see is a new arena for individualized contestation and questioning within the landscape of contemporary labour reform and the modern work economy. Overall in this chapter I aim to offer some new theoretical insight in relation to gender and the politics of creativity through a critique of the work of the autonomist Marxists.

Birmingham v Bologna: Operaismo and the Successes (or Failures) of Class Struggle?

The strand of radicalism associated with the Italian autonomist tradition was relatively dormant during the 1980s and early 1990s but sprang to the attention of readers with the edited collection by Hardt and Negri (1996) along with Empire (Hardt and Negri 2000) followed by Multitude (Hardt and Negri 2006). In the many articles and books written in recent years on the topics of precarious labour, immaterial and affective labour, all of which are understood within the over-arching frame of post-Fordist regimes of production, there is a failure to foreground gender, or to knit gender and ethnicity into prevailing concerns with class and class struggle. While theoretically capable of endorsing the difference and autonomy of various groups including the category of 'woman' and the politics of feminism, the concept of multitude is developed with an implicit focus on the male worker, with the result that questions of gender and feminism, considered alongside and within the idea of affective labour, nevertheless
is displaced and relegated to a twilight zone, at just that point at which women are moving decisively into the labour-market, so much so that these processes need to be seen together. The ‘older men’ of labour are being replaced by the younger women, for whom the trade union is less of a focal point in their working lives. The antagonistic relations formed in the struggle between capital and labour, or between the state and subordinated social groupings whose subjugation entails a distinctive relation to labour (for instance the unemployed, and those people who are left in poverty because of an inability to work because of illness or disability), continue to provide the key structuring mechanisms for class formation, but this formation does not exist in isolation from the equally influential factors of gender and ethnicity. And in the time of post-Fordism and of post-industrial society in general the experience of being a ‘worker’ is but one element in a more complex configuration of personhood. Despite the Deleuzian moves introduced around notions of difference and becoming, as well as the use of the more capacious concept of the multitude, Hardt and Negri are locked within a class model which permits no space for reflecting on the centrality of gender and sexuality in the post-Fordist era, with the result that there is a failure to consider the meaning of what is often referred to as the feminization of work.

Hardt, Negri et al. urge a return to Marx’s Grundrisse and to the abstract knowledge concretized in machinery (and now in the computational codes) of production. This affects the relations of the workforce in the light of the increasing significance of this abstract knowledge or General Intellect. Where machines or computers do most of the productive work, the standard measure of value for the work carried out by the actual workforce is lost. Marx predicts this leads to widespread social disruption and class struggle. Virno and the others instead see new forms of cynicism and opportunism develop not from within the workplace, but from outside, in everyday life, or in the street which becomes a cite for urban training’ (Virno 2005, p. 14). It is the shallowness and superficiality of these states of mind which lead Virno, for example, to envisage such discontent eventually transmogrifying, through a politics of disenchantment, into new political subjectivities. But, I argue, without a concept of ‘culture’, the idea of ‘the street’ can only connote a weaker space which is not the shop-floor and hence not primarily an expected location for class politics. In this thinking the idea of the factory-floor still takes precedence even when the workforce is in flight from it. Gender questions, when they are taken up, instead of being considered through the idea of feminization of work, emerge through a
focus on the family wage and how this kind of pay settlement historically made to the male worker, meant that care work and the domestic labour of reproduction carried out by women came to be relegated outside the field of value and hence unpaid. It is to this ‘old’ dilemma that the Hardt and Negri-influenced feminists return, to my mind as though twenty or thirty years of scholarship on sexuality, difference, and on gender, culture and ideology did not exist. There is, then, a reductionism based on a hierarchy of abstractions at play here which configures the ‘classic’ antagonism between capitalist production and its subjugated workforce as the primary force for understanding contemporary sociality. In contrast a cultural studies approach, starting with Hoggart and Williams, and especially through the writing of Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy, de-centred the significance of the factory and looked to the social and urban environment, to women, to youth, to immigrant communities, to the fields of leisure and sport, to popular culture and entertainment.

