15

"Hopeful Work" and the Creative Economy

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Introduction

This chapter considers what might be described as "actually existing creativity" as it is revealed through scholarship on work in the creative industries. The processes and practices of cultural, creative, and artistic production have, as the chapter illustrates, long been a subject of academic curiosity. This interest has been given particular impetus by the policy developments of the last three to four decades in the countries of the Global North. Here, "creativity" and, by extension, creative forms of labour have been identified as strategically significant solutions to the perceived problems of contemporary economic life—to the extent that the economy itself has been nominated as "creative". The place of *work* in these developments has been, as Banks and Hesmondhalgh (2009) identify, rather ambiguous. The policy imaginary has largely revolved around the idea that creativity, as a synonym for innovation and led by the creative industries themselves, has unleashed much-needed dynamism into sluggish post-industrial economies. However, the kinds of jobs created in these economies and their ability to underpin and sustain the lives of the workers engaged with them have been the subject of much debate, as the creative economy has also come to depend on and stand for a precarious and exclusionary labour market.

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The promotion of the creative industries as drivers of economic growth and urban regeneration is now a well-established strategic policy priority building from the influential insights of Florida (2002) and the accompanying valorization of the "creative class" as a broad and expanding category of contemporary worker. Accompanying these developments has been a policy-inspired process of definition and measurement conceived to gauge the contribution of the creative economy to the broader economy. In the UK, this strategy involves distinctions between creative occupations, the creative industries, and the creative economy (DCMS, 2016). Jobs in this latter category include all those which take place within what are labelled as the creative industries including those that might not be designated as "creative" themselves (e.g. an accountant in an advertising agency) combined with those jobs which might be "creative" but might be taking place in other industries (e.g. a marketing executive in an accountancy firm). The general tendency of this form of classification, and the choices of which industries to include or not as *creative,* is to over-inflate the overall figure. The inclusion of "IT, software, and computer services" as the single largest such category demonstrates this. As Andrew Ross remarks, the discovery of the relative value of the creative sector when strategically summed in this way was something of a godsend to the incoming UK Labour government in 1997. "Unlike Bevan's coal and fish or Thatcher's North Sea Oil, creativity was a renewable resource, mostly untapped: every citizen had some of it, the cost of extraction was minimal and it would never run out" (Ross, 2009, p. 25). It is a formulation that has proven to be especially resilient, and by 2014, the British Department of Culture, Media, and Sport was able to report that "total creative" employment in the UK amounted to some 2.8 million jobs, meaning that some 8.8% of jobs in the UK were dependent on the creative economy. For all the political utility, especially among cultural policymakers themselves, of being able to make this kind of claim, such a figure gives a good indication of the extent to which creative labour has moved in recent decades from the relative margins to the strategic centre of economic life.

With this shift as its starting point, this chapter proceeds with a summary of the terms of the debates within research on creative work. These debates are summarized in relation to various claims and counterclaims about what creative work is imagined to be and what researchers have found to be its reality. Emerging from these debates is a conception of creative work as a kind of work with distinctive characteristics—and these are explored in subsequent sections. First through elaboration on the role of "hope" in creative work, drawing on both nineteenth-century conceptions of hopeful work (Morris, 1888), especially associated with artistic and creative forms of production,

and their transformation into twenty-first-century "hope labour" (Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013) in the context of highly competitive and unstable markets for labour in the digital economy. This forms the basis for a conclusion which tries to identify and preserve in the aspiration for creative work, for all the challenges that researchers have established in relation to it, a kernel of alternative rationalities which might form the basis for escape from the expediency of contemporary strategic economic and cultural policymaking and for re-emphasizing the place of creativity in debates about "good" work.

