

be reative



Angela McRobbie

Be Creative

Be Creative

Making a Living in the New
Culture Industries

Angela McRobbie

polity

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Introduction: Pedagogical Encounters and Creative Economy

For more than a decade now I am generally, on Wednesday afternoons through the Spring term, sitting in my office from midday onwards, seeing the Master's students to discuss their research dissertations. What I have seen unfolding in front of my eyes during these supervisions is a microcosm of the new creative labour market, taking into account also the impact of the Euro-crisis and the global financial recession since 2008. The lives and times of these young people reflect many of the themes in this book. In my university department and across the institution we offer a whole assortment of one-year Master's courses. These include Media and Communications, Brand Development, Transnational Media, Culture Industries, Cultural and Creative Entrepreneurship, Gender, Media and Culture and so on. Students have to pay fees and there are only a handful of bursaries, but this does not mean our constituency is from the international wealthy classes; but rather they are the children of the middle classes from various countries across the world. The parents are, as far as I can surmise, teachers, civil servants, small publishers, doctors, sometimes themselves from the arts and creative worlds. The students come from Brazil and from Portugal, from Bulgaria and Lithuania, from Russia, Germany, Italy and Spain, from Greece and Turkey, from Croatia, Montenegro and Slovenia, from Poland and from the Middle East. They also come from China, Korea and from southeast Asia. To enter the courses they must reach a high level of competence in English to ensure they are able to write four 6,000-word essays and a 12,000-word dissertation in line with the Bologna regulations for Master's courses across EU countries. We also have a

sprinkling of UK students and some from other countries, including those above, but who have been resident in the UK for many years and have already completed a BA in a UK university.

Typically the students are in their twenties – often their mid to late twenties. They are very dedicated, exceptionally hard working. Many have done a few years work at least following their first degree. From southeast Asia, Japan and Korea it is more common that they have actually held down a job as a journalist or brand manager or fashion stylist and, having saved up enough money, and with some help from their parents, are taking a year off to improve and update their academic skills. This entire cohort has a good deal of work experience behind them, which can range from events management in Athens, to working behind the counter in a fashion chain like *Zara* in Madrid, to having an internship on a women's magazine, to working in a gallery in Istanbul. Of the thirty or so whom I usually get to know well, there are usually two or three planning an academic career and hoping for success in gaining a place to study for a PhD and funding to go with it. So, with this as a backdrop, part and parcel of my own working life, what are the sociological themes that can be extrapolated from these actual pedagogic encounters?

The students are disproportionately female and child-free. They are part of a global demographic of young women determined to live a 'life of one's own' as Ulrich Beck in his treatises on individualization processes, put it. What is not on their minds at all is the question of motherhood and the idea of grappling with a career and children. And given the adverse circumstances of the labour market for well-qualified young women like these, they are stretching out the training period even longer than might have been the case in the past, for the reason that nowadays training can itself be considered a job of sorts. It is anticipative of gainful employment or risk-laden self-employment. There is both the need constantly to enhance their CVs in order to have any chance in the job market, as well as the long-term need to find a decently paid job. Many will consider the idea of self-employment or of setting up some sort of small creative business as a realistic option, not because young people like this are natural-born entrepreneurs, but because, when weighing up their options, this emerges as a hope for a more productive and perhaps exciting future (Neff 2012). There is a time-space stretch mechanism in place that in effect disallows consideration of motherhood as anything other than a very future prospect for the reason that mobility is also a defining feature of the career pathway. These young women envisage moving city and country even if the job contract is only for a year or two. This also militates against the idea of having children, since