Arguably the ‘culturalism’ found in much of the early CCCS work led to an over-stating of the capacity of working-class populations for resistance and perhaps to an over-emphasis on the power of the symbolic meaning attached to the items (such as hairstyles, fashion, motor-bikes etc.) with which such groupings chose to identify themselves (Hall and Jefferson 1976). Young black and white, male and female, working-class people were able to take hold of these cultural resources, often with spectacular effects. But as various critics of the CCCS work showed, these were often short-lived rebellions or else they were quickly channelled into the commercial machineries of media production, as discussed in previous chapters of this book (Thornton 1996). Nevertheless, one reason why this work, most of it carried out in the mid to late 1970s, remains significant is that the concept of culture which underpinned it was historically and politically rooted. It shaped everyday life and leisure, the workings of the various social institutions, and the wider urban environment. Thanks to the writing of E. P. Thompson, Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart, the idea of popular culture as a landscape for resistance and protest had a legitimate place in social understanding. The *Operaismo* work is notable for the way it brings back ideas of agency (but this time without a subject) to the forefront of political thinking, which in turn permits a different idea of resistance to power to emerge. By abandoning the teleology in Marx, and combining the Deleuzian notion of desire with the concept of *potenza*, Hardt and Negri writing in *Empire* see the possibility of ‘decentralized or mass conceptions of force and strength’ (Hardt and Negri 2000). Three innovative elements are brought into play: first, a decisive attempt to project forwards in the context of the defeats of the Left in Italy and to imagine and envisage new potentialities for radicalism through dissecting what Virno calls the ‘emotional situation’ characteristic of contemporary subjectivity; second, this possibility for radicalism is based on a subject-less form of class politics, now configured as flows, as waves of action, as lines of flight, and as events; and third, while fully confronting the scale of defeat through the 1980s, years that, according to Virno, saw the growth of a celebratory postmodern lifestyle, there is in this work a deliberate attempt to reinstate a sense of victory over the capitalist machine. The authors see post-Fordism as a response on the part of capital to these *potenza* struggles of the working class through the 1960s and 1970s. They repeatedly cite the ‘refusal of work’ on the part of the young factory workers (in Italy and France) who would not conform to labour discipline, and who exited the factory. More specifically they see capital as having to make concessions (or give some ground) such that, with better wages in their pockets the working class expresses new desires, new dreams of lifestyle. Likewise young working-class people declare their wishes for a different and better life. Yet lacking a strong concept of working-class culture these authors can only rest their case on the refusal of work, and on better wages to allow a disposable income. In contrast the Birmingham CCCS writers envisage resistance now displaced away from the parent culture and the various factory shopfloors, which were also the sites of worker defeats during those years, to the scenes of youth culture; that is, to where their children find opportunities to express the dilemmas of powerlessness of their parents through symbolic means by virtue of their engagement with the objects and styles of consumer culture that can be subverted and played back in the form of subcultural politics of meaning. While it is never quite clear where the refusal of work from the viewpoint of the Italian authors leads to, (i.e., where do those who refuse actually go?) its significance lies in its ability to take capitalism by surprise, and force some concessions. In contrast the Birmingham School (drawing on Gramsci’s notion of the ‘national-popular’) had a more historical definition of culture as common or popular resource, which could potentially remain in the hands of its owners. My own contribution to the CCCS work argued that working-class young women were able to appropriate aspects of feminine popular culture to register their own disenchantment with the societal norms of
decorous young womanhood, and with the limited options available to themselves in contrast (McRobbie 1976). For example working-class, low-achieving girls at school would defy rules about hair, make-up and nail varnish, while punk girls wore garish ‘vulgar’ make-up and borrowed from the wardrobe of so-called unrespectable women, ‘tarts’ or prostitutes. As Hebdige and others pointed out, all of these expressions including those by girls drew on a repertoire of forgotten or somehow lost elements of past-working-class lives (Hebdige 1979). In retrieving this tradition now I am also re-infl ecting it, with young women nowadays bringing to their creative or cultural workplaces something of the politics of the ‘parent culture’, not a specific class politics, more a desire to overcome the limits imposed on their parents (or mothers)’ lives through their subordinated position in the labour market. In this context culture plays the role of social glue for the intergenerational recording of past struggles, for the history of domination to be archived and not forgotten. It is these histories that inform the lines of flight that I argue are a characteristic of contemporary ‘hairstyle politics’ and that have a particular resonance in regard to younger women and the micro-political tensions around feminism, which come to be played out in the field of creative labour.

Where my argument connects productively with the *Operaismo* writers is in the idea of mobility, and the desire to escape a lifetime of repetitive, low-status, unrewarding work. (This could also be seen in Dick Hebdige’s seminal account of British mods; see Hebdige 1979.) The autonomist authors offer an original analysis of post-Fordist’s need for brain-power (mass intellect). One of the concessions granted was that work could become more meaningful, and that the workforce could be allowed to act more autonomously in the workplace and have a greater decision-making capacity. This coincides with or even triggers the development of new technology and new forms of communications and information-based production. The combination of this brain-power along with new communications technology means that capitalism is able to deliver high degrees of customization and design in its commodities to increasingly diverse and lifestyle-conscious groups of consumers including the now more mobile working class. Overall the successes of the class struggle result in higher wages and a more participatory and intelligent role in the workplace. Capitalism, according to these autonomist writers, was forced to concede to the workers’ struggles of the 1970s. In contrast to the more usual account of the rise of post-Fordism (such as Lash and Urry 1994) the *Operaismo* writers offer a perspective that foregrounds the agency of the labour force and the changing nature of work itself. These factors are indisputably important, as is the focus they provide on the ways in which young people expressed a desire to ‘exit the factories’. In Italy capital was forced onto the defensive, as fewer younger people were willing to subject themselves to labour discipline. Jobs had to become more attractive to workers, for them to be willing to perform these tasks. Post-Fordism is then an incorporative strategy and capital is weakened because having given way, in certain respects, it finds itself reliant on the mental capacities of the workforce in an unprecedented way. And because the workers are able to exercise their brains, thereby achieving a kind of autonomous space for critical thought and reflection, they are in a profound sense less captured by the dogma and dictates of contemporary power, and capital lags behind them, increasingly dependent on their ideas and initiatives.