Creative Work in Context

The contemporary interest in creative work as it underpins the rhetoric of the creative economy is preceded by a more established scholarly concern with the mysteries of *artistic* production and their relation to other forms of production or, more prosaically, with the differences between artistic work and other forms of work. One powerful recurring theme of discussion in this area is whether artistic work can really be thought of as work at all. Marx contended that the development of industrial capitalism led to a break between the forms of work needed to sustain oneself (e.g. to provide for food and shelter) and the creative activity related to the forms of work associated with an essential human "species-being" (Marx, 1973). In this light, the forms of creative expression associated with artistic production can easily be understood as the opposite to, or even as the antidote to the forms of work organization which dominated in the industrial age. One powerful story that underpins the very emergence of the creative economy itself in the late twentieth century, as elaborated by Ross (2009), is its relation to a more general *revolt against work* from both organized labour and from abiding critical scholarship in management in which the monotonous drudgery of the Fordist workplace, whether it was the large-scale factories or the bureaucracies of the mid-twentieth century, was increasingly imagined as, depending on one's position, de-humanizing and/or unproductive. Creative, artistic labour, by contrast, with its promise of self-expression became, in this story, an element of a new spirit of late twentieth-century capitalism and a potential harbinger of new work ethics (Banks, 2007; Heelas, 2002). The "artist" came to embody this revolt. Subsequent research has revealed that this promise remains unfulfilled in the early twenty-first century, but specific scholarship on creative labour has also helped shed some light on its mysteries, through focused attention on questions of *definition* and through empirical reflection on the *experience* of creative workers.

Perhaps the most established empirical tradition explicitly concerned with creative labour emerges from work in what has been termed the "production of culture perspective" on cultural work emerging from US sociology in the 1970s. Taking empirical or historical analysis of the processes of cultural production as its starting point, this work had a broader ambition to apply insights into processes of change associated with the philosophy of science to questions of cultural production (Peterson, 1976; Peterson & Anand, 2004). Among its many contributions, this tradition of work was concerned with demystifying creative production and decentring the role of the individual artist and their characteristics or traits. Instead, it emphasized the extent to which artistic work emerges from collective and collaborative forms of endeavour and from social, technological, and regulatory influences (Coser, Kadushun, & Powell, 1982; White & White, 1993). This is achieved through focus on the various institutional and organizational contexts—Howard Becker's *Artworlds* (2008)—from which cultural products emerge and the forms of *work* performed in them. Important here is attention to the designation of the process of artistic production as artistic or creative or not. As Becker describes it,

> Artworlds typically devote considerable attention to trying to decide what is and isn't art, what is and isn't their kind of art, and who is and isn't an artist; by observing how an art world makes those distinctions rather than trying to make them ourselves we can understand much of what goes on in that world. (Becker, 2008, p. 36)

This is an important move in understanding creative work. In shedding light on the more diffuse and dispersed processes of creativity, this insight—and other cognate work in the sociological tradition such as Bourdieu on the field of cultural production (Bourdieu, 1993) and with the concept of the cultural intermediary (Bourdieu, 1984)—opens up a space in which there is a logic to the expansive definition of work in the creative economy that is so attractive to policymakers. It also, though, obscures what is actually distinctive about creative work—including the significance of the aesthetic and symbolic—and collapses important distinctions between different types of work within the creative industries themselves and between these industries and others.

This problem of definition is considered by the work of Pierre-Michel Menger (1999, 2014) which has done much to elaborate and clarify the distinctiveness of creative work by focusing on artistic labour markets. These are based on a re-imagination of labour not as a disutility, cost, or sacrifice to be endured but as a "vector of individual accomplishment" (Menger, 2014, p. 8).

A primary characteristic of such markets is *uncertainty* and therefore rational economic agents seeking to minimize uncertainty should avoid or be wary of such work. Instead, for Menger (1999), and for other recent reviews exploring this phenomenon (Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Oakley, 2009), a persistent characteristic of the market for artistic labour is *over*-supply of aspirant workers. We reflect on some reasons for this later, but for Menger, uncertainty is both a result of this over-supply and a precondition of work in this sector. Uncertainty in creative work is contrasted with the routine and predictable outcomes of non-creative labour. It is, in other words, for those attracted to work in this sector, uncertainty that makes it *attractive*. Over-supply creates, at the same time, the kinds of increased levels of employment heralded as indicative of the success of the creative economy, such as those quoted above, and increased levels of unemployment, underemployment, unpaid work, as well as the kinds of strategic multi-jobbing required to first gain a foothold in and then generate a sustainable career within that economy.