maternity means having a more fixed abode, usually in proximity to extended family for help with childcare. On the one hand, being able to travel and fund themselves for a Master's course in London is of course a privileged position to occupy; on the other hand, there is also pressure to make good use of the expenditure and the students feel obligated to pay back to parents what has been borrowed; for this reason work takes precedence, and relationships occupy the second place in the agenda of 'life planning'. Work becomes akin to a romantic relationship. Feminism is relevant insofar as it analyses the gender inequities in the precarious career pathways into which these young women find themselves locked. But the immediate socio-economic environment militates against an ethos of solidarity and collectivity. Across several chapters of this book I ruminate on these issues, reflecting on the creative economy options for those who have children and need to stay put in a city like Berlin (the same could apply to other European cities), which is child-friendly, but with such a weak labour market that highly qualified mothers, now in their forties, have the hard choice of looking for a job, perhaps in London and commuting, or remaining *in situ* and opting for some form of creative entrepreneurship. On the one hand there is a sheer determination to make something of a working life and to come up with a viable business plan; on the other hand such conditions as these also precipitate a sense of acute crisis of identity for a generation of young women who sought gender equality through acquiring what once were the risk-proof kind of qualifications linked with degrees and post-graduate training. Unfailingly the spreadsheet mindset of the life-plan, such a recurrent feature of neoliberal everyday life, shows itself to be implausible. The feature film by the feminist director Tatjana Turanskyj titled *Eine Flexible Frau* (2010) reflects on this crisis condition from the viewpoint of an unemployed architect and single mother job-seeking in Berlin. The film shows vividly what is more often a hidden or deeply privatized dimension of creative labour anxiety, that is a spiral into alcoholism and despair. The woman who had, as the film's narrative suggests, been one of the rising talents of her profession, finds herself being scolded by friends for not using her unemployment time to devote herself more to her young son. One female friend, a fellow architect who has given up her job to stay home with the children, appears to have the upper hand since she has embraced the neoliberal ethos of what she calls 'team-work' with her husband who is, perhaps temporarily, now the breadwinner.¹ At the same time Greta's pain is offset by a deep love of the urban space, and an anger about its rapid gentrification and the selling off of plots of land for private gated-communities. The figure of Greta re-plays

debates about the female *flâneuse* as she adamantly inhabits the city's open-spaces such as the Tempelhof airport, or at the city limits where fields take over the landscape at Schoenefeld. Turanskyj is also re-telling the history of previous Berlin-based feminist and queer filmmakers such as Ulrike Ottinger who deliberately put female pleasures of the urban gaze at the heart of her cinematic practice. *Eine Flexible Frau* re-iterates some of the key moments in Ottinger's *Bildnis Einer Trinkerin* from 1980 but in this case by 2010 'the sky is not so blue'.²

What I observe during my Wednesday supervisions is something like a euphoria of imagined success, relatively untainted by a reality of impediments and obstacles in the creative labour market. The options are seen as either full-time employment or freelance self-employment, or indeed short-term jobs that entail moving from one project to the next. This new kind of working life introduces some dilemmas for feminist social scientists who must re-think the sociology of employment to engage more fully with entrepreneurial culture and with the self-employment ethos now a necessity for survival. It is hardly a choice in countries like Greece and Italy and Spain and for this reason I make the case later in the book that the current debate about cultural and creative economy, including the critique of neoliberalism from the perspective of the *précarité* movements that have sprung up in recent years, needs urgently to spend time on this topic of job creation: how to develop new forms of community and cultural economy, which produce some sort of income streams and which produce livelihoods allowing people to contribute to neighbourhood and locality, including taking care of children, the elderly and the vulnerable. The question will be how to finance activities that in the past were part of the public sector. How might it be possible to make a living from working with unemployed or 'at risk' youths in the community? How can social work be re-invented, aided and supported by the rise of the creative economy? Can the current discourse of social enterprise be re-inflected away from the individualistic rhetoric of charismatic entrepreneurs who 'want to make a difference' in favour of a more grounded or grass-roots approach to community-building? What would it mean to bring a feminist perspective to bear on social and cultural entrepreneurship in the light of the current crisis of unemployment for young people across and beyond the Euro-zone?³ What kind of new vocabulary can be developed to replace the seemingly stale or over-used terms of the grass-roots and the community and how can culture play a role in this re-imagination process? Arguably the European Commission has invested for many years in this kind of terrain. Through the huge range of projects it supports it has been possible for those experiencing forms of semi-employment

or interrupted under-employment nevertheless to maintain and update skills and to have a sense of self-worth in regions of high unemployment. Here too the vocabulary of self-entrepreneurship has a strong presence, as I show in the concluding chapter of this book, but it is modified, less shaped by the heroic vocabulary of enterprise associated with US Business Schools and more measured, reflecting the residual presence of social democratic elements within the Commission.

