Serving the self: authenticity, performance and emotional labour

Serving the Self: Authenticity, Performance and Emotional Labour

Jaswinder Kaur Blackwell-Pal
PhD
Birkbeck, University of London
September 2021

Declaration

I, Jaswinder Blackwell-Pal, confirm that the research included within this thesis is my own work.

I confirm that this thesis has not been previously submitted for the award of a degree by this or any other university.

Jaswinder Kaur Blackwell-Pal
Date: 17th September 2021

Abstract

This thesis builds on Arlie Hochschild's foundational work on emotional labour by understanding it as work which requires certain traits and characteristics to be *performed* before an audience. Accordingly, it argues for the contribution that theatre and performance studies can make to analysis of such work. Using primary data gathered through observation of workplaces, interviews with employees and analysis of managerial literature, the thesis examines the theatrical and performative influence on both emotional labour, and its study, in three ways. Firstly, it considers the way in which notions of selfhood and emotional authenticity are being fostered in hospitality and leisure workplaces. Secondly, it examines the forms of management used on emotional labour in these contexts. Finally, it turns to the role of the consumer, or audience, in these commercial performances.

Where Hochschild draws on Constantin Stanislavski, specifically in relation to the concepts of deep and surface acting, this research offers both a critique of her theory and an alternative approach to the comparison between professional actors and emotional labourers. It presents a historical account of actor training in the Stanislavskian realist tradition, and argues for new ways of thinking about its relationship to ascendent forms of work under neoliberalism. In particular, the research highlights the direction and management of emotional labour via forms of quantification and measurement which are tied to the concept of character. Whilst arguing for the continued centrality of wage labour to our analysis, following a Marxist framework, this research also argues for the extension of the critique of the alienating effects of emotional labour into social relations more broadly. This is addressed via attention to how the disciplinary functions identified in the management of emotional labour become offset onto consumers, whose behaviour is shaped according to the corporate dictates of 'authenticity' which increasingly characterise service encounters.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

My appreciation is due to all the participants who were interviewed for this research.

My heartfelt thanks go to Kate Maclean and Melissa Butcher, who supervised this doctorate during the first and second half of the process respectfully. Their generous engagement with the research and insightful comments have been indispensable. I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Louise Owen, who has supported this project from its inception through years of much trial and error. She has continuously pushed my writing and challenged my thinking in ways which have fundamentally shaped this research. Without her guidance and patience it would have been impossible.

It takes a commune to raise a thesis, and I am lucky to be surrounded by people who have provided intellectual community throughout this process. I must thank the members of the Performance and Political Economy reading group, which has been a space of debate and inquiry that has strengthened my thinking far beyond this project: Shane Boyle, Caoimhe McGuinness, Martin Young, Faisal Hamadah, Clio Unger, Lynne McCarthy, Amy Borsuk, Ash Rowbin, and the many others involved.

My appreciation is also due to the many comrades who have, over the years, provided both encouragement and stern words of advice when necessary. In particular, my thanks to Mark Bergfeld and Ashok Kumar, who have always lent me their ears when needed. I would like to thank the editorial board of Historical Materialism, Paul Reynolds in particular, for supporting me with gainful employment and generous assistance throughout this PhD. Thank you to the sometime inhabitants of room 417 at the School of Arts, Birkbeck who, pre-pandemic, provided camaraderie, support and 'research' assistance in the form of frequent coffee breaks to Pret.

An acknowledgement must go to Antigone, for her companionship over the last eighteen months. This is now one of several PhD's in the field that she has overseen, and her sizeable contribution to the feline turn in theatre and performance studies has not gone unnoticed.

Without the love and kindness of my friends nothing would be possible: Hannah Jackson, Farah Ahmed, Keisha Silvera, Lottie Beauchamp, Fraser Anderson, Maev McDaid, Arjun Mahadevan, Olivia Mansfield, the MTQ's, and the many, many others that I cannot list here. The last five years would simply have been no fun at all without you.

The support of my family through this long, and at times, challenging process has been essential. I am grateful to Roxana and Kabir Pal for all the care they given me. The loving reassurance of my parents, Sue Blackwell and Rajwinder Pal, is what has allowed me to persevere with this research. Despite always encouraging me to take whichever path I wished, it is no surprise that I have ended up following closely in both of their footsteps - a testament to how they both continue to inspire me.

Finally, thank you to Dr Willem Meijs, whose infectious intellectual curiosity I can only hope to in some way carry with me. I know that he would be the person most loudly celebrating the completion of this thesis, and I dedicate it to him.

Introduction: Smile, you're on stage

The Smile Strike

In 2012 staff at the Hong Kong based airline Cathay Pacific threatened industrial action against their employer in response to a dispute over salary negotiations. The Flight Attendant's Union (FAU) announced that they were considering work to rule measures, as a build up to a potential strike.[1] Under work to rule, flight attendants would work to fulfil their contractual obligations, following established safety rules or procedures, but dispensing with any element of the work which is not strictly necessary, thereby leading to a much slowed down and reduced service. This particular threat of action attracted headlines around the world because included under the potential work to rule measures was a 'smile strike', as the FAU threatened that the 'service with a smile' which customers had become accustomed to would be thrown out in favour of staff working to the minimum required rules. Explaining the strategy to the press, the FAU general secretary Tsand Kwok-fund explained: 'In a nutshell it means passengers will still be able to reach their destinations except they are paying a five-star price to get a three-star service'.[2] Smiles, it was noted, were not formally required by staff contracts, despite becoming a ubiquitous part of the in-flight experience. 'We cannot smile because of the situation, because of how the company treats us' Tsang added.[3]

The proposed smile strike attracted coverage as it drew attention to the pervasiveness and dependence on 'emotional labour' in industries such as aviation:

---

[1] 'Cathay Pacific Smile Strike: Cabin Crews Threaten To Withhold Services Over Pay Dispute', *Huffington Post Canada,* 13 December 2012 <https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2012/12/13/cathay-pacific-smile-strike_n_2292796.html> [accessed 23 June 2021]

[2] 'Airline crew threaten a no-smile strike', *NDTV*, 11 December 2012 <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/airline-crew-threaten-a-no-smile-strike-507174> [accessed 23 June 2021]

[3] 'Cathay Pacific Smile Strike'.

the threat of its withdrawal highlighted how fundamental the employees' goodwill, cheer and emotional performances are to their work, at least as it is perceived by the customer. As such, the threat was a useful tool for the union, who were able to attract much press coverage surrounding the dispute and the financial details of the pay offer. It was in fact not the first time that the FAU had proposed such an idea - in 1999 another potential strike threatened to use exactly the same tactics.[4] Flight attendants, it seems, are well aware of the power that their smiles hold.

Four years later, in 2016, the American grocery chain Trader Joe's would attract a similar round of press coverage after one of their former employees filed a National Labor Relations Board charge against them, citing unfair labour practices.[5] Thomas Nagle, who had worked at a New York city branch of the store, argued that he was fired on the basis of having a smile which was not deemed 'genuine' enough by managers.[6] The perceived authenticity of Nagle's smile was seen as a marker of his attitude to work, his enthusiasm and commitment for the job. Smiling thus appears to have become a battleground in the modern workplace – the absence of a smile can be enough to summon formal discipline from the employer, or act as a show of strength from organised workers. Whilst both the cases of Cathay Pacific and Trader Joe's show that the smile has become a ubiquitous and important part of work, it has also become loaded, a gesture laden with potential tension.

The Cathay Pacific case is also notable for its implication of the aircraft, and to the role of the steward specifically, as a site of this emotional tension. It was the same site that served as the basis of Arlie Russel Hochschild's 1983 study *The*

---

[4] Jill McGivering, 'Smile strike for Cathay Staff', *BBC News*, 6 January 1999 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/249888.stm> [accessed 23 June 2021]
[5] Noam Scheiber, 'At Trader Joe's, Good Cheer May Hide Complaints', *The New York Times,* 3 November 2016 <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/04/business/at-trader-joes-good-cheer-may-hide-complaints.html> [accessed 23 June 2021]
[6] Ibid.

Managed Heart, in which she first theorised the concept of 'emotional labour'.[7] For Hochschild, who studied the work of stewards at Delta Airlines, the smile of the flight attendant was fraught with contestation. Trainees, she recounted, were taught the importance of a smile, told during training: 'Now girls, I want you to go out there and really smile. Your smile is your biggest asset. I want you to go out there and use it. Smile. Really smile. Really lay it on'.[8] But whilst positioned here as an asset belonging to the attendant themselves, Hochschild noted that the personal smile was actually being moulded in the image of the company's 'disposition', rather than the individual's: 'Trainers take it as their job to attach to the trainee's smile an attitude, a viewpoint, a rhythm of feeling that is, as they often say, "professional."'[9] For Hochschild, this kind of emotional labour, as managed and dictated by the employer, was a sign of our increasing alienation from our own smiles, our own emotions and our own private selves. Its advancement, particularly in global North economies increasingly reliant on service work as manufacturing becomes outsourced, represented capitalism's further encroachment into our lives. Our feelings, she wrote, become 'processed like raw ore', a process of exploitation which follows the same logic as that of physical labour, but with potentially more devastating personal and social consequences, as it intrudes into our innermost psychological and emotional lives.[10]

For Hochschild, the theatrical stage holds insight into these performances at work, and she takes the actor, their training and craft as a reference point in her reading of emotional labour off-stage. Everyone has to do a certain amount of 'acting'

---

[7] Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1983).
[8] Hochschild, p. 4.
[9] Hochschild, p. 4.
[10] Hochschild, p. 54.

in their day to day life, Hochschild claims, but there are divergent approaches to this which can be taken, approaches which she outlines via reference to prominent forms of actor training. This research is built upon the foundation of Hochschild's intervention, and seeks to examine the way in which the smile has become a pervasive part of much modern work, specifically within leisure and hospitality. Following Hochschild however, it also notes that *performance* is key to both the understanding and the application of emotion in the workplace. For the Cathay Pacific staff, their threat was the withdrawal of a performance, named as such by their insistence that smiles were part of their expected work, rather than merely a natural or voluntary reaction to the pleasures of serving customers. For Nagle, it was the perceived authenticity, or lack therefore, of his emotional performance that he claimed as being the reason for his dismissal. The veracity of his claims about how he really felt about his work, how committed he was to his job, were viewed through the judgement of his outward performance. Taking these examples as symptomatic of a wider historical turn, this research investigates the links between the performance of emotion, authenticity and work in detail, and examines what role emotion plays in contemporary service and hospitality sectors. Crucially, this research argues that theatre and actor training has played an important role in developing and influencing standards of emotional performance which now permeate into the workplace. Building on Hochschild's analysis, and recentring emotional labour in the context of contemporary work, the research demonstrates the insight that can be generated by thinking about the influence of theatre and performance in workplace practices. This insight is found in relation to multiple aspects of performance and emotion at work, impacting both the individual employee and the experiences of the customer, and shaping the direction of management in these contexts. The influence of theatre and

performance is shown to be central for understanding how behavioural norms shape employees experience of presenting 'authentic' displays in the workplace, how notions of personal character are used as organisational tools, and how specific forms of management are being used to elicit desired performances.

Fordism to Neoliberalism

Since Hochschild's study was published, the question of emotion in the workplace has become more prevalent, as both the Cathay Pacific industrial action and the Nagle case illustrate. In many ways Hochschild's book marked a watershed moment in working conditions, as Fordism gave way to neoliberalism, bringing vast changes in the organisation of the economy and thus in the organisation and form of work. The Fordist paradigm was built on both an industrial and a social model. In the workplace, Fordism was characterised by mass production on the factory line, with repetitive and routinized work in which the design and control of the labour process was kept in the hands of management. Workers often experienced boredom, resulting from a mechanical process, where they sold their time to the employer but used little in the way of mental or creative capabilities at work.[11] On the other side, however, Fordism offered a 'wager for workers'.[12] As Amelia Horgan explains: 'In exchange for eight hours of boredom at work five days a week were the freer weekends – people worked to live – and a sharp divide between work and leisure.'[13] Fordism allowed for a marked separation between the time of work and the time of life, family and leisure, with one's sense of self and identity cultivated and practised away from the

[11] Amelia Horgan, *Lost in Work: Escaping Capitalism* (London: Pluto Press, 2021), p. 49.
[12] Horgan, p. 49.
[13] Horgan, p. 49.

workplace, where you could mentally as well as physically 'clock off' once your shift was finished. Today, workers across many sectors are increasingly expected to bring themselves, meaning their emotional capabilities and commitments, to the workplace with them. It is no longer enough to simply do a job as specified, but to do it with commitment, with enthusiasm, with joy. As Carl Cederstrom and Peter Fleming argue: 'Most of us still have a boss above us giving orders. But we have also partially internalized this "boss function". Whereas under Fordism workers could mentally tell the boss to "fuck off" as they left the factory, now they take it home with them. Turning-off is no longer an available option.'[14] This is partly why the concept of emotional labour attracts such attention, or why cases in which it is highlighted draw such coverage, as it speaks to an experience now familiar to so many people. Emotional labour names that which is often naturalised, and thereby made invisible: that no matter how much air stewards may (or may not) like their jobs, the smiles they offer as part of in-flight service are indeed work, and the withdrawal of them impacts greatly on their employer's ability to offer the service it claims. In order to serve the customers, workers are increasingly expected to serve their selves.

The relative freedom offered by Fordism, where workers were able to leave their jobs behind at the end of the day without having to feign or feel some kind of emotional commitment to them, was predicated however on a distinct separation between work and life which also led to stark alienation. Thus Marx's diagnosis of alienation during an earlier period of industrial capitalism rang true for the Fordist worker: 'the worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work

[14] Carl Cederström and Peter Fleming, *Dead Man Working* (Winchester, UK: Zero Books, 2012), p. 13.

feels outside himself. He feels at home when he is not working, and when he is working he does not feel at home.'[15]

Yet, for Marx, alienation from labour occurs precisely because the capacity for creative labour is so intrinsic to humans, and because it retains the potential to be both self-realising and fulfilling. The Fordist model of leaving one's 'self' at the door when you clock in may have established a clear distinction between work and life, but also meant that the worker was fundamentally separated from her own interests for the eight hours a day she worked, and was unable to express herself freely. For many, the opportunity to bring emotions and personality to work is an attractive one, a promise of a more fulfilling type of labour. Yet this promise is often shown to be an illusion in jobs where emotions are managed and treated in a way that wrests control over them from the individual to the employer. It is not about bringing *your* personality to work, but rather *a personality*, one already dictated by the institution or company, according to the image and character they wish to convey to customers.

Hochschild's work on flight attendants drew a direct comparison between the alienation from feelings in work involving emotional labour and the alienation of the nineteenth century worker from their physical labour in factory work: 'Marx and many others have told us the factory worker's story. I am interested in telling the flight attendant's story'.[16] Hochschild points to the changes in work which have taken place since, and the differences between the factory workers experience and that of the flight attendant. Whilst the former was subject to physically brutalising conditions, resulting in 'fatigue, hunger and boredom', the latter is imagined to be participating in the production of 'glamour', considered lucky to work in a profession

---

[15] Karl Marx, *Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/preface.htm> [accessed 9 December 2016]
[16] Hochschild, p. 17.

which escapes the dullness of other jobs.[17] Despite this, Hochschild argues, both workers are alienated and exploited by capitalism, and both must 'mentally detach themselves' during work.[18] For the factory worker this is detachment from their physical labour, whilst for the flight attendant this involves a further detachment from their feelings during the process of emotional labour.[19] Hochschild therefore sees a fundamental continuity between capitalist production in the factory and that in the provision of services, and accordingly adopts a Marxist framework throughout her analysis. Specifically, Hochschild applies Marx's labour theory of value, defining emotional labour as work which is 'sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value,', adding that she uses the synonymous terms emotion work or emotional management to mean 'these same acts done in a private context where they have use value'.[20] I will return to this definition shortly, when considering the various extensions of emotional labour and their use beyond the workplace. Marx understands labour power as 'the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in the physical form, the living personality, of a human being'.[21] Emotional labour then, as part of this 'living personality', has always been a part of work, and is a part of Marx's understanding of labour from the beginning. Thus alienation is experienced differently, but its pervasiveness remains under the newer working conditions of neoliberalism.

For David Harvey, neoliberalism is defined by 'a theory of political economic practices which proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by the maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional framework

[17] Hochschild, p. 5.
[18] Hochschild, p. 17.
[19] Hochschild, p. 17.
[20] Hochschild, p. 7.
[21] Karl Marx, *Capital: Volume I* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1976), p. 270.

characterized by private property rights, individual liberty, unencumbered markets, and free trade.'[22] For Bourdieu, this agenda is achieved via the transformation and destruction of political measures 'that aim to *call into question any and all collective structures* that could serve as an obstacle to the logic of the pure market' [his emphasis], including the nation, work groups, and the family.[23] At work, this takes place via 'the individualisation of salaries and of careers as a function of individual competences, with the consequent atomisation of workers; collectives for the defence of the rights of workers, unions, associations, cooperatives'.[24] The result, he writes is the 'absolute reign of flexibility', leading to competition and individualism amongst workers, who are pushed towards 'self-exploitation' where they hold themselves responsible for their performance and the success of their workplace, despite still being wage labourers. Bourdieu terms this 'participative management', where workers are encouraged to over identify or involve themselves with their work and employers, all the while leading to the weakening of 'collective standards or solidarities'.[25]

Of course, these cultural and social shifts in the experience of work since the 1980s do not simply happen in an ideological vacuum – they emerge from changes to the type of work people are doing, and the types of commodities being produced. The growing demand for these specific types of labour power, and these forms of management, happen in economies that are driven increasingly less by manufacturing and the production of material goods, and more by the service sector and sales functions. The rise of emotional labour, under neoliberalism, coincides with huge

---

[22] David Harvey, 'Neoliberalism as Creative Destruction', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 610 March 2007, pp. 22-44 (p. 22).
[23] Pierre Bourdieu, 'The essence of Neoliberalism', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, December 1998 <https://mondediplo.com/1998/12/08bourdieu> [accessed 23 June 2021]
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.

changes in the nature of commodity production and capital accumulation today. In *Profiting without Producing*, Costas Lapavistas identifies the last three decades as a period characterised by an asymmetry between production and 'the ballooning sphere of circulation', a circuit of capitalism which is unproductive, in the economic sense, because it redistributes value which already exists, rather than creating it.[26] Under contemporary capitalism then, there is a renewed emphasis on exchange and circulation at a time of stunted productivity growth.[27] In this framing, we can understand those working in front-facing roles in services, hospitality and leisure as key to this process of circulation, often allowing for the realisation of a commodities' value without directly contributing to said value.[28] In workplaces such as call centres, for example, emotional labour is often put to the task of selling an existing commodity, like an insurance plan. In this context, the sales caller does not create value, they do not produce anything which contributes to surplus value, but they play a vital, if technically unproductive, role in exchanging that which already exists, but must be sold. Elsewhere, however, emotional labour plays a more ambiguous role in relation to value. This is the case in the coffee shop, for example, which makes up one of the key case studies in this thesis. Whilst still producing a tangible commodity (the hot drink) where physical labour is the main component, the drive to increase profits in the face of constant competition means that the point of exchange has taken on extra importance, necessitating an additional form of labour to ensure sales. However, the point of 'sale' in the coffee shop is less clear cut than that of a call centre. The customer has already decided to purchase food or drink when they walk into the shop,

[26] Costas Lapavitsas, *Profiting without Producing: How Finance Exploits Us All* (London; New York: Verso, 2013), p. 3-4.
[27] Lapavitsas, p. 3.
[28] Dave Beech, *Art and value: Art's economic exceptionalism in classical, neoclassical and Marxist economics* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2016) p. 258.

and it is highly unlikely that they will make this decision based on the performance of the worker when they reach the counter. The emotional labour aspect, therefore, could be said to ensure that they return to the same coffee shop instead of others - securing a place above competitors. We might add that the emotional effort is often now part of what is being purchased itself. Perhaps we no longer go to coffee shops or restaurants in order to just purchase food and drink, but also in order to experience these interactions themselves. In today's economy of experience, fleeting instances of (what is perceived as) genuine human affect or interaction become commodity's themselves. These broader questions of how authentic experience and emotional connection figure within the economic landscape today will be explored throughout this research, particularly in chapter five. However, discussions about the function of emotional labour are not confined to questions of value and labour, and often sidestep them altogether. In order to clarify the approach that this research takes to the study of emotional performance at work, it is important to survey the alternative usages of the concept itself, including those which stray far from the workplace.

Labour, work and wages

Hochschild's account sees emotional labour solely through the prism of waged work. She makes clear to distinguish emotional labour in the workplace from that which is done privately or in the home, as cited above. Yet in recent years, the phrase emotional labour has become used in a variety of contexts, many of them having little do with the world of formal waged work. In fact, state the phrase emotional labour to many people today and they may well presume you are talking about the unacknowledged, unappreciated and certainly unpaid work that people (primarily

women) do within their households and private relationships. Articles and infographics on how to make men do more emotional labour in their relationships, or how to spot your own emotional labour toil have sprung up, leading to rebuttals of 'concept creep'.[29] In a 2017 article for *Harpers Bazaar* which has since been turned into a book, Gemma Hartley describes the difficulty in navigating her relationship with her husband in which she sees a great imbalance in terms of their emotional roles.[30] Describing tasks like booking household services, asking her husband to clean up, reminding him of family birthdays, updating calendars and laundry as part of the burden of emotional labour, Hartley decries the invisibility of such gendered work in the household: 'It's frustrating to be saddled with all of these responsibilities, no one to acknowledge the work you are doing, and no way to change it without a major confrontation.'[31]

Hartley's account troubles attempts to define emotional labour for a number of reasons. It equates emotional labour with any type of forward planning or management of tasks, regardless of the absence of emotion required for something like folding clothes or checking stock in the fridge. Indeed, in her book she defines it as 'emotion management and life management combined. It is the unpaid, invisible work we do to keep those around us comfortable and happy.'[32] The notion of emotional labour as paid or commodified work itself is also absent from the article. In fact, Hartley's proposed solution to the pressures demanded of her is to outsource it: she opens her article by asking her husband to book a cleaning service so as to relieve

---

[29] Julie Beck, 'The Concept Creep of Emotional Labor', *The Atlantic*, 26 November 2018 <https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2018/11/arlie-hochschild-housework-isnt-emotional-labor/576637/> [accessed 23 June 2021]
[30] Gemma Hartley, 'Women Aren't Nags – We're Just Fed Up', *Harpers Baza*ar, 27 September 2017 <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/features/a12063822/emotional-labor-gender-equality/> [accessed 23 June 2021]
[31] Ibid.
[32] Gemma Hartley, cited in Beck, 2018.

her of the emotional labour of cleaning their bathrooms. The fact that this physical labour will instead be performed by someone (statistically likely to be a low paid migrant woman) is not mentioned. Finally, Hartley sees emotional labour as all encompassing, a confinement from which personal relationships cannot seem to escape: 'Even having a conversation about the imbalance of emotional labor becomes emotional labor. It gets to a point where I have to weigh the benefits of getting my husband to understand my frustration against the compounded emotional labor of doing so in a way that won't end in us fighting.'[33] Although a seemingly critical account of the pressures facing women, such a view actually runs the risk of consigning all personal interactions and relationships to a commodified lens – we cannot see our social lives beyond the language of work, labour and exchange.

Hartley's article references a now viral online PDF, compiling a discussion on emotional labour which took place on the community blog *MetaFilter*.[34] The link to this document, assembling the contributions of many (mainly women) on their understandings and experiences of emotional labour, is often cited or referenced in discussions and articles about the burden placed on women to perform both care and relationship management. The document itself contains no reference to Hochschild's own work, and only two short reflections on emotional labour in the workplace. It's clear that in much common usage, emotional labour has migrated from the workplace into the home, the family and the friendship circle. Hochschild herself has intervened to dismiss what she calls the 'overextension' of her concept which often overlooks a class-based perspective (as the example of Hartley trying to hire a cleaner to manage

[33] Hartley, 2017.
[34] Various authors, 'Emotional Labor: The MetaFilter thread condensed', *Google Document,* <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0UUYL6kaNeBTDBRbkJkeUtabEk/view?pref=2&pli=1&resourcekey=0--cIZNncO06RZSD8dC47K2Q> [accessed 23 June 2021]

her own emotional labour suggests).[35] When asked specifically about the way in which emotional labour is now used to describe the management of household or family tasks, Hochschild answers:

> There seems an alienation or a disenchantment of acts that normally we associate with the expression of connection, love, commitment. Like "Oh, what a burden it is to pick out gifts for the holiday for my children." Or "Oh, it's so hard to call a photographer to do family Christmas photos, and then to send it to my parents." I feel a strong need to point out that this isn't inherently an alienating act. And something's gone haywire when it is. It's okay to feel alienated from the task of making a magical experience for your very own children. I'm not just judging that. I'm saying let's take it as a symptom that something's wrong. […] what if home has become work and work has become home?[36]

The idea of emotional labour as expanded beyond the workplace has become a powerful concept for those who align themselves with feminism and wish to draw attention to the unpaid household labour which continues to fall disproportionately on women. Yet, these accounts seem to also run the risk of gutting emotional labour of some of its analytical potential, and of its political critique of modern capitalism. Emotional labour, understood via Hochschild as the management of feeling which is sold for a wage as part of labour power, thus giving it exchange value and not just use value (as is the case with emotional management done in private contexts), offers us a way of thinking through the relationship of control between our emotions and capitalism. As Horgan puts it, work is an activity through which capitalists still profit from workers:

> One important part of this activity is that the employers will always attempt to maximise their profits, which means they have a particular political relationship with their employees: one of control, of power over, and of surveillance and performance management. While unpaid socially

[35] Beck, 2018.
[36] Beck, 2018.

> reproductive work in the home shares some features with waged work, this direct relation of power is not present.[37]

My research takes the workplace as its site of analysis, and argues for the continued centrality of waged work as a site of control and exploitation, as well as struggle. However, in taking this approach it also recognises the relationship between our emotions at work, and our emotions in our private and personal lives, and how both spaces continue to shape and transform each other. It takes as one of its concerns the question of how these demands for emotional performance at work impact our experiences beyond it, noting that despite their formal differences there are similarities between the gendered expectations for emotional management at home and in the workplace.

This is perhaps why the idea of a smile strike is so interesting. It captures something of the frustrations or discomfort which many people feel about the place of emotion in today's society more broadly. Writing in 2017, Sara Ahmed picked up the idea of a smile strike, suggesting it as one possible form of feminist resistance to a system which demands the constant performance of happiness, of smiles, of positivity: 'Collectively we would strike by *not smiling*. Not smiling is an action when smiling is a requirement. You refuse to smile in order to meet an expectation that you should smile.'[38] Ahmed argues that a smile strike is necessary in order to announce disagreement or unhappiness with a system – smiles in Ahmed's account are seen as intrinsic to the functioning of capitalism, from the home, to the political arena, to the workplace. As such, a smile strike announces unhappiness or disagreement with an entire system in which the regulation and performance of

---

[37] Horgan, p. 46.
[38] Sara Ahmed, 'Smile!', *feministkilljoys,* 2 February 2017 <https://feministkilljoys.com/2017/02/02/smile/> [accessed 23 June 2021]

'appropriate' emotions is bound.[39] Thus even the stretched usages of emotional labour speak to the power of the concept and the readiness with which people have adopted it speaks to its relevancy to people's experiences. The recognition that emotional labour holds the potential to uncover and explain something fundamental about social and working life under capitalism has driven this project, and shaped the key questions it sets out to address.

The research

This project seeks to interrogate the way in which performance of emotion (and with it the performance of notions like authenticity and character) operate within commercial workplaces, taking leisure and hospitality as its focus. This thesis asks both what the disciplines of theatre and performance studies can contribute to our understanding of emotional labour and its increasing prominence within service and hospitality work, as well as asking how theatre and performance have already come to influence the direction and management of emotional labour within workplaces. As such, my research draws together primary data from selected workplaces, with existing theoretical and empirical literature on emotion and work, with scholarship on the role of authenticity and emotion within performance and theatre itself.

In chapter one I offer an extended reflection on the motivation for this project, exploring the two points of departure from which it begins. The first of these is the prominence of emotional labour as a sociological concept, which I explore via a literature review comparing the different approaches which have been taken towards developing a framework through which we can analyse emotions in the workplace.

[39] Ibid.

The second point of departure is the turn towards work and labour within theatre and performance studies itself. Here I look at the contributions which have been made towards the application of theatre and performance towards the study of work, as well as to studies of theatrical work itself, and how these have been applied throughout my own research. I follow with an overview of the methodology used in this project, outlining my choice of case studies and the data sets which they have generated. This chapter outlines how I bring together the disparate fields and areas of study which form the basis of this project: theatre and performance, sociology, political economy and cultural studies.

The second chapter then lays out some of the historical groundwork for the comparison between theatrical work and other forms of work which follows in subsequent chapters. Here I focus attention on the development of the Western theatre industry in the twentieth-century, and specifically the rise of emotional realism in the Stanislavskian tradition, which remains the dominant mode of performer training. I make the argument that Stanislavski's influence did not just relate to artistic form or emotional expression on stage, but was also a driving factor in the broader reorganisation of theatre, particularly in Britain and America. I offer a history, therefore, not only of the way his methods came to ascendence within British and American actor training, but also of how his efforts to steer acting towards a sense of psychological inner realism were bound up in new forms of dramatic production, new plays, and consequently, new understanding of character. This new theatre, demanding authenticity of emotional performance, thus becomes key, as authenticity rises to dominate not just the theatrical landscape, but in broader cultural notions of character and emotion as well.

This link between the theatrical representation of authentic emotion, and the demands for its performance in contemporary workplace are then developed in the following three chapters, which move between an analysis of the individual worker, the management of emotional labour, and the experiences of the customer, respectively. In chapter three I introduce my case studies, using them to investigate the ways in which selfhood and authenticity are being deployed within these commercial hospitality and leisure settings. I find that companies which ask for emotional commitment and performance as part of the job, are also advancing an essentialising discourse which seeks to make invisible such labour as work itself, positioning certain traits as natural and innate to workers whilst simultaneously necessary for success in the workplace. I offer a critique of Hochschild's own application of the dramatic metaphor and her use of Stanislavski in particular, arguing that her understanding of his teaching leads to a limited analysis of emotional labour which confines its effects to individualised experiences within the workplace. Building on the account offered in chapter two, I argue that a more careful historical reading of actor training allows us to see how the role of direction and management is just as important to our analysis as the experiences of individual workers and their efforts towards their own personal emotional management at work.

This argument leads me to chapter four, where I expand on the conclusions in chapter three by offering an overview of how theatrical and dramatic methods have been incorporated into business and management literature in the latter half of the twentieth-century. I argue that the turn towards theatricalization of the workplace was necessary based on both financial and ideological imperatives, whereby capital was compelled to incorporate demands for satisfaction, authenticity and personal fulfilment into the workplace, in the wake of struggles against the Fordist paradigm.

As a result, I show that 'character' becomes a central organising logic for companies which are seeking to both appeal to a customer base which demands more originality and personality from brands, and simultaneously a way of managing the emotional labour that such changes require. I offer this analysis in tandem with a reading of Stanislavski's work in relation to systems of management. I offer an extended comparison between Stanislavski and scientific management, showing how these older forms of management still persist, and in fact overlap, with the theatrical and performative elements that have been introduced into the workplace. I show that Stanislavski's own system offers a means for the management and development of character which is compatible with new forms of control we see exercised in the workplace today. I argue that character becomes a way by which emotional labour can be measured, quantified and controlled by management, and thus offers a way of reading emotion in the workplace beyond some of the individualising forms of analysis which have been previously applied.

Finally, in chapter five, I pivot to a consideration of what happens to the audience and the customer in these environments. Taking the example of immersive dining, a form which combines immersive theatre with the provision of food and drink, I consider how subjectivity and its relationship to outward emotional performance is being constructed in these spaces in terms of consumerism, in line with the discourse of authenticity which I have explored throughout the thesis. I consider arguments that have been put forth about the role of audiences within immersive environments and their contribution to 'production' or value creation, and argue that audiences as 'co-creators' of these environments are also subject to behavioural cues and imperatives, although these emerge differently from the experience of workers. I show that these environments demonstrate how questions of

citizenship and neoliberal subjectivity are bound with the issues of authentic emotional performance that the research has explored throughout. This chapter argues that by extending our analysis of emotional labour beyond the consideration of employees and waged work, we can better understand its broader social effects on the production of neoliberal subjectivity.

I will now move to an extended reflection of the basis for this research, and a fuller exploration of the debates concerning emotional labour.

Chapter one: Literature review and methodology

Introduction

This research investigates emotional labour, defined by Arlie Hochschild as work which involves 'the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display', using approaches, methods, and insights originating in theatre and performance studies.[1] Building on Hochschild's definition, this study understands emotional labour as work that requires certain characteristics or traits to be *performed* before an audience. This formulation opens up new possibilities for the analysis of such labour in contemporary workplaces. This chapter will outline some of the key debates within the existing emotional labour literature, survey the relationship that such scholarship has with theatre and performance studies (in which there is also an emerging focus on questions of labour), and offer an explanation for the methodology and approach to the research which proceeds.

The impulse to approach the study of emotional labour using the lens of theatre and performance stems from two related points of departure. The first is the comparison, found in Hochschild's original thesis, but since echoed by others investigating changes to work under contemporary capitalism, between emotional and affective labour (the differences between which I will clarify shortly) and the work of professional actors and performers.[2] In these comparisons, the actor is seen as emblematic of other jobs which require the subjectivity of the worker to be incorporated into the labour process, yet their own status as workers with rich experiences and insights into emotional labour is often overlooked. Whilst

[1] Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1983), p. 7.
[2] Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude* (Cambridge MA and London: Semiotext(e), 2004), p. 68.

establishing a framework for understanding emotional displays in the workplace which is based on her reading of Stanislavski's system of training and approach to acting, Hochschild frequently intervenes to remind her reader that this theatrical labour is qualitatively different from the forms of commercial emotional labour with which her study is concerned: 'We do not think twice about the use of feeling in the theatre, or in psychotherapy, or in forms of group life that we admire' she writes, adding that 'in the world of the theatre it is an honourable art to make maximum use of the resources of memory and feeling in stage performance'.[3] By distinguishing the 'art' of acting from the 'work' of emotional labour, she also suggests that acting averts the particular dangers she identifies with emotional labour, namely emotional burn-out, dissonance and detachment. As will be problematised in chapter three, Hochschild's reading of Stanislavski is in fact a limited one, which has implications for our analysis of emotional labour off-stage.

Hochschild is not alone in drawing on the actor for her analysis. Other theorists of the changing conditions of work under neoliberal capitalism have taken the figure of the professionalised performer both as a reference point and symbol. In these accounts, the performer is understood historically to have been working under conditions to which other categories of workers now increasingly find themselves subject, in terms of a labour process which involves emotional and affective capabilities and conditions of employment often marked by precarity and short term project-led work. For Paulo Virno, for example, the virtuoso, also known as the performing artist, is representative of wider changes under capitalism: 'the affinity between a pianist and a waiter, which Marx had foreseen, finds an unexpected confirmation in the epoch in which all wage labour has something in common with

[3] Hochschild, p. 12, p. 37.

the "performing artist."'[4] Richard Sennett, in his now widely cited study of modern character, turns to the figure of Diderot's actor both as a model for understanding repetition in the labour process and to examine the demands of teamwork, characterised as 'the actor's mask of cooperation'.[5] Carl Cederstrom and Peter Fleming, referring to the category of artists in general, describe structural conditions defined by: 'constant stress, self-employment, flexible working hours, no regulating contract and income, no pension scheme and low pay. In other words conditions almost identical to those now spreading through the post-industrial landscape.'[6] Yet even as they attend to the incorporation of the worker's subjectivity, their personal lives, experiences and understandings of self, into the labour process, comparisons such as these tend to overlook the actor as a worker themselves. Thus on stage, Hochschild writes, 'we know who is acting' and 'the illusion leaves as it came, with the curtain.'[7] Her analysis casts actors as exempt from the exploitation and alienation identified elsewhere by virtue of theatre's status as 'art'. Sennett, similarly, argues that the comparison between factory workers and actors is false because 'the worker does not control his or her work', unlike the actor.[8]

In *Theatricality: a study of convention in the theatre and in social life* Elizabeth Burns, writing in the 1970's, pays close attention to the historical relationship between drama on stage and the social roles that people adopt. Burns takes as her starting point the theatrical metaphor that pervades across history and disciplines, drawing particular attention to the way in which social sciences, behavioural sciences and social psychology have adopted 'dramaturgic terminology'

---

[4] Virno, p. 68.
[5] Richard Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character* (New York: Norton, 1999), p. 111.
[6] Cederström and Fleming, *Dead Man Working*, (Winchester: Zero, 2012), p. 124.
[7] Hochschild, p. 47.
[8] Sennett, p. 73.

as a way of explaining social behaviour: 'Tacitly or explicitly we constantly draw on symbolic references and typification's shared by playwright, actors and audience', she writes, and this is because 'much of everyday social behaviour and socially consequential action is itself composed, and often in a fashion which is recognised at the time as "theatrical" or is revealed as such afterwards.'[9] Burns takes issue with the level of 'mere analogy' through which this language is put to use, arguing that such usage has its limits.[10] For Burns, the theatrical metaphor continuously evokes the problem of people's relationship to the roles that they perform, because it implies that 'it is not the individual alone who is responsible for his own actions but an unseen (or undefined) producer of the whole dramatic action'.[11] This use of the actor's labour, by other disciplines, as a solely symbolic reference for emotional labour is the first catalyst for this project, which seeks to interrogate and expand upon the comparison by considering the actor themselves, and asking what more their work can teach us about similarities with other industries than the treatment of Hochschild and those that have followed her allows.