These mental capacities, it is then argued, produce a disposition towards co-operation and collectivity, qualities that are also required in the new workshops or studios of cognitive capitalism. ‘Today the production of wealth requires cooperation and interactivity’ (Hardt and Negri 2000, p. 48). The workers now need to talk to each other and make joint decisions; they can argue and express their opinions as to how a commodity needs to be produced or a service provided. With this quality of interaction, the workforce is therefore now better able to re-imagine solidaristic forms of mutual support and co-operation. Hence the strand of optimism. Lazzarato points out that the workers can now also become entrepreneurs themselves, no longer must they be seen only as employees and as mere wage labourers and of course this chimes well with the growth in the last three decades, of freelance or precarious self-employment among young people or with new forms of micro-entrepreneurialism associated with the growing cultural and creative and media sectors of advanced capitalism. It also permits that a labour politics no longer be seen as dependent only on the role of ‘worker’. But there are fine lines of difference between the *Operaismo* writers as to how far this potenza can be stretched to envisage such possible forms of communality or ‘commons’. There is a discrepancy between the contributions of Hardt and Negri and Lazzarato, and the darker comments from Virno and Berardi (Virno 2005; Berardi 2009). Joyful ideas of communality and even communistic sentiments are countered by a powerful regime that inculcates cynicism and opportunism. This cultural milieu of small talk and parties exasperates Virno pushing him, and then Berardi also, to refer to the psycho-pathologies of contemporary subjectivity. With the tight lines between work and leisure dissolved,
with spare time taking on the urgency of working time, they see this party culture and its subjective states as being transferred into the workplace, infecting it. We might stop here for a moment and reflect on this interesting observation. Are these psycho-pathologies also gendered? How do young men and women experience distress differently in their attempts to make an independent living in these new informal fields of work? How would such affective states be analysed? There are paradoxical dynamics, a ‘healthy’ potential for mobilization against oppressive work offset by a toxic brew of life-threatening psycho-pathologies, including depression, panic attacks, alcoholism and drug addiction. There are also some significant absences in these accounts, do young women get the same chances for brain power and communality as their male counterparts? Or, are the new spaces of cognitive capitalism superficially egalitarian but in reality still gender-segregated labour markets? Rosalind Gill’s account of new media cyber-workers is relatively mild in its critique of a culture norm in these workplaces that re-instates male privilege and celebrates a return to sexism, albeit with a pervasive irony predicated on some gestural but dismissive awareness of feminism (Gill 2007).

Hardt and Negri in Empire rely on an expanded concept of working class that becomes ‘multitudinous’ and no longer tied to specific nation states, thus including migrants and refugees moving across continents in search of a better life. While the women’s movement is fleetingly referred to for the role it played in disrupting the nuclear family and thus interrupting the reliable supply of youthful labour (presumably by encouraging women to have fewer children), this emphasis on women’s prime responsibility for reproduction is not updated. This is a class-dominated and gender-essentialist account of the changing world of work. Despite possible openings to gender within the multitude, gender is subsumed into class, as is race and ethnicity, and feminists may well experience a kind of flashback to moments where women could only legitimately be considered if cast in the language of either domestic labour or reproduction. As Gayle Rubin reminded us, Marxism (even Marxist-feminism) was simply not able to understand and critically engage with the wider questions of sexuality that at the time resonated across the many spheres of everyday life including work (Rubin 1984). The centrality of Deleuzian desires, corporeality and libidinal flows, does not solve this problem. The idea of multitude may well be broader and more capacious than class. Indeed the use of Deleuze disguises the inattention to gender and ethnicity. The sites of most of the struggles referred to are traditionally male sectors such as car assembly lines and the related activities associated with the automobile industry. The industrial militancy, which, the writers argue, created the crisis for capitalism, took place once again in largely male-dominated sectors. Even when the authors refer to the black struggles in the US in the 1960s they focus on the car assembly lines again and not on the community, which was the nodal point for Civil Rights (Gilroy 1987). The refusal of work and the exit from the factories was a primarily white male activity.