The second theme that emerges is that we see an upscaling (by degree conferment) of what in the past would have been considered vocational training or life-long learning. Smaller organizations, often from the so-called third sector, which in the past provided such training in the form of short courses, are gradually being squeezed out and replaced by the generic Master's undertaken in a university environment with the relevant accreditation process, which also carries the value of a degree rather than a certificate or diploma. This shift is acknowledged in the recent development of the ERASMUS Plus programmes supported by the European Commission. In effect, many different forms of youth training are now rolled into an umbrella of provision led by the university sector. It stands to reason, since only large universities can bear the risks, invest in technical infrastructure (e.g. computing and digital studios) and can have installed the complex accounting systems to make this kind of provision cost effective. Such a role also forces the universities to fulfil more fully the requirement to ensure employability, while also *de facto* enforcing the 'links with industry' agenda set by national governments.⁴ At a policy-level this upskilling dimension also appears to match the needs of the new creative economy, especially with the increasingly important role of social media and e-commerce. A key term here is training or *ausbildung* and, as I argue in this book, this is at the heart of the project of current governmentality that aims to transform the modern work regime. Training programmes ensure that the workforce is in a constant state of readiness (or employability) while also having their hopes pinned to the stars of the new economy. The word 'training' also has a long and honourable tradition within social democratic and this gives it a strategic value in terms of gesturing to some idea of social justice.

My Wednesday afternoons reveal two further elements, each of which throws light on the pathways of creative economies and the extent to which the university plays an increasingly central role in managing and overseeing this terrain. One element is the role of London as a global city and the detrimental impact this has for local and national job markets (Sassen 1991). One student in his thirties tells me how the Northern Italian fashion company he had

worked for as a sourcing manager was increasingly downscaling local manufacturers in favour of cheaper off-shore outfits now set up in Cambodia and Vietnam. His own job security was looking uncertain so, with savings and some support from his family, he took a risk and moved to London, where his wife, a fashion graduate, quickly found a job in the charity-shop sector. Midway through the Master's course, the young man was offered a job by a big fashion company sourcing suppliers in Italy, that is, doing exactly what he had been doing back in Italy, but premised on his now seemingly permanent location in London. He got the job on the basis of his know-how and contacts in the region where he had grown up and worked; he was interviewed for the job in Italian, by a team of Italians in London already working for the UK company, and he was pleased to be offered the post, despite the travel back and forth to Italy and the high cost of living, especially rental costs in London. This same pattern emerges across my cohort, including young women who had worked in publishing in Greece and Portugal but for whom the economic crisis, along with the decline in book sales, put their jobs at risk or made them disappear altogether. The possibilities for work became improved in the network environment to which they were exposed in London, including the chances for internships in companies already adjusting to the digital transformations in publishing. The same holds true for journalists coming from the world of magazine publishing. For students who have recently completed an undergraduate degree there is also the expectation of developing transferable skills. A student with a degree in Art and Technology from Denmark tells me that not seeing herself as a visual artist has led to a range of career options, especially with a Master's degree from London under her belt. 'I know exactly what is needed to undertake large-scale events management, such as what is entailed in staging a city fashion week,' she says. This raises inevitable questions about who can take such risks and those for whom it is quite impossible. Those who can somehow afford to live in London and who have the cultural capital and the time to access its dense creative networks. Those who are healthy and energetic enough to undertake a Master's while also doing an internship while working nights in a cocktail bar. In my observations this portfolio of weekly activities is quite normal. However, such a skewed global city job market has adverse consequences for those unable to be mobile, as well as for smaller cities across the UK. It is almost impossible to set up a new fashion business in the UK outside London, with any hope of survival, despite the large numbers of universities training students to a high level from the north of Scotland (Aberdeen) to the southwest corner of England