This reflects, for Menger, another paradox of this labour market. On the one hand, there are low formal barriers to entry. Anyone can refer to themselves as an artist and there is no clear system of licensing or shared standards of professional quality in artistic labour markets, save those rather ephemeral and complex ones which emerge from either being promoted and certified by critics or resonating with the tastes of the public. On the other hand, success in artistic labour markets depends on extensive specialist training in order to refine essential techniques—the much vaunted 10,000 hours of practice (Sennett, 2008)—even though this training is not rewarded, as it tended to be in other organizations in the recent past—with a long-term relationship with an employer. While some forms of creative work (e.g. work in a symphony orchestra) hold the potential for this kind of relationship, for the most part, artistic work, even if conducted by highly skilled workers, tends to be characterized by project-based, short-term arrangements with a number of different employers, including, through the high frequency of the phenomenon of multi-jobbing, work in non-creative or artistic roles which are taken to support or supplement the artistic activity itself. This reflects both the over-supply of creative workers and the general uncertainty of cultural production, in either its commercial or publicly funded guises, such that firms and organizations within this sector are disinclined to take risks beyond investment in short-term projects or in proven performers. In this way, the attraction of creative work in providing autonomous, non-routine routes to personal fulfilment and expression is undermined by the reality of insecurity and low, even non-existent wages. Individuals who might be willing to take and endure risk meet organizations who need to be risk averse to survive. Menger again

observes that creative workers tend to receive significantly lower levels of pay than professionals in other industries with equivalent levels of training and that the artistic labour market is defined by significant wage inequality.

Both the high levels of risk and the low levels of pay seen in these labour markets imply alternative reasons for engaging in creative work. Menger identifies notions of vocation or calling as providing such a rationale, such that doing a job that one loves provides a kind of compensation for the lack of material reward. The ability to endure such conditions, though, might not be equally spread in a population. Menger concentrates in particular on the relationship between certain types of creative careers and the life course. With age and financial and caring responsibilities, it might be that workers in this labour market become less able or willing to endure riskiness as they get older, making them exit the market completely or move into areas providing more stability (e.g. from performing to teaching). Such pressures, together with the bulimic modes of working evident in the creative industries, have been identified as central to the gendered patterning of the creative workforce (Conor, Gill, & Taylor, 2015). Recent empirical research into the acting profession in the UK has identified how social class also structures success in this labour market (Friedman, O'Brien, & Laurison, 2017) The challenges of the creative labour market are more easily met by workers with the ability to draw on networks established through the experience of training, for example, to enable access to a broader range of employment opportunities. Going to the "right" university or academy helps provide these networks. Access to the financial resources, through family or spousal sources, to sustain oneself "between" jobs also allows the passion or vocation to forge a life in the creative industries to be more readily realized over a longer term.

These tendencies for labour markets in the creative industries to be precarious and exclusionary trouble the optimistic conception of creative work as an antidote to work. Analysts from the autonomous Marxist tradition have been especially attentive to and influential in debates about creative work and see in this precariousness potential for new forms of work organization. The symbolic economy depends on an increasing army of symbolic workers that extends beyond the traditional bourgeoisie—the "mass intellectuality" (Lazzarato, 1996, p. 132) Lazzarato describes. Thus, as highly educated, energetic, and creative young people find themselves condemned to the low-paid and insecure forms of work that have historically been assumed to be the lot of subordinate classes, precarity creates the conditions for new forms of solidarity and new bases for campaigns for secure and fulfilling forms of work (Gill and Pratt (2008) review and critique the contribution of this tradition of thought to understanding creative labour). At the same time, it seems as likely