The second catalyst is the response of theatre and performance studies to these comparisons. Recent scholarship within the field has shown increased attention to questions of labour and production, with many referring back to the work of Hochschild, Virno and others in efforts to draw attention to how the theatre functions as a workplace and site of employment itself. This scholarship also engages with the way in which theatrical metaphors and references to performance are increasingly engaged as ways of understanding changes to work under neoliberalism, and allows us to trouble the formulations outlined above. Patrick McKelvey, for example, argues

---

[9] Elizabeth Burns, *Theatricality: a study of convention in the theatre and in social life* (London: Longman, 1972), p. 1, p. 36.
[10] Burns, p. 1, p. 36.
[11] Burns, p. 8.

that 'Hochschild invokes theatre workers only to exclude them'.[12] In his exploration of performance and value in Marx's work, Shane Boyle goes further, arguing that far from being exempt from capitalism, theatrical production in fact 'exemplifies the capitalist production process'.[13] Boyle also highlights the recent 'workerist turn' within theatre and performance studies and how it can help us to grapple with the convergence between performance and capitalism, as well as drawing attention to how managerial science itself is increasingly interested in the 'flexible capacities' of performers.[14] This growing body of scholarship illustrates how theatre and performance has the potential to concretise the connections between performative labour and the changes taking place in the service sector, rather than resting on the symbolic references that often characterise the literature. It also challenges us to think more carefully about actors, arguably the archetypal emotional labourers, as workers whose own labour process and conditions of employment have much to teach us regarding emotional labour and work more broadly.

For example, writing on the similarities between call centre work and performing, Nicholas Ridout argues:

> Sociological or market research approaches to the condition of the "cultural" or "artistic" worker might continue to insist that the "phone room worker" and the "actor", for example, constituted two separate identities, defined by their categories for distinction. A more political analysis would be able to understand how these two people (or statistical units) might be able to inhabit the same body.[15]

---

[12] Patrick McKelvey, 'A Disabled Actor Prepares: Stanislavsky, Disability, and Work at the National Theatre Workshop of the Handicapped', *Theatre Journal*, 71.1 (2019), pp. 69–89 (p. 86). <https://doi.org/10.1353/tj.2019.0004>

[13] Michael Shane Boyle, 'Performance and Value: The Work of Theatre in Karl Marx's Critique of Political Economy', *Theatre Survey*, 58.1 (2017), pp. 3–23, (p. 19).

[14] Boyle, p. 6.

[15] Nicholas Ridout, *Passionate Amateurs: Theatre, Communism, and Love* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2013), p. 120.

Building on such analysis, my research seeks to integrate an understanding of performance and labour within a political and economic framework and, by doing so, answer questions about the convergence of performance and labour in the contemporary economy. What can theatre and performance studies contribute to our understanding of emotional labour? What can be discovered by considering the development of theatrical elements of service work concurrently with historical changes to the theatrical sector? And what value do the performative aspects of emotional labour have for employers and businesses?

Emotional labour power

Hochschild's foundational definition of emotional labour is situated firmly within Marx's labour theory of value, as she explicitly outlines at the outset of *The Managed Heart:*

> I use the term emotional labour to mean the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display; emotional labor is sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value. I use the synonymous terms emotion work or emotion management to refer to these same acts done in a private context where they have use value.[16]

According to Marx, commodities have a 'use value', understood as the tangible features which make a commodity desirable or necessary to people, but they also have an 'exchange value' which determines how they operate in relation to other commodities, how much they can be exchanged or sold for. For Marx, labour power is itself a commodity, and in fact a 'special' commodity in that its use value lies in the

16 Hochschild, p. 7.

ability to create new value itself via human labour.[17] In jobs requiring emotional labour power then, Hochschild argues, that workers' emotional faculties themselves become commodified, as they become an intrinsic part of the labour power, which is sold, as a commodity, to the employer for a wage. Crucially, this means that emotional labour has *exchange* value as well as use value, and therefore enters into the market in a way which distinguishes it from the everyday forms of emotional work or management we conduct in our personal relations. Emotional labour is not simply about the emotions that we feel at work, or how we feel about work. Rather, it refers specifically to the experience in which our emotions become part of the labour process and form an element of the labour power which is sold to the employer. In making this distinction, the concept is immediately steered away from being defined by specific forms of emotional labour, or what is actually being produced, and instead grounds it in the social relation of employment. The same form of emotional work, the same observable display, can be done in both a private and public context. What distinguishes a friendly greeting to a guest in our home from a friendly greeting to a customer in our place of work is the sale of this greeting as part of our labour power.

Hochschild, following this Marxist approach, also distinguishes labour from labour power, the latter being the capacity to work (yet to be realised) rather than the finished product of said work. Labour power is, for Marx, 'the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in the physical form, the living personality, of a human being, capabilities which he sets in motion whenever he produces a use-value of any kind.'[18] Defined by the workers' capability rather than the product of said capabilities, labour power therefore always contains a fundamental

[17] Karl Marx, *Capital: Volume I* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1976) p. 270.
[18] Marx, p. 270.

indeterminacy. In order to realise its potential, employers are compelled to use different tactics and strategies in the management of labour power. Simultaneously, this indeterminacy also provides an opportunity for workers to exercise power over the labour process, creating an antagonistic relationship. For Paul Brook, emotional labour is an inseparable part of labour power, rather than a completely distinguished offshoot.[19] Emotional labour is thus always a part of labour power, which is made up of the physical, mental and emotional capabilities of workers.

Since the publication of *The Managed Heart* many of the debates amongst those who study emotional labour have centred on the limitations or implications of using the Marxist framework that Hochschild adopts. Amongst the varied contributions to the field definitions of emotional labour differ significantly, and divergent theories and attempts at categorisation have resulted in sustained debate and disagreement. This discussion tends to revolve around a number of central issues. One key area of contention is the question of control in the workplace, how much power or influence an employer is able to exert over an employee's emotional displays or capacities. Another is the validity of the separation between work and social life itself, on which much of Hochschild's analysis rests. This is also fuelled by a wider set of arguments around socially necessarily labour time, and whether such a framework remains relevant in an era of increasingly immaterial production. I will now address each of these debates, explaining the approach that has been taken towards them throughout this research, before surveying some of key contributions that have been made more broadly by scholars working on emotional labour.

[19] Paul Brook, 'In critical defence of "emotional labour": refuting Bolton's critique of Hochschild's concept', *Work, Employment and Society*, 23:3 (2009), pp. 531-548.

Alienation and subjectivity

Hochschild's conception of emotional labour draws directly from Marx's theory of alienation, whereby humans are alienated from the products of their labour, the labour process, their fellow humans, and from themselves, through the processes of capitalist production.[20] Marx's theory centres on the notion that our capacity to labour creatively on the world is what marks humans as distinct, and these capacities make up our 'species being', understood as the desire to labour on the world which makes us quantifiably different from other animals. Marx writes that labour is 'a process between man and nature, a process by which man, through his own actions, mediates, regulates, and controls the metabolism between himself and nature', arguing that far from the 'instinctive' forms of labour conducted by animals, human labour is marked by its imaginative and creative input.[21] Comparing the work of a human architect to a bee constructing its cells, he writes 'what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality'.[22] This capacity for, and desire to, act on the external world is fundamental to our understanding of labour power and its potential. Once we are separated from these capacities, by selling our ability to labour productively and creatively to others, we become alienated from them: 'the worker is related to the *product of labor* as to an *alien* object'.[23]

Hochschild uses alienation as a framing for her discussion on the damaging effects of emotional labour, writing about the estrangement and alienation that

---

[20] Paul Brook, 'The Alienated Heart: Hochschild's "Emotional Labour" Thesis and the Anticapitalist Politics of Alienation', *Capital & Class*, 33:7 (2009), pp. 7-31.
[21] Marx, p. 283.
[22] Karl Marx, 'Estranged Labour', *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/labour.htm> [accessed 12 September 2021]
[23] Marx, 'Estranged Labour'.

workers come to experience from their selves. Others, however, have suggested that this interpretation of the impact of emotional labour is overly pessimistic and denies the agency of employees in dictating their own emotional performances. Sharon Bolton and Carol Boyd, authors of one of the most direct critiques of Hochschild's analysis, retain her theatrical framing even whilst disregarding key elements of her political and economic analysis. Hochschild, they argue, offers an overly pessimistic focus on how emotions come under employer control through a process of transmutation, and does not take account of voluntary displays of emotional labour that employees may perform, as well as the 'satisfaction, enjoyment and reward that can be gained from various forms of emotion work'.[24] Employees working in contemporary conditions requiring emotional labour are distinct from factory workers, they claim, because 'they own the means of production', that is, their own bodies, and thus 'the capacity to present a "sincere" or "cynical" performance lies within the emotional labourer.'[25] Hochschild's study, in which 'feelings are processed like raw ore', presents 'organizations as flat, lifeless landscapes' and her pessimistic portrayal, they claim, is one of employees as 'emotionally crippled actors', leaving little room to accommodate the voluntary or unmanaged emotion work which often takes place.[26] They argue instead for an alternative typology of emotional labour, one which recognises 'that only a small proportion of feeling rules and associated motivations come under the "sway of large organizations" and are governed by a corporation's profit motive' and makes room for more positive experiences of emotions at work.[27] It is noticeable that even Hochschild's critics, in their use of

[24] Sharon C. Bolton and Carol Boyd, 'Trolley Dolly or Skilled Emotion Manager? Moving on from Hochschild's Managed Heart', *Work, Employment and Society*, 17.2 (2003), pp. 289–308, (p. 304).
[25] Bolton and Boyd, p. 294.
[26] Hochschild, p. 54; Bolton and Boyd, p. 290.
[27] Bolton and Boyd, p. 290.

‘crippled actors’ and their retention of the deep and surface framework which Hochschild employs, readily maintain the theatrical lens which her analysis offers even whilst dispensing with other elements, highlighting how deeply the theatrical metaphor is tied to the emotional labour scholarship.

Like Bolton and Boyd, Ben Trott takes issues with Hochschild’s critique of the alienating effects of emotional labour, and considers ‘species being’ to be an essentialist notion, categorising it alongside ‘emotional authenticity’ and ‘human nature’ as an ineffectual framework for analysing emotional labour.[28] Steve Vincent, similarly, explicitly avoids the adoption of alienation as a framework, and instead puts forth an analysis whereby emotions at work take three forms:

> first, they are spontaneous and involuntary feelings that we cannot control. Second, they result from our emotional ability to wilfully evoke, manipulate and suppress our feelings. Finally, they are affected by individual and collective normative commitments, including morals, values, attitudes and dispositions, which are both culturally embellished and constitute individual and collective sense of self.[29]

For these authors the use of Marx's theory of alienation, in which the workers labour ‘becomes an object, an *external* existence’ that becomes a power confronting her, limits and confines our analysis of workers’ behaviour where emotional labour is concerned, leading to analysis that is both too totalising in its vision, and damning in its critique.[30]

For Brook however, such contributions ‘have sought to blunt the politics of her [Hochschild's] thesis by rejecting as absolutist her condemnation of workers’

[28] Ben Trott, ‘Affective labour and alienation: Spinoza's materialism and the sad passions of post-Fordist work', Emotion, Space and Society, 25 (2017), pp. 119-126, (p. 119).
[29] Steve Vincent, ‘The Emotional Labour Process: An Essay on the Economy of Feelings’, *Human Relations*, 64.10 (2011), pp. 1369–1392, (p. 1369-1370).
[30] Marx, ‘Estranged Labour’.

alienation'.[31] He defends her work and seeks to expand upon it within the classical Marxist tradition. For Brook, emotional labour is worthy of sustained analysis precisely for what it tells us about alienation under the current phase of capitalism. Hochschild's work, he argues, demonstrates that emotional labour threatens to elicit 'a more profound form of alienation than even Marx imagined', by encouraging the worker to 'fuse' their personal life with their existence at work.[32] If we understand alienation, following Marx, to mean that the product of ones labour becomes something that does not belong to them, but to whomever they have sold their labour power to, then we understand that the consequences for this in the case of emotional labour have psychological implications beyond what have been previously considered. In this respect, Brook writes, 'Marx underestimated the potency of alienation when he stated that "the worker only feels himself when he is not working"'.[33] Emotional labour is able to bridge this gap by bending the employee's psychological and emotional states according to capital's needs. As a result, Brook argues, the corrosive effects of emotional labour spread well beyond the workplace and contribute to emotional alienation in all aspects of our social lives.

Brook concedes that *The Managed Heart* is weakened by the implication that life outside of the workplace is somehow less alienated, and that Hochschild often falls back on the contentious notion that emotion displays taking place in private are somehow more 'real' and 'authentic' than those at work. Thus her analysis cannot sustain itself beyond consideration of paid employment, and confines alienation to social relations located only within the workplace.[34] Instead, Brook argues for an extension of the application of alienation, and a recognition that it is experienced

[31] Brook, 'The Alienated Heart', p. 7.
[32] Brook, 'The Alienated Heart', p. 16.
[33] Brook, 'The Alienated Heart', p. 16.
[34] Brook, 'The Alienated Heart', p. 9.

beyond the workplace and in every realm of life under capitalism. He encourages a reading of the wider social effects of emotional labour which can incorporate the alienated exchanges that take place on off-duty time or outside of the workplace altogether. Following Brook, alienation remains a crucial concept for this research, providing a framework through which to understand the impact of emotional labour both within the workplace and in relation to the broader social relations of emotions, and how they are impacted by the increasing prevalence of such work. Marx himself stresses that alienation is not confined to our relationship with the activity and product of our labour, but also extends to our relationship with our selves, with others and society. Thinking about the conditions of alienated labour as a totality which have repercussions beyond the workplace is important to this project, which seeks to think about the mediation between cultural representations of emotion and those in the workplace, as well as about the resultant impact this has on behavioural expectations for customers and the wider public.

Using alienation in this way also helps us to account for the ways in which subjectivity is shaped by relationships of power and control which are in part exercised in the workplace. For Foucault, subject has two meanings: 'subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggests a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to'.[35] David Knights and Hugh Willmott argue for a greater attention to the question of subjectivity within scholarship on the labour process. Following Foucault, they argue for power and subjectivity to be understood as 'a condition and consequence of one another'.[36] Subjectivity is therefore understood as resulting from

[35] Michel Foucault, 'The Subject and Power' in *Michel Foucault*, ed. L Dreyfus and P Rabinow (Brighton: Harvester, 1982), p. 208.
[36] David Knights and Hugh Willmott, 'Power and Subjectivity at Work: From Degradation to Subjugation in Social Relations', *Sociology,* 23:4 (1989), pp. 535-558, (p. 537).

relations of power which themselves produce ideas of identity. Whilst subjects recognise themselves as 'discrete and autonomous individuals' with 'a clear sense of identity', this understanding is in fact maintained via social practices which are bound to power.[37] Knights and Willmott tie their understanding of subjectivity to Marx via the notion of 'identity fetishism'. By this, they mean the ways in which subjects are produced via disciplinary processes which themselves shape ideas of selfhood, and are rewarded by fidelity to these definitions.[38] Accordingly, identity fetishism mirrors Marx's notion of commodity fetishism - in which the relationship between human labour and its products is obscured - in that it 'disregards the social process through which identity formation and reproduction is accomplished'.[39] This understanding of subjectivity allows us to avoid essentialising tendencies bound up in usage of the concept, such as when it is conceived of as some creative or personal space 'not yet captured by political economy'.[40] By drawing the question of the formation of subjectivity more closely to processes of power enacted through labour, we can see how Knights and Willmott's work, building on Foucault, lends itself to addressing some of the critiques that Brook outlines in regard to Hochschild's work.

Brook also disputes Bolton and Boyd's claims about those performing emotional labour owning the means of production. As cited above, Bolton and Boyd argue that comparing the emotional labour process to that of physical labour is a false comparison because, unlike the factory worker whom Hochschild invokes at the start of her study, emotional labourers own the means of production (their own body and emotional functions), meaning that 'the capacity to present a "sincere" or "cynical"

[37] Knights and Willmott, p. 538.
[38] Knights and Willmott, p. 543-544.
[39] Knights and Willmott, p. 544.
[40] Knights and Willmott, p. 549.

performance' lies within themselves.[41] This claim, Brook argues, fundamentally misrepresents the means of production, and thus gives emotional labourers an 'immensely over-privileged role' by stating that they have complete ownership and control over their labour process.[42] As Brook points out, contexts where emotional labour is present all require fixed capital in the form of buildings, machinery, etc, as well as other support work and staff. Consequently, a worker's emotional labour power is but one, if central, element of the means of production, not unlike the actor who works in collaboration with other theatrical labours to create a performance.

Unpaid and 'unproductive' emotional labour

Another criticism that has been levelled at the emotional labour thesis is that it assigns too much importance to paid work as the site of analysis, at the expense of other areas of capitalist reproduction. For many scholars, however, capital's intrusion into and control over our lives is now so wide-reaching that analysis taking the workplace, or paid work, as a distinct category is inherently flawed. Thus the notion of emotional labour as distinct from emotion work has come under scrutiny, particularly with a growth in analysis of capitalism, and potential avenues for resistance, which posits moving beyond the workplace as the central site of power and struggle. Some feminist writers, such as Kathi Weeks, have appropriated the phrase emotional labour to refer to forms of emotional management and support that women often provide within personal relationships or the family, arguing that to exclude such work from the definition of emotional labour fails to recognise the centrality of this work to the

[41] Bolton and Boyd, p. 294.
[42] Paul Brook, 'In critical defence of "emotional labour"', p. 542.

functioning of capitalism, or the value that it creates by replenishing and reproducing those who then go on to work.[43] Linda McDowell, writing in 2009, argues that the contemporary rise in service work can be explained by the commodification of work which previously took place unpaid, and thus in order to understand it we should 'emphasize continuity' rather than transformation, noting that those who participate in the care of children, the elderly etc, have often been excluded from economic analysis by virtue of their work being unpaid.[44] Her analysis, she writes, would widen the definition of work to recognise this unpaid service that has previously been unacknowledged. The distinction between work and labour has also been criticised by those who argue that the nature of contemporary capitalism renders it increasingly meaningless as such boundaries become unstable. Weeks argues that 'the binaries of productive versus reproductive, waged versus unwaged, and with them, "men's work" versus "women's work" are increasingly inadequate.'[45] Weeks builds upon the work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, who argue that such binaries are unsustainable in an era of 'bio-political' production in which all labour is productive and exploited by capital, not only waged labour.[46] As Johanna Oksala summarises, Hardt and Negri's argument rests on the view that the current phase of capitalism is defined by the convergence of capital with the production of social life itself, thereby collapsing the distinctions between different spheres of life.[47] There is now no outside of work, and our social lives are as implicated in the reproduction of capitalism as our working ones. For Hardt and Negri, in the current epoch the paradigmatic form of labour is

---

[43] Kathi Weeks, 'Life Within and Against Work: Affective Labor, Feminist Critique, and Post-Fordist Politics', *Ephemera*, 7.1 (2007), pp. 233–49.
[44] Linda McDowell, *Working Bodies: Interactive Service Employment and Workplace Identities*, Studies in Urban and Social Change (Chichester, UK ; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009) p. 6.
[45] Weeks, p. 239.
[46] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude – War and Democracy in an Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2004)
[47] Johanna Oksala, 'Affective Labor and Feminist Politics', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 41.2 (2016), pp. 281-303, (p. 283).

immaterial – labour which produces social life itself rather than material commodities. They describe this labour as immeasurable, no longer quantifiable by units of time. Socially necessary labour time then, a key part of Marx's labour theory of value, ceases to be relevant, and with it, the concept of exchange value on which Hochschild's definition rests.

Hardt and Negri use the term 'affective labour' to describe work which results in the production of affect rather than material commodities.[48] For Hardt and Negri, the hegemony of industrial capital has given way to informational capitalism which has led to the rise of immaterial labour, which results in commodities such as knowledge, information and emotion rather than tangible physical goods. Affective labour, as one element of this new immaterial paradigm, refers to work which 'produces or manipulates' affects.[49] Many of the scholars this thesis refers to have discussed affective labour and the concepts do at times converge, as evident in Hardt and Negri's own description of affective labour which references flight attendants as one example, and highlights 'the tendency for employers to highlight education, attitude, character, and "prosocial" behavior as the primary skills employees need' as one indication of affective labour's growing prominence.[50] Here, the similarities with an account of emotional labour are evident. However, the fundamental difference between the two is that affective labour focuses on the *product* which labour produces, the affective response from the consumer or customer, rather than the emotional capabilities used by the worker in the *production process* itself. Whilst some authors do use the terms interchangeably, or use 'affective labour' to refer to the labour process, it remains useful to draw the distinction. Whilst I will return to the

[48] Hardt and Negri, p. 108.
[49] Hardt and Negri, p. 108.
[50] Hardt and Negri, p. 108.

difference between 'affect' and 'emotion' more directly later in this chapter, the focus of this project remains firmly on the use of emotion within the labour process and its resultant impact on the experience and organisation of work itself, therefore emotional labour will remain the key frame of reference used throughout.

One scholar whose work has been useful to this research, despite referring to affective rather than emotional labour, is Emma Dowling. Dowling's first-hand analysis of working in a restaurant has proved valuable in thinking about the unique problems of measurement and valorization that are posed by the need to generate specific responses from both employees and consumers, as will be explored in detail in chapter four of this thesis. Studies of emotional labour have noted the difficulty employers find when recruiting, training and retaining employees with the often under-defined or supposedly elusive emotional skills required for their jobs.[51] Business owners and managers have also had to reckon with this problem. The prolific American restaurateur Danny Meyer, for whom hospitality is the 'most significant and lasting way' for a business to set itself apart, outlines the difficulties of hiring employees who are able to meet his philosophy of 'enlightened hospitality'.[52] Meyer writes that 'training for emotional skills is next to impossible', adding 'either it's there or it isn'''.[53] For Meyer, the difficulty is in making 'the subjective objective, and the implicit explicit'.[54] Yet despite these problems, other studies have illustrated the ways in which capital still finds ways to quantify and measure affective and emotional labour despite its obstacles. In the restaurant which serves as Dowling's site of analysis, she recalls the scoring system of 'mystery diners', and the role that tips

[51] Bolton and Boyd, p. 300.
[52] Danny Meyer, *Setting the Table: Lessons and Inspirations from One of the World's Leading Entrepreneurs* (London: Marshall Cavendish, 2010), p. 63, p. 237.
[53] Meyer, p. 142.
[54] Meyer, p. 148.

play in contributing, psychologically at least, to the way emotional labour is measured on capital's terms.[55]

Dowling uses the term affective rather than emotional labour, following Hardt and Negri, but she uses her experiences as a worker within the restaurant to critique their arguments about the measurability of such labour. For Dowling, the boundaries between wage labour and other forms of work remain clear, as her work is structured directly by capital which in turn alters the work and performance she enacts. The workers interaction with the 'product', being the dining experience, adds value to it directly, making such labour 'constituent' of value rather than attributive.[56] Dowling therefore finds that exchange value remains a useful concept, and with it wage labour. The conflation of waged and unwaged labour, she argues, also poses an analytical problem 'because these different types of activity [...] carry with them different political issues in relation to exploitation and the capital relation'.[57] Thus, whilst Hardt and Negri argue that the 'regulatory rhythms of factory production and its clear divisions of work time and non-work time' are no longer relevant in the current era, Dowling asserts that these divisions still held during her work in the restaurant, and that wage labour remains key because it allows capital to dictate the form which work takes: 'the social relations I engaged in were different in the workplace and outside it.'[58]

Retaining an application of the labour theory of value and the importance of the workplace as a site of analysis is not to deny the multiple ways that our personal relations and private lives are also structured and influenced according to capital. In

---

[55] Emma Dowling, 'Producing the Dining Experience: Measure, Subjectivity and the Affective Worker', *Ephemera*, 7 (2007), pp. 117–32, (p. 126).
[56] Dowling, p. 121.
[57] Dowling, p. 118.
[58] Hardt and Negri, p. 145, Dowling, p. 124.

Dead Man Working, Carl Cederstrom and Peter Fleming note the ongoing ways in which the logic of work, 'haunts''us, 'spilling over into our memories, feelings, habits and worries.'[59] Echoing Hardt and Negri, they argue that 'the real fault-line today is not between capital and labour. It is between capital and life. Life itself is now something that is plundered by the corporation, rendering our very social being into something that makes money for business.'[60] For Oksala, this insatiable urge to 'plunder' our everyday lives demonstrates that the binaries of waged or unwaged work and productive or unproductive labour remain useful for analysis precisely because they allow us to assess just how much these boundaries have been disturbed and where the battles to redefine them might be. She argues that Hardt and Negri's notion of 'biopolitical production' whereby such distinctions are collapsed, 'makes resistance against capitalism hard to imagine because it obfuscates the fact that capitalist societies, and our daily lives in them, are organized through various competing and divergent normativities, which are in constant struggle and tension with one another.'[61] For the purposes of this project, these 'divergent normativities' might also be understood as the competing roles, characters and scripts that we are expected to adhere to.

In focusing on the workplace, scholars have been able to consider the available strategies for resistance in workplaces reliant on emotional labour. Vincent's work on the emotional labour process, for example, looks closely at collective models which offer an alternative to the individual resistance that characterises many other accounts of emotional labour.[62] Oksala argues that a feminist approach to these questions should look at how affective and emotional work is being increasingly commodified,

[59] Cederström and Fleming, p. 71.
[60] Cederström and Fleming, p. 7.
[61] Oksala, p. 289.
[62] Vincent, p. 1376.

privatised, and brought directly under the control of capital. Feminist politics, she argues, should 'resist the prospect' of this happening, not in an attempt to defend 'private authenticity against social reification' but instead in 'an attempt to mediate, shape, and manage our affects through freer and less exploitative social relations'.[63] For Oksala, such a project should not rely on 'the idea of a true self' but should demand 'restrictions on the commodification of our everyday lives in order to create new or different forms of the subject, forms of love, and relationships.'[64]

Culture and authenticity in the experience economy

Returning to Brook's analysis, the framework of alienation remains useful, both because it accounts for the way that changes in our working lives spill over into wider social effects, but also because understanding alienation as an incomplete and ongoing process opens up scope for resistance, or what Ben Trott has termed 'emotional class struggle', around emotional labour.[65] As Brook explains, the process of alienation is contradictory, and opens up the possibility for workers to resist the 'dehumanising' social relations that are built upon a foundation of commodity fetishism.[66] Oksala similarly points to this contradictory nature of alienated emotions under contemporary conditions:

> On the one hand, as modern, capitalist subjects, we are thus interpellated to recognize our 'true' emotions as expressions of our inner and most authentic self. On the other hand, these emotions are detached from us and constructed as interchangeable and measurable things that can be commodified - exchanged in the market and sold as skills.[67]

[63] Oksala, p. 296 - 297.
[64] Oksala, p. 296.
[65] Trott, p. 3.
[66] Brook, p. 22.
[67] Oksala, p. 295.

Connecting these experiences necessitates looking not only at how emotional labour operates within the workplace, but at how these forms of emotional management and presentation then feedback into our broader emotional landscape. To do so, my own research approaches emotion as socially and historically situated, specifically with regards to how theatre and performance have contributed both to the ways in which emotions have been socially interpreted and understood at different historical moments, and the ways in which we are taught to produce and manage the outward representation of them.

Anthropological scholarship is useful in contributing to this understanding of emotions as social relations rather than as intrinsic or purely biological impulses. Catherine Lutz, for example, explains that emotions are often assumed to be universal, identifiable by their 'essence', and separated from social contexts.[68] As a result, 'the cultural meaning system that constitutes the concept of emotion has been invisible'.[69] This tendency to look at emotions in isolation from broader social relations has resulted, she argues, in emotions understood as 'singular events' which remain situated within individuals, rather than as exchanges between them.[70] For Michelle Rosaldao, our individual thought and feeling is largely produced by 'socially organized modes of action and of talk'.[71] The widely adopted analytic framework in which the individual self is equated with 'spontaneity, genuine feeling, privacy, uniqueness, constancy' and 'inner life' is in fact 'a reflection of dichotomies that

---

[68] Catherine A. Lutz, 'Emotion, Thought, and Estrangement: Emotion as a Cultural Category', in *The Emotions: A Cultural Reader*, by Helena Wulff (ed) (Oxford ; New York: Berg, 2007), p. 19-20.
[69] Lutz, p. 19-20.
[70] Catherine A. Lutz, *Unnatural Emotions: Everyday Sentiments on a Micronesian Atoll & Their Challenge to Western Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 212.
[71] Michelle Z. Rosaldo, 'Toward an Anthropology of Self and Feeling', in *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self and Emotion*, ed. by Richard A. Schweder and Robert A. LeVine (Cambridge, London, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 146-147.

constitute the modern Western self.'[72] Drawing on these contributions helps to steer away from essentialist understandings of emotion, which suggest a simple binary between an authentic self and an alienated or commercialised one. As Cinzia Arruzza writes: 'when we address the problem of affects under capitalism, we should be very careful to avoid the risk of thinking that the problem lies in the capitalist intrusion into our hearts, in an opposition between, for example, the authenticity and naturalness of our private affects and their forced and normative display or regulation dictated by capitalist social relations.'[73] She suggests that we might think instead about how our very understanding of the individual, as characterised by the 'privacy of affects', is in fact an understanding that itself emerges from capitalism.[74] Guerrier and Adib draw similar conclusions, noting that although the literature on emotional labour is often characterised by a distinction between 'deep' and 'surface' acting which equates these states with authentic or inauthentic emotions, 'an alternative analysis is that the self is much more fragmented and illusory than this implies and that any notion of an "authentic self" is (merely) a part of late modern, Western, social discourses.'[75] These debates about the applicability of the deep/surface acting dichotomy will be discussed in detail in chapter three, where I consider the potentials and limitations of such a framing.

Eric Shouse makes an important contribution to our understanding of emotions as socially and historically constituted by outlining the difference between feeling, emotion and affect. For Shouse, feelings are understood as personal and biographical,

---

[72] Rosaldo, p. 146-147.
[73] Cinzia Arruzza, 'The Capitalism of Affects', *Public Seminar* (August 2005) <http://www.publicseminar.org/2014/08/the-capitalism-of-affects/> [accessed 28 February 2018]
[74] Ibid.
[75] Yvonne Guerrier and Amel Adib, 'Work at Leisure and Leisure at Work: As study of the Emotional Labour of Tour Reps', *Human Relations*, 56 (11) (2003), pp. 1399–1417 (p. 1401).

emotions as social, and affects as prepersonal.[76] Whilst affect 'is a nonconscious experience of intensity', which Shouse therefore understands as 'abstract', emotion is a projection or display of feeling.[77] This means that emotion, as the outward presentation or performance of feeling, can have a different relation to the actual personal experience of feeling: 'We broadcast emotion to the world; sometimes that broadcast is an expression of our internal state and other times it is contrived in order to fulfil social expectations.'[78] Emotions are therefore both fundamentally social, and fundamentally about performance, including the reception of the spectator. As outlined earlier in my discussion of affective labour, this thesis deals primarily with the social phenomenon of emotion in the workplace and its reception, rather than the 'pre-personal' phenomenon of affect. Accordingly, my research adopts a social, historical and political approach to emotions and employs qualitative methods to do so, leaving the distinctive psychological and scientific based studies which attempt to quantitatively measure and assess the effects of emotional labour outside of its remit.

Theatre and performance also have to contend with questions around the supposed naturalness or authenticity of emotions, and how these are measured or interpreted by audiences. The task of much actor training is precisely to teach performers how to generate seemingly 'authentic' emotional displays for the consumption of their audience, and finding the right methods and tools which will allow them to do so repeatedly on demand. This project draws heavily from the literature on actor training, particularly that which falls under the Stansislavskian tradition or which engages directly with his project to systematise and codify actor training. In *Performing Emotions* Peta Tait defines emotions as social relations and

---

[76] Eric Shouse 'Feeling, Emotion, Affect', *M/C Journal,* 8.6 (2005) <http://journal.mediaculture.org.au/0512/03shouse.php>
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.

argues that in acting, 'they are neither authentic or inauthentic; their degree of truthfulness is a social belief.'[79] Erin Hurley, similarly, in her account of *Theatre and Feeling*, argues for an understanding of emotions as fundamentally relational, and cautions that it is precisely this relational aspect which we must keep in mind when considering how theatre both produces and transmits emotion.[80] For Tait, truthful emotions are those which are deemed socially appropriate ones, and theatre has an important role to play in shaping the public perception of how to appropriately perform and convey emotional states. Tait studies closely the work of both Konstantin Stanislavski and Anton Chekhov, and in doing so examines the social meaning of emotions, with particular attention to gender. The work of these theatrical practitioners is significant, she argues, because 'realist theatre is implicated in the emotional beliefs of Western culture and therefore observable in everyday social interaction and behaviour'.[81] Tait argues that the theatre has often been overlooked as an important site for studying the construction of social emotions, and she cites Hochschild's work specifically as one example of other disciplines which 'draw on Stanislavski's understandings to interpret concepts of depth while ignoring their theatrically specific construction'.[82] Thus she draws a direct connection between the management and production of theatrical emotion and how emotion is understood in wider society, making her insights indispensable for the current project. I will expand upon these insights in chapter two, where I trace the emergence of Stanislavskian realism and its relationship to broader cultural notions of authentic emotional performance.

---

[79] Peta Tait, *Performing Emotions: Gender, Bodies, Spaces, in Chekhov's Drama and Stanislavski's Theatre* (Aldershot ; Burlington Vt: Ashgate, 2002), p. 170.
[80] Eric Hurley, *Theatre and Feeling* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 20.
[81] Tait, p. 169.
[82] Tait, p. 4.

The existing literature on emotional labour also often indirectly points to parallels with the work of actors, elements which this thesis will pick up in greater detail. Yvonne Guerrier and Amil Adib's article on the work of holiday tour reps, for example, draws conclusions from which connections with the actor are evident. They discuss how the blurring of work and leisure in tour rep jobs complicates the relationship between the employee and their role. Holiday reps, they write, 'buy into' lifestyles that they equate to their authentic selves as a means of dealing with the negative aspects of work, which in turn allows them to develop more workplace discipline.[83] In Axel Haunschild and Doris Ruth Eikhof's survey of German actors, similar points are made: 'work relationships in theatre have a much more friendship-like character than in other companies and thus it is relatively easy for the actors to masque self-marketing activities as "interacting with friends."'[84] They also highlight how the idea of 'art for art's sake' as a professional value helps to discipline actors. Despite the many pressures they face as a result of their work, 'if push comes to shove they understand themselves as actors first and will prioritise their career over private life.'[85] Similarly for Guerrier and Adib, tour reps understand their relationship with their work as 'a socially embedded one rather than purely economic', and this helps them to deal with difficult customers or complaints.[86]

Other studies of emotional labour have dedicated specific attention to the theatrical elements that characterise the work. These aspects have themselves generated debate. Robin Leidner's work, for example, draws attention to the role of

---

[83] Guerrier and Adib, p. 1399.
[84] Axel Haunschild and Doris Ruth Eikhof, 'Bringing Creativity to Market: Actors as Self-Employed Employees', in *Creative Labour: Working in the Creative Industries*, ed. by Alan McKinlay and Chris Smith, Critical Perspectives on Work and Employment (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), pp. 156–73, (p. 164).
[85] Axel Haunschild and Doris Ruth Eikhof, p. 167.
[86] Guerrier and Adib, p. 1408.

scripts, arguing that they serve as attempts to standardise interactions between staff and customers in a way that mirrors the routinization of manufacturing work.[87] Leidner also argues that the use of scripts offers some psychological safeguards for employees, protecting them from the emotional estrangement that Hochschild identifies as a danger of emotional labour.[88] Routinized emotional labour can, she claims, 'help workers to do their job, can boost their confidence, can limit the demands made upon them, can give them leverage over service-recipients, and can offer psychic protection from demeaning aspects of the job'.[89] This is because the routinization of the emotional labour process via the use of methods such as scripting allows workers to create a 'shield' or a distance between their performance at work and their understanding of their own, private selves.[90] As a result, routinization and standardization can in fact be seen to aid workers in avoiding personal consequences for mistreatment at work, or for taking negative interactions on board personally. Phil Taylor and Peter Bain, in contrast, characterise the predominance of scripts in call centre work as representing 'an unprecedented level of attempted control', and document the ways in which emotional labourers, in resistance to these attempts, 'develop sophisticated ways of wrestling back control when talking to customers'.[91] As I will argue throughout this thesis, the parallels with actors and theatrical labour are rooted in a concern over questions of authenticity which are raised by emotional labour.