(Falmouth), the reason being the concentration of big brands in London and the powerful role their 'transaction rich networks' play in creating small-scale casual or part-time job opportunities even as sales assistants (Lash and Urry 1994). Micro-fashion enterprises need publicity and they need to be talked about by influential bloggers. The network is both virtual and live; people need to see and be seen out and about and smaller cities can only provide this infrastructure with a lot of government support and regional funding. It is not impossible to create this kind of fashion hub (Montreal and Berlin are good examples) but the spell of the fashion conglomerates is such that they need not look far afield; the expectation is that people come to them. Likewise, stores and retail spaces will only locate to cities where there are guaranteed high-income consumers. Therefore the pervasive inequality and competition that underpins the growth of the new creative economy at a time when the public sector is being dramatically shrunk reduces the capacity for poorer regions and cities to respond with long-term policies for job creation, and this means they are often looking for a quick fix and will seek image enhancement through bolstering the marketing and branding departments in the often forlorn hope of attracting investment from the big brands. The overwhelming power of the global cities insofar as they are home to major companies and in this case vast retail spaces, produces hugely imbalanced labour markets, not least in the creative economy, putting paid to Florida's ideas that smaller towns and cities can somehow create an infrastructure to attract the right calibre of talented people (Florida 2002). This means that a key question for consideration is how local economies can be developed separately from the agglomeration effect of the big brands and the job creation capacity therein.⁵

Another question arising from my Wednesday afternoons is that of pedagogy. 'Cultural studies', with its history in the UK to include the writing of Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall (adding to this Dick Hebdige and Paul Gilroy), has become a field with almost unlimited potential for what Gayatri Spivak referred to as the 'teaching machine'. One additional and unanticipated consequence of the idea of 'cultural studies' has been the immense commercial value emerging out of 'subcultural theory'. The pathway here could be traced through the idea of bricolage, 'cut ups' and the subversion of style, as theorized by Hebdige, finding its way out of the classroom or seminar room of the art school into the hands of the fashion designers, the graphic designers and communications graduates able to translate the ideas of the street and of 'authentic' working-class culture or even of revolt into the very stuff of collections, or for

the ‘edgy’ visual image of global labels such as Dior or YSL⁶ (Hebdige 1978). For many years I myself stopped teaching subcultural theory for this reason. The vocabulary could too easily be translated into a snazzy pitch. Instead what was needed was a meta-critique, one that, like the writing of Boltanski and Chiapello, could show how capitalism replenishes itself by conceding ground and by admonishing itself under the impact of the social or artistic critique now extended, as I would argue, to include a pop or subcultural critique (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005). In various articles dating back (in French) to the mid 1990s, these authors claim that what they call the artistic critique (an off-shoot of the student movement of the late 1960s, whose more political counterpart they label the ‘social critique’) is absorbed by media and creative practitioners in the commercial world such as advertising and it becomes part of their own professional vocabulary. In short they can use artistic or avant-garde theories of society, to bolster their careers in advertising. This suggests instead a wholesale absorption of the counter-cultural critique by capitalism in its post-Fordist phase. It also suggests that creative professionals are largely de-politicized and concerned only with their own self-advancement. The awkward reality is that the political leanings and affiliations of those working in the creative and cultural sector are so diverse as to make it difficult to draw any generalizations. Often professionals themselves have to bear the brunt of working against the grain of their own inclinations for the sake of an income in a highly competitive and difficult economic climate, architects being an obvious example but also actors and musicians. There is both co-option and critique across the cultural landscape. However there are also times of embedded conservatism and likewise periods of seemingly sudden politicization and organization. In this book I speak of the ‘Damien Hirst moment’ to refer to the former, while more recently in the aftermath of the Occupy movement there is a resurgence of activism. What has been unexpected is the way in which cultural studies has become the privileged conduit for this double and paradoxical movement of instrumentalization and politicization. The commercial value of what Sarah Thornton called ‘subcultural capital’ cannot be underestimated but this does not mean its field of influence is totally depleted of political value, despite my own past reservations in the classroom. In the course of this book I return to this dilemma. There is a further irony at the heart of the tradition of British popular culture, which is that what was being done or being made by young ‘creative practitioners’ – musicians, artists, graphic designers – typically from a working-class background and within the direct orbit of