for creative workers to be "new model workers" (Ross, 2009, p. 19), with elective affinities between the kinds of characteristics required for success in the art world—risk taking, resilience, an acceptance of short-term contracts or project work—being more general characteristics of any competitive, flexible, and entrepreneurial contemporary labour market—regardless of any specific expertise or skill in aesthetic or symbolic forms of production itself. McRobbie (2016), goes so far as to suggest that the creative industries provide a model for a "post-welfare" form of work in which workers entering these fields are expected—and increasingly expect themselves—to survive without the forms of support (through state or trades unions) available to the workers of the recent past. For all the apparent distinctiveness of the creative economy, its workers can be imagined as exemplifying a context in which the spread of entrepreneurialism and "get up and go" amongst an individualized workforce absolves the state from its responsibilities in managing economic prosperity, or at least of making the provision of good work a policy imperative. Such a position—and the ongoing supply of aspiring workers attracted to work in this realm of the economy—raises significant questions about the future of work in these industries and the motivations for work within them. The next section considers this through reflecting on perspectives which, despite the difficulties and challenges outlined earlier, sees in creative work the possibility of alternative rationalities.

From "Hopeful Work" to "Hope Labour"

As the earlier discussion has illustrated, two recurring themes in scholarship about creative work are its *difference* from other types of work and, relatedly, whether its characteristics make it qualitatively better, that is, more fulfilling, than other types of work. "Creativity" has been claimed for more general business or management practices—and incorporated into associated policy narratives—as a synonym for innovation. As Ross speculates, though, "However co-opted by management fads, the underlying desire for stimulating work in decent circumstances persists as a goal for nearly any employee. Could some of those hopes be realized through the elevation of creativity to a genuinely progressive industrial policy, one that is rooted in public health rather than private profit?" (Ross, 2009, p. 23) Hesmondhalgh and Baker's (2011) analysis of work in the three contemporary cultural industries lays out precisely what is at stake in this question in the context of debates about what constitutes "good" and "bad" work. The former includes reasonable, fair levels of pay, autonomy, convivial social relations at work, and the opportunity for

self-realization. These things are together related to the possibility of making products which are "good", either in and of themselves (i.e. aesthetically good) or contributing to some sense of the common good. Characteristics of the latter include poor wages, overwork, and high levels of risk, and, by contrast, engagement in the production of things which are of low quality and do not contribute to broader social well-being. Both kinds of work are at play in the cultural industries they describe but, importantly for Hesmondhalgh and Baker, the promise of the former kind of work is more than just gloss obscuring the harsh reality of the latter. As anyone who has attempted to teach aspirant creative workers about what scholarship on the cultural workplace has revealed about its complexities and challenges can attest, knowing the risks rarely dampens the enthusiasm for work in these sectors. How then to account for this continuing attraction? One concept, with a long-standing relation to questions of creative production, might help explain this: hope.

Before exploring its relevance to the discussion of creative labour, it is worth pausing to reflect on the ambivalent place of hope in critical scholarship. Research and theory in the critical tradition seeks to reveal the "hidden" machinations of power "behind the curtain" of apparently solid phenomena. We can see elements of this tradition in some of the phenomena explored by researchers into creative work, such as the myth of the individual creative genius, or the romanticization of creative work or the incorporation of creativity into the strategic goals of capital or the state. In this tradition, as Bennett (2011, 2015) has described, hope can be readily dismissed as a kind of naivety, lacking credible intellectual seriousness, and the important job of the analyst is to point out what we have missed or how we have been tricked. Bennett indicates this conception might be related to the grand failures of the optimism of the Enlightenment. In figures like Adorno and the Frankfurt School and their discussion of the apparently compromised scope of aesthetic production in the context of "the culture industries" (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1944), creative labour is at the very heart of this scholarly pessimism. In understanding the empirical experience of creative labour, though, as important as grand hopes for progress, are the forms of "little optimism" (Tiger in Bennett, 2011) which mediate everyday life. These are the forms of optimism which encourage people to work hard in the belief that their contribution might be rewarded or to plan for the future in romantic or family life. There are significant interrelations between grand scale hopes and these more personal versions. Here, there are resonances with Lauren Berlant's paradoxical conception of the "cruel optimism" (Berlant, 2011) which characterizes life in the advanced economies of the Global North. For Berlant, visions of the good life remain essential to provide rationales for everyday activities even though