Recent sociological research has addressed the question of authenticity as it appears within commercial settings, drawing important links between the increasingly

---

[87] Robin Leidner, *Fast Food Fast Talk: Service Work and the Routinization of Everyday Life* (University of California Press, 1993: Berkeley) p. 5.
[88] Leidner, p. 14, Hochschild, p. 187.
[89] Leidner, p. 220.
[90] Leidner, p. 175.
[91] Taylor and Bain, p. 109, p. 113.

prevalent demand for genuine, authentic experiences in leisure and hospitality, and how these demands are met through the performances of employees and customers alike. In his study of Blues music clubs in Chicago, David Grazian notes that globalisation of culture has led to a paradoxical pursuit from consumers for experiences that appear 'uncommercial and therefore less affected by the strong hand of the marketplace'.[92] When this is met with the 'well timed response' of local authorities and businesses, it results in an upsurge of establishments catering to these desires, leading to the deliberate manufacture of supposedly authentic experiences.[93] Adam Alston has referred to this model as the 'experience industry', defined as 'businesses that produce and usually look to profit from the provision of memorable or stimulating experiences'.[94] David Miles has theorised the 'experience society', in which experience becomes 'the new ideological terrain of consumer society', arguing that what he calls 'experiential consumption' has hugely accelerated in recent decades, with the links between identity and consumption becoming ever stronger.[95] These arguments are particularly notable in relation to chapter five of this thesis, which explores the impact that the theatricalization of service spaces, and the performative labour contained within them, has on consumers and audiences. It is here that the thesis is able to address Brook's critique that Hochschild's own analysis of emotional labour does not extend to consequences beyond the workplace.

Our understanding of emotion as socially and historically situated also help us in our framing of authenticity as a concept. In their work on 'foodies' and foodie

---

[92] David Grazian, *Blue Chicago: The Search for Authenticity in Urban Blues Clubs* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 6-7.
[93] Grazian, p. 166.
[94] Adam Alston, 'Audience Participation and Neoliberal Value: Risk, Agency and Responsibility in Immersive Theatre', *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 18.2 (2013), pp. 128–38, (p. 131).
[95] Steven Miles, *The Experience Society: How Consumer Capitalism Reinvented Itself* (London: Pluto, 2021) p. 1.

culture, Johnston and Baumann argue that authenticity is never something which is inherent, but is rather 'both socially constructed and relational'.[96] Something is authentic when it can be defined as such in relation to something else, specifically something which has been collectively understood as inauthentic. Rather than something which represents innate or ahistorical qualities, authenticity is therefore always historically negotiated according to various conditions. For Eva Illouz, authenticity is today tied to the ways in which emotional life under late capitalism has become increasingly entwined with consumer practices.[97] In her reading, authenticity is simultaneously understood as a 'psychological-cultural motivating structure', shaped by consumer capitalism, and as a performance of the self via interaction with objects and commodities: 'Authenticity is the experience generated by the co-production of emotions and consumer practices.'[98]

By thinking about our understanding of authenticity as inherently linked to current forms of capitalist social relations we can more closely draw connections between the increasing cultural emphasis on authenticity and particular business models. For Alston, the rise of experience based business models as described above find themselves compatible with the recent growth of immersive theatre practices, a form of theatre which he claims is 'particularly susceptible to co-optation by a neoliberal market'.[99] Similarly, Will Davies has recently outlined how the rise of 'behavioural economics' has led to the ideal of the social being instrumentalised by capital.[100] Richard Ocejo adds to this analysis of the experience industry by

---

[96] Josée Johnston and Shyon Baumann, *Foodies: Democracy and Distinction in the Gourmet Foodscape*, Cultural Spaces Series (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 70.
[97] Eva Illouz, 'Introduction: Emodities or the making of emotional commodities' in *Emotions as Commodities: Capitalism, Consumption and Authenticity*, ed. Eva Illouz (Oxon, New York: Routledge, 2018)
[98] Illouz, p. 7.
[99] Alston, p. 128.
[100] Will Davies, *The Happiness Industry: How the Government and Big Business Sold Us Well-Being* (London, New York: Verso, 2016) p. 184.

considering the employees who are actively attracted to working for them. Ocejo's study looks at upscale cocktail bars, men's barbershops, whole animal butcher shops and distilleries in an attempt to understand why new iterations of these jobs are becoming an attractive prospect for young workers. He writes that these jobs which were once classic, manual labor jobs have been through both a deskilling and reskilling phase, and are now recoded as 'cool', 'creative' opportunities.[101] Ocejo argues that such jobs offer 'vocations, or callings, providing meaning through materially oriented, craft-based manual labour, in front of knowing peers and an accepting public.'[102] The performance of this labour in front of a public is key to their desirability, he argues:

> Why are there no 'cool' plumbers, electricians, or maintenance workers? Perhaps because they usually do their work in confined, private settings. A central aspect of these new elite manual labor jobs is that they are performed publicly, in front of a knowing audience. Doing so and being transparent in their work practices is an important part of the philosophical underpinnings of their job. And for them validation for a skilled performance is integral to achieving status through work.[103]

In contrast, those who fulfil the 'backstage' roles in the same workplaces are often racialised minorities who lack an interest in the 'cultural repertoires' of such work.[104] Dowell, similarly, argues that the 'bodily performance' of the server is a key part of exchange in service occupations, work which is defined by 'exchange based on the manipulation of emotions and the satisfaction of desire'.[105] McDowell writes that in an era of 'aestheticized work', 'performativity, as much as credentials or skills, became recognised as a key aspect of personal identity', and that concern with

---

[101] Richard E. Ocejo, *Masters of Craft: Old Jobs in the New Urban Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), p. 18.
[102] Ocejo, p. 18.
[103] Ocejo, p. 262.
[104] Ocejo, p. 155.
[105] McDowell, p. 64.

‘image, appearance and the ability to convince’ have become essential parts of interactive service exchange.[106]

Scholarship from theatre and performance studies also explicitly highlights the overlap between contemporary service and hospitality work and performance. Broderick Chow's work on the actor as the ideal ‘self manager’ covers important historical ground, comparing practices that are an increasing characteristic of work under neoliberalism with the long term working conditions of actors, and charting these alongside the changes ushered in by Stanislavski, arguing that ‘psychologically-based actor training stems from an ideology of individual self-management – mental, physical, and emotional – that accompanies the emergent practice of management in the twentieth century.’[107] Similarly, Jonathan Pitches’ book *Science and the Stanislavski Tradition,* which will be a key source for my exploration of character in chapter four, expands upon Stanislavski's industrial connections, drawing out in greater detail the similarities between his systematised approach to actor training and the scientific management of Taylor, and suggesting that Stanislavski's methods were an attempt towards ‘Taylorisation of the body’.[108] Drawing directly from the concept of emotional labour, in her work on the ‘aesthetic labour’ of the actor's body, Roanna Mitchell develops the notion of the ‘body as servant’, requiring ‘embodied capacities and attributes’ from the performer.[109] She argues that such ‘re-shaping of the body’ inevitably also involves ‘re-shaping of the cognitive processes’.[110] These important contributions towards understanding the political and ideological aspects of acting and performer training will be central to this thesis, as it looks the historical

---

[106] McDowell, p. 33.
[107] Broderick D.V. Chow, ‘An Actor Manages: Actor Training and Managerial Ideology’, *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*, 5.2 (2014), pp. 131–43, (p. 132).
[108] Jonathan Pitches, *Science and the Stanislavsky Tradition of Acting.* (Routledge, 2009), p. 44.
[109] Mitchell, p. 60.
[110] Mitchell, p. 71.

convergence between specific forms of theatrical realism, and approaches to authentic performance in neoliberal work.

Methodological framework and disciplines

As I have outlined above, this project argues that theatre and performance studies can offer unique insights into questions of emotional and performative labour. Whilst this project will draw specifically from histories of Stanislavskian actor training and its role within the development of Western theatre industries, it also draws more broadly from the approaches offered by performance studies, a field which has decisively expanded the meaning of performance to incorporate social life beyond the limits of the stage or the performing arts. For Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, performance studies is a discipline which 'takes performance as an organising principle for the study of a wide range of behaviour', and which opens up limitless subjects of study within this framing.[111] Richard Schechner, whose work in the 1980s and 1990s was integral to the emergence of performance studies as a field distinct from theatre or drama, claims that the underlying notion of this approach 'is that any action that is framed, presented, highlighted, or displayed is a performance.'[112] Emerging as a distinct field of research in the late twentieth-century, Schechner also contends that performance studies emerged at this time 'as a response to an increasingly performative world', and offered an interdisciplinary approach which combined this widely applicable performance theory with the social sciences.[113]

---

[111] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'Performance Studies', in *The Performance Studies Reader* ed. by Henry Bial (London, New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 43.
[112] Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 2.
[113] Schechner, *Performance Studies*, p. 4.

Schechner defines performance as behaviour which is 'twice-behaved', otherwise referred to as 'restored behaviors.'[114] Restored behaviour describes living behaviour that can be 'rearranged or reconstructed', comparable to the way in which 'a film director treats a strip of film.'[115] This behaviour exists separately from those doing the behaving, and can thus be 'stored, transmitted, manipulated, transformed'.[116] This understanding of performance encourages particular attention to be paid to the ways in which behaviour is taught and rehearsed, drawing our focus towards forms of training and acknowledging that performances are reconstructed and rehearsed rather than innate or original. Accordingly, another key principle for Schechner is that 'the self can act in/as another; the social or transindividual self is a role or set of roles'.[117] This understanding is integral to my project, which attempts to understand the ways in which the performances demanded of those performing emotional labour are constructed, communicated and repeated. Schechner notes, 'it isn't that a performer stops being himself or herself when he or she becomes another - multiple selves coexist in an unresolved dialectical tension'.[118] The acknowledgement of multiple sets of selves or roles can help us to determine how the role demanded by a job might draw from, come into conflict with, or contradict the roles one plays in other aspects of life, much like the 'competing and divergent normativities' which Oksala, as earlier noted, claimed are in constant struggle and tension with one another.[119]

---

[114] Richard Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology*, (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), p. 36.
[115] Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology*, p. 36.
[116] Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology,* p. 46.
[117] Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology,* p. 36.
[118] Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology*, p. 6.
[119] Oksala, p. 53.

This framework, as offered by performance studies, allows us to consider emotional labour *as* performance and examine how the behaviours that make up these performances are constructed and reproduced. It also allows for a more complex understanding of the way that employees understand and react to the demand for such performances. Much of the emotional labour literature is preoccupied with debates around the concepts of 'real self' or 'authentic self', which run the risk of ahistoricism or essentialism. Using a framework of theatricality and performativity, in contrast, 'makes it increasingly difficult to sustain a distinction between appearances and reality, facts and make-believe, surfaces and depths. Appearances are actualities – neither more nor less so than what lies behind or beneath appearances. Social reality is constructed through and through.'[120] Instead then, we can ask questions about how ideas about selfhood and authenticity are being constructed and represented through the use of emotional labour, and offer an analysis which can go beyond the deep/surface acting dichotomy of Hochschild's analysis, in which deep acting is defined as 'a natural result of working on feeling; the actor does not try to seem happy or sad but rather expresses spontaneously, as the Russian director Constantin Stanislavski urged, a real feeling that has been self-induced', whereas surface acting is when 'we try to change how we outwardly appear […] the action is in the body language, the put-on sneer, the posed shrug, the controlled sigh.'[121] As disciplines with particular interest in how exterior emotional performances and representations have been shaped throughout history, theatre and performance are well placed to interrogate notions of 'authentic' performances and how these are constructed under

[120] Schechner, *Performance Studies,* p. 19.
[121] Hochschild, p. 35.

varying contexts and conditions. This forms the basis of the argument which is put forth in chapter three.

As well as these conceptual approaches, performance studies also offers specific methods and tools with which to address the research questions for the current project. Denzin describes how, in the 1980s and 1990s, 'performance ethnography' came to fruition by adopting elements from its two parent disciplines: 'From social science, it inherited an emphasis on ethnography; from the arts and humanities, it inherited an emphasis on performance and interpretation.'[122] This new field was developed and advanced in particular by the work of American scholars: Schechner, along with his anthropologist collaborator Victor Turner, at New York University, and later Dwight Conquergood at Northwestern University. Both institutions were also amongst the first to establish dedicated performance studies departments, partly distinguished from the more text based approaches of theatre and drama precisely by these methodological innovations. For Schechner, the collaborative approach of performance ethnography promises to enrich both parent disciplines: 'Theater people can help anthropologists identify what to look for in a training or performance situation; and anthropologists can help theater people see performances within the context of specific social systems.'[123] Performance ethnography uses the methods imported from anthropology in order to study one's own culture or behaviour, allowing for 'a Brechtian distance' from the object of study which invites 'criticism, irony and personal commentary as well as sympathetic participation'.[124] Additionally, in recognising that the fieldworker is also performing, this scholarship can move beyond the tendency in anthropology to distance oneself

[122] Norman K. Denzin, *Performance Ethnography: Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Culture* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003), p. 29.
[123] Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology*, p. 25.
[124] Schechner, *Performance Studies*, p. 2.

from the culture of study. As Turner explains, 'Anthropologists usually see and hear but try not to interfere with the life they immerse themselves in among initially "alien" cultural milieu'.[125] In contrast, Denzin argues, critical and reflexive performance ethnography 'dialectically situates the researcher and those he or she studies within capitalist culture, in a dialogue or exchange that reframes and reposes the "question of understanding itself"'.[126] By employing a performance ethnography framework for this research, I have prioritised ethnography and observation in my analysis, as well as a reflexive approach to my role as researcher in the environments which I participated in. The methods offered by this approach have also, crucially, allowed me to think critically about how social performances are constructed and negotiated collectively – an approach which has been central to developing my arguments about how standards of emotional authenticity are understood, rehearsed and received.

My research therefore draws from the methods of performance ethnography to negotiate a materialist approach to the phenomenon of emotional labour with an understanding of its dramaturgical and performative aspects. For Denzin, these approaches are already inherently intertwined:

> The ways in which the world is not a stage are not easy to specify, and global capitalism is one reason this is so. Indeed, if everything is already performative, staged, commodified, and dramaturgical, […] then the dividing lines between person and character, between performer and actor, between stage and setting, between script and text, and between performance and performativity disappear.[127]

However, he cautions that the 'dramaturgical model' encouraged here brings with it the dangers of oversight, and is often lacking 'any sustained consideration of the

---

[125] Victor Turner in *Between Theater and Anthropology,* Schechner, p. xi.
[126] Denzin, p. 33.
[127] Denzin, p. 26.

politics of gendered, global capitalist culture. It is as if culture and its performances stand outside political economy and the structures of neoliberalism and the state apparatus.'[128] This resonates with Boyle's work, in which he identifies a lack of direct engagement with questions of economics within the literature on theatrical labour, arguing that 'attempts to describe how capitalist society impinges on performance tend to look past or even overstate the specific economic relation performance has to capital.'[129] Dave Beech's work *Art and Value* is an important contribution to the integration of political economy and the arts. Although he focuses almost exclusively on visual art, accepting that theatre needs its own dedicated analysis, his work is useful for moving beyond an analysis which looks only at an art form's relationship with capitalism, but instead considers the 'actual economic relations' an artist has with capital, rather than considering the ideological position expressed by their work.[130] This research is aware of these problems, and integrates an attention to the economics of service work within its mixed methods approach, building on Hochschild's own use of Marxist value theory to ask how value is being created or circulating in organisations employing emotional labour.

In a response to Beech's book, Boyle seeks to extend his analysis to an understanding of theatrical production. Boyle begins by critiquing the way that Marx has been used (and abused) in recent scholarship within the fields of theatre and performance, specifically targeting Virno's misrepresentation of Marx's position on immaterial labour by pointing out that Marx did not ignore immaterial production, or treat it as inherently different to the production of physical commodities.[131] The use of

[128] Denzin, p. 29.
[129] Boyle, p. 6.
[130] Dave Beech, *Art and Value: Art's Economic Exceptionalism in Classical, Neoclassical and Marxist Economics*, (Chicago: Haymarket, 2016), p. 28.
[131] Boyle, p. 15.

Virno's work within the field is then demonstrative of a misapplication of Marx more broadly, and this is characterised by what Boyle argues is a wide take up in scholarship of the links between performance and neoliberal capitalism, but without analysis of the relation with capital in the production of theatre itself.[132] Here he takes up where Beech leaves off, and explains how theatre can be at once both productive and unproductive labour, excluded from the general exceptional character of visual art that Beech outlines. Theatrical labour, when hired by an entrepreneur for the sake of surplus value, falls under the social relations of capitalist production.[133] Boyle uses the term 'theatre', then, to talk about performance as organised along capitalist lines, and referring to its institutionalisation and commodification. This provides important materialist grounding for the application of these questions of political economy to theatrical labour and performance. More directly, political economy is needed to fully understand the importance of emotional labour in today's service based economies.

Three approaches are thus used to draw the study together. The first is to situate the convergence of service work and its theatrical elements within a historical analysis: paying close attention to how dominant modes of theatrical production and management, particularly in relation to the actor, have emerged, and reading these developments alongside transformations in Western economies which have resulted in the growth of the service sector and resulting management strategies. The second involves working with concepts and methods provided through the interdisciplinary field of performance studies, specifically, an understanding of 'performance' which can be applied to the workplace. Thirdly, the research draws on political economy to look closely at the function of emotional labour in the wider capitalist context and

[132] Boyle, p. 1.
[133] Boyle, p. 16.

what role it plays in the creation and circulation of capital. Using these approaches in tandem offers new pathways to answering questions about the increasing intersection of performance and labour. As outlined, the research is interdisciplinary in nature, drawing from sociology, political economy, history and anthropology alongside the foundation of theatre and performance scholarship. Bringing these various approaches into dialogue with one another avoids a compartmentalising of disciplines, allowing instead for a holistic understanding of the relationship between performance and emotional labour.

Performance studies and the use of performance ethnography is often framed as critical or politically committed scholarship. Schechner, for example, argues that performance studies is 'actively involved in social practices and advocacies', and Conquergood has written of the 'radical promise of performance studies research'.[134] Despite these statements, it is important to note how performance has been taken up beyond researchers who share this mission. Business and management literature and scholarship is saturated with theatrical references and metaphors, from employee handbooks that tell workers to 'set the stage' and treat the checkout as 'the grand finale', to the widely cited claim by Joseph Pine and James Gilmore that 'work is theatre'.[135] The theatrical lens offers great advantages to businesses, as noted by Morgan, Watson and Hemmington who employ notably violent language to explain that using this metaphor means 'the consumers are no longer seen as a target to be captured, hit or penetrated, but an audience to be entertained, involved and drawn into

[134] Schechner, *Performance Studies,* p. 2; Dwight Conquergood, 'Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research', *TDR: The Drama Review*, 46:2 (2002), pp. 145-156, (p. 145).
[135] Trader Joe's employee manual, *The Employers Handbook* <https://www.theemployerhandbook.com/files/2016/11/NagleULP.pdf> [access 24 February 2021]; B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, *The Experience Economy* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2011), p. XXV.

participating in the drama.'[136] The implications of this for how customers are evaluated, treated and expected to perform will be explored throughout the research. This research is primarily concerned with the social impact that such work has on those who experience and perform it, and shares concern about the long-term impact of emotional labour on society and social relations more broadly. Labour scholarship is foregrounded throughout the thesis in recognition that it is the actions and agency of those working in these environments which provides the clearest opportunity to challenge or alter some of the cultural and political norms which are being established through such employment practices.

Data sources, methods and sample

The research focuses on three main areas where performance can be used to generate insight into emotional labour: the worker's self; management and the organisation of labour; and the role of the customer or audience. Each of the three empirical chapters will address specific questions about the relationship between performance and theatrical forms and labour practices in the service sector: How are ideas of selfhood and authenticity, integral to dominant Western acting, articulated and understood in these workplaces? How is emotional labour managed or measured, and how have the performative aspects of it shaped the labour process? In what ways are customers at these businesses also being encouraged to act or perform in certain ways?

The research draws from a number of sources and employs multiple methods to generate data. This includes the analysis of practitioner texts (such as Stanislavski's

[136] Michael Morgan, Pamela Watson, and Nigel Hemmington, 'Drama in the Dining Room: Theatrical Perspectives on the Foodservice Encounter', *Journal of Foodservice*, 19 (2008), pp. 111-118, (p. 113).

works), historical sources (theatre publications and biographies), and business literature, (training documents, company PR and recruitment literature). These will be cross read against fieldwork looking at two specific case studies, the high street coffee chain Pret A Manger, and the high-end steakhouse restaurant Hawksmoor. This approach allows me to compare what businesses say about their customer service and how this is performed in practice, as well as comparing this directly with methods of training and production used within the theatre industry itself. This research will also allow me to trace historically where and how certain forms of acting and performance have begun to intersect with business practices.

However, as the project is primarily concerned with *performance* it is also necessary to witness and experience performances of emotional labour, as important sources of data and insight. This consists of reflexive participant observation as a customer: I interacted and engaged with the performances of staff at various branches of the two companies chosen for my case studies. Detailed notes of these encounters were made, including the behaviour exhibited by staff, my own behaviour and feelings in the settings, what interactions took place, and how these compared to one another. In keeping with Denzin's understanding that 'we inhabit a performance-based, dramaturgical culture' in which the boundaries between formal theatre and everyday performance are increasingly blurred, these encounters are to be understood as public performances. As my participation was limited to that of a customer, and not an employee, I was not subject to any personal or private information about employees. As such, this method did not warrant the same ethical considerations that 'covert research' as an employee would require and permission was not sought from those who are being observed or interacting with me as a customer. In order to protect

privacy, however, individual branches or locations of stores have been omitted, and names or identifying characteristics of specific staff members are not used.

In addition to the data generated through observation, interviews have been conducted with employees at both Pret A Manger and Hawksmoor. Whilst the experiences and narratives of interviewees provide important insight and knowledge for the project, a critical approach has been maintained in interpreting the interviews. The project as a whole is interested in unpicking and critiquing of notions of 'real' or 'authentic' self, and is also engaged with examining the increasingly performative elements of life under neoliberalism. As such it takes a critical view of approaches to research which rest on presumptions of generating 'truth' merely through the insights of interviewees. As Denzin notes:

> there is no essential self or private, real self behind the public self. There are only different selves, different performances, different ways of being a gendered person in a social situation. These performances are based on different narrative and interpretive practices. These practices give the self and the person a sense of grounding or narrative coherence. There is no inner of deep self that is accessed by the interview or narrative method.[137]

He thus rejects a model of interviews in which the researcher attempts to 'uncover' experiences and their meanings that reveal 'the hidden self', and the increasing reliance on first-personal narratives as a site of personal meaning.[138]

A strategic sample of two workplaces has been selected in order to draw cross-contextual analysis from the data and illustrate wider tendencies in the service sector. The first workplace, British based company Pret A Manger has been selected as a paradigmatic example of how emotional labour is used in relatively low paid, low skilled work. It is a British company that has since expanded to the North American

[137] Denzin, p. 86.
[138] Denzin, p. 63.

market, meaning that it traverses the transatlantic economic context this study is concerned with. In addition, there is a wealth of literature and documentation of Pret's business and recruitment practices including interviews with the CEO, journalistic investigations, and their own publicly available documentation. This provides ample secondary literature to use in conjunction with and enrich the ethnographic research. It is difficult, however, to draw generalisable conclusions solely from the type of emotional labour that is performed at Pret, which is characterised by brief interactions with customers and a highly structured work process that requires little creative input from employees. Where Pret can provide data which contributes to a macro understanding of emotional labour and its functioning within large multinational corporations, the second company, Hawksmoor, has been selected to provide examples of how emotional labour is managed and directed in a more luxury focused market. At Hawksmoor there is durational contact between employees and customers, where the emotional labour makes up an important component of the overall product being offered, and this labour also requires a degree of input or improvisation from the employee's performance.

Although the data sets available at both companies differ, both taken together provide a rounded view of the way that the demands for such labour operate and are experienced. At Pret, eleven in depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with individual staff, across a range of store branches in London. These interviews provided detailed and thorough accounts of the working conditions and management practices in place at Pret. These could then be read alongside the extensive literature about Pret's business model which is available in the public domain and via journalistic investigations. At Hawksmoor, only two interviews with staff members could be obtained. However, I was granted access to an in depth, semi-structured

interview with founder and owner of the chain Will Beckett. Via Beckett, I was also given a copy of the Hawksmoor training manual for new staff members. Thus, whilst Pret as a case study has provided more data on the experiences of employees themselves, Hawksmoor has given me greater access to managerial thinking and decision making, as well as documentation of how these designs are entrenched in the organisation practically. As well as these two case studies, several other examples are used throughout the thesis which help to explore and expand the analysis. The American grocery store Trader Joe's is cited, with its internal staff manual used as additional evidence for how certain expectations are communicated to staff via a dramaturgical model and theatrical language. In the final chapter I also conduct performance analysis of two immersive theatre productions, and use the employee manual from one of these companies, Gingerline, to further elucidate the connections between theatrical production and rehearsal, and service work.

In addition to the interviews, I used data from the website *Glassdoor* for both Pret and Hawksmoor. *Glassdoor* is a website where current and former employees of organisations can leave 'reviews' and detailed accounts of their salaries, working conditions and recommendations to those considering taking up posts in the same places. The website allows users to submit anonymously, and thus positions itself as an honest account of the realities of working for companies and institutions. For both Hawksmoor and Pret, I took a sample set of seventy employee reviews from the website, and cross referenced these against the interviews and other data I had collected on both companies. Although many more reviews for Pret were available, this number was selected as it was the total number of reviews available for Hawksmoor at the time the data was collected. The *Glassdoor* data is notable not only for the accounts it provides (which largely corroborated that reported in interviews)

but because it is an example of the increasing reflexivity of working lives which is also a feature of demands for emotional labour. *Glassdoor* positions former and potential employees almost as customers, with the choice of who to sell their labour power to at least partially determined by recommendation from others. As explored throughout this thesis, the emergence of such a platform speaks to the broader dynamics of subjectivation which are impacted by the changing expectations in terms of people's relationship to work and the workplace.

Conclusion

Taken together, both case studies, and data ranging from employee manuals, to interviews, to ethnographic accounts of interactions at these workplaces, provide a view of emotional labour from the shop floor to the highest levels of design and decision making, allowing my analysis to range from the sense of self which such jobs are cultivating within workers (chapter three), to the ways in which conceptions of character and authenticity provide organisational steers for management (chapter four), to the way in which such environments are having broader impact on our understanding of emotional performance via the coercion of audience/customer performance (chapter five).

This chapter has laid out the rationale for the research and its various departure points within multiple fields and research disciplines. It has elaborated on some of the key debates or points of tension within scholarship on emotional labour, as well as identifying some of the broader political critiques which structure discussions about work under cotemporary capitalism. It has also laid out the methodological choices made during the research process, and the way that the

various types of data have been brought together to provide an all-rounded study of the functioning of emotional labour, which takes into account questions of subjective formation, political economy and cultural history. Before proceeding to the empirical analysis in chapter three to five, the next chapter will first lay out some of the historical work of the development of emotional realism within the theatre itself, and its links to specific forms of theatrical management. It will consider the development of Stanislavskian based acting and its particular trajectory within American and British theatre, as well as the implications for cultural understandings of authentic emotional performance, in order to elaborate on the ways in which these particular theatrical forms have come to influence or find traction with approaches to emotion management in the workplace. This will then provide groundwork for the application and comparison of theatrical labour to contemporary forms within the service sector.

Chapter two: Stanislavskian realism and authentic character

Introduction

In the previous chapter I noted that Hochschild, whose theory of emotional labour is central to this project, drew explicitly from the ideas of the Russian director and actor Constantin Stanislavski in her theorisation of the different modes of emotional labour, particularly in relation to her employment of the terms 'deep' and 'surface' acting. These connote the respective levels of authentic attachment to the roles workers are performing, and the feeling states they enact.[1] In Hochschild's understanding of Stanislavski, attachment to the role is determined by how much of the actors' 'real' feeling has been 'self-induced' in performance: deep acting is the spontaneous expression of these feelings, whereas surface acting involves a greater degree of separation between performer and role, in which they actively 'put on' or pretend to the emotions being enacted.[2] I have also referred to the ways in which the figure of the actor has been used as both a symbol and a reference point in analysis of the changing conditions of work under neoliberal capitalism, and understood as historically working under conditions to which other categories of workers now increasingly find themselves subject, such as precarity and project based work. In this chapter I will lay foundations for elaborating on the connections between acting in the Stanislavskian tradition and emotional labour by considering the development of professional Western actor training and its relationship with industry. I argue that the specific, and still dominant, approaches to acting ushered in by Stanislavski are directly connected to the actors' conditions of employment and their status within the

[1] Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1983), p. 36.
[2] Hochschild, p. 35, p. 36.

theatrical workforce. The reorganisation of training in accordance with the demands of industry, as signalled by the ascendance of Stanislavski's methods, I will argue, has had resultant effects on conceptions of both the actor as subject, and emotional subjectivity more broadly. The influence of these dominant modes of theatrical performance have had an important impact on our understanding of realism and emotional management both on and off stage, as the rest of this thesis will go on to consider.

In the account presented here, Stanislavski's contribution is contextualised within the specific historical conditions of its development. Disputing prominent attitudes that cast this kind of psychological realism as 'natural', or the default mode of performance, this chapter instead presents a materialist account of its rise – noting the economic and industrial factors within theatre at the time that allowed Stanislavski's methods to become dominant across training establishments in Britain and America. These conditions are marked by artistic, social and political influences. As the eighteenth European bourgeois drama, reflecting a historical turn towards individualism, gave way to the development of Naturalism and a 'new' realism in the late 19th century, this lead to concurrent changes in the theatre industry itself. New forms of drama emerged alongside new modes of theatrical production, dispelling the craft-based models that previously existed, with theatre reshaping itself as it became more entwined with capitalism. These developments are also related to how broader understandings of authentic emotional performance become socially transmitted via stage and (importantly) television drama in the late twentieth century. The expansion of drama, and realism, via the accessibility of television in the early twentieth century, also led to an extension of dramatic modes and forms into everyday life.[3] In keeping

[3] Raymond Williams, 'Lecture on Realism', *Screen*, 18.1 (1977), pp. 61–74.

with the approach outlined in the previous chapter, where emotions are understood to be a set of cultural and social relations whose presentation and display is shaped by the conditions in which they are produced and received, this chapter notes how the ascendence of emotional display tools and norms established through Stanislavskian realism therefore came to dominate the dramatic and cultural landscape, rather than being the result of a natural development or the discovery of the 'correct' way to perform emotions. This historical work is important for the thesis in two key ways. Firstly, it marks how trends and expectations around authentic emotional expression have been shaped by specific developments within dramatic representation, which are not timeless or natural, but rather the product of how specific modes of training came to pre-eminence. Secondly, it notes how the trajectory of this training relates to the labour conditions of actors themselves. Specifically, it marks a period where a previously craft-based mode of training and production in theatre gives way to the proletarianization for actors, which also coincides with the carving out of their specific role in production and the removal of their managerial and economic power. This is important when considering the conditions of employment and labour marking other industries which now require some of the same skills and methods as professional performers.

In making this argument I will present an introduction to the work of Stanislavski and the historical context that gave rise to his methods; a brief overview of how his teaching came to dominate the training landscape in both Britain and America; and an explanation of how these changes impacted on the actors' position in the theatrical workplace and the organisation of their labour. This will provide important groundwork for the rest of the thesis, in which the relationship between the performative nature of emotional labour and the management of service work will be

examined with reference to the historical experience of the actor. Although Stanislavski's work emerged in pre-revolutionary Russia, I will be mostly concerned with the dissemination of his ideas in Britain, as well as how these have been imported via America, and the nature of this transatlantic current of influence.

Key debates

Born to an industrialist family in Moscow in 1863, Stanislavski described himself as being born ‘on the border between two eras', having witnessed both serfdom and Bolshevism, growing up in a successful manufacturing family but living through the Russian revolution, which saw him lose much of his inherited wealth.[4] Stanislavski’s industrial background is of note, and will be discussed in more detail in chapter four when I consider the relationship between his systemised approach to performance and scientific management and Fordism. Beginning his career as a successful character actor he went on to become a director and co-founder of the Moscow Art Theatre (MAT), which became notable for its landmark productions of Anton Chekhov's work and for the innovative approaches to acting which Stanislavski was cultivating through the company’s studio work and his development of ‘the system’ – an organised approach to the training of actors which focuses on the development of a technique which aided them in reaching what he understood as their ‘subconscious’ creative state. However, despite Stanislavski's attempts to codify his approach to acting, and despite the publication of his books in which he documents and explains his teaching, the legacy of Stanislavskian training remains fraught with contestation

[4] Konstantin Stanislavsky and Jean Benedetti, *My Life in Art* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 3.

and ambiguity.

When assessing the history of his methods and their absorption into professional training, it is important to begin by noting that despite widespread consensus on his importance as the first practitioner to offer a systematised approach to actor training, there remains ongoing dispute and confusion about what the system actually consists of, and how best to define it. Trevor Rawlins, for example, in a detailed investigation of actor training in the UK, describes Stanislavski's theories as 'the only substantial theory of the practice of acting written by an actor from the point of view of the actor/practitioner', yet also concedes that this theory is itself an 'uncertain, unstable and disputed area'.[5] Sharon Carnicke, in her comprehensive account of the competing offshoots of Stanislavskian training in America, goes further in both describing his influence as lacking cohesion and coherency, and pointing describing the various schools and offshoots of Stanislavskian training as a set of 'warring camps', marred by hostility and fanaticism.[6] Patrick McKelvey, in his article exploring Stanislavski, disability, and work, similarly describes Stanislavskian training as 'an unstable repertoire of practices distributed through competing pedagogical networks'.[7] Although the centrality of Stanislavski's influence is unquestioned, a solid definition of his contribution remains elusive.

These debates about Stanislavski's legacy and influence tend to centre on two key areas of division: the difference between the American 'Method' offshoot of Stanislavski's work, most notably associated with the teaching of Lee Strasberg,

---

[5] Trevor Rawlins, 'Studying Acting: An Investigation into Contemporary Approaches to Professional Actor Training in the UK' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Reading, 2012), p. 17.
[6] Sharon Marie Carnicke, *Stanislavsky in Focus: An Acting Master for the Twenty-First Century*, Routledge Theatre Classics, 2nd ed (London ; New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 11.
[7] Patrick McKelvey, 'A Disabled Actor Prepares: Stanislavsky, Disability, and Work at the National Theatre Workshop.of the Handicapped', *Theatre Journal*, 71.1 (2019), pp. 69–89 (p. 71) <https://doi.org/10.1353/tj.2019.0004>

Harold Clurman and Stella Adler, and whether theatrical realism is at the core of his work. Far from being insignificant factional feuds, these disagreements are key to not only an understanding of how Stanislavski's methods have continued to circulate in the training sphere, but also their application to the study of emotional labour specifically. Hochschild, in *The Managed Heart*, refers to Stanislavski as 'the originator of a different type of acting – called Method acting', later alluding to 'true' Method acting as espoused by him.[8] This conflation of the American Method with Stanislavski's system in general is both historically inaccurate and, as I will explore in depth in the next chapter, has implications for the analysis of emotional labour and its performance. Similarly, the debate about Stanislavski's commitment to realism has implications for the conception of the individual subject which sits both at the heart of his theatrical vision, and our understanding of performed emotional authenticity in the workplace. It is therefore important to dedicate space to these debates, in the process tracing how Stanislavski's work has come to dominate actor training in both Britain and America, and what relationship his methods have with the theatre, film and television industries which they equip professional performers to enter. The debate about the Method and its relationship to other interpretations of Stanislavski's teaching will be explored later in this chapter. To begin with, I will consider the question of realism and its relationship to the ideas around emotional authenticity which sit at the centre of Stanislavski's work.