the art school (e.g. The Beatles, Roxy Music, The Sex Pistols) provided the raw materials upon which writers like Dick Hebdige were able to develop such elaborate theoretical models. We would not be here without them, making such outstanding cultural artefacts. Stuart Hall et al. were right to emphasize that these were youth-culture offshoots of working-class culture, as Hebdige and Gilroy also emphasized the role of race and ethnicity as it intersected with these white class formations (Hall and Jefferson 1976). Such phenomena could not so easily come into being in countries like Italy or Germany where working-class culture did not have the same established place, one that in the UK had been gained through struggle. This leads Italian sociologists Arvidsson and Malossi to 're-read' youth subcultures retrospectively merely as 'effervescence' connected with the new consumption possibilities brought about by post-Fordism, where in contrast the original Birmingham CCCS work stressed the politics of working-class culture (Arvidsson and Malossi 2010). But for our purposes here the unexpected outcome of cultural studies is to have found itself canonized as a curriculum for the new creative economy, alongside and even conjoined with the more mainstream staple of business studies as it adapted itself to the needs of trainee artists and designers. When we bring these developments into the space of the new 'entrepreneurial university' it becomes clear how a good deal is at stake inside the 'teaching machine'. This does not mean that what we teach will inevitably merely shore up, replenish and re-invigorate the cultural agenda of contemporary capitalism. Instead we can put the teaching machine to work in order to interrogate how its own critical thought is taken on board and turned into an instrument for economic growth and renewal. In the context of the imperative to have 'industry links' this is perhaps totally predictable. And in fact such processes have long been the subject of attention by social theorists such as Bourdieu and Ulrich Beck under the heading of 'reflexive sociology'. In this case I am undertaking an exercise in reflexive cultural studies, although in fact my overall argument in this book reflects more widely much of Foucault's emphasis on 'pastoral care' now translated into 'pedagogic practice' as the privileged site for guidance and instruction within the field of contemporary governmentality (Foucault 2008)⁷. We live in a work regime of constant training. This education-training complex takes formal shape as curriculum, and informal shape as 'edutainment'. Amid this panoply of instructive discourses the kind of critical pedagogy that is associated with the cultural studies tradition permits, or so I argue, 'shards of light' to emerge as prefigurative forms of

social understanding and political consciousness. However the environment within which this happens is one defined by the intensity and embeddedness of individualization. How a capacity to resist comes into being in the context of such an array of forces, which would tend to extinguish this potential, is a recurring theme in the pages that follow.

Middle-classification

In the title of this book, I retain the words ‘culture industries’ to signal a lineage from the Frankfurt School and Adorno in particular through to the Birmingham CCCS, where I started my own academic career (Adorno and Horkheimer 1976; Hall et al. 1976). The allegiance to the former is oblique in that, for Adorno, while the dream factory of the culture industries was indeed a place of production, employing legions of writers and artists, it was paced according to a relentless assembly line of economies of scale such that cultural artefacts took on the semblance of sameness, uniformity and mind-numbing banality. The Birmingham CCCS under the influence of Gramsci disputed this analysis of inevitable banalization, making a strong case for critical participation at both producer and consumer ends in the context of the social history of popular culture as a site of class struggle. Birmingham scholars extended this to include struggles of ethnicity (citing *pace* Gilroy the idea of a black musical genius such as Bob Marley) and the importance of gender struggles also with reference to the subversive ways in which items of commercial femininity could be deployed in un-imagined ways, an argument more recently developed by Lauren Berlant (Gilroy 1987, McRobbie 1976, Berlant 2010). However in both the cases of Frankfurt and Birmingham it was the outcome of cultural production, the artefacts themselves, which took precedence over the social conditions of their inception. In this current book my emphasis is on the latter processes and with how changing conditions militate against the kinds of collective identities that help produce political art and popular culture. Nevertheless, I retain the term ‘culture industry’ because it stands as a counter to the more pragmatic ideas of creative industries adopted by the policy-makers and advisers in the late 1990s to designate a preference for the ways in which creativity as an individual activity could be economized. Indeed, I argue that the word ‘creativity’ displaces and supplants the word ‘culture’, since it is less contaminated by the Marxist legacy that in the space of British public debate at least still lingers round the edges of many such debates. Creativity