the chances of disappointment or failure are high and known to be so. Having hope allows us to survive in conditions which seem to militate against it. Optimism is a survival strategy.

Hope, at both its macro and micro levels, is at play in debates about the creative economy. We might detect the hope of a gambler's punt in the identification of the creative industries by national and local policymakers as the solution to the regeneration of the post-industrial city. In relation to creative work itself, we might also detect hope in the army of young people who, as McRobbie describes, "cling on with more determination than ever to making a living in these alley-way micro-economies" (McRobbie, 2016, p. 34). For McRobbie, such forms of work represent "a line of flight"—they are mechanisms of escape including from the kinds of work opportunities of the recent past. Young people are fleeing from the perceived drudgery of "the rat race", of the "organizational" work ethics of their parents' generation and instead embracing forms of work which at least contain the possibility of self-fulfilment or the pursuit of enthusiasms and the expression of passion. These kinds of choices, then, represent something of a radical refusal of other kinds of work: a motivation perhaps felt especially by the children of working-class parents able to access an expanded higher education system and invest work with some kind of promise of a better more fulfilled life than "just" getting by and progressing up a career ladder. Such notions of the grinding and unrelenting nature of factory or office life are as powerful in the contemporary imagination of work as any residue of a work ethic. Where McRobbie perhaps punctures this optimism is with the recognition that this attitude to work might also play into the hands of contemporary capitalism as the concern with self-fulfilment also contains the possibility of self-*exploitation*. There might still be a disciplinary commitment to fulfilling one's potential and "making it" that maintains a resonance for aspirational creative workers—but these young people are also demanding that work should be *fun*. In the unfolding experience of these demands, there might be more optimism than realism as the inequalities and iniquities of these forms of work become established, but it represents an emancipatory ideal.

There is a longer history of reflection on the relations between creative work and "good work". It can be found most clearly in the account of William Morris, founder of the arts and crafts movement which, with its preoccupations with the place of the aesthetic in shaping everyday life and work, perhaps provides a useful comparative analogy with the concerns of the contemporary economy. Morris' account takes us to the heart of the modern conception of work under industrial capitalism and shares many of the anxieties of theorists of the industrial revolution, such as Marx or, earlier, Adam

Smith, who saw in the transformations of this period, particularly those wrought by factory work, the spectre of de-humanization and alienation. Morris' influential essay (1888) distinguishes between *Useful Work* and *Useless Toil,* with most forms of work under conditions of industrial capitalism coming under the latter category—work which does not allow for the possibility of any kind of meaningful engagement or creative expression. It is a contrast which, for all the transformations in the contemporary workplace, and the gains of a century or more of organized labour struggles, still resonates. The anthropologist David Graeber (2013) makes similar distinctions in his account of the proliferation of professional, administrative, and management positions which continue to fill the gap between the promise of reduced work in late, technological capitalism and the reality of *over*work for many.