How then can we talk about the gender of post-Fordism? The women’s movement reached a peak in the years that coincided with the crisis in profitability for many major companies across the world. And since the structure of patriarchal society at that time had produced gender-segregated labour markets with men occupying the better paid and more highly skilled industrial jobs, the shift to a post-industrial economy adversely affected the employment prospects for working-class men while having the opposite effect for women. The nature of work in a post-Fordist economy favoured the large skill-pool and the flexibility of the female workforce. In the UK, women flowed into work from the mid 1980s and have continued to do so ever since. The UK has seen the growth of post-Fordist techniques of production in various sectors, for example, retail, fashion and clothing, furniture and household goods, DIY, and a huge service sector, which booms especially in London and the southeast as London became a global city and centre for the finance industry through the 1980s. As women are more present in the workplace, new goods and commodities become available, catering for the needs of the working woman rather than the mother at home. Sean Nixon showed how the fashion retail chain Next set up in the early 1980s offered a perfect example of fashion with high-design content targeted towards the new style-conscious and aspirational white-collar worker (Nixon 1993). What seems to start with Next in the UK, expands across many products and goods, leading twenty years later to a global rise in spectacular consumption, for which women serve as the main market. The flow of women into work goes hand-in-hand with the expansion of further and higher education and the flooding into the universities of young women in increasingly high volume through the 1980s and onwards to the current moment. Where in the mid 1970s only a tiny trickle of middle-class young women went to university, thirty years later girls outnumber boys in their take up of university places and in some universities there are twice as many females as
males. Across Europe and the US and other affluent countries it has become normal for women in their thirties and forties today to have much higher qualifications than their mothers. Young women from working-class backgrounds have taken up the opportunity to train and consequently make their way up through the ranks of various administrative and institutional sectors, including the public sector, health, education, welfare, as well as in the new financial services such as insurance. Young black and Asian women across different socio-economic backgrounds seek higher qualifications and better-paid work. With all of this activity inevitably there is a corrosion of the old core of working-class people, as the young men (of the Hardt and Negri argument) who started off in the factories in the late 1970s, thirty years later, face early retirement or redundancy. During these years in the UK and elsewhere (e.g. Germany, Italy, France, the US) there have been processes of class de-alignment, class fragmentation and new forms of social divide based on more acute polarities of poverty and unemployment on the one hand, and relative affluence on the other hand. Women come to embody processes of mobility and transition. Some take on extra work because their husbands are made redundant, some black women, mothers and daughters alike, are the main breadwinners because racism more widely and labour market conditions in particular discriminate against their fathers and brothers in specifically gendered ways. Gender is made to articulate with wider female individualization processes so as to seemingly diminish the significance of class, so that its new political meaning for women rests on this faded-out status (Bauman 1990). If working-class young women, through media and lifestyle are exhorted to dis-identify with a working-class position, if in the jobs they do such as retail manager in fashion shops like Karen Millen or Warehouse, there is no tradition of trade unionization, but there are possibilities for further education and ‘lifelong learning’, is it not the case that by and large capital and the state have succeeded in producing an aspirational female workforce in this respect, so that the envisaging of labour organization and the optimism of Hardt and Negri are overstated? How do the politics of the General Intellect or the dimensions of cognitive capitalism play out, for example, in the expanding fashion industry? The answer to this question is more ordinary than the autonomist writers would envisage, there is indeed an in-flow of higher qualified people across this sector but this is no guarantee of a political consciousness emerging, instead it can simply mean that the capitalist machinery works more efficiently than before.

Affective Labour

When we shift registers away from the antagonisms of capital and labour brought about by the ascendance of the general intellect, downwards to the actual field of struggle, examples are relatively few and far between. Lazzarato follows the actions of Les Intermittents Du Spectacle in France, but we would find it hard to locate comparable struggles by women in the creative sectors fighting for either union recognition and hence better social security, or indeed for entitlements for freelance workers or for the self-employed, let us say in regard to maternity leave or for childcare provision such as access to employer-run creches. And, as I suggested above, there have been few recent labour campaigns within the fashion retail sector, where women predominate, for the right to union recognition. In the context of campaigns such as UK Uncut and Occupy, these have been orchestrated largely by people, such as students, working outside the sector not inside. A further difficulty appears when some of the abstract concepts from Hardt and Negri that envisage moments of liberatory joy or communist impulses within the communicative communities that come together within the new fields of work, are taken rather too literally, resulting in a celebratory account of agency in unlikely locations, as in the case of upscale fashion modelling (Wissinger 2007, 2009). With the exception of writing emerging directly from a theoretical dialogue with figures like Hardt and Negri such as that by Lorey (see also Raunig 2013) who makes a direct connection between the potenza of the General Intellect and the uprisings dating back to the EuroMayDay 2000 rallies by precarious workers in western Europe, the possible politics of affective labour can indeed be misconstrued, yielding to an untenable notion of radicalism, even taking into account the emphasis on spontaneous actions and deliberately short-lived events (Lorey 2015; Raunig 2013). For this reason my own focus for the remainder of this chapter and in its conclusion will be on the management of female affect as a requirement for ‘pleasure in work’ such that not to find and express such enjoyment becomes a mark of personal failure or of being the wrong person for the job. The tool for achieving this contemporary affect is ‘passionate work’.