Psychological realism

A vocabulary of the 'authentic', 'real', and 'genuine' is fundamental to Stanislavskian

[8] Hochschild, p. 37, p. 38.

acting, which is characterised by the search for dramatic 'truth' through the emotional and physical engagement of the performer, and where characterisation can only be shaped 'from an actor's own inner elements.'[9] For Stanislavski, these notions of truth and authenticity are explicitly equated with emotional interiority: 'inner truth', he writes in *My Life in Art*, 'is the basis of all acting.'[10] In opposition to the forms of mechanical and 'superficial' acting which he wished to depart from, Stanislavski argues that the creative process must be given over 'to intuition and feeling, which become the helmsman', writing that actors 'have to fill the role with inner content as you load a ship with passengers and cargo'.[11] The system is designed to help the actor in these efforts, offering emotional management strategies and physical cues which enable them to reach the 'creative state', via which they can experience and express this inner truth repeatedly before an audience. Authenticity is thus something conceived of as both individually specific and internal, accessible only to the actor themselves. The actor becomes the bearer of truth and authenticity on stage, and the willing use of their emotional interiority as material towards this goal becomes a central objective of their work. Going even further, Stanislavski equates knowledge itself with personal feeling, writing: 'I had understood […] earlier, but only intellectually. And in the language we use, to understand means to feel'.[12] Later in the book he reiterates, writing 'I was able, in part, to understand (I.e. feel).'[13] Thus, it is not just the performance of any given actor which is ruled by the centrality of feeling, but also any broader understanding of role, character or performance. Real feeling, as the source of both truth and knowledge, rules above any abstract or intellectual

[9] Constantin Stanislavski, *An Actor's Handbook* (New York: Routledge, 1963), p. 33.
[10] Stanislavsky and Benedetti, p.184.
[11] Stanislavsky and Benedetti, p. 110.
[12] Stanislavsky and Benedetti, p. 255.
[13] Stanislavsky and Benedetti, p. 339.

understanding of the play. Stanislavski's methods therefore privilege 'real' emotions and feelings in both the rehearsal and acting process: utilising the actors' own lived experience in order to drive them towards presenting emotional states on stage which, in order to appear genuine to the audience, must also be experienced as genuine by the performer. This necessitates the actor opening up their memories, internal life, and private recollections for use in their work, and is one of the reasons that Stanislavski's system has been defined as 'holistic' in approach, demanding as it does that the 'principles and techniques investigated and practised in the laboratory shape one's life'.[14]

To become an actor in the Stanislavskian tradition requires ones whole self to be committed to the craft of acting - Stanislavski asked his students to consider 'what it is you put first: your private life or art?'.[15] These could not possibly be divided, he argued, and 'all your life will be true life only when your creative "I" has been merged with it.'[16] For Jean Benedetti, Stanislavski's biographer and translator, in order to reach the 'creative spontaneity' that Stanislavski was aiming for, the borderline between actor and character must become blurred.[17] As will be explored in more detail in later chapters, a similar language of authenticity is now found to be increasingly integral to occupations requiring emotional labour and the expectations laid upon the Stanislavskian actor find resonance in companies who demand that employees 'really' love their jobs, 'genuinely' smile at customers, and 'authentically' commit themselves emotionally to their roles.

This particular emphasis on emotional authenticity has led to Stanislavski's

---

[14] Frank Camilleri, 'Of Pounds of Flesh and Trojan Horses: Performer Training in the Twenty-First Century', *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 14.2 (2009), pp. 26–34, (p. 26-27).
[15] Stanislavski, cited in Stefan Aquilina, 'Stanislavsky and the Impact of Studio Ethics on Everyday Life', *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*, 3.3 (2012), pp. 302–14, (p. 305).
[16] Stanislavski, cited in Aquilina, p. 305.
[17] Jean Benedetti, *Stanislavski and the Actor* (London: Methuen Drama, 1998), p. 9.

approach being characterised as focused on ‘internal realism', with he himself being referred to as the ‘father of psychological realism', and the system described as ‘foundational to psychological realism’.[18] In her book *Stanislavsky in Focus*, Sharon Carnicke attempts to correct the record surrounding the understanding of Stanislavski's system which has become increasingly framed as outdated and unable to meet the demands of twenty-first century acting.[19] The stakes for rehabilitating Stanislavski’s methods within contemporary performance are high, in an era where the influence of postdramatic practices threaten to invalidate an approach based on psychological realism. In *Postdramatic Theatre* Hans-Thies Lehmann outlines how the paradigm of European dramatic theatre has, since the 1970s, been disrupted by the rise of experimental and avant-garde forms which challenge its various motifs and features.[20] Characterised by the primacy of text, the centrality of ‘imitation’, and the drivers of action and plot, dramatic theatre leads to the formation of a ‘fictive cosmos’ and an illusion of wholeness which both spectators and performers participate in creating.[21] This wholeness, Lehmann argues, is then proclaimed as ‘the model of the real’.[22] It is challenged by postdramatic forms where these various elements no longer make up the ‘regulating principle’ of theatrical performance, but instead present a new paradigm, made up of many forms and aesthetics but in which, crucially, the dramatic text is dislodged from its central position.[23] For Carnicke, as performance practices have increasingly broken with realism and moved towards these postdramatic and postmodern modes, Stanislavski's methods have been side-lined or written off as

[18] Carnicke, p. 4; Tait, p. 1.
[19] Carnicke, p. 1.
[20] Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre* (London, New York: Routledge, 2006) p. 21.
[21] Lehmann, p. 22.
[22] Lehmann, p. 22.
[23] Lehmann, p. 22.

insufficient or lacking the relevance that they once had.[24] Where his system has broadly been understood as tied to the project of theatrical realism, Carnicke disputes such an account, arguing that poor translations of his work alongside lack of attention to political context have obscured many other aspects of his teaching and led to a fundamental misreading of his notion of 'truth'.[25] Most importantly, Carnicke argues, these various misunderstandings have contributed to the widely accepted notion that Stanislavski's idea of 'truth' (and thus authenticity) lies in the emotional *self-expression* of the actor, based on them taking previously lived experience and using it in performance, rather than as the experience of what the performer does on stage itself being the source of theatrical truth. This interpretation comes down to the question of the division between the actor and the character (or role). Where, Carnicke argues, the American Method treated actor and character as 'indistinguishable' and therefore art as the 'communication of genuine personal experience', a closer reading of Stanislavski's work sees him embracing the actor's dual consciousness on stage.[26] In this reading, the actor's own existence is distinguishable from the character they play and this division, or the 'alternating perceptions between artist and role', is itself the source of genuine and truthful performance.[27] As a result, Stanislavski 'begins to think of the theatrical event itself as the source of the actor's genuine experience'.[28] Thus, truth is redefined as what happens on stage, during the time of the performance. For Carnicke, this

[24] Carnicke, p. 1.
[25] Carnicke argues that the MAT's American tour focused on performance of realist work because this was already being dictated as the official style of the Soviets, and Stanislavski was under political pressure at home to conform. Carnicke also offers extensive analysis of Elizabeth Hapgood's original translations of Stanislavski's work, and shows how passages which were either omitted, or poorly translated, have had significant impact on how his system has been interpreted; Carnicke, p. 2, p. 87-91.
[26] Carnicke, p. 134.
[27] Carnicke, p. 144.
[28] Carnicke, p. 144.

reinterpretation of Stanislavski's notion of truth as being one which embraces the actors dual consciousness *in performance* is central to her argument, because it means that the contemporary actor can apply his system to any dramatic style or form, including those that may develop in the future.[29] This would, in turn, save Stanislavski's system from irrelevance and ensure his continued importance to actor training.

Whilst Carnicke offers an insightful reading of the division between actor and character, and makes a persuasive case for how Stanislavski's methods can be readopted or interpreted for use beyond realism, this emphasis on the rehabilitation of Stanislavski runs the risk of obscuring the broader historical trajectory and outcome of his influence. For the last century his ideas have, in one form or another, been taught as a means to access inner, psychological truth, and have been largely utilised to equip actors working in a realist style, which remains dominant on both screen and stage. Circumventing the ways in which Stanislavski's work has been concretely implemented also means conflating a commitment to a realist theatrical form with the broader political and ideological implications of psychological realism, with which Stanislavski's project is intimately bound. In this understanding of realism, regardless of the exact boundary between actor and character, the individual subject (the actor) and their authentic emotional experience is still situated at the centre of the theatrical production. This applies both to the centrality of psychological realistic characters themselves, and the actor as the subject at the centre of the theatrical production.

Colin Counsell provides the most lucid account of the ideological ramifications of Stanislavskian realism. For Counsell, the hallmarks of the system are ‘behavioural detail, “plausibility”, a sense of profound psychological depth, a marked

[29] Carnicke, p. 147.

linearity or smoothness to the performance as a whole' and a commitment to 'internal realism'.[30] Others, like Rawlins, have restated Carnicke's critique, disputing Counsell's suggestion that the system is synonymous with realism itself.[31] Rawlins suggests instead that Stanislavski's work proposes a focus on 'inner life' and an 'inside out' approach to acting, which is not strictly tied to realist theatre.[32]

This once again misses the key argument that Counsell and others are making when they refer to Stanislavskian realism. Counsell's argument deals with the 'internal realism' which defines how the subject is conceived of and centred within the theatrical production, regardless of its other formal conventions. Stanislavskian actors, writes Counsell, behave according to how they judge their psyches, basing their characters and interpretations off this self-focused reading. But as Counsell points out, this is only what *they* deem their own psyches to be.[33] This intervention is to remind us that the actor is also a social subject, but one who is trained to view themselves as a 'coherency' skilled enough to express their own psyche through the 'available codes' they are equipped with.[34] Stanislavskian acting is thus reliant on the notion that behaviour is 'innately understandable' and a 'transcultural communicative form regardless of language'.[35] This is reiterated by Jonathan Pitches who alludes to the humanist assumptions underpinning Stanislavski's mission when he describes it as a search for a 'grammar' of acting, a 'transcendent language' for performers, and the system as a 'kind of United Nations for acting'.[36] David Shirley, similarly, describes

---

[30] Colin Counsell, *Signs of Performance: An Introduction to Twentieth-Century Theatre* (London, New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 25.
[31] Trevor Rawlins, p. 59.
[32] Trevor Rawlins, p. 168.
[33] Counsell, p. 30.
[34] Counsell, p. 31.
[35] Counsell, p. 31.
[36] Jonathan Pitches, 'A System for all Nations? Stanislavsky's Transmission in the World' in '*Stanislavsky in the World: The System and Its Transformations across Continents*, ed. by Jonathan Pitches and Stefan Aquilina (London, New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2017), p. 13.

the system as a form of training which depends on coherence and unity, meaning practices which disrupt or challenge 'stable and knowable concepts of selfhood' pose innate challenges to it.[37] For Counsell, such a system must by its nature avoid any 'discord and disjuncture' by offering 'the image of the illusory coherent self no matter what character is being portrayed or which text staged'.[38] In the system, humans are understood as 'desiring machines, constantly in pursuit of their own aims, their actions dictated by forces within their psyches, so that the sole author of human action, consciously or subconsciously, is the individual self'.[39] Although the MAT did indeed present work of varying styles, this type of psychological realism remained at the heart of their approach. Describing their early efforts at producing Ibsen's symbolist work, for example, Stanislavski puts their failure down to their 'inability to live the inner life of the play realistically', elaborating that these early efforts at symbolism sprang 'not from feeling but from thought. It was artificial, not natural'.[40] Symbolism, impressionism and 'all the other subtle isms' can only be performed successfully when an actor's behaviour is both 'spontaneous' and 'normal according to the laws of nature'.[41] Stanislavski's invocations of nature, and the universal emotional experience of humans, underline the systems roots in a realism which is often treated as a 'style without a style'.[42]

Thus, both Rawlins' and Carnicke's claims that Stanislavski's system can be separated from its connections to realism are based on an interpretation which elides the ideological and political significance of the system. As Jonathan Chambers has

---

[37] David Shirley, 'Stanislavsky's Passage into the British Conservatoire', in *Russians in Britain: British Theatre and the Russian Tradition of Actor Training*, ed. by Jonathan Pitches (London ; New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 59.
[38] Counsell, p. 32.
[39] Counsell, p. 39.
[40] Stanislavsky and Benedetti, p. 191.
[41] Stanislavsky and Benedetti, p. 191.
[42] Counsell, p. 24.

explained, the system is often taught as a default in drama schools in such an un-contextualised way that it is treated as though realism is not in fact a style, and the system itself has no history.[43] Stanislavskian realism is thus framed as the 'normal' and 'good' starting point for performance and, as a result, his approach to truth and characterisation is naturalized.[44] Regardless of how his specific methods could be wrestled away and used for a different purpose, in totality Stanislavski's conception of acting and character is tied to the 'fabrication of reality', a point which Counsell argues.[45] Whilst every other aspect of the play's production, including its use of language or stage design, might differ from the conventions of stage realism, the psychological approach to the portrayal of individual characters, and therefore the methods of emotion management taught to actors, would not. This is the overriding emphasis because for Stanislavski, the individual, felt, experience of the actor is at the centre of both the system and any theatrical production.

In a brief account of the falling out between Stanislavski and his MAT collaborator Nemirovich-Danchenko, Benedetti summarises such an approach. Nemirovich, he writes, believed in theatre as a branch of literature, whereas for Stanislavski 'the theatre was an art itself, with the actor at its heart'.[46] These tensions came to a head during their 1902 production of *Julius Caesar*, in which Nemirovich was concerned to paint a 'portrait of a society rather than individuals', where Stanislavski wished to portray Brutus as 'a human being'.[47] Reflecting on the approach to outwardly political plays, Stanislavski himself writes that the secret of the effect of such plays should lie 'in the fact that the actor should not think of social and

---

[43] Jonathan Chambers, 'Actor Training Meets Historical Thinking', in *The Politics of American Actor Training*, ed. by Ellen Margolis and Lissa Tyler Renaud (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 34.
[44] Jonathan Chambers, p. 34.
[45] Counsell, p. 24.
[46] Stanislavsky and Benedetti, p. xxvi.
[47] Stanislavsky and Benedetti, p. xxvi.

political problems, but simply be genuine and honest'. Even in such political works, he concludes, 'you have to live the thoughts and feelings of the role and then the politics of the play convey themselves. A direct approach to the politics ends in mere staginess'.[48] Thus authentic character, as given existence through the emotional state of the actor, is the driving force behind the play, rather than any historical, political or broader social framing. The implications of this are wide ranging and extend beyond the stage, as will be discussed in chapter four, where I consider the impact of applying 'character' as an organisational logic within business and workplace practices. The success of Stanislavskian training in promoting the centrality of the psychologically 'real' character, based on a coherent selfhood, has consequences not only for the development of new performance techniques, but also in relation to the actor's place in the theatrical hierarchy, and the broader social understandings of character which influence our day to day social performances. As Elizabeth Burns notes, the standard for 'natural behaviour' in any historical period is always shaped by conformity to certain norms, rather than a given or ahistorical reference point.[49] Those who aspire to be 'natural' actors, she argues, are concerned with authenticatication of character according to such norms. As I argue throughout this thesis, this relationship between societal expectations for behaviour and their dramatic representation is in fact a two way process, in which theatre has also played a role in shaping and solidifying social standards for emotional authenticity. Thus, the exact trajectory of the development and implementation of Stanislavski's psychological realism remains a central concern for this thesis, and this history will now be briefly charted.

[48] Stanislavsky and Benedetti, p. 219.
[49] Burns, p. 162.

Constructing 'character'

If the desire for a new approach to character, based on authentic, individual emotional representation, was the driving force behind the development of Stanislavski's system, then this in turn was driven by the need to respond to new plays, with new characters demanding precisely such an approach, specifically the work of European realist and Naturalist writers such as Anton Chekhov. Stanislavski's ideas emerged in response to the innovative characters offered in Chekhov's work, forcing him to look at how the actor could tackle roles that could not merely be copied from 'master actors', and which were reliant on ensemble performance rather than encoded and established stereotypes.[50] Stanislavski admitted that he, like others, found Chekhov's writing 'strange' when he first encountered it, and had to be convinced to produce his work.[51] Rather than being driven by outward action, Stanislavski considered Chekhov's plays to be defined according to what is 'hidden' behind the words, 'in the pauses, or the way the actors look at each other or in the way they radiate inner feeling'.[52] These plays, he writes, are full of inward rather than outward action. Crucially, they were defined by their portrayal of characters shaped by their projection of emotional interiority, directly related to the conception of psychological realism outlined earlier. For Stanislavski, the 'fundamental theme' of Chekhov's work, is 'Man with a capital M.'[53] Such characters demanded a new mode of performance from actors: Stanislavski lamented that theatres across Europe tried and failed to perform Chekhov's plays because they were wedded to an older style of acting, that could not meet the demands of his writing. Already insistent on breaking from this old

[50] Dacre, p. 4
[51] Stanislavsky and Benedetti, p. 176.
[52] Stanislavsky and Benedetti, p. 192.
[53] Stanislavsky and Benedetti, p. 193.

style by rejecting '"theatricality", spurious emotion, declamation, overacting' and 'stardom', Stanislavski was able to use Chekhov's plays as a vehicle to further his own programme of acting and develop his system.[54]

The new realism that Chekhov and Stanislavski pioneered at the MAT was an explicit rejection of established nineteenth century delivery, marked by overstatement, exaggeration and hyperbole.[55] Peta Tait argues that Chekhov and Stanislavski's work marked a shift in how theatrical emotions were demonstrated, from the physical gestures of the nineteenth century to the staging of emotional interiority which marked the innovations of the MAT, and that this understanding of their work also recognises the historical and cultural specificity of such emotions.[56] The development of this particular form of acting led to the materialisation of an acting aesthetic which was premised on the social expression of inner emotion, and the control exerted over these displays in turn confirmed a broader social value system in which uncontrolled emotional expressions were seen as potentially socially and morally destabilising.[57] While Tait points to how prevailing scholarship considers theatrical emotions to be 'culturally neutral', she thus suggests that we should rather think of them as social experiences, which are 'performance phenomena', exhibiting cultural identities via their embodiment in performance.[58] Tait's contribution reminds us that emotional management was a key concern not only for Stanislavski, in his attempts to provide a cohesive and consistent mode of actor training, but also as a broader part of social concerns at the turn of the twentieth-century. As a result, we can see the implications

[54] Stanislavsky and Benedetti, p. 193.
[55] Peta Tait, *Performing Emotions: Gender, Bodies, Spaces, in Chekhov's Drama and Stanislavski's Theatre* (Aldershot ; Burlington Vt: Ashgate, 2002), p. 89.
[56] Tait, p.117.
[57] Tait, p. 135.
[58] Tait, p. 1.

for everyday social life that emerge from the rise of these realist forms of theatre.[59] The relationship between the theatrical representation of emotions and the ways in which we perform embodied emotions in our general life will be integral to this thesis, as it goes on to consider how the skills and methods of professional actors may be being co-opted for use by other professions, and what the implications are for this translation of theatrical emotional management techniques into other spheres. This is evident in what Baz Kershaw terms 'the theatricalization of cultural exchange', whereby performance becomes central to all aspects of social life, as major economies move towards service and information rather than manufacturing.[60] Thus, as I argued earlier, the Stanislavskian approach to 'character', as defined by his particular approach to the actor's emotional management within a realist frame, has implications for our social performances off stage, and for the ideas of authenticity which we replicate in our personal lives, or at work.

The rise of realism

I have argued that Stanislavskian psychological realism has implications for how we understand notions of character and authenticity both on and off stage. Stanislavskian realism also, however, has a key role to play in the way that the actor themselves, and their work, is understood. I will now turn to the institutional and industrial context of Stanislavski's work, charting the practical application of his methods in theatre, focusing on both why his ideas found traction and the implications of this for the

[59] Tait, p. 169.
[60] Baz Kershaw, 'British Theatre, 1940-2002', in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre*, ed. by Baz Kershaw, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), VOLUME 3: SINCE 1895, pp. 291–326, (p. 292).

acting profession. As the rest of this thesis deals primarily with economic trends in the British and American service sector, I will move away from Stanislavski's Russian roots to consider his influence in these specific contexts.

Despite the aforementioned lack of clarity around Stanislavski's methods, the training landscape in both Britain and America remains overwhelmingly framed as a continuation of his legacy. A 2009 study carried out by Rose Bruford College into the teaching of his methods across further and higher education - itself an institution with a particular interest in the Stanislavskian tradition - found them being taught at every stage of the British educational system, from GCSE to postgraduate level.[61] Counsell, reflecting on Stanislavski's influence on twentieth-century performance, writes that the system and its hallmarks had become the 'accepted common sense in performance', and had come to stand as signs of 'good acting'.[62] In a 2012 assessment of the British training landscape, John Freeman asserts the continued prevalence of this influence, arguing that drama schools inevitably tend towards naturalistic performance based on a 'behavioural realism' indebted to Stanislavski.[63] As I argued earlier, although Stanislavski's own personal commitment to realism as a form can be disputed, his actual application in training remains geared towards psychological realism in acting.

Similarly, the various disagreements about Stanislavski's legacy do not detract from the broad agreement that the system, and its international dissemination, remains the single biggest innovation in Western acting, marking the development of a systematised approach towards performer training which has been described as both

---

[61] Kathy Dacre, *Teaching Stanislavski* (Palatine, 2009) <https://www.heacademy.ac.ukmy.ac.uk/system/files/teaching-stanislavski.pdf> [accessed 28 June 2017]
[62] Counsell, p. 25.
[63] John Freeman, 'Drama at a Time of Crisis: Actor Training, Performance Study and the Creative Workplace', *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 13.4 (2012), pp. 1-22, (p. 6).

the first attempt to organise technique into ‘a coherent, usable system’, and as ‘the closest existing language for a vocabulary of acting in the West in the 20th and 21st centuries’.[64] As such assessments suggest, it is the *organisational* aspects of Stanislavski's work which, alongside his approaches to character, are most responsible for his ongoing influence, despite the different interpretations and applications of his specific methods. What was most remarkable and crucial about his work was not necessarily the originality of his insight (many of his teachings were based on existing oral and practical traditions of acting developed long before him), but his attempt to codify and organise these techniques and philosophies into a teachable system that could be passed on.

In understanding that Stanislavski's biggest contribution may have been in the *form* of training and knowledge, rather than its specific components, we can also see a clear link between the development of his approach and the broader industrialisation of theatrical production which was emerging in the same historical context. Tracing the relationship between Stanislavski's systemised approach to training and the wider industrial context in which this inserted itself is key for this thesis, which is concerned not just with the experience of individual workers or workplaces, but with the broader trajectory of the emotional labour within the economy, and how the demands for it are both fed and met. I have argued that critical scholarship on emotional labour often deploys the figure of the actor, whilst neglecting to attend to the specifics of their own labour conditions. An understanding of how acting, as professional work, has been shaped and developed, is therefore important for making comparisons with the trajectory of other groups of workers today. The history of how Stanislavski's approach came to ascendance in British drama schools, however, is neither clearly

[64] Counsell, p. 24; Trevor Rawlins, p. 17.

documented nor easy to trace. Attempts to outline this history are incredibly difficult, not least because the transmission of his ideas into Britain was less cohesive or coherent than in America, where his direct influence on a number of key practitioners is easier to track.[65] In the absence of institutional histories charting his emergence in drama schools then, a history of the rise of realism itself in Britain can help us uncover the roots of his influence in British theatre.

Prior to the emergence of realism as a major force, the late nineteenth century stage in both Britain and America was defined artistically by melodrama and institutionally by the power of the actor. The acting style of the period matched the demand of these melodramatic plays, with their heightened emotions and moral overtones, and equipped actors to communicate their characters accordingly. [66] George Bernard Shaw, who became later known as a playwright for developing his own brand of British Naturalism, referred to Victorian acting as full of 'hackneyed stage tricks' and indeed, in the absence of formalised training, instruction often came in the form of books and manuals which offered devices and tools for the aspiring actor.[67] These manuals demonstrated the 'correct' gestures for each emotion, offering mechanistic formulas for performers to follow: 'sorrow was registered by clasped hands. To cry real tears, you had to turn your face away from the audience and blink your eyelids rapidly.'[68] These manuals served performers who, unlike 'star' players, were consigned to the 'stock' company. The phrase stock company referred originally to a repertory of plays which companies were ready to perform, enabling them to change performances nightly, but soon became used to describe the various standard

[65] David Shirley, 'Stanislavsky's Passage into the British Conservatoire', p. 39–40.
[66] J. L. Styan, *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice 1* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 3.
[67] Styan, p. 64.
[68] John Elsom, *Post-War British Theatre* (London ; Boston: Routledge & K. Paul, 1976), p. 19.

character types contained within these plays.[69] These 'thin-blooded' stock characters have been held responsible by some scholars for the romanticism, cliché and excess which dominated the nineteenth century stage.[70]

Training was, at this time, unsystematic and disorganised. Alongside the various manuals, aspiring actors learnt either on the job, or via the family. In the Victorian era, acting tended to be a family businesses, with many actors simply born into the industry.[71] In her history of Victorian actresses, Tracy Davis, notes that family-based companies were a centuries-old tradition, propped up by a stock system which was characterised by apprenticeship and lengthy periods of training. [72]

This system was not unique to Britain. Stanislavski's acting career began under similar circumstances in Russia, where there were no drama schools and actors were instead apprenticed to the best actors who, Stanislavski wrote, would hand down 'simple, unwritten traditions and teaching methods' whose success was largely dependent on the talent of the individual actor.[73] This state of affairs would continue until the demise of the stock system and its replacement with alternative forms of organisation which, as we will see shortly, necessitated the introduction of training schools and the gradual professionalisation of acting.

Although most performers were confined to the stock roles of the melodrama, other actors sat at the top of the theatrical hierarchy. Many theatres of the time were run by powerful individual actor-managers, single entrepreneurs who had control over

---

[69] J. L. Styan, *The English Stage: A History of Drama and Performance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 312.
[70] Styan, *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice 1,* p. 10.
[71] Baker, p. 26.
[72] Tracy C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women: Their Social Identity in Victorian Culture*, Gender and Performance (London ; New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 44, 48-49.
[73] Stanislavsky and Benedetti, p. 60.

the theatre, the choice of plays, and were able to cast themselves in leading roles.[74] The best known of this generation is Henry Irving, who became the first of the profession to be awarded a knighthood in 1895. Where acting had once been seen as a disreputable profession, Irving and his peers were able to disrupt such Victorian notions of respectability and achieve recognition, cementing the rise in the social status of the Victorian actor.[75] By the end of the nineteenth century many of the most notable theatres in London were managed by actors.[76] Integral to the actor-manager system was the combination of both financial and artistic control that they exerted over theatres, with the actor-manager entrepreneur maintaining a tightening grip over the entire production, single handedly able to determine the interpretation of a role.[77] Baker writes that the Victorian theatre was 'undeniably the actor's domain', with actor-managers able to both decide artistic policy and enact it. They were responsible for every element of production, from casting to direction and rewrites (with authors paid little attention).[78] This system of production suited the leading actor-managers, who sat atop the theatrical hierarchy and were able to use plays as vehicles to further their own stardom and careers. This interweaving of artistic and business interests also meant that the managerial role of these actors came to define the artistic content of the theatres. When actors such as Irving were knighted, this was much more in recognition of their achievements in the business of theatre, than achievements in acting.[79] As a result, the high status of the actor at this time acted as a brake on the

---

[74] Maggie B. Gale, 'The London Stage, 1918-1945', in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre*, ed. By Baz Kershaw, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), VOLUME 3: SINCE 1895, pp. 143–67, (p.154).
[75] Dennis Kennedy, 'British Theatre, 1895-1946: Art, Entertainment, Audiences – an Introduction', in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre, Volume 3: Since 1895* ed. By Baz Kershaw, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 3–34, (p.7).
[76] Lynton Alfred Hudson, *The English Stage, 1850-1950* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1972), p. 407.
[77] Styan, *The English Stage,* p. 309.
[78] Baker, p. 36.
[79] Kennedy, p. 7.

development of new forms of plays. Baker writes that playwrights of the time were 'little more than hired hacks', working under conditions that were geared towards the business needs of the actor-managers, rather than creative expansion or development.[80] Realism emerged in response to these conditions, and offered a style of writing which challenged the prevailing attitudes and expectations.[81]

Most importantly, these new plays demanded new approaches from actors, demands that would eventually require the systematic reorganisation of the actor's role altogether. The work of T. W. Robertson (1829-1871), and his 'bourgeois realism', was a key moment in the early development of British realism.[82] Robertson was a playwright influenced by the work of French writers Scribe and Sardou who were, in turn, responsible for the concept of the well-made play. The well-made play was a form marked by neatness, with emphasis placed on key elements which could be repeated in each script to create a satisfying and tight plot. In particular, it centred on the unity of the three key elements: time, place and action. Robertson exploited the form with great success, using it to explore familiar representations of middle class life.[83] By focusing on familiar everyday domestic conditions, Robertson was fundamental to the development of English Naturalism. John Russell Taylor argued that Robertson's major innovation was his dialogue, characterised by a 'light, intimate style of short speeches, each one taking up the thread of what has gone before in an easy, natural-seeming way'.[84] Rejecting the rhetorical speaking style of the time, Robertson's characters seemed instead 'to be listening to and answering each other rather than speaking to the audience'.[85] This change in dramatic style equally

---

[80] Baker, p. 41.
[81] Styan, *The English Stage,* p. 2.
[82] John Russell Taylor, *The Rise and Fall of the Well-Made Play* (London: Methuen, 1967), p. 16.
[83] Russell Taylor, p. 16.
[84] Russell Taylor, p. 22.
[85] Russell Taylor, p. 22.

demanded a change from the actor: Robertson's dialogue imposed ‘a natural, unemphatic style of acting on the players, and, moreover, requires them to play as an ensemble rather than as so many individuals waiting to deliver their big speeches.’[86]

Integral to this emerging realist style was the idea that the central characters of such plays required greater depth, individuality and, crucially, ‘authenticity’ than older plays had accounted for. The realist play needed attentively written characters that evoked specific social worlds, as such plays came to be seen as documenting social reality.[87] In his ‘Lecture on Realism', Raymond Williams laid out what he perceived as the three defining elements of realism. Firstly, the secular; marking a distinction from earlier drama that saw characters and plot influenced directly by religious and metaphysical forces; next, the contemporary, which Williams notes as the trend towards setting plays in the present, rather than a prior emphasis on ‘the historical or legendary path’, and finally; the ‘socially extended’, by which he means a focus on characters from the same social class as the audience, rather than the classical emphasis on ‘persons of rank’.[88] Each of these attempts at definition centre the agency and social circumstances of individuals as central to realism, with characters that are no longer victims of fate or god, but required nuance to express their particular social circumstances.

Whilst Robertson and his peers had proved early pioneers of realism on stage, the limitations of their well-made play format were enough to provoke harsh reaction from those who felt it did not go far enough. These criticisms would be addressed through the emergence of Naturalism, a heightened form of realism which developed in Europe at time when the relationship between the arts and the sciences was being

---

[86] Russell Taylor, p. 22.
[87] Stephen Lacey, *British Realist Theatre: The New Wave in Its Context 1956-1965* (London, New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 77.
[88] Williams, ‘Lecture on Realism’, p. 63-64.

reshaped. Though closely related to realism enough that the terms are often used interchangeably, Naturalism is best defined as a specific historical movement of writers who, as defined by Williams, were preoccupied with applying scientific methods to literature by interpreting human behaviour 'in strictly natural terms, excluding the hypothesis of some controlling or directing force outside human nature.'[89] Influenced by Charles Darwin's work, Naturalism was led by a belief that human behaviour, like that of animals, could be understood through a systematic method of observation. As such, these writers were determined to apply new scientific and social ideas to the stage in a more radical form than the existing realist writers. Zola thought of nineteenth century characters as mere puppets and abstractions of ideas.[90] In their place, he wanted a drama which centred character, studying people in their 'natural' settings to determine the physical and social influences upon them.[91] Naturalism and it's aims were inextricably tied to the political period from which the plays emerged, characterised by both scientific influence and the rise of bourgeois democracy in Europe. This could produce contradictory effects. Counsell argues, for example, that the determinism of Darwin's theory of Natural Selection found its theatrical embodiment in Naturalism, but that its ability to understand the forces shaping human behaviour were limited by its confinement to the analysis of individuals and private families.[92] For Zola, the novelist turned playwright, transporting his work to the stage offered an opportunity to analyse 'the cause and effect of human behaviour', acting as a laboratory for human experiments.[93]

The Naturalists also faced a struggle between their new forms of dialogue and

---

[89] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana Press, 2000), p. 217.
[90] Styan, *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice 1,* p. 9.
[91] Styan, *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice 1,* p. 9.
[92] Counsell, p. 81, p. 85.
[93] Elsom, p. 35.

the existing heightened forms of acting. In France, Zola, who was then grappling with the challenge of adapting his Naturalistic novels for the stage, was coming to the same conclusions, struck by the inflexibility of actors despite the changing styles of language: 'the style of acting is inseparable from the way a play works, and he could not change the actors overnight. Indeed, the great realists, Ibsen, Shaw, Chekhov and the rest, each in his own way, had to accommodate or do battle with the very actors upon whom they depended.'[94] In plays which were preoccupied with the experiences of bourgeois individual life, new forms of acting and emotional representation were needed.

In Britain, Shaw advocated access to the work of the European Naturalists as being crucial to English drama's development.[95] This was met with fierce resistance, however. Ibsen's work fell foul of the Lord Chamberlain's censorship, which prevented his work from reaching a British public until 1891, more than a decade after *A Doll's House* had been written. Once such plays did make it to the stage, the theatre establishment reacted fiercely and fought to prevent their spread. Hudson notes that by 1899 a number of 'romantic sentimental plays' had flooded the stage in an attempt to act as 'the counter-current to the rising tide of realism.'[96] The work of the major Naturalist and realist writers required not just a realignment of moral values, containing in them themes that were seen as unsavoury for public viewing, but also a realignment of ideas of character which jarred with what was customary in British plays. This was part of the reason that Shaw fought so hard for the plays to be staged, using them to press for 'a new school of acting', which would throw off the

[94] Zola quoted in Styan, *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice 1,* p. 10
[95] Peter Thomson, 'The New Drama and the Old Theatre', in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre*, ed. by Joseph Donohue, Volume 2: 1660 to 1895 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 405–22, (p. 416).
[96] Hudson, p. 106-107.

stock characters and melodrama of the past, and establish the 'new actor' as someone 'plastic', in that 'he could assume whatever shape the individual character needed.'[97] Over in Moscow, Stanislavski was embarking on just such a project, in response to the challenges thrown up by Chekhov's distinctly new characters.

Transformation of industry

The rising influence of both realism and Naturalism came at a time of upheaval for the theatre industry, which went through a series of radical changes at the turn of the twentieth-century. The stock system, along with the actor-managers who presided over it, became increasingly less viable with the rise of the long run, an alternative which consisted of one show being toured or performed continuously, in contrast to the multiple shows that a company of stock actors would previously have had in repertoire. Baker partly attributes the initial spread of the long run in the late nineteenth century to the popularity of Robertson's plays, drawing attention to the fact that realism's challenge to the existing theatre lay not only in its artistic goals, but also in its 'mode of production', and that its rise resulted in significant changes to how plays were produced and performed.[98] J.L Styan, similarly, draws attention to how entwined artistic and economic concerns together hastened the demise of the stock system: the long run offered a better economic solution for theatre managements, he argues, not only because of outside pressures such as rising rents and payrolls, but also due to the spiralling costs incurred by the elaborate costumes and scenery that were demanded by the new realist plays.[99] Formal and financial changes were thus

[97] Styan, *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice 1,* p. 64.
[98] Baker, p. 36.
[99] Styan, *The English Stage,* p. 313.

ushered in simultaneously, and the dissolution of the stock system led to transformations in every element of production, from training to acting styles.[100] As a result, the actor-managers who had appeared at one time as the 'unassailable […] industrial powerhouse of theatre' were to see their rule come to an end as theatre began to become more like a monopoly enterprise, dominated by commercial managers, investors and speculators who swept in in the aftermath of World War I.[101] Actor-managers were therefore pushed out by a new consortia of capitalists. The rise of realism is central to understanding both how the actor lost their managerial hold on theatre, and what subsequently happened to their role as they were replaced by a new set of entrepreneurs whose control of the theatres would eventually be seen as monopolistic.[102] In tracing this history, we can see that new artistic and formal demands on actors were directly tied to changes in the industry and the actor's professional status.