becomes something inherent in personhood (childhood, adolescence and young adulthood; less often, old age), which has the potential to be turned into a set of capacities. The resulting assemblage of 'talent' can subsequently be unrolled in the labour market or 'talent-led economy'. The creativity *dispositif* comprises various instruments, guides, manuals, devices, toolkits, mentoring schemes, reports, TV programmes and other forms of entertainment.⁸ I see these come together as a form of governmentality, as Foucault would define it, with a wide population of young people within its embrace. In the book I trace the illustrious inception of the creativity *dispositif* from the UK New Labour government to its coming of age under the auspices of the EC to include small social projects in Italy and Germany and elsewhere across member states. I see two things happen together: the expansion of higher and further education from the mid 1990s in the UK with particular reference to the arts, humanities and media fields, and with this the directing of such young people so that they adjust themselves to the idea of enterprise culture. Middle-classification processes come to be linked directly to self-entrepreneurship as an ideal. This is not, however, upward mobility; instead, it is an ideological effect, giving young people, especially young women, the feel of being middle class and aspirational. For instance, from studying dance and theatre arts, they will go on to set up their own small company providing dance classes and stage school for children in different neighbourhoods as after-school activities. Or else they may set up a pilates studio with ballet classes, and so on. As I discuss in Chapter 3, this kind of process shows the *dispositif* to be an instrument of 'de-proletarianization' as the Ordo-liberal economists stressed. Neo-liberalism succeeds in its mission in this respect if a now very swollen youthful middle class bypasses mainstream employment with its trade unions and its tranches of welfare and protection in favour of the challenge and excitement of being a creative entrepreneur. Concomitantly, when in a post-industrial society there are fewer jobs offering permanent and secure employment, such a risk-taking stance becomes a necessity rather than a choice. The two come together in a kind of magic formula. This raises the question: what kind of entrepreneur with what kind of 'project'? The role of the *dispositif* is to manage and oversee the seemingly exciting and rewarding aspects of this transition, which in effect means that it does some of the work of labour reform under the rubric of the encouragement to 'be creative'. This making of a new young middle class is also the making of a 'risk class' as Ulrich Beck would put it; it works as a future template for being middle class and learning to live without welfare protection and social security. The realm of this *dispositif* is education and the

media and entertainment environment, which nowadays wraps itself around all of our social lives. For example, on Saturday 15 February 2015 on BBC Radio 4, the successful young cook and pastry-maker Rachel Khoo described her path from studying fashion, starting off in fashion public relations, then deciding it was important to follow her dreams, which meant moving to Paris and holding down several jobs at one time in order to take a Cordon Bleu cookery course. Khoo's enthusiasm on air reflected everything this book is about in terms of the girlish romance of following your dreams. As she put it, 'If it doesn't work out, at least you have tried.' Khoo was employed as an au pair, a perfume assistant in a department store, and ended up working as a cook-book store assistant, organizing launches for successful food writers, which took her into an extended network of editors and publishers and eventually landed her a book contract. Her TV series, filmed from a tiny Paris kitchen, where she exuded a joyful enthusiasm about cooking for friends while living in a tiny attic, all helped to create a successful brand identity, with one contract leading to another. The point, of course, is that we the audience only hear about these success stories, and about how all the hard work eventually paid off. Here the *dispositif* is embedded in the broadcasting of the narrative itself and the production decisions underpinning it. Entering the risk class and embarking on a creative career means listening to the voice of the *dispositif* as it says, 'Here is your chance; take it now and prove to yourself that making films or baking cakes or knitting jumpers is something you can do.'

Précarité?

With such encouragement to become a creative practitioner⁹ questions about making a living fade into the margins and the value of sheer hard work and constant activity takes over. It therefore requires a whole new vocabulary to raise questions about livelihoods, about payment for freelance work, and about earning enough money to support a family, never mind funding a private pension plan. This switching of registers is also a political process, one that may well be resisted by those within the professional field for whom it is the work itself that matters. This difficulty is marked in the UK fashion design sector. Policy matters tend to be conducted at what we might call the top end of CEOs, lobbyists and global retailers like Sir Philip Green of *Topshop*. Where very recently the idea of *Made In Britain* with the revival of small-scale manufacture has re-emerged in policy debate (such as that conducted at the Westminster Media Forum),¹⁰ the