For Morris, hopeful work contained three key elements. First, hope of *rest*—a recognition, during work, that working time is not infinite and that time not working "must be longer than is merely necessary for us to recover the strength that we have expanded in working" (Morris, 1888, p. 3). This form of hope goes to the heart of distinctions between work and not work and the place of creativity within it. The bulimic work patterns—long hours of intensive, pressured activity punctuated by prolonged periods of underemployment—which have come to dominate accounts of the creative industries, might mirror the imagined manic creativity of an artist or writer in which completing the artistic *work* drowns out other aspects of life including those forms of work which are needed to materially provide for oneself. For the artist, such ways of working might be freely entered into, even welcomed and embraced, but they cannot be the basis for sustainable forms of good work without an accompanying understanding that they are not permanent. Second, there is hope of *product*. The organization of work could be oriented towards minimizing the feelings of alienation from the things that were being made that predominated in the factory. "It remains", Morris suggests, "for us to look to it that what we do really produce something, and not nothing, or at least nothing that we want or are allowed to use" (Morris, 1888, p. 3). Morris is clear that nature will not provide our material needs, and so some work is *necessary*, but the products of human labour should contribute something concrete to human nourishment. This links to the final element of hopeful work—the hope of some *pleasure* in work. For Morris, "nature will not be finally conquered till our work becomes a part of the pleasure of our lives" (Morris, 1888, p. 13), and the "hope of pleasure in our daily creative skill" (Morris, 1888, p. 4) contributes to this.

Hopeful work describes an idealized form of work in the late nineteenth century in the context of the ongoing decline of craft as a social institution

and its almost total replacement with machine-based, mass forms of production. There are elements of nostalgia in this vision, but the concept also includes utopian aspirations about what work might be in the future. The revival of the craft economy in the twenty-first century also suggests a place for this orientation to work in the present. As Luckmann describes, the re-emergence of craft work cannot be unproblematically celebrated—it reflects both the over-supply of creative workers and a re-individualization of risk in a post-welfare working landscape. It also, though, reflects as she describes it, "an active strategy of taking back the economy, largely on the part of women" (Luckman, 2015, p. 130). Craft, with its notions of immersion, self-management, care, and discipline in relation to the acquisition of skills, represents one element of an alternative politics of creative work (Banks, 2007) in which the self is affirmed rather than negated through the experience of the workplace. In Hughes' account of Birmingham craft jewellery designers, for example, makers place more value on the correct completion of the task, even spending time that might be considered irrational on perfecting designs, than on material reward. This privileging of the aesthetic over the economic is fundamental to what she describes as "hopeful economies" (Hughes, 2013). Such commitments are not just evidence of exploitation in precarious labour markets—they insulate cultural workers from their effects. They make the labour market livable and tolerable.

Keuhn and Corrigan's concept of "hope labour" (2013) perhaps suggests how far from this ideal the contemporary creative workplace has fallen in the labour market of the twenty-first century. This concept emerges from the analysis of bloggers and online reviewers working at the coalface of the contemporary digital economy (itself often conceptualized as a synonym for the creative economy). Here, workers work *in hope*—more often than not because they are working for free—providing content for various digital platforms but hoping that their work will be recognized and rewarded in the future. Hope labour represents "un- or under compensated work carried out in the present, often for experience or exposure, in the hope that future employment opportunities may follow" (Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013, p. 10). This is the hope of the pro-sumer, encouraged by the participatory rhetoric of contemporary modes of cultural production and taking advantage of the lower barriers to entry enabled by new technologies and changing organizational frameworks in the cultural industries to try out a career as a writer or journalist. Kuehn and Corrigan are keen not to dismiss these workers as mystified by or blind to the relations of this workplace. It is a form of labour which "functions because it is largely not experienced as exploitation or alienation" (Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013, p. 12). Moreover, the instrumental aim to add value to oneself in a competitive labour

market is, in their study, a secondary motivation for these proto-workers. Participation in these practices is understood as driven first by the "intrinsic pleasures of productive processes" (Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013, p. 10).

In this light, their work connects with the insights of Terranova on "free labour" and the recognition that the digital economy, at least in its emergence was, in part, a *gift* economy to which participants willingly donated their creative energies without the expectation of material reward. Such technologies might even have gained their appeal through the promise of *escape* from work—as an extension of the kinds of creative forms of "experimentation" unleashed by late twentieth-century consumerism. "In the over-developed countries", she suggests, "the end of the factory has spelled out the obsolescence of the old working class, but it has also produced generations of workers who have been repeatedly addressed as active consumers of meaningful commodities" (Terranova, 2013, p. 37). That labour is done for free is one element of this but as significant is the promise of freedom *from* labour implied by the active and enthusiastic participation in "the communities of social production" (Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013, p. 10) which web 2.0 technologies have developed.