As a result of these factors, the theatrical terrain of the early twentieth-century was one of strife and conflict, with the industry described as 'beset by conflicting interests', undergoing a 'torturous transition' and hit with 'increased antagonism between performers and managers'.[103] By the end of World War II, however, the key battles had been decisively won. Actor-managers were now relics of the past and in their place stood an industry where chains of theatres were controlled by groups of companies.[104] With the loss of financial and managerial control came the simultaneous weakening transformation of the actor-manager's role in the theatre

---

[100] Davis, p. 7.
[101] Kennedy, p. 5, p.11.
[102] Elsom, p.12.
[103] Viv Gardner, 'Provincial Stages, 1900-1934: Touring and Early Repertory Theatre', in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre, Volume 3: Since 1895* ed. by Baz Kershaw, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 60–86, (p. 79).
[104] Elsom, p. 8.

making process. Dan Rebellato, in his history of modern British drama, notes that the tasks of the actor and director became more and more distinct as the actor-managers went into decline.[105] In fact, the term 'director' did not come into common use until the mid-twentieth-century: the role that we would now associate with a director was more commonly labelled 'stage manager', and would often have been fulfilled by the leading actor themselves.[106]

With the separation of roles that Rebellato notes, came the resultant loss of the actor's creative influence into the theatre. Thus, as Chambers notes, it was not the changes in theatrical style themselves that marked the most major shift for acting in the post-war period, but rather the 'decline of controlling power over the production' which came in tandem with them.[107] The resulting impact hit all actors, not only those who had risen to the top of managerial heights. Early Victorian actors had overseen influence over all aspects of theatrical organization: Baker notes that they often had to serve as 'stage-manager, prompter, door-keeper, costumier, bill-stick and theatrical agent as well as performer'.[108] By the 1900's, the profession had changed to the extent that they could now expect these jobs to be assigned to specialists, while actors focused solely on their performances.[109] This was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, Baker argues, this confinement of the actor's specific role allowed them to fully ascend to the ranks of the professional, marking them as a distinct occupation within the stage world.[110]

This professionalisation signalled the ascendence of the arts, and the acceptance

---

[105] Rebellato, p. 86.
[106] Thomson, p. 416.
[107] Colin Chambers, 'Developments in the Profession of Theatre, 1946-2000', in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre*, *Volume 3: Since 1895* ed. by Baz Kershaw, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 377-96, (p. 383).
[108] Baker, p. 161.
[109] Baker, p. 161.
[110] Baker, p. 161.

of acting as a legitimate and serious career.[111] Simultaneously, however, it marked the proletarianization of the actor – as they began to be transformed from the key player in a craft based system of production, into one type of specialised worker within a much larger production process over which they no longer exerted control. Davis argues that this reshaping of theatrical production led to clear industrial comparisons:

> On stage and backstage theatres became analogous to the industrialized factory, growing increasingly specialized in what they offered. As in textile and heavy manufacturing trades this involved newly mechanized procedures, required highly specialized labourers, diluted the skills of the majority, induced a greater intensity of labour, and increased the scale of production.[112]

This contradiction between the status of the actor as a legitimate professional and the corresponding unravelling of their artistic influence would continue to play itself out until the 1950s, when the arrival of Stanislavski's systematic and codified approach to training in Britain would cement the trajectory of their role.

In the early half of the century, however, these tensions had not yet been resolved, and formalised actor training was still in its infancy. The rapidly changing demands of the industry had led to multiple calls for the establishment of drama schools as a way of ensuring a skilled and accredited workforce, and in the early twentieth-century, this growing demand for more trained actors led to the establishment of a number of major conservatories.[113] Davis explains that, for many in the industry, the establishment of these schools was not just about providing a stable labour source, but also bound to the professional status of actors, with the founding of dedicated training establishments becoming central to 'the justification of

---

[111] Baker, p. 22.
[112] Davis, p. 48-49.
[113] Simon Shepherd, 'The Institution of Training', *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 14.2 (2009), pp. 5-15, (p. 5).

acting as a profession' which could be compared to others such as law and medicine.[114] They were also founded in order to address the competitive employment market within the theatre.[115] More and more aspiring actors desired to work on the stage, yet the old points of entry into the profession were no longer viable under the new systems of production, which required a different set of skills from the performers in earlier stock shows. Not only did the long run require actors to repeat the same nightly emotional performances for much longer periods of time, but the rise of the regional repertory theatres was allowing for the successful development of plays by new writers from outside of London. David Shirley writes that formalised actor training was thus developed in response to the repertory system which needed actors who could adapt quickly to the needs of a wide range of plays, and this is echoed by Shepherd's account of a growth in institutions opening in response to an industry which needed larger numbers of well-trained performers to fill its shows.[116] Where previously the dominant means of entry to acting consisted of either being born into a theatrical family, or learning of the job via a master and apprentice model, the new group-based sites of learning created in the drama schools promised to usher in greater professionalisation and formalisation.[117]

Yet despite the foundation of these schools (including: RADA in 1904; The Italia Conti Academy in 1911; Guildford School of Acting in 1935; and the pre-existing Guildhall School of Music and the London Academy of Music adding acting to their names by 1935) the forms of training on offer within them did not provide much in the way of departure from older methods. In the earlier cited Rose Bruford

---

[114] Davis, p. 44, p. 36.
[115] Davis, p. 36; Hudson, p. 133.
[116] David Shirley, '"The Reality of Doing": Meisner Technique and British Actor Training', *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*, 1.2 (2010), pp. 199–213, (p. 208); Simon Shepherd, 'The Institution of Training', *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 14.2 (2009), pp. 5-15.
[117] Shepherd, p. 5.

College report into Stanislavski's influence on British training, Jane Boston finds that early training at RADA was 'focused on textual analysis and the physical externals and, as such, had been more related to a literary approach than to examining the psychological depth of character.'[118] In addition it is claimed that this training was based 'principally on rehearsal', and knowledge was passed down from noted teachers to students through the process of 'on the job' rehearsal learning based on the tutor's own individually acquired techniques.[119] Although this may have been institutionally formalised through the creation of drama schools, the method of teaching found within remained tied to the master apprentice model of the past.

Certainly, the work of Stanislavski had not yet gained traction. Shirley, citing accounts from the 1920s, notes that he was 'barely noted' by the theatrical establishment, partially because training regimes themselves were driven by commercial rather than artistic concerns.[120] This may account for why British acting was so derided in these early decades of drama schools, variously described in accounts as 'artificial', 'mechanical', and 'sober and genteel'.[121] British theatre thus found itself in somewhat of a paralysed state. The actor-manager was gone, and training schools were now working to produce the kind of professional performer demanded by the new model of the industry. There remained, however, an unresolved problem with the acting itself. Although realism had made its presence felt on the British stage, theatres had difficulty in finding actors who were well equipped to deliver the plays. Financial and commercial constraints also created pressure to provide a certain type of performer: the introduction of the entertainment tax at the start of World War I, and the damage inflicted on theatre by the war, meant that

[118] Boston in Dacre, p. 62.
[119] Dacre, p. 62.
[120] Shirley, 'Stanislavsky's Passage into the British Conservatoire', p. 39.
[121] Lacey, p. 67; Elson, p. 29; Baker, p. 173.

commercial priorities took precedence and theatres were thus encouraged to programme plays featuring star performers in order to sell tickets. Elsom notes that the prominence of these stars was not necessarily an indication of exceptional talent. Instead, agents and impresarios would often 'groom' performers for stardom, thus ensuring that they served as 'main assets' for those profiting from their shows.[122] Rebellato argues that despite their loss of controlling power, in the post-war period, the actor's remained pre-eminent, and that they were considered the 'front end' of theatre, around whom everyone else's work was still centred, including the playwright's.[123] This state of affairs ensured the lingering power of the individual actor, however stripped of the managerial and artistic control they once held.

By the 1950s, however, a number of forces posed a challenge to this model. Firstly, the 'new wave' generation of British writers were developing a distinct iteration of realism that they felt could better articulate and explore working class life, as opposed to the bourgeois characters traditionally represented by European Naturalism. Secondly, by the late 1940s public subsidy for the arts had been introduced in the wake of World War II, with the government gradually committing larger sums of money to reinvigorate the theatre. This opened up the possibility for new companies, theatres and styles of work, as well as encouraging the regional repertory theatres which were responsible for producing new aspiring actors and playwrights outside of the established middle-class, London, mould.[124] Finally, the rise of film and television also drove the need for actors who could fill the roles, which were defined by the need for performance that were subtle and nuanced enough to translate into on screen realism. Between 1951 and 1964 the number of TV sets in

---

[122] Elsom, p. 19.
[123] Dan Rebellato, *1956 and All That: The Making of Modern British Drama* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 73.
[124] Gardner, p. 62.

Britain jumped from 1 million to 13 million, making on-screen drama accessible to huge numbers of the public.[125] These factors were related: Shirley notes that the development of kitchen-sink realism in the 1950s was a notable moment for British theatre, one which would later help propel the development of realism in TV and film drama.[126] Williams in 1977 argued that the spread of television signalled the extension of drama to working-class life, making it the ;centre of dramatic action' and themes, thus extending drama to a popular audience.[127] Williams also argued that this widespread availability of drama through the TV set signalled the beginning of 'dramatized society', in which drama would become 'habitual experience', part of everyday life in a way never before experienced.[128] These claims regarding mediatization will be important throughout this project as I consider how dramatic modes have further implanted themselves into everyday lives with the rise of the service sector.

As these forces converged, actors in the mid-twentieth-century found themselves having to contend with new forms of drama, on stage and screen, which required psychologically demanding, emotionally convincing performances of characters from a wider than ever range of social backgrounds. This resulted in the growth of the new wave social realist writers, characterised both by their identification as working class and by the forms of 'emotional protest' contained within their plays.[129] Lacey notes that new wave plays, such as John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, Shelagh Delaney's *Taste of Honey*, and Arnold Wesker's *Roots*, were understood 'as an unreconstructed "reflection" of social reality, which relied on the

[125] Lacey, p. 10.
[126] Shirley, 'Stanislavsky's Passage into the British Conservatoire', p. 41.
[127] Williams, 'Lecture on Realism', pp. 61–74.
[128] Williams, 'Drama in a Dramatized Society', p. 12.
[129] Rebellato, p. 32.

personal situation of the writers to guarantee the "truth" of the text, its sociological validity', placing the writer's vision front and centre.[130] These theatrical and social changes were to place new expectations on the actor, who now had to serve the interests of the text and its characters, rather than vice versa. As Rebellato explains, 'the new actor was someone who lent his or her body to the text, become a guarantor of its authenticity, and through it transformed him or herself into its symptoms; consequently they came to be more authentic people.'[131]

Stanislavski's methods finally arrived in Britain within this context, at a time when theatre was undergoing a transformation in hierarchy: the revered status of the actor giving way to a stage which would soon be characterised by the dominion of playwrights and directors. In addition, this new wave of realism ensured that the notion of authenticity was quickly becoming cemented as integral to the work of the actor and coming to be seen as a defining characteristic and measure of a performer's success or ability.

Stanislavski's introduction to America and Britain

British theatre was both slow to adopt and resistant to adopting Stanislavski's methods. By the 1950s his work was well known, having already been embraced in America by the likes of Lee Strasberg, Stella Alder and Sanford Meisner, a group of influential practitioners who built upon Stanislavski's teaching to develop their own, distinctly American, iterations of his ideas. Strasberg, in particular, is credited with the development of the Method, an approach inspired by Stanislavski, but which

[130] Lacey, p. 77.
[131] Rebellato, p. 81.

placed primary emphasis on the personal experience and emotional expression of the actors, and privileged certain elements of the system including the technique of emotion memory (also known as affective memory or emotion recall). This involves the actor drawing on past personal experiences of their own, in order to relive and perform the emotions they felt during them. By the end of the 1950s, Strasberg had helped to solidify his version of Stanislavski's teachings via the Method and alongside it, as Carnicke argues, an overriding focus on psychological realism and emotional authenticity. Yet despite knowledge of his work and familiarity with the American performers it had inspired, Stanislavski remained largely untaught and his methods ignored in Britain. In his 1958 autobiography, for example, Sir Kenneth Barnes, director of RADA from 1909 until 1955, mentions Stanislavski's name just once, and then only in reference to why he did not admit his methods to the school: 'a practice which I felt was more suited to a small theatre studio than to a large public organisation'.[132] This discrepancy between America and Britain has been partially attributed to the fact that, while America had hosted the MAT on tour in 1922, Britain had to wait until 1958, after Stanislavski's death, to witness its work in the flesh.[133] Other factors, however, also played a key role. Keith Walden argues that Stanislavski gained prominence precisely because of how much his approach shared with American public life and performance already, and Richard Hornby suggests that Strasberg's particular articulation of Stanislavski's work was 'appropriate for a highly individualist, capitalist culture'.[134] Similarly, Chambers argues that whilst Stanislavski's work was rooted in a European humanism which emphasised shared experience, Strasberg was more influenced by an American neoconservative approach

[132] Kenneth Barnes, *Welcome Good Friends* (London; Peter Davies, 1958), p. 138.
[133] Styan, *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice 1,* p. 144.
[134] Walden, p.318, Richard Hornby, 'Stanislavski in America' in *Stanislavski on Stage*, eds. Kathy Dacre & Paul Fryer. (Stanislavski Centre, Rose Bruford College, 2008), p. 59.

which prioritised individual and private rights. The Method, he argues, is based on a 'near deification of the individual', which was in keeping with an American politics and ideology based on inalienable individual rights.[135]

The differences between Stanislavski's system and the Method approach are important for this research, as they have implications for the theorisation of emotional management off stage. This will be explained in more depth in the following chapter, however a useful summary of the differences between them is provided by Counsell, who argues that Stanislavski's approach to acting produced unified, coherent character in which elements came together to produce even performance, as apparent in the emphasis given to broader trajectories of 'objective' and 'through-line of action' when developing a role.[136] The Method, in contrast, resulted in unintegrated, highly charged emotional flashes and 'drastic swings in feeling', as these immediate 'truthful' emotional responses on the part of the individual were given priority over the longer development of character.[137] The coherency offered by the system is also central to understanding the organisation of the play and performance according to Stanislavski. His use of 'units' to break and 'carve up' the character's trajectory is what allowed for a more systemised and teachable approach to developing character.[138] I detail these techniques in chapter four, where I also consider the consequences they have for how we understand the system as a mode of performance and character *management*.

The American embrace of Stanislavski is crucial to understanding how his ideas were then spread in Britain. In her report for Rose Bruford College, Dacre argues that much of the Stanislavskian technique imparted to British drama schools

---

[135] Jonathan Chambers, p. 37.
[136] Counsell, p. 58.
[137] Counsell, p. 58.
[138] Pitches, p. 13.

comes in fact from a generation of teachers who had advanced his ideas in America, and who have since acted as 'the conduit of influence on contemporary UK practice.'[139] By 1958, when the MAT eventually toured Britain, Stanislavski had already become associated with the American Method actors in the minds of British critics and, despite featuring Russian performers, the tour sparked a debate about the competing qualities of British and American styles. Reviewing the MAT's first London show in 1958, a critic for the magazine *Plays and Players* wrote: 'In the first place, when it comes to the Moscow Art Theatre you do not go to see anybody in anything. What you go to see is the finest ensemble playing that a lifetime's dedicated professionalism, untainted by Western star nonsense, can produce.'[140] It was the strength of this ensemble quality, actors fully inhabiting each character without upstaging one another, to which the MAT's success was frequently attributed. In the *Plays and Players* review, this collectivity is counterposed to 'Western star nonsense' - a reference to the star system which was still prevalent in British theatre at this point. The review is indicative of the way that the work of the MAT and Stanislavski was frequently employed by critics during the 1950s to attack British acting styles, and the dominance of star individuals in particular. By the time of the MAT's London debut frustration with the existing system had reached a crescendo and the pages of *Plays and Players* were filled with monthly complaints, often using Stanislavski and acclaim for the American Method actors as leverage in their attacks. The American critic Charles Marowitz, for example, became notable for a series of scathing attacks on British acting, lamenting performances of 'abysmal vacuity' which could 'resemble a galaxy of animated spurts'.[141] In a particularly memorable piece

[139] Dacre, p. 6.
[140] 'Review of the Cherry Orchard, Sadlers Wells', *Plays and Players*, June 1958, p. 9.
[141] Charles Marowitz, 'British Acting is Divorced from Reality', *Plays and Players*, March 1957, p. 10.

Marowitz, with the help of a medium, summoned the spirit of (the by then deceased) Stanislavski to assist him in condemning British styles of the day. The spirit of Stanislavski decries the 'phoney externalism and high-flown histrionics' of actors and, surveying the past three hundred years of British theatre from the vantage point of the afterlife, announces that he can see only 'Stars! Personalities!'.[142] By way of contrast, Marowitz would often write about America's success in adopting the system, and in particular reserved praise for how the Method 'emphasised the importance of "inner truth" and "acceptable credibility" among actors', continuing that 'in a profession which for centuries has been racked by artifice and bogged down by superficiality, the virtues of "truthfulness" and "credibility" are not to be sneezed at.'[143] This then was the key dividing line in the late 1950s: a British theatre limited by the egos and status of its actors, struggling against a rising tide of perceived Russian and American excellence which privileged authentic characterisation above all else.

For Shirley, these debates emerged at a crisis point for British drama schools, with many 'failing to furnish students with the kinds of skill that were being demanded by the profession'.[144] British theatre had by this point been through decades of transformation and was now being organised in a manner radically different from the actor-managed, melodramatic stage of the nineteenth century. Stanislavski's methods offered an appropriate fit for an industry struggling to find a solution to the problem of how to equip actors to meet the demands of new plays and characters. By the late 1960's Stanislavski, and his American interpreters, were becoming integral to British acting. Rawlins writes that there was a 'cultural shift' during this period, towards the perceived American tradition. Stanislavski, he argues,

---

[142] Marowitz, 'A Conversation with Stanislavsky', *Plays and Players*, March 1958, p. 6.
[143] Marowitz, 1957, p. 10.
[144] Shirley, 'Stanislavsky's Passage into the British Conservatoire', p. 49.

fitted the 'zeitgeist' of a new age where film and television were on the rise, and realistic styles of performance were in high demand.[145]

As has been established, drama schools offer a form of industrial apprenticeship, equipping students with a trade which then prepares them for the job market they enter on graduation. Ben Francombe has charted the relationship between actor training and the theatre industry, highlighting that these links were historically cemented in 1975, when the Gulbenkian report into actor training recommended the establishment of the National Council for Drama Training, which was able to confer legitimacy through its offer of accreditation to acting courses.[146] The report, Francombe argues, accepted that industrial demands were key for training requirements.[147] The demands of the industry forced drama schools to change their approach and allow new forms of training to take up residence.

This shift within training was not a straightforward transition however, as some institutions were still reluctant to adopt new methods. Actors graduating from RADA in the 1960s, for example, remained 'associated with the classical repertoire, with its bias towards the language of a character and less towards their psychology', lacking the 'distinctive breadth and depth' of those emerging from newer schools.[148] These newer schools included London Drama Centre, established in 1963 by a breakaway group of teachers and students who had left the Central School of Speech and Drama after that institution had refuted their use of Stanislavski's work.[149] These teachers, Harold Lang, Yat Malmgren and Christopher Fettes, established their own school, taking many students with them, with the intention of furthering Stanislavski's

---

[145] Trevor Rawlins, p. 177.
[146] Ben Francombe, 'Falling Off a Wall: Degrees of Change in British Actor Training', *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, 21.3 (2002), pp. 176–87, (p. 177).
[147] Ben Francombe, p. 179.
[148] Boston in Dacre, p. 65.
[149] Boston in Dacre, p. 63.

work in Britain, making Drama Centre foundational to that project. Notably Fettes, in a 1993 BBC documentary about the school, describes their training as heavily based on Stanislavski's 'Method', rather than system, implying a particular commitment to the American iteration of his work.[150] Their students, he says, are expected to be 'rigorously truthful about what happens inside themselves'. Their approach is demonstrated in the first episode of the documentary, where a prospective auditionee is asked about what in life has hurt her. 'My whole childhood' she replies, on the brink of tears, and is then asked by the tutors whether she can 'face the memory of it' and whether she is afraid. She insists that she is not afraid and that she can face, and therefore use, her trauma. Later in the documentary another student is seen practising an emotional memory exercise, resulting in tears and screams as she recalls a traumatic encounter with a teacher who called her fat. Despite her reactions becoming increasingly loud and distressed, her acting teacher is seen encouraging her to continue, and to vocalise her emotions. One alumni interviewed for the film describes the process of acting as 'baring yourself' and 'finding a method to know or discover yourself […] a craft where you have to learn to manipulate and discover yourself, not just a psychological exercise, but you have to learn how to use yourself and you have to have a method' before complaining, 'we come from a country which is anti-Method.' Drama Centre then, framed itself as explicitly breaking with existing British moulds of acting and offering instead a training more in line with the work of Strasberg and other American tutors, relying primarily on the ability to use and manage the students most personal emotional material. Drama Centre's success led to its tutors being poached by older drama schools, and Stanislavski's work eventually making its way throughout the British conservatoire system. Consequently, the older

[150] John Barnes, 'Theatre School' (*BBC*, 1993).

schools began appointing tutors with knowledge of Stanislavski's work and focusing more of their training around his system. At RADA, John Fernald, Barnes's successor, introduced Stanislavski to the curriculum as part of his efforts to shake off the 'conservative and uninteresting' reputation that it had attained.[151]

It is notable that Drama Centre had such success with its Method based approach as, according to the BBC documentary, most of its graduates went on to film and TV careers rather than ones focused on stage. Although an orientation towards screen acting is neither mentioned in the documentary nor a feature of the training itself, the staff are upfront about preparing students for the reality of their careers post-graduation. One tutor talks about the need for students to 'sell' and 'market' themselves, and groups of students are seen discussing what traits they can emphasise and sell in order to increase their chances of getting work. Most of the students featured who do find work after graduation pivot immediately into TV and film auditions and opportunities. Debates about the difference between the Method and the system have often considered the role of screen acting in the development of their approaches. For Shirley, the American tradition was largely shaped in response to the demands of the screen, whereas the British tradition of Stanislavskian acting has largely been in response to theatre. One of the fundamental differences in the two approaches, he argues, is between the privileging of the performer over character. In a Method based approach authenticity is directed towards the 'real-life experiences of the actor', whereas the British approach tends towards the transformation into character, making the 'imaginary personality of a fictitious character' the more important vessel for authenticity, echoing Carnicke's similar argument about the focus

[151] 'Fernald brings Realism to RADA', *Plays and Players*, February 1957, p. 8.

on the experiences of the individual actor within the Method.[152] Shirley concludes that British drama schools have thus limited 'a propensity towards the psychological subjectivism that was often a feature of early Method-based approaches to interpellation'.[153]

Despite Drama Centre's innovations signalling the more widespread adoption of Stanislavskian techniques in British drama schools, a contradiction in this training thus emerges: the industry demands actors who can fill the numerous TV and film roles available but many drama schools, whilst offering a screen acting module or a short section of the course dedicated to it, still reserve the bulk of their three year acting programmes for stage acting. Rawlins highlights this, arguing that most British drama schools still focus their training on theatre, despite the fact that TV and film work is now the norm for professional actors. He suggests that theatre is, perhaps, still seen as 'the greater repository of artistic integrity' despite screen being increasingly where actors make a living.[154] For Rawlins, the implications of this shift in working patterns are huge. He identifies the tradition of subsidised repertory theatre, and the 'professionally nurturing, ensemble approach' that he assigns to it, as part of a more collective model of training and apprenticeship.[155] As actors now move from drama school straight into TV and film jobs, he argues, they find themselves in a 'much more individualistic, less structured environment', where the actor is disempowered in favour of the domination of the director.[156] This is a very different reality for the Stanislavskian actor than the one Carnicke envisions when she claims that the system views the actor 'as an autonomous artist'.[157]

---

[152] Shirley, Stanislavsky's Passage into the British Conservatoire', p. 58.
[153] Shirley, Stanislavsky's Passage into the British Conservatoire', p. 59.
[154] Rawlins, p. 20.
[155] Rawlins, p. 138.
[156] Rawlins, p. 138.
[157] Carnicke, p. 2.

British drama schools, who were resistant to change in the early twentieth-century but eventually made way for the spread of a system-based training regime, seem once again to be caught in a bind. Their status as both carriers or gatekeepers of an artistic tradition and agents of industry casts them in a contradictory position. Freeman, in a discussion of the British training context, attributes the prevalence of realism in drama schools to the fact that as 'institutions designed for a specific industry' they must equip trainees with the skills required by the jobs market they face upon graduating.[158] Fettes himself, in the BBC documentary, is clear about this 'duty', arguing that Drama Centre has a responsibility to industry as much as to its students. This historical relationship between drama schools and the industry they serve has become increasingly complicated in the twenty-first century, however. Most notably, a system of accreditation for drama schools is no longer in place, reflecting the fact that most training institutions have become attached to universities and offer their degrees through Higher Education institutions. Breaking this seal of industry accreditation raises the question of what jobs or contexts aspiring actors are now being trained for..

Frank Camilleri writes that we are now witnessing 'a paradigm shift', in which performer training is becoming increasingly commercialised, packaged and split into smaller components isolated from the holistic approach of Stanislavski.[159] He argues that when these components are 'transposed into the wider context of commodities, technique takes on a different dimension and marketability informs and structures its logic', with the result being a form of training 'geared towards technical placement meant as subject formation'.[160] For Camilleri this 'subject formation' in an institutional context 'occurs in the image of the dominant socio-economic conditions'.

---

[158] Freeman, p. 6.
[159] Frank Camilleri, 'Of Pounds of Flesh and Trojan Horses: Performer Training in the Twenty-First Century', *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 14.2 (2009), pp. 26–34, (p. 26).
[160] Camilleri, p. 28.

Today these conditions are marked by the consequences of neoliberalism in which economic instability and precarity is increasingly the norm for many, regardless of profession, and the cultural impacts of film and TV (as well as more recent trends in social media and advertising) have led to an acceleration of processes of individualism. With this in mind, Stanislavskian based training treads an uneasy path.

Whilst the tendencies towards individual psychological focus, especially in the Method, are well suited to cultural demand, the holistic training framework, which is invested in the preservation of theatrical tradition, is increasingly less economically viable. This can be seen in the recently announced closure of Drama Centre, as well as what some have identified as the broader crisis of funding and accreditation facing drama schools in the current moment.[161] We might add that a system of performer training based on the model of the cohesive, knowable subject is increasingly under threat at a time when neoliberalism has resulted in what some consider an increasingly fragmentary form of subjectivity.[162] If this is true then it allows room for subjectivity to be more greatly moulded according to corporate and workplace dictates, which are able to wield greater power over sources of identity. Camilleri argues that we are seeing new packaging of performer training which is now 'ultimately, at the service of the industries that surround the phenomenon of performer training today'.[163] Although Camilleri points to the academic, publishing and funding industries as key examples, we might broaden our view by considering

---

[161] Adele Redmond, 'Drama school to close after review reveals course "pushed students to the edge"', *Arts Professional*, 12 March 2020 < https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/drama-school-close-after-review-reveals-courses-pushed-students-edge> [accessed 13 September 2021]. For further discussion of Drama Centre's history and the issues surrounding its closure see Robert's Price and Annie Tyson's podcast episode: Robert Price, 'The Drama Centre 1963-2022. Annie Tyson. The rise and fall of this influential school', *The History of Actor Training in the British Drama School*, October 2020 <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/the-drama-centre-1963-2022-annie-tyson-the-rise-and/id1535319541?i=1000496722250> [accessed 13 September 2021]

[162] Jayne Raisborough, *Lifestyle Media and the Formation of the Self* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 28.

[163] Camilleri, p. 28.

the industries that today have an interest in access to trained performers such as call centres, hospitality and leisure establishments.

Conclusion

I have argued that the introduction of the system in the British and American context coincided with transformations in how theatre was owned and managed and, as part of this, the actors' specific role within the production process and hierarchy. Stanislavski's work cannot, therefore, be understood as merely an isolated series of innovations in the art of acting, but rather must be contextualised within the broader ruptures taking place on stage in the early twentieth-century: his system offered not just a novel approach to the acting process, but a way of organising theatre on a newly industrial basis. The way in which skills in emotional management are taught to aspiring actors via formal training becomes inextricably bound with the forms of employment they then find themselves entering. Stanislavski's major contribution is twofold: acting is taken from the realm of a craft mostly passed on through an apprentice based model and professionalised, and in the process cultivates new notions of subjectivity in relation to both the actors position and relationship to their work, and the characters they portray.

Since this widespread rollout of his methods in the 1960s Stanislavski's work has remained the cornerstone of British training, reflecting the continued demand for psychologically real characters on stage and screen. If the fundamental offering of British actor training has remained relatively unchanged since the mid 1960s however, the application of these skills once students graduate has been transformed. As we have seen, those who do pursue acting careers find themselves more and more

likely to take on screen roles, demanding both a different technical approach and an acceptance of very different working conditions. Away from both stage and screen, the skills of professionally trained performers are also in demand. The skills of actors are increasingly relevant elsewhere in an economy heavily reliant on workers equipped with interpersonal, emotional management and communicative skills, but which also places ideological emphasis on individuality, a concept which has also been identified as underpinning Stanislavski's methods.[164]

This means that control and design of work is increasingly wrested away from employees, whilst their most subjective and personal input is simultaneously required by the role. As outlined in this chapter, the ascendance of Stanislavski's methods coincided with the restructuring of the actor's place within the theatrical hierarchy. From a nineteenth century industry characterised by a relatively high degree of control over their own labour, and management roles for some, the mid-twentieth-century actor found their status usurped by the growing importance of the director, writer, and new forms of theatre ownership. Despite attempts to professionalise acting through the establishment of dedicated training schools as a means of regulating entry, the actor was instead proletarianized during this period, as the craft-based model of acting was gradually abandoned and, more recently, formal ties with industry eroded. Rosalind Gill and Andy Pratt draw attention to the notion of a similar 'dual process' facing creative work under neoliberalism: 'on the one hand the "re-Taylorisation" or "proletarianization" of cultural and intellectual work, and on the other the transformation of all work such that it is increasingly dependent on communicative and emotional capacities.'[165] In chapter four I will return to examine this claim of re-

[164] Shepherd, p. 8.
[165] Rosalind Gill and Andy Pratt, 'Precarity and Cultural Work in the Social Factory? Immaterial Labour, Precariousness and Cultural Work', *Theory, Culture & Society,* 25 (7-8) (2008), pp. 1-30, (p. 8).

Taylorisation in relation to Stanislavski's approach to the development of character.

This thesis will now go on to consider exactly how, and with what consequences, Stanislavskian approaches to performance are being translated into the contemporary service sector. As Phillip Auslander reminds us, although Stanislavski and many other theorists 'assume that the actor's self precedes and grounds her performance' offering access to truth, 'the actorly self is, in fact, produced by the performance it supposedly grounds.'[166] In the next chapter I will turn to examine what kind of subject is being demanded, performed and reproduced by occupations which employ emotional labour, and in particular, explore in greater depth the emphasis on the actor's 'real self', which has been highlighted as integral to understanding his approaches.

[166] Phillip Auslander, *From Acting to Performance: Essays in Modernism and Postmodernism* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1997) p. 30.

Chapter three: The 'system' of service and the self at work

Introduction

Outside of the entrance to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in central London a poster reads 'It's work, so work it'. The poster advertises 'RADA Business', a division of the school offering acting and communication workshops to businesses, promising to improve teamwork and leadership skills for both groups and individual participants. Alongside RADA, another conservatoire, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, has a similar division called 'Central for Business', with training courses offered on themes including storytelling, 'courageous conversations' and 'personal impact'.[1] RADA Business also offers a variety of workshops, including one entitled 'Being the Brand', where practical sessions encourage employees to tell 'positive stories' about the company they work for.[2] Group workshops are also run with a focus on improvisation, helping teams to become 'more creative at work and respond "in the moment" with greater confidence.'[3] RADA Business's website boasts about the reputation they have developed for their corporate work 'by making RADA's ideas relevant in a business context.'[4] They explain: 'When we talk about learning skills from actors, it's got nothing to do with being inauthentic or becoming a different person. It's about delivering your best performance, and being able to do so consistently. Whoever you are.'[5] Here, the actor is not heralded for their potential to

---

[1] 'Central for Business', *Central School of Speech and Drama*, <https://www.cssd.ac.uk/content/central-business> [accessed 16 March 2020]
[2] 'RADA Business', *Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts*, <https://www.radabusiness.com/> [accessed 16 March 2020]
[3] 'RADA Business: Research', *Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts,* < https://www.radabusiness.com/about-us/research/> [accessed 24 February 2021]
[4] 'The RADA Approach', *Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts*, < https://www.radabusiness.com/rada-approach/> [accessed 16 March 2020]
[5] 'The RADA Approach'.

teach other groups of workers how to effectively shape artifice, or generate a role that is demanded of them. Rather, the actor possesses an ability to enable the client to craft performance from their own authentic, inner material. Their individual leadership courses, similarly, promise to 'encourage you to find a leadership style that feels both authentic and credible, guided by world leading performance coaches.'[6] Any reference to theatricality itself is absent, with a focus instead on the promise of unleashing 'authenticity' via dramatic techniques which help the individual to unlock their own 'finest performance'.[7]

These initiatives could be crudely described as drama schools offering short courses in emotional labour skills – capitalising on the correspondence between Stanislavskian realism's insistence on individual emotional authenticity (as detailed in the previous chapter) and the concurrent demand in many emotional labour heavy jobs for the same skills. This convergence between the two is of particular interest to this thesis, whose starting point is the deployment of Stanislavski in the emotional labour literature, most notably in Hochschild's foundational work on the subject. As previously outlined, through *The Managed Heart* Hochschild draws heavily from Stanislavski, specifically *An Actor Prepares*, comparing the emotional labourer in her analysis to the emotional management of Stanislavski's actors. The expansion of drama schools into business training is therefore illustrative of these changes, and how the skills associated with professional actors have entered broader consciousness as a set of skills which are also of value to businesses outside of the theatre industry. While RADA Business caters to executives, management teams, or larger businesses with the corresponding budgets for staff training, similar notions surrounding the

[6] 'The Leading Role', *Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts*, < https://www.radabusiness.com/courses-individuals/leading-role/> [accessed 24 February 2021]
[7] 'RADA Business'.

wider applicability of the actor's proficiency for authentic performance have begun to find articulation in other commercial areas. In many instances, staff are now encouraged or expected to generate the type of authentic performance that the actor is known for, but without the professional training offered to their corporate counterparts through the conservatoire and its commercial offshoots. Of course, the paradox of RADA in Business is in its promise to 'unleash' participants' authenticity through skills training, an offer unavailable to those in many workplaces, particularly those in leisure and hospitality, where such skills are not acknowledged as such, nor regarded as trainable in and of themselves. Rather, the ability to perform authentic, genuine, and repeat performance is ascribed as some innate attribute that staff must display at the recruitment stage, before they can even enter the workforce. Although these ideas are expressed in different forms depending on the scale, type and needs of the business, certain elements remain prominent and consistent regardless of the specificities of the business, or price of the commodity.

Despite vast differences between the high street coffee chain Pret A Manger, and the upscale steak house chain Hawksmoor, including average length of time for each customer interaction, the price points, and the target customer base, both examples illustrate the convergence of specific notions surrounding hospitality, emotional authenticity and the needs of businesses in an increasingly 'experience' centred service economy. As such, these examples represent both the luxury and lower end of the market, and reflect broader trends which are prevalent across the sector. This chapter will consider what ideas about selfhood, authenticity and performance are being articulated in these commercial contexts, and how they correspond to the Stanislavskian system of training which is both the bedrock of Hochschild's comparison, and the dominant dramatic mode in Western theatre,

television and film. The chapter will consider Hochschild's use of Stanislavski in greater detail, arguing that the deep and surface acting framework she offers rests on a misapplication of his work. It will consider the way in which notions of authenticity, emotion and performance are being communicated within these workplaces, and the effects upon and experiences of workers within them. It will argue for a reorientation towards questions of direction and management – in other words, the manner in which theatrical action is supervised and shaped - which will then be taken up in the following chapter in relation to both case studies.

The capacity for conservatoires to offer the kinds of courses described above is rooted in their prevalent mode of training, a Stanislavskian realism where the authentic self of the performer - and now employee - is positioned as both the centre of the performance, and the key resource needed to ensure its quality. These additions to drama school offerings are the result of the convergence of a number of factors. As explored in the previous chapter, drama schools in the late twentieth-century largely severed their formal ties to the theatre industry, increasingly taking both accreditation and funding from larger Higher Education institutions.[8] The opening up of business divisions in drama schools is reflective of broader changes within the Higher Education context: the introduction of marketisation into universities and the financial pressure which spurs the growth of lucrative 'short courses'. As Frank Camilleri has argued, in the context of performer training, marketisation means a previously holistic, residential tradition is converted into a system which can be broken down into smaller, self-contained 'chunks' or 'units' of training, which can then be sold individually to consumers rather than delivered as part of that wholly integrated

[8] Ben Francombe, 'Falling Off a Wall: Degrees of Change in British Actor Training', *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, 21:3 (2002), pp. 176-187.

programme of focused study.[9] This is not confined to vocational performer training. Mariya Ivancheva has written about the process of 'unbundling', in which educational programmes are disaggregated into smaller components that can then be delivered by different stakeholders, including via the introduction of public-private partnerships.[10] Though it is often used as a neutral term, Ivancheva argues that 'unbundling' is characteristic of 'the era of neoliberal globalisation that sees rampant commercialisation of the higher education marked by quantified competition for excellence and success measured by metrics of individual performance and world rankings.'[11] The emergence of business divisions of conservatoire institutions also rests on the appetite for such courses, fed by the prioritisation of effective communicative or 'performance' skills in the business workplace. An emphasis on the need for these 'soft skills' allows drama schools to capitalise by offering short courses that repackage elements of their training as now directly applicable to the non-theatrical workplace. Revenues generated from these programmes can then be fed directly back into the drama schools' degree programmes, a valuable source of income at a time when Higher Education in general is facing enormous financial pressure under a system where direct grants from government to educational institutions have been cut, in favour of a fees system which has led universities to compete with one another under a market based model.[12] The integration of business-oriented provision within drama schools is thus fundamentally linked both to the

[9] Frank Camilleri, 'Of Pounds of Flesh and Trojan Horses: Performer Training in the Twenty-First Century', *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 14.2 (2009), pp. 26–34.
[10] Mariya Ivancheva, 'Unbundling: A New Gendered Frontier of Exclusion and Exploitation in the Neoliberal University', *Matter: Journal of New Materialist Research*, 1 (2009), pp. 99–104, (p. 99).
[11] Ivancheva, p. 99.
[12] Roger Brown and Helen Carasso, *Everything for Sale? The Marketisation of UK Higher Education* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013)

rising concern with emotion and performance within business and work, and to the Stanislavskian model of conservatoire training.