glamour image of the industry as a whole, and the emphasis on public relations means that voices that reflect the kind of issues in this book tend not to be heard and they must seek out other avenues for debate. This focus on fashion as a culture industry provides a key thread throughout the book, with a long-term interest on my own part in livelihoods and in how critical fashion practices, which stand as something of a counter to the dominance of the big brands, can survive and defend their right to existence, perhaps again by looking to the field of art and the gallery world for recognition and support. This possibility has a different meaning in London from what happens in Berlin. In London, fine-art fashion (under the heading of ‘emerging talent’) can only survive if it finds support from a major label or from a leading fashion house. In Berlin, as I show in Chapter 5, fashion designers struggle to keep their own labels going, but do so with a glance towards the art world in the city and the strategies of artists for keeping their own studio practice going while also working as a lecturer in a range of different art schools and colleges.

This book is not one that engages closely with cultural policy, although in Chapter 3 it does offer some reflections on how colleagues in the field have responded to and intervened in discussions about the present status and the future of the creative economy. Drawing however most directly on Foucault, I dissect the incitement to ‘be creative’. My emphasis is on the mix of pleasure and discipline in these various addresses and the way in which they undertake labour reform by stealth and without even drawing attention to the old ways of organized labour. Being expected to work without workplace entitlements severs a connection with past generations who not only had such protection (in the form of sick pay, pensions, maternity leave etc.) but also fought hard to get them. And once these go, if indeed they do, it becomes difficult to imagine them being reinstated, especially since they took almost a century of struggle to win. It is therefore all the more important to reclaim the ‘w’ word (i.e. welfare-in-work). How then to resist this imperative to become creative? By adamantly remaining un-creative? In some ways this is the logic of Richard Sennett’s fine body of writing on the modern work society, and I reflect on his trilogy of books in Chapter 6, where I also take issue, however, with some of his ideas on craft. In effect, it stands in for creativity in his opus and I have some misgivings about the special slow and recalcitrant qualities of craft-work and the joy of practising and rehearsal, which Sennett emphasizes as suggestive of a more harmonious relationship between people and working life. But there is also a tendency to upgrade more monotonous tasks in Sennett’s books, and this makes him seemingly immune to the sheer hard work

and the exhausting repetition of daily cleaning, washing and cooking for a family, as well as taking care of the children.

In recent years many other scholars have also reflected on this governmental imperative to become creative, especially the Italian social theorist Maurizio Lazzarato. But the work that stands most closely to this current endeavour is Isabell Lorey's recent book *The State of Insecurity* (2015). Where I argue that the call to be creative is a potent and highly appealing mode of new governmentality directed to the young in the educational environment, whose main effect is to do away with the idea of welfare rights in work by means of eclipsing normal employment altogether, Lorey's argument complements this by proposing that this mode of neoliberal governmentality is also a general and widespread process of precarization. She deftly makes a series of theoretical connections between her use of this term and the writing of Judith Butler (who posits precarity as a feature of all living beings through their essential vulnerability and dependency) by showing how this new form of governmentality makes us all precarious and thus seemingly in need of more extensive and heightened forms of security, since we are also made fearful of those who seem to threaten the now fragile security to which we struggle to hold on. Precarization for Lorey works by summoning the spectre of outside dangers. She stresses that this is not entirely an invention of our neoliberal times but has a much longer historical trajectory through the development of modern liberal government and the contract into which it enters with its citizens (subject to strict criteria) through providing some means of protection from the dangers or risks outside the jurisdiction of this protectionist 'embrace'. In particular Lorey refers to the welfarist entitlements offered, against a backdrop of labour struggle, from the early years of the twentieth century, to sectors of the male, white, working class, taking the form of the 'family wage' and forms of support and subsidy that were predicated on the nuclear family with a dependent wife and children. This kind of wage labour, offered only to sections of the population, was able to provide a kind of bulwark against the dangers of destitution. Lorey shows how good self-governance had the imaginary effect of reducing vulnerability while also permitting entitlement to protection. But this changes with the advent of post-Fordism alongside the rise of neoliberal forms of governmentality, which increasingly normalizes forms of precarization across the population, including those designated middle class, while also seeing through the 'demolition of workers' rights'. Lorey stresses the paradox at the heart of this precarization process, which is that the subject is promised freedom (to self-actualize) while also being subjugated to this normalization (and