There are ambiguities here, not least in the ways in which these forms of participation are harvested and monetized by platforms. Hope Labourers ultimately, "undermine the very labour market they aspire to enter by continually supplying it with individuals who are willing to work for nothing" (Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013, p. 20). At the same time, these platforms and practices create a powerful sense of possibility—a sense of empowerment, that "you can do it too" which is not insignificant in the imaginary of creative work. The question is perhaps whether the contemporary organization of creative work allows these kinds of hope to be sustained or whether, as these forms of unpaid work become seen as a necessary prerequisite for any kind of sustainable career in these industries, this is the very definition of cruel optimism. At the very least, if, as the policymakers of the mid-1990s believed, creativity was a renewable resource, then these platforms and the appetite for engagement with them seem to indicate one mechanism through which it has been successfully harnessed.

Conclusion: Keeping Hope Alive

Critical analysts of the workplace and the creative economy might see in the journey from "hopeful work" to "hope labour" evidence of the inevitable onward march of capital incorporating long-standing aspirations for more

equitable and fulfilling forms of work into ever more nuanced and sophisticated modes of exploitation. This is perhaps the compelling implication of the critique of the rebranding of creativity as a "perversion" of radical political demands for cultural democracy or a "semantic re-coding" of creativity as a synonym for entrepreneurship or innovation in business in ways which suit the strategic economic goals of policymakers (Raunig, Ray, & Wuggenig, 2011, p. 1). Notwithstanding this kind of incorporation, it remains the case that a key attraction of creative work for the still enthusiastic army of young people attracted to pursue work in the arts, cultural industries, and associated fields is precisely that it is *not* definitively shaped by these goals. Instead, such work remains associated with other forms of rationality, with aesthetic forms of self-expression, with pleasure and passion.

Scholarship on creative work remains framed by the distinction between its similarity to and distinction from other kinds of work. This has been most effective in de-privileging the sacred role of the artist in the production of culture and recognizing that art emerges from collective processes as much as individual geniuses. On the one hand, this democratizes creativity and gives momentum to claims that it is not an innate and exclusive property of special people but a trait which can be cultivated and expressed as part of a vision of the good life. On the other hand, such a discovery, and the broadening out of definitions of what "counts" as creative work also opened up the space in which the diffuse definitions of work evident in the expedient inflationary measurement of the creative economy have thrived, allowing jobs which are neither good nor fulfilling to be designated as creative. The "mysteries" of creativity in work remain somewhat opaque here, but the practices of those engaged in the creative economy—their ability and willingness to "tough it out"—are transferable to the more general world of post-Fordist, post-industrial, post-organized labour work, now increasingly re-imagined as "creative" itself. Intriguingly researchers, such as those referred to earlier, who have looked at the actual experience of creative work, even in conditions which might appear to be fundamentally exploitative and precarious, seem to identify and emphasize the survival of more hopeful elements of this work too. Focusing on and cultivating what is hoped for might be a productive basis for understanding creative work as a model for other work.

Research into the creative labour market continues to affirm that access to creative work is uneven, mirroring broader divisions in society. The contemporary craftworkers in Hughes' hopeful economies are able to draw down financial support from other types of work and from spouses in other jobs or professions. Even access to the time and technology to engage in the kinds of hope labour evident in the digital economy are, despite the inclusive rhetoric

of web 2.0 technologies, not equally accessible to all. Morris' hopeful work, and the characteristics associated with it, provides a useful lens through which to examine the limitations of the contemporary imaginary of creativity and work in general. Debates about rest, product, and pleasure have the potential to remind us of quite fundamental questions about what work is and what it is for, at a time when these things might be once again in flux.

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