As outlined above, an understanding of Stanislavskian actor training has also been key to conceptual approaches to emotional labour itself. As highlighted in chapter one, Hochschild's framework has come under criticism from scholars such as Paul Brook, who argues that her analysis offers a fundamentally individualistic way of understanding emotion at work. This tendency in turn creates problems within her analysis as it both neglects the broader and social implications of the ascendence of emotional labour, whilst also painting a pessimistic picture about the potential for tension or resistance within the workplace which might be organised around the demands presented by emotional labour and its attendant practices. Hochschild's use of Stanislavski and the theatrical lens is not incidental, but rather foundational, to this individualising mode of analysis. She introduces his approach as a way of understanding the individual emotional transmutation process of the worker, which is a limited and limiting understanding of Stanislavski's work. Hochschild writes that 'in everyday life, we are all to some degree students of Stanislavski; we are only poorer or better at deep acting, closer or more remote from incentives to do it well.'[13] But it is also the case that consideration of how his legacy of systematised performer training shaped the emotional management skills of actors, might offer us perspectives on the collective experience of such work in other industries. The application of Stanislavski's work has a number of implications for how we conceive of the potential for employee organisation or resistance in workplaces that are dependent on this type of labour, and the emergence of what Ben Trott has argued can

[13] Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, p. 194.

be understood as 'emotional class struggle'.[14] Thinking more historically and concretely about the development of the Stanislavskian tradition can offer us new routes into thinking about how emotional labour is managed and collectivised. On this basis, this chapter will probe the theatrical analogy that informs Hochschild's work and suggest how a more serious consideration of the actor's work might lend itself to studies of emotional labour beyond that profession. I will argue that there are three key problems with Hochschild's invocation of the actor. Firstly, it naturalises culturally and historically specific notions of 'authenticity' which are in fact shaped by performance itself, both on and off stage. Secondly, her misattribution of the 'Method' school of acting to Stanislavski is a historical inaccuracy which obscures the nature of his contribution to acting, and finally her deployment of the 'deep' surface theory contributes to the individualisation of what is in practise actually a more collective process of shaping emotions in an institutional context. I will finish by suggesting ways in which Stanislavski might be more usefully understood in relation to emotional labour, specifically via insights into its management and direction.

The Joy of Pret

It is lunchtime on Valentine's Day and I walk into a central London branch of the coffee chain Pret A Manger. Having earlier decided to dress in the spirit of the day, I am wearing earrings replicating the heart eyes emojicon: large yellow faces with love hearts replacing the eyes. I approach the cashier, smiling and greeting her in a friendly manner. I place on the counter the wrap and chocolate bar I'm buying. The cashier

[14] Ben Trott, 'Affective Labour and Alienation: Spinoza's Materialism and the Sad Passions of Post-Fordist Work', *Emotion, Space and Society* (2017), pp. 1–8, (p 3).

picks up my wrap, which isn't labelled, turns it over, then over again. I step forward and tell her which one it is. She thanks me, and processes the rest of my order. As I am paying she hands me a Pret 'Love bar' from behind the counter and says: 'it's on the house today'. I thank her and leave, feeling both surprised and grateful as a result of this gift. What I had just experienced was 'The Joy of Pret': the terminology which the company uses to refer to its policy of mandating staff to give away a percentage of free food and drink to customers of their choosing each day.

'The Joy of Pret', is one example of how Pret leverages emotional labour to create a brand identity which it sees as pivotal to its success.[15] Founded in London in 1983, the chain now consists of over five hundred stores globally, over three hundred and fifty of which are in the United Kingdom. The chain generates a turnover of over £700 million a year, and in 2018 was sold to investment group JAB Holdings for a reported £1.5 billion.[16] On the British high street, Pret has become a ubiquitous presence across major cities, with a carefully constructed image emphasising a commitment towards ethical, organic and vegetarian food, ongoing work with homeless charities, and the persistently friendly demeanour of their staff. The insistence on the latter point is reiterated in Pret's publicity but also through its recruitment process, training procedures, and management approach, and is formalised in staff contracts. Pret has developed a reputation based on these attempts to 'love-bomb customers', relying on the emotional labour of staff to maintain its image as a store synonymous with enthusiastic customer service.[17] Alongside 'The

---

[15] A detailed account of how the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted Pret is covered in the conclusion to this thesis.

[16] Phoebe Hurst and Wunmi Onibudo, 'How Pret Took Over the British High Street', *Vice*, 2019, <https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/n7jjjd/pret-a-manger-history-business-model> [accessed 16 March 2020]

[17] Timothy Noah, 'Labor of Love: The enforced happiness of Pret A Manger', *New Republic*, 2013, <https://newrepublic.com/article/112204/pret-manger-when-corporations-enforce-happiness> [accessed 16 March 2020]

Joy of Pret' the company uses a number of other tactics including the cultivation of a 'Pret Buzz', a specific type of atmosphere that each store must replicate through various means, and the use of mystery shoppers who arrive each week to monitor the performances of employees and penalise them if service is not fast, clean or friendly enough. In our interviews, employees at Pret stores reiterated that providing authentic, 'genuinely happy' customer service was a necessary part of the job. One interviewee, reflecting on the recruitment process for the job and what managers looked for, stated 'It's more about your character, your type of person. Some people wasn't born to be serving people, but for some people…' whilst another told me, 'You're not allowed to be scripted on till. You're not allowed. You can't be scripted. It's personality.'[18] The experience of performing emotional labour is therefore intrinsic to work as an employee of Pret.

As a result of these policies, the chain has attracted significant attention from the press, with articles in the *London Review of Books, New York Times*, *The Guardian*, and others, discussing their business practices as an example of emotional or affective labour, and multiple outlets offering guides on how to access the elusive free coffees.[19] Whether the emotional labour at Pret constitutes an intrinsic part of the product being sold – that is, customers are paying not just for their coffee but for the overall *experience* offered during the transaction - or whether it is purely a marketing strategy, not in itself fundamental to the company's offering, but rather designed to carve out a greater share of the market from competitors, is a question to be addressed

[18] Interview L2; interview L1. All interviews were conducted with agreement of anonymity and codes have been used to reference each.

[19] Paul Myerscough, 'The Pret Buzz', *London Review of Books*, 35:1 (2013); Stephanie Clifford, 'Would You Like a Smile With That?', *New York Times*, 6 August 2011; Peter Moore 'Pret A Manger – Behind the scenes at the 'Happy Factory', *The Guardian*, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/small-business-network/2015/apr/14/pret-a-manger-happy-coffee-chain> [accessed 16 March 2020]

in the final chapter of this thesis. Regardless of its precise economic function within the company, however, the experience of *performing* emotional labour is intrinsic to work as an employee of Pret, and it is these performances themselves that will be the focus of this chapter.

One of the ways in which the company underlines these expectations is through directives surrounding behaviour. A previously published list of 'Pret behaviours', cited in the *London Review of Books*, outlines a set of standard characteristics that employees are expected to exhibit, as well as those which are prohibited. According to this document, the ideal Pret employee is 'genuinely friendly'; 'creates a sense of fun'; 'knows their audience'; and 'has presence'.[20] Conversely, someone who 'does things only for show' is undesirable. The use of theatrical language in this document is positioned alongside the demand for authenticity – there is a clear performative imperative in the expectation to 'create' a certain atmosphere or 'presence', yet the requirement to know one's audience goes hand in hand with doing things out of a 'genuine' desire and refusing any sense of 'show'. The formalisation of these behaviours in writing demonstrates that they are very much a requirement of the job.

The theatrical metaphors, both implicit and explicit, as articulated through Pret's corporate literature, are not uncommon within the hospitality sector. As Morgan, Watson and Hemmington note, theatrical language and terms are commonly used by food critics and journalists, and foodservice itself has always included theatrical and performative elements, from rituals and pageants, to 'the formality of silver-service waiting to the spectacles of contemporary themed restaurants with

[20] Myerscough.

singing waiters or exploding volcanos.'[21] Pine and Gilmore's widely cited article, and subsequent book, *The Experience Economy*, explicitly advances this argument, urging managers to think of their businesses as a stage, and work as theatre.[22] The 'Pret behaviours' are exemplary of expectations for workers across the service sector, where theatricalization of the workplace, and the imperative to bring a performance of authenticity to work is now standard. This focus on the authentic serves both a financial and ideological function. Positing the ability to provide genuine, happy, service as innate to the employee's own self means that they do not have to be trained in, or remunerated according to, the possession of emotional 'skill'. Emotional labour, in this context, is an invisible skill, rendered as something that is the employee's responsibility to carry and cultivate, without a direct relationship to the employer. Simultaneously, the necessity of having these qualities means the employee is compelled to internalise the logic of the company, and subscribe to its mission as they commit their full 'authentic self' to the job.

Antitheatrical behaviour

In an account of the spread of this discourse of authenticity in the modern workplace Peter Fleming describes the evolution of what he terms 'just be yourself' management, arguing that management consultants, particularly in the contexts of the United States and the United Kingdom, now increasingly use authenticity as a reference point for understanding employee motivation and productive performance.[23]

---

[21] Michael Morgan, Pamela Watson, and Nigel Hemmington, 'Drama in the Dining Room: Theatrical Perspectives on the Foodservice Encounter', *Journal of Foodservice*, 19 (2008), pp. 111–18, (p. 111).
[22] B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, *The Experience Economy* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2011).
[23] Peter Fleming, *Authenticity and the Cultural Politics of Work: New Forms of Informal Control* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 2.

Fleming characterises this philosophy as inherently contradictory, an attempt by management to solve perennial workplace tensions through an increasing reliance on the incorporation of 'non-work associations', such as markers of identity, lifestyle, or sexuality.[24] Authenticity, as espoused by management, is then an attempt to 'solve the problem of self-alienation and "cure" the pathologies sustained by workers' as part of management's ongoing interest in finding ways for workers to accept the 'unpleasant realities' of work.[25] This management style, which encourages more of the employee's non-work existence to be carried into the productive sphere, coincides with the increasing demand for emotional labour and a workforce who are able and willing to put their own emotional management skills into the labour market. While the exhortation to 'just be yourself' may coincide with a greater emphasis on emotion, and solve some problems for management, it creates others. One manifestation of this is that staff performances require constant monitoring and adjustment, in a process of permanent rehearsal. Whilst one Pret interviewee explained that employees should think of themselves almost as 'game show hosts', they simultaneously drew attention to the careful balance required from their performances: 'there is such a thing as going too extreme with your customer service and personality'.[26] Others added: 'if you're even too loud or too smiley or things, it's like oh this is over the top.'[27] Employees described instances of being told, or telling others, to effectively tone down their showmanship, so the performance seemed more natural. This is also demonstrated by the banning of rote phrases during service: employees must not say 'next please' to customers waiting in line, but choose between a variety of phrases such as 'can I help' or 'are you next'. One interviewee explained, 'you don't shout

[24] Fleming, p. 7.
[25] Fleming, p. 3.
[26] Interview L9.
[27] Interview L6.

“next, next next!” because it's not McDonalds. You don't shout “next!”’, ‘So you say, “hi can I help?” or “is anybody waiting?” They're very specific. They don't want one word, “next, next”.’[28]

I will return to the question of management itself later in this chapter, but it is important to note the instability inherent in these performances, and the need to constantly re-establish the line of demarcation between a suitably authentic persona and an undesirably theatrical one, as articulated by the employees quoted above. Fleming refers to the tendency of ‘just be yourself’ management to adopt an ‘anti-managerial’ stance, whereby employees are encouraged to articulate and express parts of their personality which were once discouraged by corporations and managers, including personal markers of sexuality, ethnicity, cultural identity, leisure interests etc.[29] This anti-managerialism, as we have seen, is also indicative of an *anti-theatricality* which characterises the approach of Pret and other workplaces reliant on the discourse of authenticity. The attention placed on the authentic, genuine performance of selfhood, as counterposed to the rigid, or fake, ‘doing things only for show’ (as per the ‘Pret Behaviors’), echoes Marvin Carlson’s claims about the negative attributes assigned to theatricality from the 1960s onwards, as trends in performance art and theory reinforced an association between theatricality and ‘rigidity and empty repetition’.[30] Carlson points to the work of writers such as Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried who, during the 1960s, used their criticism to contribute towards the search for ‘the “essence” of art, a kind of authentic “self” for each art and each work of art’.[31] Carlson argues that theatricality and performance

[28] Interview L9.
[29] Fleming, p. 2.
[30] Marvin Carlson, ‘The Resistance to Theatricality’, *SubStance*, 31 no. 2/3.98/99 (2002), pp. 238–50, (p. 239-240).
[31] Carlson, p. 241.

became counterposed as 'rhetorically oppositional terms', with performance seen in alignment with the 'authentic' or 'meaningful' self and theatricality with the artificial, or empty repetition.[32] This uneasiness about the attributes of theatricality are notable even in the description offered by RADA Business earlier in this chapter, in which they are keen to reassure potential clients that their workshops have 'nothing to do' with inauthenticity or 'becoming a different person'.[33] If we consider the Pret behaviours cited earlier we can see this binary framework in effect. Despite the emphasis placed by the likes of Pine and Gilmore on the use of the theatrical as a marketing technique, the persistent focus on authenticity in fact serves to render explicitly 'theatrical' forms of behaviour as unwanted, and demonstrative of artifice.

Nicholas Ridout reaffirms this tendency in his own account of antitheatricality: 'Theatre is guilty, and knows it, while performance still makes some claim to innocence'.[34] For Ridout the 'ontological queasiness' which Jonas Barish identifies in relation to theatricality is extended to theatricalised service encounters (such as Pret), where he describes an 'affect of discomfort' which is intrinsic to the encounter.[35] Ridout argues that performance, far from being ideal mode of authentic self-expression is in fact 'an exemplary commodity' because it commodifies action, rather than objects or tangible 'things', and elsewhere argues that theatre itself is positioned very much within capitalist relations, rather than outside of them.[36] Theatre offers an experience of work 'that is not normally experienced as work, but as some kind of nonwork or "play"'.[37] The integration of non-work elements, of

---

[32] Carlson, p. 239-240.
[33] 'The RADA Approach'.
[34] Nicholas Ridout, *Stage Fright, Animals, and Other Theatrical Problems*, Theatre and Performance Theory (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 4.
[35] Nicholas Ridout, 'Performance in the Service Economy: Outsourcing and Delegation', in *Double Agent* (London, 2008), INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS, pp. 127–31 (p. 126).
[36] Nicholas Ridout, INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS, p. 131; Nicholas Ridout, *Passionate Amateurs: Theatre, Communism, and Love* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2013), p. 6.
[37] Ridout, *Passionate Amateurs*, p. 8–9.

‘fun’, and self-identity within the theatricalised service space mirrors the same condition. As Fleming notes, ‘the promotion of fun relies upon a symbolic blurring between life and work since the aim is to make the act of production feel as if it is not work at all’.[38] Businesses such as Pret deliberately integrate playful elements - indeed the articles cited earlier offering tips on how to get free coffee suggest customers are highly engaged in the ‘game’ offered by ‘The Joy Of Pret’ - but more crucially, the appeals to employees to willingly bring their genuine, fun, lively personalities to work also aims to conceal the nature of this practice *as* work, echoing Ridout’s description of theatre as work that strives to be experienced as ‘play’ instead.

Ridout’s conclusions about our understanding of theatre as part of the ‘real’ world of capitalist relations, rather than outside of them, have implications for our understanding of the theatre of labour across commercial stages such as Pret and Hawksmoor. Indeed the ‘Pret behaviours’ find their own affinity with Stanislavskian realism when they emphasise the necessity for those are who ‘genuinely friendly’ and ‘happy to be themselves’, alongside the clearer guidelines for outer performance.[39] Like the actor, employees at Pret are asked to draw from a personal resource of emotion and experience to fuel a repeat performance – in the case of such service work, of happiness and amenability to the customer’s needs. As I have outlined in chapter one, the theatrical metaphor which pervades the corporate literature also persists within critical scholarship which examines these business practices. Hochschild’s own analysis of emotional labour, with its reliance on the work of Stanislavski, in many ways echoes the training manuals and management guides which encourage employees to perform on the service stage, and managers to

[38] Fleming, p. 64.
[39] Myserscough.

construct their businesses based on a theatrical model. Of course, unlike such guides and manuals, Hochschild uses Stanislavski to advance a critique of the alienating effects of emotional labour. However, as this chapter will now proceed to argue, her application of the theatrical metaphor actually weakens her critique by succumbing to many of the essentialist notions of authenticity which these business models rely upon, and this is due in part to a misunderstanding of specific elements of Stanislavski's work itself. I will now explore in more detail the ideas of selfhood and authenticity which are being cultivated in these commercial contexts, before comparing them to Hochschild's theory in order to expand upon this claim.

'Enlightened Hospitality'

At Hawksmoor, a high-end chain of steakhouses originating in London, the price point and style of service is far removed from the fast food offering of Pret. Hawksmoor, founded in 2006 by owners Huw Gott and Will Beckett, has built an image which is reliant on exclusivity - from the price of the meal, which puts Hawksmoor on a par with fine-dining establishments, to the food itself, where great emphasis is put upon the quality of the meat, to the physical locations, which are often set back from the street, with dark store fronts and no windows, noticeable only if you are already looking for it. Having first opened in Shoreditch, London, the store has since expanded to include six restaurants in London, additional branches in Edinburgh and Manchester and, most recently, a restaurant in New York City.[40] Yet despite occupying a different space in the market than Pret, the two companies share many

[40] The Covid-19 pandemic delayed the opening of Hawksmoor NYC by over a year, with it eventually opening in September 2021.

similarities in their approach to service and employment, signalling a continuity in these trends, despite the cost of the product, which permeates service provision regardless of the luxury status of the commodity for sale. At Hawksmoor, 'work hard and be nice to people' is the stated basis of the company's ethos, and the first of the five values they set out to new recruits in their company training manual.[41] Amongst the others are, quality, development, support and finally, personality: 'everyone is different, and that's fine by us. We're not looking for identikit waiters in black ties. All we ask is that everyone aims for the same high standards. Apart from that just be yourself and you'll do fine'.[42] Though the cost of a meal at Hawksmoor puts it in the realm of much more formal dining establishments (a meal for two including wine is estimated at upwards of one hundred and fifty pounds) the company emphasises friendliness, happiness and a 'laid back' approach to hospitality. In my interview with founder Will Beckett, he explained that he always wanted a restaurant 'staffed by happy people, being themselves'.[43] The injunction to 'be yourself' is repeated throughout the staff manual, not only listed under the key values cited earlier, but also in relation to personal presentation: 'be yourself but make an effort', and under the basic principles of working there: 'be yourself and smile a lot'.[44] 'Be yourself', in these instances, is followed by a clarification, one which points to the kind of 'self' it is appropriate to 'be' at Hawksmoor. Employees are being asked to simultaneously craft and authenticate their selves in relation to the workplace and its demands.

In my interview with Beckett, he confirmed that Hawksmoor's principles in regard to service and hospitality are driven by the philosophy of Danny Meyer, a hugely successful American restauranteur responsible for, amongst others, Union

[41] Hawksmoor training manual, not publicly available.
[42] Hawksmoor training manual.
[43] Interview with Will Beckett, January 24 2019.
[44] Hawksmoor training manual.

Square Café, Gramercy Tavern and the international burger chain Shake Shack. Meyer's approach to hospitality, written up and detailed in his bestselling book *Setting the Table* (2006), can be best explained through two of his concepts: Enlightened Hospitality, and the 51% percent rule. Hawksmoor's management subscribes to both of these concepts, and have reworked them for their own stores. In *Setting the Table*, Meyer describes Enlightened Hospitality as 'putting hospitality to work', and employs the theatrical metaphor when differentiating it from service: 'Service is the technical delivery of a product. Hospitality is how the delivery of that product makes its recipient feel.'[45] He continues, 'Service is a monologue – we decide how we want to do things and set our own standards for service. Hospitality, on the other hand, is a dialogue.'[46] The 51% rule, which Hawksmoor also incorporates into its management strategy, involves placing emphasis on emotional job performance, with the remaining 49% focused on technical excellence and skills. Thus, in Meyer's approach, management and employees are encouraged to prioritise the emotional and affective elements of the job, over any more concrete skills or demands.[47]

Meyer's philosophy is notable in its codified approach to recruitment and management that centres on the worker's personality and emotional attributes, outlining in great detail how businesses can go about selecting people with the right qualities to boost the restaurant's image. A sample advertisement for a server position at one of Meyer's restaurant outlines that servers should: 'excel at applying empathy to every guest they care for so they may create and maintain our guest's loyalty, while ranking their teammate's needs even higher.'[48] Listed under the person specifications

---

[45] Danny Meyer, *Setting the Table: Lessons and Inspirations from One of the World's Leading Entrepreneurs* (London: Marshall Cavendish, 2010), p. 65.
[46] Meyer, p. 65.
[47] Meyer, p. 141.
[48] 'Join Our Team', *Union Square Hospitality Group*, <https://www.ushgnyc.com/join-our-team/> [accessed 10 March 2020]

are: ‘Derives pleasure from providing hospitality’, ‘excellent Emotional Self Awareness under pressure while maintaining a graceful, warm presence’ and ‘Open availability and a career mentality’.[49] Amongst the now recognisable tropes of ‘warm presence’ and authentic commitment, the phrase ‘open availability’ is of note, not least for its ambiguity. At Pret, ‘openness’ as a character trait was also repeatedly cited by interviewees, with the claim that such a trait is required by new employees in order to excel. When asked what kind of skills or attributes were needed to work at Pret, interviewees gave responses including ‘Somebody that’s good with people. That's naturally open’, ‘As open as possible, as friendly and someone whose not shy to, as I said, talk to customers’, ‘To be open. You have to learn lots of stuff. You have to memorise, you have to be fast’.[50] In discussion of managerial interventions, respondents also described the demand to be ‘open’ as a direct command: ‘I've only heard my manager say maybe two times, just to everyone in general that we should smile a little bit more, just be more open’; ‘ Just first day on the till, because I was like “next customer!” they said no, it's too much like a supermarket, you have to be more open’.[51] Openness, in these accounts, signifies a willingness to offer oneself, on a personal level, in service to the job, as well as a willingness to be subject to authority from the customer, not only management. In contrast, respondents talked about their initial experiences of feeling ‘closed off’, or ‘locked in’ when they first began their jobs. This understanding of ‘openness’, as a necessary trait, aligns with what could also be said to be a necessary trait for the aspiring actor - one who is encouraged to be willing and able to offer up their personal and emotional material for use in the training process. As referenced in the previous chapter, this sense of

[49] Ibid.
[50] Interview L11; interview L10; interview L7.
[51] Interview L3; interview L7.

emotional availability was also crucial to the process of developing the new British realism, with Rebellato citing playwrights demanding an 'emotionally open' acting style.[52]

Performance review and the 'genuine' smile

Meyer, in outlining his 51% solution, describes a recruitment strategy designed to ensure only those with the correct mindset and personality are brought on board:

> Hiring 51 percenters today will save training time and dollars tomorrow. And they are commonly the best recruiters for others with strong emotional skills. Nice people love the idea of working with other nice people. […] Training for emotional skills is next to impossible. We aim to hire people who possess an emotional skill that chef Michael Romano calls the *excellence reflex*.[53]

Meyer goes on to claim that along with five core emotional skills needed in employees - optimistic warmth, intelligence, work ethic, empathy and self-awareness and integrity - he looks for people 'to whom caring for others is, in fact, a selfish act'.[54] He terms such people 'hospitalitarians', describing them as a special personality type who are able to thrive on the provision of hospitality and whose 'source of energy is rarely depleted'.[55] Meyer is not searching for outward markers of performance in these potential recruits, nor is he assessing the external measure of how 'genuine' their hospitality is. Rather, he is looking for signs of their inner desires, drives, personality: something more subjective and much harder to grasp. In doing so, he returns to a number of performance tropes and metaphors, including describing

[52] Dan Rebellato, *1956 and All That: The Making of Modern British Drama* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 213.
[53] Meyer, p. 152.
[54] Meyer, p. 146.
[55] Meyer, p. 146.

service as ‘beautiful choreography’ and, ‘at its best, an art form, a ballet’ and later comparing restaurant service to a Broadway show.[56] Referring to inspiration that he and his team took from Starbucks, he describes how the company was able to centre the ‘experience’ of drinking coffee with others, making it ‘the real star of the show’.[57] The artistry in these constructions is of great importance to Meyer. Recalling a review of one of his restaurants, he recounts how the critic described the behaviour of servers as ‘less a ballet than a military drill, glaringly mechanized’.[58] For Meyer, these words were particularly painful as the framing of service as mechanised was understood as a ‘judgement on the genuineness of our hospitality’.[59] The ‘genuineness’ in this context is clearly not solely reliant on internal factors, the individual’s sense of commitment or feeling, but the external measure of performance. It is not enough to be happy with your job, or to be happy at work. Rather employees *must be seen to be happy*, and must be perceived to exhibit the required level of enthusiasm. The dynamic between inner conviction and outer performance, which I explored earlier in relation to Pret, thus poses a problem for management. If the workplace demands that an employee’s performance be ‘genuine’, rather than merely competent, how can this be reviewed?

The difficulty in monitoring the employee’s inner emotional state is exemplified in the employment case of a worker at the American grocery store, Trader Joe’s. In November of 2016 Thomas Nagle, an employee at a New York branch of Trader Joe's, filed a case against the company alleging that he was fired for showing an inadequately positive attitude and failing to convince his employers that

[56] Meyer, p. 65, p. 87.
[57] Meyer, p. 134.
[58] Meyer, p. 184-185.
[59] Meyer, p. 184-185.

he was happy in his job.[60] Trader Joe's, like the other examples I have outlined, demands emotional labour from its employees in pursuit of what it calls its 'WOW customer experience', and uses explicitly theatrical language as part of its training regime.[61] At the end of their training programme for new recruits, employees are asked to read aloud from a document entitled 'Customer Experience: A Trader Joe's Love Story'. This document opens with a caution for its readers: 'Warning: theater references up ahead'.[62] This love story, laden with theatrical references, goes into detail about the elements that make up the customer experience seen as essential to Trader Joe's business model. These elements include: 'setting the stage' through the layout and cleanliness of the stores; 'Are your displays accented with accurate, WOW, informative signage? are we getting bravos and air kisses or are we getting rotten tomatoes?'; ensuring there is a personal touch to all customer interactions; 'You are the customer's ticket to have a great shopping experience. Without you, they're just wandering around an empty set with good lighting'; and finally, making a lasting impression at the checkout, which is referred to as the 'grand finale'.[63] Employees, they state, must not be 'cold, mechanical', but rather warm and friendly.[64] They end by saying, 'Hopefully, you'll agree that there's no business like Joe business'.[65] They state that their brand 'represents far more than a label or packaging... it is the customer's emotional and personal response to our stores.', going so far as to say that the Trader Joe's brand 'is a promise between Trader Joe's and each customer that we

---

[60] Noam Scheiber, The New York Times, 'At Trader Joe's, Good Cheer My Hide Complaints', 3 November 2016 <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/04/business/at-trader-joes-good-cheer-may-hide-complaints.html> [accessed 23 June 2021]
[61] Trader Joe's employee manual, *The Employers Handbook* <https://www.theemployerhandbook.com/files/2016/11/NagleULP.pdf> [access 24 February 2021], p. 50.
[62] Trader Joe's employee manual, p. 111.
[63] Trader Joe's employee manual, p. 111-112.
[64]Trader Joe's employee manual, p. 105.
[65] Trader Joe's employee manual, p. 112.

will diligently act on their behalf to satisfy their dreams related to our products and their experience'.[66]

Transcripts from Nagle's performance reviews reveal a persistent demand for emotional authenticity from Trader Joe's employees. In one exchange, for example, Nagle is told by a manager: 'I don't remember the last time I've seen you like genuinely smile.'[67] In another, he is told that he is being judged, not for his actions at work, they later concede he's a very productive worker, but for 'the attitude in which' he conducts them.[68] Later, Nagle is again reprimanded for 'not even genuinely smiling and engaging'.[69] When asked who is judging whether the smile is genuine, Nagle's manager claims he can identify a non-genuine smile by comparing it to other team members who 'love me and they really enjoy it and they get amped.'[70] Nagle's emotional performance, in contrast, appeared insufficiently authentic. Trader Joe's go further than other companies by, in their training literature, presenting genuine customer service as a skill, one which can be mastered by the dedicated employee. To this end, they break down the execution of what they call their 'WOW customer experience' into a series of steps. The first step involves focusing on the customers '"internal" experiences', which are defined as how the customer 'feels' about the store experience and about themselves whilst shopping there.[71] The document then outlines a number of questions that they believe customers ask themselves whilst doing their food shopping:

Do they [the staff] really care that I am shopping here today?

---

[66] Trader Joe's employee manual, p. 104.
[67] United States of America Labor Relations Board Charge Against Employer, *The Employers Handbook* <https://www.theemployerhandbook.com/files/2016/11/NagleULP.pdf> [access 24th February 2021] p. 3.
[68] Labor Relations Board Charge, p. 4.
[69] Labor Relations Board Charge, p. 4.
[70] Labor Relations Board Charge, p. 4.
[71] Trader Joe's employee manual, p. 102.

> Do they really care that I am safe in their store or parking lot?
> Do they really respect me as a person?
> Do they really trust me?[72]

The use of 'really' in this document is telling in relation to Nagle's case in which smiling, treating the customer politely and performing his duties were not enough to satisfy the employer that he 'really' wanted to be doing them or working at the store. At one stage in the review process, for example, Nagle's manager tries appealing to him directly: 'I just want you to enjoy what you do man.'[73] In this instance, the outward performance of happy customer service is insufficient, the feelings displayed must be real, and the employee a bearer of authentic emotion. What these examples demonstrate is that the discourse of emotional labour is highly reliant on the notion of a 'real' and 'authentic' self that can be revealed through performance. Both are necessary for the job: workers must have the type of character and emotional make up suitable for the demands of the specific industry, but they must also possess the ability to access and perform these inner traits to the satisfaction of their employers.

Deep and surface acting

This relationship between the 'inner' emotional material and the 'outer' performance at first seemingly corresponds with Hochschild's deep and surface acting dichotomy, which describes the competing strategies available to workers managing the demands of emotional labour. If we return to the concern around 'openness' which characterised the respondents from Pret, we can see a resonance with Hochschild's theory. For the Pret employee, or indeed the actor, to not be open as directed, but

[72] Trader Joe's employee manual, p. 102.
[73] Labor Relations Board Charge, p. 30.

instead 'closed', would mean guarding and protecting their emotional state, demonstrating a reluctance to offer themselves up freely to the demands of management or engage in the co-creation of both experience and subjectivity with the audience/consumer. But openness in these accounts is not just a requirement of the job, as dictated by the company, but described by employees themselves as in fact a necessary trait which allows and assists them to get through the working day and successfully acclimatise to the job. When asked what they thought were necessary skills or traits to work at Pret several answered along these lines: 'To be open. Have to learn lots of stuff. You have to memorise, you have to be fast. And most important you have to be... you have to pay attention.'; 'Always open for changes. Because if you're open for changes you don't get annoyed by them and you will provide good customer service as well.'.[74] Here, to be 'open' is then both a direct demand from management and a strategy for behaviour on the part of the worker – a stance that can protect you from being 'annoyed' by work as well as allow you to perform better for customers. This echoes some of Hochschild's claims around strategies available to individual workers, that they can, and often do, 'choose' what she terms 'deep acting' as a strategy to make working life more bearable, fusing their personality with what is demanded of them at work in an effort to reduce emotional dissonance.[75] Hochschild expands on these dangers, explaining emotional dissonance by comparing it to cognitive dissonance, and arguing that the difference between what workers feel and what they must display leads to strain: 'we try to reduce this strain by pulling the two closer together either by changing what we feel or by changing what we feign. When display is required by the job, it is usually feeling that has to change; and when

[74] Interview L7; interview L2.
[75] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, p. 90.

conditions estrange us from our face, they sometimes estrange us from feeling as well.'[76] Similarly, Paul Brook describes emotive dissonance as resulting from the worker's prolonged emotional investment in the performance.[77] Another interviewee at Pret described the process by which his performance at work became gradually aligned with what the company expected from him. When he first began working at Pret, he described himself as being 'fake': 'I was so fake on till. I was so fake.'[78] During this period, whilst learning the rules and procedures, 'what you're giving is what you're being fed', leading to 'generic' behaviour with customers. Over time however, 'you become more confident, you're not being fed anything because you know it by heart. You're taking what you've been fed, you've moulded it into your own words and then just, be yourself.'[79] In this account, the demands and expectations of the employer have been fully absorbed by the employee so that they can be expressed as an authentic representation of themselves – avoiding the strain that prolonged emotional dissonance may create. Within psychology, the notion of emotional dissonance has also been explored by scholars such as Rebecca Abraham, Jeroen Jansz and Monique Timmers. Abraham argues that emotional dissonance induces job dissatisfaction and emotional exhaustion, leading directly to staff turnover.[80] Where Abrahams employs a now familiar essentialising language in reference to emotional labour (arguing that emotional dissonance occurs due to a clash between organizational norms and 'true feeling'), Jansz and Timmers draw

---

[76] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, p. 90.
[77] Paul Brook, 'The Alienated Heart: Hochschild's "emotional Labour" Thesis and the Anticapitalist Politics of Alienation', *Capital & Class*, 33: 7 (2009), pp. 7-31, (p. 15).
[78] Interview L9.
[79] Interview L9.
[80] Rebecca Abraham, 'The Impact of Emotional Dissonance on Organizational Commitment and Intention to Turnover', *The Journal of Psychology*, 133.4 (1999), pp. 441–55; Jeroen Jansz and Monique Timmers, 'Emotional Dissonance: When the Expereince of an Emotion Jeopardizes an Indvidual's Identity', *Theory & Psychology*, 12.1 (2002), pp. 79–95.

attention to the more complex relationship between emotion and identity.[81] They argue that 'as products of social interaction, individual identities are never static', but explain that it is the sense of danger to one's identity which produces a feeling of dissonance: 'when an emotional experience is evaluated as a threat to identity, it results in a dissonant feeling'.[82] Consistent with this argument, another interviewee described leaving her job at Pret because it became a 'mental cage' for her, leaving her exhausted and unable to enjoy activities in her private life.[83] Even forming relationships with colleagues, which would alleviate some of the stress, was 'super hard because everyone is super alienated'.[84] Ultimately her inability to reconcile herself to the demands of the job became a threat to her identity. For other employees, 'putting it on' was the most viable strategy for coping with what they described as rude and demanding customers. One employee described 'plastering it on' when he felt particularly exhausted, adding: 'plastering on the smile can be better with botox.'[85]

Opening oneself up to the demands of the employer is therefore not just done for fear of punishment or disciplinary action, but because it is a viable way to cope with the pressures of the work itself. The question of the 'real' emotional self and its performative constitution is key to any analysis of emotional labour, which rests on making public an emotional expression underscored by the notion of authenticity. Hochschild's means of addressing is this through her use of the descriptors 'deep' and 'surface' acting - techniques available to workers who have to negotiate the professional expectation to present emotional reactions corresponding to a prescribed

[81] Abraham, p. 442.
[82] Jansz and Timmers, p. 81, p. 89.
[83] Interview L6.
[84] Interview L6.
[85] Interview L1.

appropriate and authentic emotional state. Where deep acting, she writes, is 'a natural result of working on feeling' and involves 'spontaneous' expressions of 'self-induced feelings', surface acting involves feigning or 'putting on' the bodily or facial display.[86] Thus, for Hochschild, surface acting involves deceiving others about our emotional state, whilst deep acting also involves deceiving ourselves.[87] This self-deception (such as suppressing anger towards a passenger who behaves rudely), is achieved, Hochschild writes, 'by taking over the levers of feeling production, by pretending deeply, she [the worker] alters herself.'[88] Deep acting is achieved, but at the cost of a fundamental change in one's own emotional self which comes about through repeat performance. The attachment an 'actor' might develop to their professional role – for example, flight attendant, security guard or barista - is determined by how much of their 'real' feeling has been 'self-induced' in the performance: deep acting is the spontaneous expression of such feeling, whereas surface acting involves a greater degree of separation between performer and role, in which expressions are actively 'put on' or the performer pretends to the emotions being enacted.[89] Where Hochschild acknowledges that she takes surface acting directly from sociologist Erving Goffman, her definition of deep acting is, she claims, adopted from the work of Stanislavski, specifically his book *An Actor Prepares,* first published in 1936.