Discussing the concept of affective labour, Michael Hardt maintains the potenza emphasis of the autonomist Marxist tradition, by seeing possibilities for subversion and for the creation of new forms of sociality, in effect glimpsing an alternative to capitalist rationality, through this kind of work (Hardt 1999). He acknowledges the fact
that affective labour is, and has been, significantly gendered and associated with women’s activities. Hardt defines the idea of immaterial labour as part of the ‘production of services that result in no material and durable good’, but instead ‘immaterial goods such as knowledge or communication’ (Hardt 1999, p. 10). While he uses immaterial labour interchangeably with affective labour, it is the latter that leads him to consider the realm of ‘maternal activities’. Hardt comments that increasingly forms of labour entail elements of care, or emotion, and that these labour practices have the capacity to produce ‘collective subjectivities’ that could contest the formidable power of contemporary capitalism. In effect this is where Hardt extends the General Intellect to the kind of work usually performed by women. Hardt is here pinpointing features within the new expansive service economy (where even manufacturing is envisaged as a service) that rely on such high degrees of communication as well as informatics, that this has the possibility for an overflow of sociality and a force for transformation. Because affective labour is now in a ‘dominant position in the contemporary informational economy’, so also is this possibility all the more significant. There is the rise of a communications and information led economy, with the consequences that brings for labour, now in effect disaggregated, dispersed beyond the factory gates into the field of everyday life, and disorganized. Despite this, there is a potential for new forms of autonomist collective action, often emerging from unpaid or low-paid domestic work. In this regard Hardt looks at the biopolitics of female agricultural workers in India, mostly female, and the whole realm of care work and domestic labour in advanced capitalism, which under the influence of feminism acquired a political significance. On the one hand capitalism has never before made such extensive use of the ‘manipulation of affects’, which entails ‘human contact’ and proximity, a kind of tactility and corporeality in everyday working situations, while on the other hand this kind of labour traditionally associated with women has the possibility of producing what he calls (inverting Foucault) a ‘biopolitics from below’. Capitalism is now organized so as to produce experiences that offer a sense of ‘well-being’ and that promise states of ‘excitement, passion and even community’.

But the joyful-excitement factor, generated through the manipulation of affects, for which the mostly female workforce is trained, can too easily be seen as embryonic of some new radical politics of affect. Hardt restricts his references to feminism to family work or the care sector, there is no sense of what a new feminist
labor when feminism is cast aside (this author acknowledges that ‘gender’ was ‘outside the scope’ of her work). The danger then lies in the newly capacious concept of the precarious proletariat of post-Fordism that permits fashion models who command vast daily fees for their labour being seen as part of this expanded class (or multitude) for the reason that their work is often casual and insecure. Reflecting the all-comers style of Florida’s ‘creative class’ this puts models like Kate Moss in the same bracket as low-paid, female care workers who also perform emotional labour in their daily duties with elderly people suffering dementia. In short the renewed current of Marxist autonomist thought, when directed to normatively gendered work such as fashion modelling, without the presence of a strong feminist perspective, can lead to a confusingly celebratory account that is unable to differentiate among the harshly hierarchical divisions within the expansive field of immaterial labour.

Emma Dowling redresses this weak reading of affective labour through an auto-ethnography of her own time spent working both full-time and part-time in an expensive restaurant where staff were trained to adjust their smiles according to the exactly measured space between themselves and the customers (Dowling 2007). This viewpoint foregrounds the management of emotions and the cultivation of their specific tonality according to the training manuals and handbooks provided by the employer. It recounts the specific techniques deployed such as the ‘mystery diner’ to test the staff on their adherence at all times to the elaborate protocols of welcoming and charming the customers with light conversation. Dowling is sceptical about the claims made by Hardt and Negri and others regarding the possibilities for resistance among immaterial labourers. In her years on the restaurant floor or at front of house she sees little scope for labour organization, and resistance hardly goes beyond the kind of micro-strategies that de Certeau labelled ‘poaching’, in this case a chef illicitly cooking restaurant food for a fellow worker. This is a classic example of new managerialism requiring staff to bring their own intelligence and their personalites to the job, creating a relaxed and enjoyable ‘dining experience’. Dowling was encouraged to entertain the guests as though they were personal friends, taking care to order a taxi home should someone become the worse for wear from drinking too much. ‘Affect is therefore something required of staff, a fundamental condition of the job; it is also, as Hochschild argued in her study of cabin crew, something that must be sincere, the waitress has to be able to convey her genuine enjoyment in what she is doing, she has to demonstrate ‘pleasure in work’ (Hochschild 1984). This deployment of affect is also, contrary to Hardt and Negri, something that can be measured in the calculation of value, since wages can be kept low if service charges and tips are high enough to compensate the restaurant staff for more minimal take-home pay. Dowling also points to rigid hierarchies among the paid staff with the more elegant and educated staff mingling with the guests as waiting staff and the kitchen workers, often from migrant backgrounds, more likely to be out of sight and not entitled to the benefits of the tips and service charges. A more extended feminist analysis would have paid attention also to the recruitment policies in restaurants like these, which seek out slim and beautiful and immaculately groomed young women for this kind of role, such that they reflect the quality of the goods on offer in much the same way as the sales assistants in luxury haute-couture fashion boutiques are required to embody the brands in their personal style and body image. Here, too, where so many assistants work on commission, personal charm, intelligence and savoir faire work to maximize the profit margin and depress wages in favour of individualized competition among the workforce in the bid to sell. The need for a feminist analysis is not reduced simply because in jobs such as these it is nowadays just as likely that handsome and well-dressed young men will also be appointed to the sales floor or restaurant space. On the contrary, a feminist account would fully investigate the specific deployments of gender attributes and the extent to which sexual hierarchies are thereby maintained.6

Gender Performativity at Work

‘Passionate work’ can be understood within the terms used by Donzelot in his account of pleasure in work as a force that acts to reduce the likelihood of labour organization, in this case specifically for young female subjects in post-feminist times who are expected, or normatively required to participate in waged labour (Donzelot 1996). A desirable job becomes part of the panoply of attributes by which cultural intelligibility is acquired. In a context where creativity is a dispositif for instigating a new labour regime marked by self-enterprise, the idea of work corresponding to one’s inner dreams or childhood fantasies also banishes, to some separate realm entirely, the idea of organized labour (despite the unionization of white-collar work in the last decades). Passionate work is then inherently individualistic and conservative. It is identifiably ‘girlish’ and enthusiastic, a trait or mode of behaviour and
The Gender of Post-Fordism

demeanour associated with the heroines of Jane Austen whose ‘opinions are all romantic’ (Austen quoted in Campbell 1987, p. 54). Colin Campbell has considered the shift away from Max Weber’s Protestant Ethic, which, with the rise of consumerism, is transformed into a ‘romantic ethic’. I offer a further transposition in the direction of a (feminized) romantic ethic of production, rather than consumption. The Romantics, Campbell reminds us, glorified individualism as uniqueness and creative genius, and the passionate disposition with which romanticism was associated elevated imagination and ‘other-worldliness’. When translated into the context of the current discussion, these traits can be understood as indicating a disregard for matters of the monthly salary in favour of a bohemian anti-economy, which in turn can have the effect of permitting low pay or wage stagnation to prevail (Bourdieu 1993; Adkins and Devers 2014). Young women have been compelled to succeed in school and in further or higher education in the last fifteen years or so, within a political vocabulary dominated by the values of neoliberal thinking. The post-feminist masquerade instructs its subjects on how female bodies are expected to appear in the office-space or design studio (such as the ‘fashionable’ London publishing house where the fictional character Bridget Jones is employed) (Fielding 1996; McRobbie 2008). The professional field of work most closely aligned with this passionate dispositive is the fashion industry. The naïve enthusiasm of the intern character named Andrea Sachs in the film titled The Devil Wears Prada shows both the meaning of passionate work as a young woman’s romantic quest for job satisfaction, and the process by which, through emulating her colleagues, she learns how to make up and dress in the required style of post-feminist masquerade. (Expressions of almost ecstatic enthusiasm for internships in the fashion sector are familiar to many academics whose students are often eager to find work, despite awareness of long hours and almost no pay. Internships can represent the summation of dreams for young women, even when they are counselled against willing self-exploitation.)? Three recent studies reflect the ‘intimate’ relationship that young women have with fashion; in each case there is a similarly intense attachment to the creative work I first encountered when studying the working lives of young London-based fashion designers in the mid 1990s (Arvidsson et al. 2009; Bill 2012; Larner and Molloy 2009; McRobbie 1998). Bill’s study of fashion students points to exceptionally high levels of investment in the fashion labour process. Like the designers I interviewed in the mid 1990s, Bill’s respondents happily work through the night in preparation for a show (McRobbie 1998). As they say, ‘we were working crazy hours’. In a similar vein, the Milan survey undertaken by Arvidsson et al. focuses explicitly on labour conditions in Italian fashion, with 67 per cent of the respondents being female, 60 per cent being degree-holders, and with an average age of thirty-three. Arvidsson et al. show how, despite low earnings (with those under twenty-five barely taking home 500 euros a month), and with a long hours culture built into the jobs, still the young women expressed love for the jobs and for the opportunity to learn new skills and to take part in some of the ‘buzz’ of the glamorous fashion world in Milan, including parties and events. As the authors suggest, ‘Passion it appears has become a means of production, systematically promoted and put to work as part of the institutional framework within which brand values are produced’ (Arvidsson et al. 2009, p. 18). Larner and Molloy offer a persuasive feminist analysis of established women designers in the emerging New Zealand fashion sector where there has been government support for this home-grown creative industry, which in turn provides the wardrobes for ‘other busy working women’ now active as wage earners in the New Zealand economy. These designers struggle to keep their enterprises afloat, and to some extent their excessive enthusiasm also functions to justify the sheer effort needed to keep going. The question confronting these feminist authors is: what does it mean for women to become entrepreneurial actors? They are torn between previous feminist scholarship, with its emphasis on female employees rather than on small-scale employers, and the new questions thrown up for feminist social science when the work landscape is now littered with self-entrepreneurial practices. Where are these to be located in the divide between capital and labour? Must we consider these women to be hard-driven would-be capitalists, prepared to exploit their own employees and interns? Or ought feminist scholarship now to be more receptive to women’s need to self-entrepreneurialize? The authors seem ambivalent, seeing some expression of anxiety on the part of these designers manifest in their collections, which reflect the angst and tensions of ‘gendered neoliberal subjectivity’.