In an article preceding the publication of *The Managed Heart,* Hochschild offers a more expansive and detailed take on the theoretical model of emotions she favours:

---

[86] Hochschild, p 35.
[87] Hochschild, p. 33.
[88] Hochschild, p. 33.
[89] Hochschild, p. 35.

> Goffman suggests that we spend a good deal of effort managing impressions-that is, acting. He posits only one sort of acting-the direct management of behavioural expression. His illustrations, though, actually point to two types of acting-the direct management of behavioural expression (e.g., the given-off sigh, the shoulder shrug), and the management of feeling from which expression can follow (e.g., the thought of some hopeless project). An actor playing the part of King Lear might go about his task in two ways. One actor, following the English school of acting, might focus on outward demeanour, the constellation of minute expressions that correspond to Lear's sense of fear and impotent outrage. This is the sort of acting Goffman theorizes about. Another actor, adhering to the American or Stanislavsky school of acting, might guide his memories and feelings in such a way as to elicit the corresponding expressions. The first technique we might call "surface acting," the second "deep acting." Goffman fails to distinguish the first from the second, and he obscures the importance of "deep acting." Obscuring this, we are left with the impression that social factors pervade only the "social skin," the tried-for outer appearances of the individual. We are left under-estimating the power of the social.[90]

This passage is revealing in relation to the use of 'deep' and 'surface' acting and their implications, to which I will return to in a moment. The passage is also key, however, for demonstrating how Hochschild understands and utilises Stanislavski within her work. By contrasting Stanislavski, whom she associated with the 'American school' to the surface acting of a supposed 'English school', we can see that her application of the theatrical metaphor begins with a substantial mischaracterisation of his work by conflating Stanislavski's system with Method acting. Hochschild returns to this reading in *The Managed Heart* itself, describing Stanislavski as 'the originator of a different type of acting - called Method acting', and later alluding to 'true' Method acting as espoused by him.[91] Method acting, however, is not a term used by Stanislavski but, as explained in the previous chapter, is rather associated with the teaching of Lee Strasberg, Harold Clurman, Stella Adler and their peers, at the Group Theatre in New York, founded in the 1930s. The Method is an approach inspired by

[90] Arlie Russell Hochschild, 'Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure', *American Journal of Sociology*, 85.3 (Nov) (1979), pp. 551–75, (p. 558).
[91] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart,* p. 37-38.

Stanislavski but which places primary emphasis on the personal experience of the actors, and privileges certain elements of his system above others. In particular, the Method is notable for its focus on the actor's own individual psychological material and lived experience, and the relative lack of attention it gave to the importance of physical cues, which became of far greater importance to Stanislavski later in his career. For Strasberg, as the pioneer of the Method, the provocation of 'real' emotional responses from the actor was paramount, above the successful delivery of *character* which was the cornerstone of Stanislavski's approach. Though many of the techniques he used to achieve this had been part of Stanislavski's teaching, they took on a much greater prominence within the Method school, leading to an acting style characterised by 'intensity' and extreme emotional responses.[92] The most well-known example of Method acting is emotion memory (also known as affective memory), where the actor is asked to relive a traumatic or difficult episode from their life in order to generate the required performance. Sharon Carnicke, in her book re-contextualising Stanislavski's work, outlines the Method approach in which 'emotion took precedence' above other considerations, and 'affective memory' became a far more important technique than it ever was for Stanislavski, who himself often cautioned against an overreliance on primary feeling as a matter of 'mental hygiene'.[93] Carnicke explains that for Stanislavski 'memory safely filters and controls emotion, maintaining artistic distance between the actor and the event portrayed'.[94] Affective memory, as an exercise, became, according to Carnicke, the 'cornerstone' of the Method, where emotion and the notion of the 'subconscious' became more important to the training than other considerations such as action.[95]

---

[92] Counsell, p. 57-58.
[93] Carnicke, p. 148, p. 158.
[94] Carnicke, p. 158.
[95] Carnicke, p. 64.

The historical inaccuracy of Hochschild's account also leads to an emphasis on the elements of Stanislavski's work most associated with the Method, at the expense of others. The different emphasis placed on the actor's personal emotional memory is exemplified in an example laid out by David Jackson in an article on the future of actor training within a British context. Jackson argues that Stanislavski in fact had 'little interest in the raw emotion of an actual traumatic event', and highlights a passage where one of his fictional students recounts witnessing a car accident.[96] Stanislavski compares the first impression of the event to the 'transformed image' that emerged through memory. Whilst the 'raw' experience of the event, as recounted, is 'crudely naturalistic' and thus unsuitable for use in rehearsal, the 'symbolic quality' of the memory after it has been 'transformed by a process of distillation, elevation and association' makes it more appropriate for the actor to draw upon.[97] Jackson concludes that Stanislavski's conception of acted emotion is ruled by principles which distinguish it from emotional responses in everyday life, namely that emotion memory becomes useful only after it has been 'processed to the point of being controllable'.[98] Jackson argues for an understanding of this kind of 'scenic emotion' as an important, and underexplored, principle of Stanislavski's work.[99] This distinction between the raw, 'real' emotion to which the individual actor has access, and the theatrical or scenic reinterpretation of this emotion is missing in Hochschild's account of a Method approach.

For both Carnicke and other scholars the emphasis on personal emotional experience can be attributed both to concrete issues of dissemination and wider social

[96] David Jackson, 'Stanislavski, Emotion and the Future of the UK Conservatoire', *Stanislavski Studies*, 5.1 (2017), pp. 75–83, (p. 78) <https://doi.org/10.1080/20567790.2017.1298195>
[97] Jackson, p. 78.
[98] Jackson, p. 79.
[99] Jackson, p. 81.

concerns. Carnicke dedicates considerable time to discussing the problems in the original English translations of Stanislavski's work, and how these mistranslations impacted interpretation and subsequent teaching. Jonathan Pitches meanwhile highlights the significant gap between the publication of the translation of Stanislavski's first two books.[100] A thirteen-year gap ensured that the first volume, focused on inner characterisation and feeling, formed the basis for the development of training in the English-speaking world, at the expense of the material covered in the following volume which emphasised physical cues and actions. Carnicke, Pitches and John Elsom all additionally highlight the influence of Freud and psychoanalysis in America at the time of the American Laboratory Theatre's emergence as being largely responsible for this preoccupation with accessing the emotional memories of the performer.[101]

This framing of Stanislavski via the Method, however, has analytical consequences beyond historical inaccuracy. By taking this particular iteration of actor training as the basis for her conception of deep acting, Hochschild runs the risk of adhering to the same binaries that the businesses who demand emotional labour also subscribe to and rely upon. In particular, the dichotomy drawn between the private and professional self that is implied in *The Managed Heart* can, and has been, critiqued for its essentializing tendencies, as it suggests that there is an integral and identifiable 'real self' which exists as separate from and outside of the workplace environment. Such a notion sits in contradiction to much of Hochschild's otherwise materialist analysis. Where she acknowledges that the process of repeat performance fundamentally alters the individual's relationship to their emotions - indeed she states

[100] Jonathan Pitches, *Science and the Stanislavsky Tradition of Acting.* (Routledge, 2009), p. 21.
[101] Carnicke, p. 63; John Elsom, *Post-War British Theatre* (London ; Boston: Routledge & K. Paul, 1976), p. 28.

that 'the very act of managing emotion can be seen as part of what the emotion becomes' - she simultaneously frames deep acting as self-deception, thereby suggesting that the emotion generated by this repeat performance is somehow a departure from the real which preceded it.[102] Hochschild's misattribution of Stanislavski's work to the Method offshoot bolsters this weaknesses in her analysis. If we understand, following the contributions of Carnicke, Jackson and others, that Stanislavski treated emotion as something to be worked *upon*, rather than simply recalled or provoked as in the Method approach, then we see that the idea of a natural reserve of private feeling which remains unaltered by the predominant conditions of labour is called into question. In drawing on Stanislavski, for instance, Hochschild makes appeals to the actor and the audience's soul. In surface acting, she writes, 'the body, not the soul, is the main tool of the trade', whereas deep acting offers an alternative which presumably uses the soul as emotional material.[103] For the emotional labourer, it is both the body and the 'margins of the soul' which they use in the process of their work.[104] But what is the soul that Hochschild refers to, and how does someone's 'soul' or essence exist outside of the capitalist relations that shape their experiences of the world, and thus the production of their own subjectivity?

These concerns have led a number of scholars to identify tensions within Hochschild's analysis. In calling for a critical defence of her emotional labour thesis, for example, Brook argues that by confining her analysis of alienation to the workplace, Hochschild ends up with an overly individualistic analysis which fails to grapple with the broader condition of alienation across social life, and which 'effectively localises the existence of alienation to workplace social relations.'[105] The

[102] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, p. 27.
[103] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, p. 37.
[104] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, p. 7.
[105] Brook, 'The Alienated Heart', p. 9.

feminist scholar Kathi Weeks is similarly concerned with a fundamental conflict within Hochschild's analysis whereby 'she insists on the social construction and malleability of the emotions while also positing them as fundamental to the self such that their alienation is a problem.'[106] Weeks goes on to write that Hochschild's argument 'is animated by an ideal of the "unmanaged heart" – associated either with a separate private world of emotional practice and contact or with what one may experience as one's "true" self – the possibility of which it simultaneously disavows.'[107] This ambiguity is clear at the end of Hochschild's analysis, where she at once describes how 'hopelessly and romantically' people yearn for 'unmanaged' feeling, a desire for what she describes as an imagined 'natural preserve' of feeling which remains 'forever wild', whilst seeming to validate the existence of such an idealistic notion by claiming that this desire is fuelled by the scarcity of such 'unmanaged' pastures.[108] Such statements appeal to an ahistorical frame of reference. As Guerrier and Adib, in their article on emotional labour and tourist reps, remind us, 'any notion of an "authentic self" is (merely) a part of late modern, Western, social discourses.'[109] Weeks' points to the strength of Hochschild's analysis in showing the emotional labourer not only 'seeming to be but also about his or coming to be; the work requires not just the use but the production of subjectivity'. However, despite this, Hochschild's own deployment of the trope of natural, or pre-social self, threatens to invalidate her own contributions.[110]

---

[106] Kathi Weeks, 'Life Within and Against Work: Affective Labor, Feminist Critique, and Post-Fordist Politics', *Ephemera* 7:1 (2007) pp. 233-249, (p. 244).
[107] Weeks, p. 244.
[108] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, p. 194.
[109] Yvonne Guerrier and Amel Adib, 'Work at Leisure and Leisure at Work: As study of the Emotional Labour of Tour Reps', *Human Relations*, 56 (11) (2003), pp. 1399–1417, (p. 1401).
[110] Weeks, p. 241.

If we return to the extract above in which Hochschild critiques Goffman's model of selfhood, we see that the issue identified with this model is that Goffman offers his reader an actor who, Hochschild argues, 'does not seem to feel much, is not attuned to, does not monitor closely or assess, does not actively evoke, inhibit, shape - in a word, work on feelings in a way an actor would have to do to accomplish what Goffman says is, in fact, accomplished in one encounter after another.'[111] Instead, Hochschild aims to build a model of emotions which accounts for 'some theory of the self', one which she identifies as absent in Goffman's work.[112] Goffman, in this reading, does not presuppose a self that exists prior to its social performance, and Stanislavski is therefore introduced as a means to address this gap. Writing less than a decade after Hochschild's article, Judith Butler also addressed the question of performativity in Goffman's model. In their early article 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution' Butler draws a different conclusion from Hochschild, arguing that Goffman's theory does indeed include a pre-existing sense of self. Goffman's view, they write, 'posits a self which assumes and exchanges various "roles" within the complex social expectations of the "game' of modern life".[113] The very nature of treating social interaction as a series of 'roles' implies that, rather than the absence of a 'self' which Hochschild points to, these roles in fact either 'express' or 'disguise' an interior self which precedes the adoption of such roles. In contrast, Butler argues that the self 'is not only irretrievably "outside," constituted in social discourse, but that the ascription of interiority is itself a publicly regulated and sanctioned form of essence fabrication.'[114] Theorising gender, Butler argues that rather than being an 'essence', it

[111] Hochschild, 'Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure', p. 557.
[112] Hochschild, 'Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure', p. 558.
[113] Judith Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory', *Theatre Journal*, 40.4 (Dec) (1988), pp. 519–31, (p. 528).
[114] Butler, p. 528.

is at once produced by performance and yet concealed by it. The accomplishment of our collective commitment to these social performances is such that, Butler argues, both audience and actor 'come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief'.[115] In this way, people are compelled to understand gender as both natural and internal – 'the credibility of its production' acts to enforce performances of gender as 'punitively regulated cultural fictions'.[116]

Butler's theory of gender performativity proceeds on the basis of this argument that the self (at least in regard to gender identity) is only ever constituted through the process of repeat performance, but that this performance itself also constitutes the self, or identity, as 'an object of belief'.[117] Miranda Joseph characterises Butler's theory of performativity as one in which 'performance does not enact pre-existing meanings but rather constitutes meanings through action'.[118] It draws on theatricality in order to move away from speech-act theory which, like Goffman, assumes a constituting subject, to a framework in which the constitutive nature of performance allows us to understand how gender is at once enacted by individuals and simultaneously 'punitively circumscribed' in discourse.[119] This understanding of performance as key to both the formation of selfhood and the formulation of what is socially understood as 'authentic' behaviour, is lacking in Hochschild's account, and for that matter Goffman's, which suggests that the authentic self precedes its social performance. However, where Hochschild elides this point, her account does rest on the interrogation of the institutional rules and pressures which coerce employees to perform in certain ways. In contrast, discussion of the

---

[115] Butler, p. 520.
[116] Butler, p. 522.
[117] Butler, p. 520.
[118] Miranda Joseph, 'The Performance of Production and Consumption', *Social Text*, 54 Spring (1998), pp. 25-61, (p. 27).
[119] Joseph, p. 27.

impact of employment, the workplace and similar forms of power is missing in Butler's account.[120] I would advocate an approach that bridges Hochschild and Butler in relation to the self and performativity – taking Butler's insistence on the constitutive nature of the performative act itself, and combining this with Hochschild's close attention to the impact of specifically economic capitalist forces on these performances. Joseph, similarly, argues that Butler's theory can be read in conjunction with Marx – a proposal I will return to in the final chapter.[121] This helps us to retain the strongest parts of Hochschild's analysis, whilst taking a critical approach to the notion of the 'self' which allows us to challenge the discourse of authenticity that is adopted in the service sector, rather than being complicit in reproducing it.

I have argued earlier that the theatricalization of labour on display in workplaces such as Pret exists alongside an antitheatricality, which operates both to naturalise performances which are, in fact, directed and managed according to the company, and to mask the skill involved in the work. A discourse of antitheatricality, in this context, works to obscure the social relations of work itself and assist in perpetuating what Fleming identifies as the 'instrumental discourse' of authenticity.[122] At Hawksmoor, Trader Joe's, and Pret, recruitment relies on the idea that an employee either brings these abilities with them, or they don't. Employers who demand emotional labour deliberately cultivate specific notions of subjective authenticity as innate, natural, and somehow immune to corruption in the workplace. Colluding with such a formulation, as Hochschild's own work threatens to do, can prevent attention being drawn to the ideological construct of such notions in

[120] Although it is important to note that this essay is an early work, and Butler deals with some of these questions in greater detail in later works.
[121] Joseph, p. 25.
[122] Fleming, p. 5.

themselves, which would in turn puncture the kind of 'capitalist realism' that they perpetuate. For Mark Fisher, capitalist realism captures 'the widespread sense that not only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible even to imagine a coherent alternative to it.'[123] In thinking about the instrumentalization and commercialisation of emotions within this understanding, we can think about the kinds of emotional realism which are presented to us as natural, inescapable and sellable.[124]

Kirk Williams offers an account of the antitheatricality which is found within nineteenth century Naturalist theatre itself. As outlined in the previous chapter, Naturalism 'replaced traditional theatricality with scientific accuracy of observation, the precise recording of minutiae, the recording of life as it occurs "second-by-second."'.[125] In its attempts to drive theatricality, artifice and metaphor from the stage, Williams argues that Naturalism 'takes a stand against subjective interpretation', advocating instead for a truth which is empirical.[126] For Williams, the question of antitheatricality is in fact the question of the subject. He writes: 'Anti-theatrical discourse assumes, of course, that there is an empirically verifiable subject of that discourse, or, to put it more bluntly, that it is possible to see a coherent, autonomous "self" behind the seductive veils of theatrical dissimulation.'[127] As such, the antitheatricality of dramatic Naturalism is reliant on binary oppositions which in fact 'naturalize and materialize the very conditions it would claim to be "social."'.[128] For Williams this means that whilst Naturalism may offer progressive social criticism,

---

[123] Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?*, (Winchester: Zero Books, 2009)
[124] Fisher, p. 5.
[125] Kirk Williams, 'Anti-theatricality and the Limits of Naturalism', *Modern Drama* 44:3 (2001), pp. 284-299, (p. 285).
[126] Williams, p. 285.
[127] Williams, p. 289.
[128] Williams, p. 290.

it presents only regressive representational strategies.[129] Williams' account resonates with the criticisms that I offer here of Hochschild and other scholars who rely on binaries (such as deep and surface acting) even in their efforts to critique the instrumentalization of emotions under capitalism. His attention to the ways in which these dynamics play out in the form of Naturalism also highlights the value that can come from closer attention to the nineteenth century theatrical traditions from which Hochschild herself draws.

Yet Hochschild not only ignores the historical and literary context of Stanislavski's innovations. She also uncritically mobilises a partial understanding of his work in service of her own analysis, neglecting to consider how his own contributions to psychological realism have in turn assisted in shaping the very concepts of selfhood and performance that are now taken up by the businesses of which she is so critical. The scholars and writers who are interested in close examination of these workplaces can all too easily contribute to this same instrumentalization through the rendering of the performative aspects of this labour as something other than work itself. In these examples, the actor's skill is demonstrative of the ability to access inner authenticity.

Another reading would suggest both employee and actor are in fact engaging in a more complex process of defining and shaping – performing - what constitutes the acceptable and believable public representation of 'authentic' emotional expression. Adopting approaches from theatre and performance studies can help to illuminate some of these issues, as outlined in chapter one. Performances at work, in the style of 'just be yourself' management, are not the same as life outside of the workplace – they are skilled performances that deserve to be recognised and

[129] Williams, p. 290.

remunerated as such – but they are no less our social reality by virtue of being performance. I would also suggest that adopting the theatrical lens, and the example of theatrical labour specifically, can offer us further insight, not only into the experience of performing these working personas, but also of the tactics and methods used to elicit them. To consider this further, let us return to the Valentine's day encounter at Pret outlined at the beginning of this article, which resulted in a free 'Love bar'.

Centralisation and the problem of management

As I walk down the street after receiving my free Love bar, I begin to question why the cashier offered me the bar, rethinking and retracing each step of the interaction. Initially, I decide, it must be because I assisted her with the name of the sandwich I had chosen. Pret does not label its food products, staff must memorise each item and be able to identify it on sight alone. Helping her with this repetitive and difficult part of her job might have resulted in her giving me something for free. As I cross the road however, I suddenly become aware of my heart emoji earrings hanging down, and remember the date. It occurs to me that perhaps she gave me the 'love' bar because it is Valentine's Day and I am wearing something appropriate. I am aware, as a result of my research, that Pret regularly assign promotions for particular holidays or events, rewarding customers who are dressed or behaving accordingly. Was the free bar the result of my earrings adhering to the Valentine's theme? As I reach my destination, doubt begins to set in. I remind myself that I had already bought a chocolate bar as part of my purchase. Why would the cashier give me a second snack bar, rather than just waive the cost of the one I had picked myself, as I know she has the freedom to

do under ‘The Joy of Pret’ initiative? Why did she have a Love bar on hand behind the counter? As I sit down at my computer, a woman in my postgraduate office turns around and announces to the room ‘Pret are giving away a free Love bar to everyone who pays with a Monzo card today’. I don't have a Monzo card, but I now have a Pret Love bar. After some momentary confusion I find myself pleased. Perhaps, unlike other customers who have been given a bar because they met the criteria for this particular promotion, I was gifted it for some other reason – be it helping with the product name or the earrings. I begin to think that, unlike the other customer, I was gifted mine because of something I must have done, individually, to warrant it. I feel my love bar is perhaps more deserved, the offering more genuine, the gift more meaningful.

Some months later I have another encounter at Pret which sheds new light on my Valentine’s day transaction. In celebration of ‘National Croissant Day’, Pret announces across its social media channels that costumers visiting between 3pm and 4pm on the day will be given a free vegan jam croissant, as long as they say the password ‘Wham Bam Thank You Jam’. Customers are reminded that the promotion is only available whilst stocks last. At 3.05pm, I enter my nearest Pret, a central London branch not far from a key commuter hub. The line is already 30 people deep, snaking its way throughout the entire shop. At the front of the queue, staff are handing out croissants in paper bags to customers, without the password being stated, or virtually any interaction whatsoever. The customers in line are not purchasing drinks, or anything else, and are simply taking their free offering and walking out. Eventually, the supply of fresh croissants finishes, and a member of staff shouts this announcement to the whole store, encouraging us to leave as there are none left. In the interests of research, I approach the counter regardless, and ask him if they anticipate

making any more. Yes, he says, in about ten minutes. I purchase a coffee and wait to the side, while a queue forms again behind me. When the majority of customers have given up and left, the staff member again makes an announcement, this time to say there will be precisely eighteen croissants available, as this is all that's left of the shop's supply, and that customers should count themselves – the nineteenth person in line and everyone behind them being told to leave. The customers oblige, and the eighteen of us left are shortly given our croissants. Again, no password is spoken, and little interaction takes place except the passing of the bag.

In the case of the croissant promotion, the 'gift' was advertised by head office rather than offered by individual employees, blunting the potential for any 'authentic' display of gift giving the company's management may aspire to, as well as disrupting the theatricality of the exchange. In stores that are busy, staff cannot cope with the demand from customers who have seen the promotion announced online and decided to rush in large numbers to the stores. As a result, staff break from the script, dispensing with key elements (such as the password) in order to alleviate the pressure. Looking back to Valentine's day, it becomes apparent to me that, just as the password, which was never required, the actual display of a Monzo card was probably disregarded by employees in an attempt to speed up the queue and make their day easier. Simply handing a bar to everyone, regardless of their adherence to the promotional 'rules', was a preferable way to manage the pressure imposed upon them. However, unlike the Love bars, which were delivered in boxes and easily distributed to all customers, the croissants had to be freshly baked – requiring an even greater coordination from employees. This stands in contrast to the 'gift giving' espoused by the Joy of Pret philosophy, which is supposed to involve commitment and choice on the part of the employee. In centralising and standardising these processes, Pret can

no longer guarantee they function in the way envisioned, and in the process, expose the theatricality of their set up: that such encounters are in fact staged, scripted, and directed with intent.[130] Any discussion of the authenticity, or not, of the employee's feelings or performances in these instances becomes secondary to the pressure and control exerted by a management concerned with the cultivation of the brand image, and the promotion of footfall.

These examples draw attention to the inadequacy of any theorisation of emotional labour which is focused only on individual experience, rather than considering the workplace both as a whole, and within a larger economic and political context. The construction of subjectivity through performed interactions, and accordingly the experiences and accounts of workers themselves, are an important site of analysis. But if analysis is left at this our understanding of emotional labour remains incomplete. Employees are neither simply operating freely, nor according to a set of dictates laid out in advance. They are working under a state of constant management and direct intervention designed to elicit the desired performance, as well as meet the pressures caused by additional promotions. Brook points out that Hochschild explores emotional labour 'principally through the individualised, conceptual lens of her distinction between individuals' surface and deep acting, and 'transmutation of feelings', outlining this as a weakness in her approach.[131] This individualising tendency also poses a problem for any strategy around organising in these workplaces or resisting the particular demands of emotional labour, including,

[130] Amelia Horgan makes a similar observation about workers at a London Tube station who independently decided to write inspirational and humorous quotes on the service updates whiteboard at their station. Once this was noticed, and pictures were widely shared on social media, the gesture was turned into a 'central directive', with management starting to email an identical quote to various stations each day and instructing them to write it up: Amelia Horgan, *Lost in Work* (London: Pluto, 2021), p. 64.
[131] Brook, p. 98.

as will be examined in chapter five, the demands placed on customers themselves (as evidenced by the croissant-day frenzy). By theorising emotional labour as something that can only be understood through the individual's attachment to the feelings they perform, without serious attention to the material constitution of the workplace, we exclude a necessary structural analysis.

Rather than thinking of someone's emotional interiority as existing as a fixed resource to be either corrupted or protected in the workplace, more valuable insights into emotional labour might come from moving away from the question of individualised consequences of emotional labour. As I have argued, this preoccupation within the critical analysis poses a problem where it begins to mirror the same individualising and essentialising tendencies of these practices in themselves. Like Brook, who writes that we should both defend and strengthen Hochchild's analysis, in the same spirit I would argue from the standpoint of theatre and performance studies that an analytical reorientation to the ways in which emotional labour is *directed*, rather than just individually *performed*, can be a more useful way to apply theatrical methods and comparisons to its study than the way in which the essentialism of the Method school of acting offers. Invoking the actor only in relation to their individual performance ignores the role of the director.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined some of the theatrical analogies that persist in both corporate literature and critical writing around emotional labour, and have specifically considered the ways in which Hochschild uses Stanislavski to illustrate and explain these theories. I have interrogated this usage to explain where and how she

misinterprets Stanislavski. Whilst Hochschild's work offers a vivid and compelling analysis of emotional labour, it is heavily focused around the experience of the individual worker, their capacities and strategies for coping with the demands of the job. In her use of Stanislavski she applies his teachings – or rather, a misconstrued version of his teachings - to understand the individual emotional transmutation process of the worker, rather than to the collective experience and shaping of such work. This approach has a number of limitations, particularly when it comes to thinking through the potentials for employee organisation and resistance in workplaces that are dependent on this type of labour.

Scholarship on emotional labour has tended towards a preoccupation with the question of authenticity, often articulated through the symbolic referent of the actor. This presents two problems for research. Firstly, such a focus can recreate, rather than question, the very notion of an 'authentic' self which underpins corporate attempts to valorise and commodify employees emotional faculties. Secondly, a preoccupation with how authentic, or not, performances at work may be obscures the managerial and directorial dimensions of work. With a particular interest in how exterior emotional performances and representations have been shaped throughout history, theatre and performance studies is well placed to interrogate notions of authentic performances and how these are constructed under varying contexts and conditions. As I argued in the previous chapter, Stanislavski's significance as a theatrical practitioner, deeply concerned with how to generate authentic emotional performances from his actors, lies less in the individual tools he equipped actors with, but rather in how his system led to the reorganisation and management of theatrical labour on a wider scale. Stanislavski's project was not just one of equipping the actor with a toolkit from which to generate their performances, but was also a managerial project aiming to

systematise the rehearsal process and make it more efficient from the director and producers' perspective, with the actor proletarianized in the process. When we consider the companies and workplaces today which demand emotional labour from their employees, it is important to think about the ways in which actors, as exemplary emotional labourers, contribute to our understanding of managerial attempts to elicit or 'direct' such performances, rather than simply how workers' choices under these conditions can be compared to those of the individual actor on stage.

Thinking about theatrical labour itself, as labour, can then be usefully brought into dialogue with the study of such business practices to help move beyond an individualising framework. Alongside my discussion of Hochschild's theory, this chapter has considered how ideas of authenticity and selfhood are being implemented and understood in commercial contexts, and their relationship with the Stanislavskian forms of training which Hochschild refers to. As my own account illustrates, any discussion of the authenticity, or otherwise, of the employee's feelings in instances of emotional labour becomes secondary to the pressure and control exerted by a management concerned with the careful cultivation of brand image, and the commercial imperatives it serves. This draws attention to the inadequacy of any theorisation of emotional labour which is focused primarily on individual experience, rather than considering the workplace both as a whole, and within a larger economic and political context, and demonstrates the need for labour relations to be foregrounded in scholarship on these issues.

Emotional labour at Pret and Hawksmoor is not solely the result of employees' individual strategies and techniques for emotion work, but is also the result of the deliberate imposition and management of directorial techniques that cultivate and encourage the types of 'acting' required. What we see in the examples I have explored

is not the emotional labourer as autonomous actor, but the role of the *director*, through the intervention of management. The next chapter will now turn to focus on how this theatricalization of the workplace has historically emerged, and the managerial techniques which are used to elicit and measure the performances of employees.

Chapter four: The organisational logic of character

Introduction

The handbook given to new Hawksmoor employees begins by establishing an expectation for excellence, opening by stating the primary thing that new recruits must know about the company: 'we always want to be the best steak restaurant in the country'.[1] Keeping this aim in mind, the handbook continues, 'will help you make decisions on the right way of doing things', thus operating as a guiding principle by defining the standard to which the company aspires: 'We try not to have too many rules and we try to let everyone be themselves because we know that what works for one person doesn't necessarily work for everyone. That doesn't mean we can't all strive to hit this standard'.[2] Here, Hawksmoor's training document articulates the 'just be yourself' management style, as outlined by Fleming and explored in the previous chapter, whilst also gesturing to some of the unique problems posed by such an approach, and by the reliance on emotional labour more broadly. The integration of theatricalised labour and the training of employees in emotion management offers opportunities for companies seeking to brand themselves as markedly different from competitors.[3] It can also, as I will argue in chapter five, be constitutive of value itself.[4] In either case, the indeterminacy of emotional labour power, which I pointed to in chapter one, means that management and measurement tactics are needed to elicit its potential. Yet the intangible and immaterial qualities of such labour also make it

[1] Hawksmoor employee manual, not publicly available. Provided by the company.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Joseph B. Pine II and James H. Gilmore, *The Experience Economy* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2011).
[4] Emma Dowling, 'Producing the Dining Experience: Measure, Subjectivity and the Affective Worker', Ephemera, 7.1 (2007), pp. 117–32.

particularly difficult to monitor, measure and control. How can Hawksmoor managers ensure that this 'standard' is indeed met, when such work is performative and reliant on the individual's subjectivity? How can the continued quality of each individual performance be assured, or monitored? How can emotional labour, ephemeral as it is, be measured?

Whilst the previous chapter of this thesis addressed the ways in which the individual worker's emotional and affective capabilities were understood and experienced, as well as the corporate narratives surrounding this, the current chapter will set out to address the ways in which businesses address the problems of management thrown up by the rise of these forms of work. The necessity for businesses to aim for greater standardization - in order to ensure the repeatability of service as required - poses an obstacle to the realisation of emotional labour's potential value, and thus presents itself as a key challenge for management. This chapter will consider both how theatricalised elements such as plot and character are manifested within management and corporate literature, and which tactics and strategies are being used to address the difficulties of controlling and realising the value of emotional labour power. 'Character', here, is understood and examined in multiple ways. In the artistic and fictional sense, it represents what Christina Delgado-Garcia describes as the 'figuration of subjectivity' in theatre and, for the purposes of this research, the specific production of subjectivity via dramatic character under conditions of Stanislavskian realism.[5] Moving to consider the meaning of character within the workplace, the term is used to refer to the ways in which the demonstration of individual moral qualities (often associated with 'virtuous' conduct) are

[5] Cristina Delgado-García, *Rethinking Character in Contemporary British Theatre: Aesthetics, Politics, Subjectivity*, CDE Studies, Volume 26 (Berlin ; Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), p. xixi

increasingly foregrounded, both in assessing leadership qualities and in expectations on workers. Finally, character is used in reference to how companies market themselves using increasingly personalised social media and public presences which cultivate a sense of character as associated with brand. These dramatic, moral and corporate uses of the word are found to be increasingly bound together in the workplace. I will argue that *character* has become a central organising logic for many companies looking to capitalise on both emotional labour and attention to customer experience, and that the reconstitution of character in the workplace offers one such strategy for addressing the transformations in the modes of control over employee performance necessitated by such work. I will begin by charting the emergence of performative and theatricalised elements within management discourse itself. I will then move onto a discussion of how character has been theorised, both in relation to theatre in the Stanislavskian tradition, and within business literature and political theory. I will then consider the ways in which character is being formulated in these contemporary workplaces as a new mode of control and organisation.

The emergence of 'neo-management'

In the previous chapter, I drew on Flemings' argument that the turn towards authenticity in businesses emerges from attempts to reconcile workers' relationship with work, allowing them to accept some of the more unpleasant aspects.[6] Where Flemings' work is focused on tracing the contemporary articulation of this authenticity discourse, and considering the possibilities for resistance to it, other

[6] Peter Fleming, *Authenticity and the cultural politics of work*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) p. 16.

authors have provided in-depth accounts of its historical emergence. In *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (1999), Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello trace the emergence of a new ideology characterised by approaches that dispense with hierarchies, promote organisation along the lines of 'networks' or 'projects', and respond to demands for authenticity and freedom through a restructuring of work.[7] By comparing management literature (which they argue is 'one of the main sites in which the spirit of capitalism is inscribed') from the 1960s, to literature from the 1990s, they chart a definitive change of approach, deeming the new style 'neo-management'.[8] Like Fleming, Boltanski and Chiapello frame many of these changes as capital's response to the increasing dissatisfaction of workers who, from the late 1960s onwards, began to expect that their work would allow them both personal fulfilment and the sense of contributing towards society. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, boredom was a characteristic feature of much work under Fordism, which faced a challenge in new forms of work promising flexibility and emotional input.[9] Neo-management aims to address the demands for autonomy coming from the workforce: 'the new organizations are supposed to appeal to all the capacities of human beings, who will thus be in a position fully to blossom'.[10]

For Boltanski and Chiapello, whose work is focused on France, many of these demands come from the reverberations of the struggles of 1968 and capital's attempt to incorporate, and therefore neutralise, the critiques that sprang up from the movement. The same process of transformation however can be seen across other national contexts, as argued in the works of Fleming and by influential management

[7] Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2018)
[8] Boltanski and Chiapello, p. 57, p. 79.
[9] Amelia Horgan Lost in Work (London: Pluto, 2021) p. 52-53.
[10] Boltanski and Chiapello, p. 90.

theorists such as Peter Drucker, who in 1988 famously heralded the 'The Coming of the New Organization' in an article for the *Harvard Business Review*.[11] Drucker argued that organisations of the future would be based on information, requiring new forms of management, and that the future of work would look far less like established manufacturing companies and would have more in common with 'the hospital, the university, the symphony orchestra'.[12] For Drucker, these workplaces are examples of 'knowledge-based' organisations made up of specialists who, 'direct and discipline their own performance through organised feedback from colleagues, customers and headquarters.'[13] These future employees can be compared to artists, like the members of a symphony orchestra – high grade specialists in their work. Drucker's deployment of this analogy was a useful illustration of an emerging era of post-Fordist work, in which the emphasis was switching to emotional intelligence, flexibility and the importance of immaterial production. As Jason Hughes, in his survey of the significance of emotional intelligence in managerial discourse suggests, the late-1980s were characterised by a turn away from a 'corporate zeitgeist' which regarded emotions as an impediment to decision making, and towards a greater emphasis on the 'display, deployment, and management of emotions'.[14] Thus the question of emotional performance and management (of both ourselves and others) has become part of a new 'toolkit' of work skills.[15] In opposition to psychologists such as Daniel Goleman, who locates the ascendency of emotional intelligence within managerial discourse to a set of scientific discoveries or new body of research, Hughes ascribes it

---

[11] Peter Drucker, 'The Coming of the New Organization', *Harvard Business Review* (January-February 1988), pp. 45-53.
[12] Drucker, p. 45
[13] Drucker, p. 45.
[14] Jason Hughes, 'Bringing emotion to work: emotional intelligence, employee resistance and the reinvention of character', Work, Employment and Society 19:3 (2005) pp. 603–625, (p. 604).
[15] Hughes, p. 605.

to a broader set of shifts occurring in the workplace at this time: 'shifts in the control strategies pursued by organizations, shifts in the character of work, shifts in the demands made of employees, and, indeed, shifts in the demands that employees make on their workplaces.'[16] His account therefore echoes Boltanski and Chiapello's, which frames neo-management as a response to the demands of the workforce as much as it is a response to changing economic pressures. Hughes reference to the changing 'character' of work is notable for this chapter, as I will argue that the emergence of character, both in relation to individual employees as well as the development of character for companies and brands themselves, is one area in which theatrical notions have been adapted and become central for management strategies.