One way of resolving this problem as to how one approaches, sociologically, the category of the newly self-employed, is to take into account those factors to which I have referred throughout the book so far, an expanded new middle class propelled into entrepreneurial activity through their training and within the wide remit of the creativity dispositive, many of whose subjects may otherwise be working within the long post-industrial shadow of unemployment or else of
under-employment. Alongside this is the point made by Lazzarato, which is that those who in the past may have been ‘workers’ are frequently nowadays entrepreneurs.

I pose the idea of passionate work being a distinctive mode of gender re-traditionalization (as defined by Adkins) whereby the conservatism of post-feminism re-instates young women’s aspirations for success within designated zones of activity such as creative labour markets, which then becomes spaces for the deployment of highly normative femininity such as ‘girlish enthusiasm’, which can be construed as a willingness to work all hours for very little pay in the hope of gaining a foothold in the field of work (Adkins 2002). This would imply that the idea of passionate work requires a more forceful feminist critique than has been available so far. One location from which a critique emerges, is from the précarité movement, which has creative labour as a central platform for new modes and styles of political activity and campaigning. As already argued in the previous chapter, this debate in turn hinges on the idea of post-Fordism as it touches upon the lives and work expectations of arts, humanities and creative graduates. Adding a feminist perspective means seeing that creative labour market participation in the post-Fordist economy marks both the summation of changes brought about by feminism, and its limits. This movement into work is overseen or managed by a regime of femininity, which addresses its subjects as aspirational and relatively unanchored by ideas of class, particularly of being, or having been working class. Work for women, even in a call centre, has come to stand for equality achieved. Adhering to ideals of normative femininity within a framework of paid work, ensures a kind of delivery into a world less tainted by the social realities of class and inequality. By in effect marrying her work, having devoted so much romantic energy into finding the right job, rather than the right man, the woman can uplift herself into a relatively undesigned middle-class social category. Landing in such a space, let us say as a visual merchandiser, she is confronted with changes being wrought upon the middle classes, the scale of which pitches it into a risk class status.

Isabell Lorey makes the argument that precarization is now a dominant mode of biopolitical governmentality, one that affects not just the already marginal or low qualified workforce, but everyone (Lorey 2015). For Lorey, contemporary post-Fordism is synonymous with precarization. In contrast, my focus in this book is on the active production of a young middle-class stratum of people, by means of decisive governmental interventions exercised within the apparatuses of education and training, for whom creativity is both a passport into desirable or even passionate work, and an instrument of capture, the cost of which is the removal of historic forms of protection and security. In undertaking such an expansion of the middle classes and by providing training for this new creative occupational grouping, governmentality is pre-empting discord and social unrest. By these means there is an extension of the new (self-)managerialism already for decades established inside employment, outwards into the realm of self-employment. This way creativity comes to serve as a precise instrument for labour reform. For young women, achieving a degree and finding a job in the media, or in an art gallery, is a guarantor of middle-class status, if not comfortable middle-class existence and economic security. Bearing in mind what the ordo-liberals said about the aim to de-proletarianise society we could see creative young women today as exemplars of this process. However, economic insecurity and having to learn to live on freelance contracts does not eradicate significant differences between the middle-class precarious young women artists and creatives and those women who have much less possibility for mobility and for whom aspiring to a dream job is a hopeless endeavour. While for the working-class young women who are childless and thus have the option of working in clubs in Ibiza as dancers or as bar staff, and thus are able to become mobile in this particular kind of way, their counterparts who are single mothers at home and trapped on a housing estate, have no such opportunities. If reliant on benefits, such young women are stuck and shamed for this incapacity to become mobile through various media-led moral panics.

Lorey, in the spirit of Hardt and Negri’s understanding of communist impulses, and taking their remarkably prescient ideas about new political formations based on events and on non-homogeneous singularities into account, understands the general condition of precariousness as a starting point for struggle. Following the earlier account provided by Rodriguez (2008, p. 390) on the Spanish feminist Precarías a la Deriva group, Lorey describes the solidaristic activities of these young Spanish women, mostly students, unemployed graduates and artists, who set about trying to forge connections with other low-paid precarious female workers across the city, while also gathering extensive knowledge about what it means to be a precarious female worker today. Like others influenced by the autonomist writing, Lorey embraces the idea of flight or exodus as a practice of struggle. I also have signalled the Enes of flight, modes of political organization such as those developed by the
European précarité movement, but more a matter of hairline politics often reflected through processes of inter-generational relations and memory. Lorey sees the potenza of going away and starting something new, echoing Virno through the idea of exodus. This seems to suggest exploring and inventing ways of living within a new political imaginary. It could mean, for example, leaving the parental home and moving into a squat as a way of avoiding the ‘rent gap’ economy of contemporary urban housing. Nevertheless, if we stick with the image of the single mother of young children, who is also a subject legally bound to keep her children in school and provide for them accordingly, even if in poverty, this model of flight (to a squat or to a new location hundreds of miles away) finds its limits where care responsibilities, legally as well as ethically, restrict the options for movement. Such a woman would find it hard to organize a move out of (or flight from) the tower block to a nicer, healthier location for her children, and in addition she would immediately lose all her welfare payments or her workfare job. Lorey challenges Robert Castel’s critique of the reduction of welfare and benefits and the dismantling of welfare on the grounds that this was always a selective and protective system that only offered the male worker a family wage of benefits on condition that the wife and children remained reliant on him as the breadwinner. Where Castel looks to the re-constitution of welfare as a tool for social integration and a guard against chaos, Lorey rightly points to the exclusions embedded within these programmes based on protection for national populations only, making the point that new measures for protection would need to be for everyone. Following the lead from the various articles collected together by Grzimić and Reitsamer (2008), Lorey’s work reflects a shift in recent debates on creative economy so that they connect more directly with the anti-capitalist protests and the Occupy movement. Exemplifying what has been labelled ‘theoretical activism’, Lorey writes as an activist who, having charted the precariousness of creative labour, then reflects on the new political movements that have emerged from the recognition of the shared states of insecurity heightened as a result of the austerity measures adopted by governments in response to the banking crisis, national debt and the dramatic loss of value of the euro. This linking of young graduate populations faced with unemployment across Europe with the emergence of self-directed creative and entrepreneurial work, with this folding into new forms of political organization, is persuasive. The new waves of feminism, which have also taken root within this wide constellation of precarious activism, mark out alliances between queer, transgender and feminist politics, with an emphasis on the care work that women, including mothers, nannies and sex workers, find themselves expected to perform. This wide umbrella also extends to the global fashion industry and there has been a much more vocal critique of the new sweatshops as well as the exploitation of unpaid interns inside some of the world-famous design labels. This has in turn given rise to an awareness of the anomalies of passionate work leading to willing self-exploitation, especially where, in a sector-like fashion, those looking for a job in the industry are predominantly female. But understanding of this reputation for exploitation in fashion does not stop the flow of enthusiastic young designers and design-related personnel into the sector and, once inside the fashion world, even on a freelance contract, the corporate machine stifles dissent and takes steps to ensure a docile workforce, which is all the easier to do when contracts are temporary and much sought after.

I have argued that the creativity dispositif gains a particular momentum from the gendered practice of ‘passionate work’, which, particularly during the period of New Labour’s neoliberal turn, comes to be amplified and enhanced by the ‘post-feminist masquerade’. These together become a powerful force for engendering female conformity with the new work regime. If young women describe themselves as passionate about their work, this is often a youthful declaration announced at that point at which they are entering the labour market; however it promises with maturity something akin to the right kind of business disposition characterized by Sheryl Sandberg (COO of Facebook) in her best-selling Lean In (2013), where she encourages young women to remember at all times to ‘smile’, such that smiling (i.e. performing heteronormative femininity) becomes, once again, a prescribed way of progressing on the career track for women (Sandberg 2012). We are reminded here of Hochschild’s ethnographic analysis of US cabin crew staff training, where the young women were told to ‘work’ their smiles (Hochschild 1984). By these means the subjects of post-Fordist work, employment and self-employment, are required to be normatively feminine, with passionate work expressing the way in which this is exuded as a bodily style, an exuberant enthusiasm. That this kind of conduct has become so routine in upscale restaurants, in art galleries, on the flight deck, in the department store, and even, as Tatjana Turanskyj’s film Eine Flexible Frau (as referred to in the Introduction) shows, the call centre, makes it all the more surprising that Hardt and Negri and the other theorists of post-Fordism and affective labour so overlook the dominance of women’s
work and the attempts in these labour markets to re-traditionalize
gender as a de-politicizing containment strategy. In these circum-
stances being a career girl is something young women are both con-
gratulated for and required to express gratitude for. Despite the
decades of feminist struggles for workplace equality, young women
entering the now precarious world of work are nonetheless expected
to be beholden.

5

Fashion Matters Berlin:
City-Spaces, Women’s Working Lives,
New Social Enterprise?

Introduction

It must be clearly stated that an assessment of nationwide development
trends shows that the cultural and creative industries are not going to
be a driving force for the creation of traditional jobs.

Creative Industries in Berlin, Wozseireit 2008

In this chapter I introduce the results of research into the scene of
small-scale fashion designers in Berlin (using qualitative methodolo-
gies including semi-structured interviews, observational visits and
specially arranged research events) and I also take this as an occasion
to reflect further on those points at which the forms of address of the
creativity dispositif come into contact with living subjects. In Berlin
we find both a stronger, more vocal antipathy to the business regime
of fast fashion, so-called luxury fashion and the big brands, on the
part of producers, in favour of an auteurist outlook and we also see
that the programmes emerging from the ideas of new creative economy
as overseen by the Berlin Senate (and also at national level), though
increasingly driven by a neoliberal agenda, remain strongly inflected
by social democratic thinking. The reality of the need for public
sector support at key points in creative careers is recognized and
acknowledged on the pages of the various official reports. The vocab-
ulary of the business school is less apparent in the everyday debates
among those who administer and oversee the creative sector in the
city, and this means that, while constantly under pressure to become
both more commercial and less reliant on subsidy of any type, the