These ideological and financial rationales for the integration of personalised 'authentic' concerns into the workplace coincide with the growth of the service sector in the West, relative to manufacturing, which in turn results in more interactive jobs or as Kathi Weeks, paraphrasing the work of sociologist C. Wright Mills, writes 'putting subjectivity to work in jobs that are less about manipulating things and more about handling people and symbols.'[17] The resultant new paradigm for work, markedly different from the Fordist era of the past, is crucial to understanding the adoption of theatrical and performative elements in the workplace, which have not necessarily been adopted consciously but rather are the logical result of the need to 'introduce "authenticity" into capitalist production in the form of the "personalized"'.[18] As I argued earlier in this thesis, actors and the theatre industry are archetypal sites of emotional labour and offer a well-tested means for the development of emotional management skills, as well as being key sites in the

[16] Hughes, p. 605.
[17] Kathi Weeks, 'Life Within and Against Work: Affective Labor, Feminist Critique, and Post-Fordist Politics', *Ephemera* 7:1 (2007) pp. 233-249, (p. 239).
[18] Boltanski and Chiapello, p. 99.

reproduction of cultural ideas of authenticity. As a result of the increasing emphasis on authenticity and emotional management within the workplace from the late 1960s onwards, businesses began to turn towards the theatrical sphere, first as metaphor or inspiration, but eventually also for practical tools and assistance to aid them in incorporating these factors into their managerial strategies. Thus the theatricalization of the workplace, which I explore and document in this thesis, is not merely a cultural trend, but the result of imperatives that are driven by structural changes to work in the later twentieth-century.

One of the earliest and most visible results of this dynamic is the increasing prominence of the theatrical metaphor in managerial literature. In their survey of the use of the theatrical metaphor in services management and consumer behaviour literature, Morgan, Watson and Hemmington identify the work of authors Booms & Bitner and Grove & Fisk, working in the late 1980s and 1990s, as foundational in their attempts to move beyond the anecdotal or atheoretical comparisons between services and theatre which were often deployed, and develop instead a 'comprehensive framework' that represents service encounters as drama.[19] Grove, Fisk and Dorsch focused their analysis on four key theatrical components in service contexts: '(1) actors, or the service personnel whose behaviours and presence help to determine the service, (2) audience, or the consumers who are the service recipients, (3) setting, or the physical environment in which the service occurs, and (4) performance, or the service enactment itself.', a theatrical framework which, they argued, collectively captures the way most service encounters are designed.[20]

---

[19] Michael Morgan, Pamela Watson, and Nigel Hemmington, 'Drama in the Dining Room: Theatrical Perspectives on the Foodservice Encounter', *Journal of Foodservice*, 19 (2008), pp. 111–18; Stephen J. Grove, Raymond P. Fisk and Michael J. Dorsch, 'Assessing the Theatrical Components of the Service Encounter: A Cluster Analysis Examination', *Service Industries Journal*, 18:3 (1998), pp. 116-134, (p. 117).
[20] Grove, Fisk and Dorsch, p. 116-117.

Separately, Bitner developed the idea of the 'servicescape' as the stage of performance in a service encounter and, taken together, these ideas of servicescape and a comprehensive theatrical framework have since been applied within management literature, culminating in what Morgan, Watson and Hemmington deem the 'strategic' use of the metaphor in the work of writers like Pine and Gilmore, who draw explicitly from Richard Schechner's theory of performance: 'the drama is the strategy of the company, expressed through its mission, vision and strategic plans.'[21] As we will see, this reimagining of the company itself as a dramatic production leads to important consequences for how characters, i.e. employees, within it are conceived of, managed and strategically deployed.

If businesses found themselves turning towards theatre and performance as sites to aid them in utilising cultural notions of authentic performance, they are also sites which are key to the propagation of broader cultural notions of character. As Marjory Garber, in her historical account of the concept of character, notes, theatre provides a 'performance laboratory' for dealing with questions of character and interiority.[22] Garber introduces the idea of 'back-formation of character', the process whereby fictional characters are used to produce and drive ideas of character in everyday life, to argue that theatre (specifically, in her account, Shakespeare) has had a strong influence on broader cultural understandings of character.[23] Garber points to leadership institutes which draw on fictional works as part of training exercises to 'develop character' in participants – a phenomena which draws parallels with the business offshoots of drama schools discussed in the previous chapter.[24] Despite the

[21] Morgan, Watson and Hemmington, p. 112.
[22] Marjorie Garber, *Character: The History of a Cultural Obsession*, First edition (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020), p. 20.
[23] Garber, p. 16.
[24] Garber, p. 16.

fact that character is commonly treated or understood as 'intrinsic and essential to the individual', Garber argues that dramatic and theatrical influences on our understandings underscore how character is often produced via interaction with others, including via performance.[25]

Whilst accounts of the theatrical metaphor within business pay detailed attention to the adoption of this vocabulary within management literature, they pay limited attention to the implications for employees. As Boltanski and Chiapello argue, managerial literature is a 'normative literature' one which adopts a moral tone in order to argue 'what should be the case, not what is the case'.[26] It is thus legitimate to question the realism of this literature, and how much it bears resemblance to what 'really' happens in firms.[27] With this in mind, the gaps in this account of the theatrical framework become apparent. Although Morgan, Watson and Hemmington discuss the need for convincing and authentic staff performances, for example, they situate this as just another component within the wider personality of the business, writing that staffing requirements can be met through 'careful selection, training and motivation by management', suggesting that employers can exert complete control and design over employees, without paying detailed attention to what this might entail.[28] In this sense, the management of human emotional labour power is treated no differently from designing the scenography of an environment, treating it as a wholly controllable and malleable element. The instability of worker's performances, the agency they themselves have over the execution of their labour, their own input into it: the specifically human element of this labour is erased in this treatment.

---

[25] Garber, p. 20.
[26] Boltanski and Chiapello, p. 58.
[27] Boltanski and Chiapello, p. 58.
[28] Morgan, Watson and Hemmington, p. 116.

Managerial literature is also, of course, rarely critical of the effects on workers asked to perform such roles, and the broader societal implications that this shift may result in. These questions have instead been taken up by sociologists, including Hughes, who argues that the shift towards emotional intelligence can be understood as 'constituting a reinvention and redefinition of character, a version which attends to the short-termism and moral ambiguity of the post-Fordist, flexible workplace', and this marks a''continuation of processes in which the control strategies pursued in contemporary work organizations have come increasingly to involve the colonization of workers' affects and subjectivities.'[29] These concerns correlate to the expanding scholarly body of work on emotional labour, which takes the broader shifts in work and management and resituates the employee themselves as at the centre of them. As Weeks explains, Hochschild's seminal work on emotional labour drew attention away from previous, vaguely defined notions of a 'personality market', and shifted focus to the labour process itself, highlighting that such work is not only skilled labour, but also socially necessary labour, with constitutive effects.[30] Before returning to a detailed account of how characterisation relates to control strategies in the workplace, I will first trace some of the history of character as a concept, and debates about our contemporary understandings of it both on and off the stage. I will then return to an earlier period in management literature, one defined by the influence of Taylor and Ford, and consider its relationship with the forms of Stanislavskian character and characterisation, before turning to my case studies to examine how character is being reformulated and understood in the current context.

[29] Hughes, p. 605-606.
[30] Weeks, p. 240.

Conflicts of character

The multiple usages and meanings of character have a long and varied history. In Garber's historical tracing of the concept, she notes that the word's original meaning referred to engraving or stamping, before coming to also mean the object or thing itself which was being engraved.[31] Over time the word has come to be used in reference to moral ideas, literary personas and incised marks, amongst other meanings.[32] Cristina Delgado-Garcia, similarly, draws from Martin Harrison to chart the meaning of the word from its original English usage to denote instruments used for engraving, to its later usage as 'the sum of the qualities which constitute an individual', and finally as a reference to individuals within fictitious works (such as plays), which became common usage only in the eighteenth century.[33]

Within theatre and performance, the meaning and persistence of 'character' has been debated. Elinor Fuchs in 1996 notably argued for the 'death of character' on the post-modern stage, as realistic theatrical depictions of individuals gave way to strategies which 'deliberately undermined the illusion of autonomous character'.[34] Fuchs notes that in Aristotelian tragedy, the plot was understood as the 'soul' of the play, before this gave way to the centrality of character. With the influence of the avant-garde in the twenty-first century, she argues, it is thought and ideology which become the central concern, with ideas manifesting themselves through 'quasi-allegorical use of space' as less attention becomes paid to either character or plot, and the abstract levels of the play rise to prominence.[35] Delgado-Garcia, conversely,

---

[31] Garber, p. 5.
[32] Garber, p. 5.
[33] Delgado-García, p. 2.
[34] Elinor Fuchs, *The Death of Character: Perspectives on Theater after Modernism*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 31.
[35] Fuchs, p. 31, p. 35.

challenges Fuchs' dismissal of character and instead offers an analysis of how character has in fact been renegotiated and understood, specifically in contemporary British theatre. Some of the problems that emerge from pronouncements about the death of character, Delgado-Garcia argues, are rooted in Western theatre's tendency to understand character primarily via the 'illusionist representation of a person generated by an actor.'[36] Within this more modern usage of the word, Delgado-Garcia points to the inconsistencies in how character is understood and applied to dramatic texts. The figures in both Greek and Brechtian plays, for example, are referred to using the lens of 'character', despite neither corresponding directly to such ideas of individuality or illusion.[37] She also points out that whilst Brecht's theatre is widely understood as representing a new sense of 'fragmented character' which the actor is unable to fully embody or impersonate, we nonetheless continue to refer to his own creations like Mother Courage as 'characters'.[38] These inconsistencies can then also be understood as pointing to the 'elasticity' of the notion of character itself.[39]

Expanding on this argument, Delgado-Garcia argues that these shifting notions of character are linked to our wider understanding of subjective formation. Where Fuchs and she agree, is in seeing theatre as a key site which alters, as well as reflects, our broader cultural understandings of character. For Fuchs, every new epoch of characterisation on stage also constitutes broader changes in how the social constitution of the self is understood.[40] Thus notions of theatrical character are never distinct from wider contemporary notions of subjectivity.[41] For Delgado-Garcia, theatre is able to reconfigure our knowledge and understanding of subjectivity

[36] Delgado-Garcia, p. 2.
[37] Delgado-Garcia, p. 2.
[38] Delgado-Garcia, p. 2.
[39] Delgado-Garcia, p. 2.
[40] Fuchs, p. 8.
[41] Fuchs, p. 8.

precisely through its dramatic articulations of character.[42] She argues for an understanding of character as broadly, 'any figuration of subjectivity in theatre' regardless of its appearance in the play text or the forms in which it is materialised on stage.[43] As she notes, the historicization of dramatic form alongside conceptualisations of subjectivity has been widely practised in relation to earlier periods. In particular, she notes that the emergence of 'the liberal-humanist notion of selfhood' has been often linked to the emergence of new, individualised characters within Renaissance drama.[44] Proclamations about the death of character, or its replacement in postdramatic forms, however, have not been met with the same consideration. Studying theatrical character alongside changing notions of subjectivity is key, she argues, because 'character is precisely the node where theatre's aesthetics and conceptualisations of subjectivity intersect, and as such it is a suitable starting point for addressing transformations in these two realms.'[45] Here she echoes Garber's claims, cited earlier, about the importance of theatre (as well as now film and television) as a space for developing and transmitting widely understood ideas of character.

Delgado-Garcia's argument about the transformations in terms of dramatic representations of subjectivity holding significance beyond theatre also relates to Garber's arguments around the essentialising tendencies in our use of the word. Garber notes that the ways in which we commonly refer to character today, including the use of phrases such as 'out of character', indicate an understanding of character as identifiable, habitual, and readable – allowing for the possibility of a discrepancy

[42] Delgado-Garcia, p. xii.
[43] Delgado-Garcia, p. xii.
[44] Delgado-Garcia, p. xii.
[45] Delgado-Garcia, p. 10.

between 'ideal and performance'.[46] These varied understandings of character also points to its various contradictions. Fuchs' own account of challenges to character in the twentieth-century points to these, with the experiments that threaten the dominance of character on stage taking place in the context of avant-garde performance forms, whilst the entrenchment of emotional authenticity and realism happens elsewhere during the same period (as charted in chapter two). Similarly, Garber notes that despite the increasing demand for flexibility, the original meaning of character as a 'distinctive mark or brand' persists in some form today. Character, she argues, is still seen as 'written', with character traits, like personalities, seen to be things which are 'engraved.' Garber points to digital forms such as Twitter, where posts are limited to a certain number of 'characters' as an example of where such meaning persists.[47] This will be important later in the chapter, when I turn to how companies are using digital branding strategies to advance their own 'characters'.

Within policy and business contexts, the question of character has also grown in recent prominence. This development is charted and discussed by Paul du Gay et al, who argue that underlying notions of character in these areas are the issues of 'ethics' and virtuous conduct.[48] The rise of concern for character across contexts including public and private sector institutions, and scholarship, they argue, fall into an approach which lacks attention to contextual specificity, resulting in abstract notions of character. The authors attribute the growing concern for character within policy arenas as stemming from a revival of virtue ethics in the later twentieth-century, and link this specifically to various management reforms and ethical scandals, including the banking collapse and healthcare failings. The stress on

---

[46] Garber, p. 5.
[47] Garber, p. 6.
[48] Paul du Gay and others, 'Character and Organization', *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 12:1 2019, pp. 36-53.

virtues turns to a stress on the importance of character, as the site in which virtues are represented as traits which are 'acquired and developed through habituation, training, and practice.'[49] Character has, they argue, become a way in which organisational problems (including questions of conduct) have become addressed.

Drawing on Weber, du Gay et al argue that context is important when framing questions of character. The authors identify examples in the literature where character has been deployed in such a way as to suggest the establishment of a complete or whole human, character understood as a 'normative benchmark for all others'.[50] Richard Sennett's text *The Corrosion of Character*, though widely regarded as an important critical text for understanding how capitalism has altered notions of character in relation to the workplace, is identified as a text which runs these risks. Sennett defines character as 'the long-term aspects of our emotional experience'.[51] In this understanding, character is 'expressed by loyalty and mutual commitment', and is concerned with the personal traits valued both in ourselves and in others.[52] In this way Sennett, du Gay et al argue, looks for a 'unifying source' of character which appears as a unifying function, and thus leads to what they identify as a 'metaphysical longing' in his work.[53] For du Gay et al, as for Weber, there is no such 'transcendental unity' or 'meta-character', which would be somehow appropriate across all institutional and organizational roles, as suggested by such an approach.[54] Instead, character is understood as relating to the self as cultivated in dedication to a *particular* role or office.[55] These personas are dependent on

---

[49] Du Gay et al, p. 2.
[50] Du Gay et al, p. 6.
[51] Richard Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*, (New York, NY: Norton, 1999), p. 10.
[52] Sennett, p. 10.
[53] Du Gay et al, p. 8.
[54] Du Gay et al, p. 6.
[55] Du Gay et al, p. 6.

institutional context and need to be reckoned with as such. As a result, they argue that character is 'never set in stone but is always contestable (though not always contested).'[56] Adopting this approach allows us to treat character as regional, related to specific circumstances and persons, rather than to the 'whole person' and the entirety of their life, and always in negotiation according to institutional demands.[57] This in turn allows the notion of character within organisational and institutional context to avoid the essentialising tendencies which cast behaviour and conduct in these settings as equatable with a person's true 'essence' or 'real self'.

Questions of character then impact specific selves and personas in institutional and organizational settings or roles. Analysing various organisational settings they demonstrate that attempts to solve work related problems are often done through 'addressing the personal, extra-organizational self that, by definition, is outside the role occupied'.[58] Drawing on the work of Joseph L. Badaracco in *Harvard Business Review*, the authors propose that authenticity is at the heart of character-building initiatives for management and business leaders, with the instruction to cultivate authentic identity based on the individual's own judgment, 'rather than on someone else's understanding of what is right'.[59] This is, notably, referred to as a 'process of self-inquiry', in the service of fostering this authentic leadership identity – drawing parallels with the Stanislavskian approach to developing authentic character.[60] Badaracco asks managers to use their 'innermost feelings and convictions' as 'guiding principles' through which they can resolve

[56] Du Gay et al, p. 6.
[57] Du Gay et al, p. 8.
[58] Du Gay et al, p. 10.
[59] Badaracco, cited in du Gay et al, p. 10.
[60] It is important to note that this 'individual judgement' in questions of authenticity is reserved for discussion of management and leadership positions. As my previous chapter argued, employees who do not occupy senior roles are in fact often instructed or pointed towards specific ideas of 'authenticity' as proscribed by the employer.

‘defining moments’, once again sounding strikingly like the Stanislavskian actor asked to use their understanding of character and objective to navigate the play.[61] For du Gay et al, these instructions serve to create a process of abstraction, whereby character building is made individually rooted and thus abstracted from the institutional context it is actually designed to serve. Ultimately the authors conclude that this turn to character within policy is so abstract as to avoid any meaningful contribution to understanding the roles and work that people are actually performing in a given context. These claims about the abstraction of character will be important later in this chapter, when I look at the ways in which businesses have sought to address the need for emotional labour which is measurable, and therefore abstract.

From the survey of these arguments, both within theatre and performance studies as well as with broader critical literature, we can see that the changing landscape of character and its deployment on stage and at work is fraught with debate and change. Character formation and its implementation via business is a live area of study, particularly when combined with consideration of broader changes to subjectivity and subject formation under post-Fordist neoliberalism. Before turning to my case studies of Pret A Manger and Hawksmoor to look at the ways in which these issues are playing out in recent management practices, I will firstly return to Stanislavskian actor training to gain more insight into the relationship between character and business management. Building upon the research discussed in chapter two, I will chart how previous forms of management related to notions of theatrical and dramatic character, in order to assess how these have changed, or indeed remain continuous.

[61] Badaracco, cited in du Gay et al, p. 10.

Stanislavski and scientific management

In chapter two I argued that Stanislavski's pursuit of emotional realism in performance was historically tied to the development of new forms of theatrical management and production. I argued that the move away from a craft based model, towards one in which the actor is reconstituted as a worker, managed by producers and directors, is central to understanding the transformation of the theatre industry in the early twentieth-century and the formal and stylistic changes that came with it. These changes in the organisation of theatrical labour happened concurrently with broader transformations in industrial management. This specific lineage between Stanislavski and industrial management has been traced in detail by Jonathan Pitches who, in reminding the reader that Stanislavski came from a family of industrialists, argues that the influence of this background on his work is more important than accounts of his career have previously suggested.[62] Pitches details the links between Stanislavski's scientific and systematic approach to acting and the 'Scientific Management' that was becoming firmly rooted in American industry in the early twentieth-century, exemplified by Frederick Winslow Taylor and Henry Ford. Fordism and Taylorism are described by Jon McKenzie as a call for 'organizing work upon rational, scientific principles designed to make work more productive from both managerial and labor perspectives'. [63] Whilst developed in the United States, Pitches gives a detailed account of how their ideas were disseminated in Russia through the work of Alexei Gastev, also citing John Benedetti, Stanislavski's biographer, to confirm that Stanislavski was familiar with Taylorism.[64] Taylor and Ford, Pitches

[62] Jonathan Pitches, *Science and the Stanislavsky Tradition of Acting.* (Routledge, 2009), p. 46.
[63] Jon McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2001), p.6.
[64] Pitches, p. 32.

writes, 'were striving for the most efficient and systematic, task-based approach in industry' whilst Stanislavski was 'proposing an organised system for the actor based on the same foundations': a dedication to establishing, as recorded by the literary head of the MAT, 'the right selection of tasks, their composition, the right pattern, the execution of every task.'[65] Indeed, in *Building a Character*, Stanislavski describes his system as a set of 'steps' leading to unlocking the subconscious: 'Because you cannot climb to the top at once […] You need a ladder, or steps. It is by means of them that you reach the top. I give you these steps.'[66] Pitches' research draws attention to this connection, and what he calls the 'interplay between Taylor's industrial efficiency drives and Stanislavski's practice.'[67] Similarly, Ysabel Claire has pointed to the correlation between the 'systematising' tendency in manufacturing at the time, and Stanislavski's quest to develop his own system, and Broderick Chow has argued that Taylor and Stanislavski find an affinity through their similar attempts to 'capture knowledge that was at first glance tacit, embodied, natural, and mercurial, in the form of method – understandable, transmissible.'[68]

Pitches argues that the logic of Stanislavski's systematising approach is based on the organisation of a character's actions, which are broken down into 'bits' or 'units'. Order, for Stanislavski, is thus established through 'deep textual investigation, ensuring that the larger picture of the play can be organised into comprehensible parts'.[69] The play is thus 'carved up', illustrated by a notable scene

---

[65] Pitches, p. 29.
[66] Constantin Stanislavski, *Building a Character* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013) p. 243.
[67] Pitches, p. 29.
[68] Ysabel Clare, 'Stanislavsky's quest for the Ideal Actor: the System as Socratic encounter', *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*, 7:2 (2016), pp. 148-164; Broderick Chow, 'An actor manages: actor training and managerial ideology', *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*, 5:2 (2014), pp. 131-143, (p. 134).
[69] Pitches, p. 13.

in *An Actor Prepares* where Stanislavski, through the account of a fictional famous actor hosting a dinner party, compares this process to that of carving a turkey:

> Imagine that this is not a turkey but a five-act play, The Inspector General. Can you do away with it in a mouthful? No; you cannot make a single mouthful either of a whole turkey of a five-act play. Therefore you must carve it, first, into large pieces, like this…" (cutting off the legs, wings and soft parts of the roast and laying them on an empty plate). "There you have the first big divisions. But you cannot swallow even such chunks. Therefore you must cut them into smaller pieces, like this..' and he disjointed the bird still further.[70]

Each of these pieces, or units, consists of an objective, or task, and an action which aims to satisfy or address it. The actions of the character, as spurred on by these tasks, are the driving force for the actor's performance, and here Stanislavski's system finds an affinity with the 'task' management of Taylor, in which the worker is put to specific and rationalised tasks, rather than involving themselves in the overall conception or execution of the labour process. Harry Braverman, in his study of monopoly capitalism, argued that this separation of tasks was central to the Taylorist project of wresting control over the labour process away from the worker and into the hands of management, and arguably 'the most prominent single element in modern scientific management.'[71] The first principle of scientific management, he writes, is 'the dissociation of the labour process from the skills of the worker', as the process becomes independent of 'craft, tradition, and the worker's knowledge'.[72] The labour process becomes dependent upon the 'practices of management' rather than the embodied craft knowledge of the worker.[73] Pitches, in describing Taylor's attempts to breakdown the labour process into explicit tasks and activities, writes that the aim of

---

[70] Constantin Stanislavski, *An Actor Prepares* (London: Methuen, 1986) p. 111.
[71] Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1998), p. 82.
[72] Braverman, p. 78.
[73] Braverman, p. 78.

this was 'to eliminate the chance factor in the work pattern of employees', comparable to Stanislavski's own attempts to create a performance process which is rationalised and, crucially, repeatable.[74]

Where Taylorism involved the standardisation of work, and Fordism relied upon clear and linear sequences of delineated tasks, Stanislavski similarly adopted a framework whereby these 'tasks', rather than the product itself, became central to the process of performance. Pitches explains: 'For each new performance the actor must readdress these tasks, must seek to *re*solve the problems. By focusing on the task (rather than the product of the task) the performance engages afresh with the creative process, avoiding clichés and the temptation to "play the result"'.[75] This is combined with a linear approach in which the 'through-line of action', the overall structure of each task put together, evolves 'along a clearly defined causal line' which Pitches compares to Ford's linear approach to task sequencing in car production.[76] For Pitches, the conveyor-belt is thus equated with 'plot', as the linear organisation resulting in the final product. The plot therefore serves as the vehicle for the delivery of the final product, which is the actor's delivery of character, in keeping with Stanislavski's frequently stated view that the purpose of art is the transmission of feeling, via character. This also aligns with Pitches' claim that Stanislavski and Aristotle are differentiated by where they place the emphasis of logic in their understanding of drama: for Aristotle the plot is central, but for Stanislavski, logic emerges from the organisation of character.[77]

Before returning to the question of Taylorism it is worth underscoring the wider relevance of this interplay between Stanislavski's approach and the dominant

[74] Pitches, p. 31.
[75] Pitches, p. 31.
[76] Pitches, p. 25.
[77] Pitches, p. 13.

modes of industrial production. Pitches has framed this in relation to Fordism and Taylorist modes of production within manufacturing but Stanislavski's system equally has a relationship with public-facing forms of work which were also important during the same period. Keith Walden explores this dimension by highlighting the similarity between Stanislavski's systematic approach to acting and the work of salesmen, who played a notable part in American public life in the early twentieth-century.[78] He draws attention to the prominence of sales literature advising these workers how to best deliver their performance and pitch, and suggests that the public familiarity with this type of work might be a contributing factor to the embrace of Stanislavskian modes of performance.[79] Whilst Pitches has elsewhere challenged the 'myth' that America was especially well suited to Russian training, Walden's account suggests that these similarities actually allowed his system to flourish and be enthusiastically taken up abroad, particularly in America, and uses his study to argue for situating performer training more historically, considering 'the circumstances that make some kinds of cultural logic more compelling than others.'[80] For Walden, whilst 'Stanislavsky challenged many of the orthodoxies within acting academies' in America at the time, 'much of what he and his followers advocated meshed smoothly with developments in other areas of American life.'[81]

Authenticity, notably, is one of the principles that was transferable from one context to the other, with Walden quoting Norval Hawkins, a sales guru at the Ford Motor Company who declared: 'The heart has a wonderful ability to detect

---

[78] Keith Walden, 'Whose Method? Culture, Commerce, and American Performer Training', *New Theatre Quarterly*, 19.4 (2003), pp. 318–25.
[79] Walden, p. 320.
[80] Jonathan Pitches, 'Introduction' in *Russians in Britain: British theatre and the Russian tradition of actor training,* edited by Pitches (London, New York: Routledge, 2012); Walden p. 325.
[81] Walden, p. 319.

counterfeits'.[82] Walden writes that 'if a seller did not genuinely accept the truth of a pitch, the insincerity would "almost surely" be detected', and adds that sales authorities themselves were 'highly conscious that customers' suspicions about feigned sincerity by sales agents could undermine the larger goal of promoting consumption'.[83] Stanislavski himself directly compares actors who are more interested in demonstrating their own skill and ability (rather than authentically embodying the role), to poor sales people: 'Such actors have no more relation to art than the salesman of musical instruments who brashly demonstrates his wares by pyrotechnical execution, not for the purpose of conveying the intent of the composer but merely to sell the instrument.'[84] Successful salespeople were seen as those who committed themselves to their role in such a way as they believed in their own pitch, able to transmit this to their audience through the force of their performance. Stanislavski's system thereby found an affinity with not only the new forms of industrial management taking place in factories, but the ways in which business practices were experienced through social relations and encounters, an area that will be explored in depth in the next chapter. I will now return to the relationship between Stanislavski and task based, scientific management in more detail.

Task based emotional management

It could be suggested that the neo-management of contemporary capitalism marks a decisive break with Taylorist and Fordist techniques of production, of which Stanislavski's system bears the hallmarks. Boltanski and Chiapello offer a summary

[82] Walden, p. 320.
[83] Walden, p. 320.
[84] Stanislavski, *Building a Character*, p. 96.

of the pivot towards 'lean production', as one example: they define this in terms of '*lean* forms working as *networks* with a multitude of participants, organizing work in the form of teams or *projects*, intent on customer satisfaction, and a general mobilization of workers thanks to their leaders' *vision*.'[85] The methods utilised in lean production include the principles of 'just-in-time, total quality, the process of continual improvement, autonomous production teams'.[86] Taylorism, which Pitches summarises as a system of control which mechanised people as well as occupations, is thus said to be rejected in favour of a more holistic attempt to incorporate the whole being of the employee.[87]

Yet the approaches of neo-management do not necessarily mark a break with scientific management or Fordism. Braverman, writing in 1974, also detailed the dissatisfaction with work which was becoming increasingly amplified, but drew attention to the methods firms were exploring to pacify and address the problem: 'job enlargement, enrichment, or rotation, work groups or teams, consultation or workers' "participation", group bonuses and profit-sharing, the abandonment of assembly line techniques, the removal of time clocks, and an "I Am" plan (short for "I Am Manager of My Job").'[88] These changes, Braverman argued, represented an adjustment in style but not a fundamental difference in the dynamics of management:

> Work itself is organized according to Taylorian principles, while personnel departments and academics have busied themselves with the selection, training, manipulation, pacification, and adjustment of "manpower" to suit the work processes so organized. Taylorism dominates the world of production; the practitioners of "human relations" and "industrial psychology" are the maintenance crew for the human machinery.[89]

---

[85] Boltanski and Chiapello, p. 73.
[86] Boltanski and Chiapello, p. 73.
[87] Pitches, p. 25.
[88] Braverman, p. 24.
[89] Braverman, p. 60.

Many elements of task based, scientific management still persist even in the contemporary service sector where the neo-management discourse is strongly proclaimed. Whilst the rise of neo-management has resulted in noticeable changes to the organisation of work, it has not necessarily resulted in more power or agency being afforded to workers, despite the language of authenticity and personal fulfilment. When we look specifically at the emotional labour component of many jobs, and the relationship with actor training tendencies which I have outlined, we can see clearly how older modes of production still persist despite these transformations. What has changed, however, is both the mode of performance at work, and the mode of control – and this change can be seen in the ways in which character is mobilised as an organising logic for management.

In the previous chapter I noted that particular attention is paid, both by Hochschild and those of the Method acting tradition, to *An Actor Prepares*, at the expense of Stanislavski's second book *Building a Character*. This second volume is where Stanislavski expands on the physical work necessary for the actor, emphasising the integration of mind and body and laying out approaches for how physical, voice and movement work can equally stir the actor's 'subconscious' and trigger the internal emotional states necessary for performance: 'external characterization can be achieved intuitively and also by means of purely technical, mechanical, simple external tricks'.[90] The lack of attention paid to the second book within the emotional labour literature is a significant oversight. The relative exclusion of physical work and its cues from the analysis of emotional labour means emphasis is placed almost solely on the emotional or psychological demands and their cues as they are put to

[90] Stanislavski, *Building a Character*, p. 4.

employees. As explained in the last chapter, this allows for an over focus on individualised experiences within the analysis of emotional labour. Closer attention to *Building a Character* allows us to see the similarly Stanislavskian basis of some of the more discreet ways in which emotional labour is managed through the physical organisation and structuring of the working day, which would suggest a lineage with Fordism, as well as through his approach to character itself.

In one section of *Building a Character*, Stanislavski outlines the effectiveness of using speed as a mechanism in rehearsal. After an exercise where he has worn the students to exhaustion by making them rapidly increase, then decrease, the tempo of their actions, he writes:

> Well, have you learned how to play? Are you having fun now? […] See what a magician I am – I control not only your muscles but your emotions, your moods. According to my wish I can put you to sleep, or I can raise you to the highest pitch of excitement, put you into a fine lather. I am not a magician, but tempo-rhythm does possess the magic power to affect your inner mood.[91]

Speed as a trigger for the authentic 'inner mood' is frequently used in rehearsals, where actors are worn down by the exercise to the point where emotional vulnerability is thought to be more readily accessible, as the performer's defences are lowered. In Stanislavski's account, the director has the means to influence an actor's internal emotional state by putting them through a serious of physical demands. The management and direction of performance then, is not limited to giving the actor a toolkit through which to access and develop their own emotional responses, but is also linked to control over pace, environment and other physical factors. This allows us to broaden our understanding of Stanislavski's relevance to workplace

[91] Stanislavski, *Building a Character,* p. 163.

performance, by thinking beyond the individualised performances of workers to the question of how 'character' is both constructed and actively managed in the workplace. Whilst businesses that deploy these techniques are unlikely to be aware or conscious of such a connection, this research demonstrates that the logic of a Stanislavskian approach to character remains nonetheless embedded within their practices. This in itself speaks to both the historical importance of these forms of actor training, and the ideological compatibility which exists between them and such managerial practices.

Addressing the gaps in the application and understanding of Stanislavskian methods also brings us to the questions raised at the outset of this chapter of how performances can be controlled and monitored to ensure they are in line with business expectations. As Mark Fisher notes, 'the drive to assess the performance of workers and to measure forms of labour which, by their nature, are resistant to quantification, has inevitably required additional layers of management and bureaucracy.'[92] A scene from the 1999 film *Office Space* encapsulates these issues. In the film, Joanna, a waitress played by Jennifer Anniston, is told by the management at her restaurant that all employees must wear a minimum fifteen 'piece of flair': buttons or badges through which the staff can 'express themselves'.[93] Despite the fact that this is meant to serve as a genuine expression of the employees personality, Joanna is berated by her manager for not exhibiting more flair. Even when she wears the required number, she is told it is up to her whether she continues to do the 'bare minimum', or follow the lead of her colleagues, some of whom wear up to thirty seven pieces of flair, alongside their 'terrific smile'.[94] Joanna eventually quits her job, choosing to follow

[92] Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?*, (Winchester: Zero Books, 2009), p. 41.
[93] *Office Space*, dir. by Mike Judge, (20th century Fox, 1999).
[94] *Office Space*.

the injunction to 'express herself' by swearing at her manager, and loudly announcing how much she hates her job.

Whilst demonstrating striking parallels with the demands that Thomas Nagle claimed to face from Trader Joe's (as explored in the previous chapter), *Office Space* also offers insight into some of the attempts to measure and quantify the more subjective elements of employee input into the emotional labour process. Existing studies of emotional labour have highlighted the various tactics employed to navigate these problems. In call centres, for example, the widespread use of direct surveillance allows management close access to the performances of staff, and the ability to monitor closely details of their interaction, and tightly manage their time, leading Taylor and Bain to argue that 'If anything distinguishes the call centre worker it is both the extent to which they are subject to monitoring and the unrelenting pressure to conform to acceptable forms of speech, whether scripted or not.'[95] The nature of these performances, taking place over the phone rather than in the direct visible presence of the consumer or audience, allows for a heightened use of surveillance, giving greater control and access to employers. As noted, face-to-face encounters in food and hospitality tend to be less reliant on written scripts, which are integral to call centre work, and more reliant on improvisation and input from employees.

Measurement, whilst initially sounding antithetical to artistic creation, was also a concern of Stanislavski's, one that he expressed through often mechanistic language. In *Building a Character*, he details the introduction of the metronome into rehearsals, as the question of 'mechanical, pedantic measurement' became a part of the process.[96] Emma Dowling, as referenced in chapter one, has provided a

---

[95] Phil Taylor and Peter Bain, '"An Assembly Line in the Head": Work and Employee Relations in the Call Centre', *Industrial Relations Journal*, 30.2 (1999), pp. 101-117.
[96] Stanislavski, *Building a Character*, p. 160.

convincing account of how, despite the problems inherent to the management of affective and emotional labour, performances of staff are not immeasurable, and that employers still find ways to quantify workers' performances. Dowling highlights how 'specific prescriptions', comparable to the physical cues I discuss above, were incorporated: 'there was the "five-ten rule": When approaching someone, you had to smile at them and make eye contact when you were ten feet away and at five feet, greet them'.[97] She also draws attention the use of mystery diners, grading systems and feedback as ways for management to enforce requirements surrounding emotional labour - techniques used by management to control and influence the performance of work, where we see the biggest transformations from a Taylorist industrial model of management to a new emerging form.

Bearing in mind the importance of physical action that is stressed by Stanislavski in his consideration of how to elicit authentic emotional performances, we can look to both Pret A Manger and Hawksmoor to see how the use of physical actions and cues can trigger reactions and states of performance, with each of these practices involving certain pressures on employees. One such example of this is the decision at Pret to not label food products with names, meaning that staff must memorise each product by sight alone, and be able to spot what a customer is purchasing from feet away so that they are ready to process it as soon as it reaches the till.[98] Employees reported that it often takes months to learn the entire food offering, and that this is a stressful experience. Similarly, staff are not allowed to write down coffee orders or receive them printed on receipts. Instead, cashiers must shout the customer's coffee order to a barista, who then makes it, before handing it back to the

[97] Dowling, p. 122.
[98] This practise has since changed in the wake of allergy related deaths and incidents at Pret stores. Food sold at Pret now contains labelling with ingredients and product names.

cashier, who hands it to the customer. Both policies are explained to staff as attempts to cultivate a distinct atmosphere in store (called the 'Pret Buzz'): 'If you go into a coffee shop and there's - coffees being shouted, it kind of adds to the atmosphere of the environment of that shop. They call it a Pret buzz, and that's what it creates. So the constant shouting… cos it's not like angry shouting, it's just 'cappuccino, flat white' and it adds to the coffee experience.'[99] This testimony from employees suggests that the primary factor is the creation of a scenic atmosphere, aimed at the customer experience. However, I would argue that policies such as this also serve to create a state of constant alertness in staff, ensuring that they are always 'switched on' and forced to concentrate on the present moment, without recourse to the potentially more relaxed state offered by written cues. This aspect was also emphasised by employees who reported that there was no time to be idle on the job: 'you have to be present in every transaction. If you are a robot, "hello can I help, hello can I help" it's boring.'[100]

The injunction to alertness is also illustrated through the importance of speed, both as a necessary part of the production process and as a managerial tool. At Pret, strict rules around speed of service are implemented, with the aim being for customers to wait in line no longer than two minutes, coffees to be served within one minute of ordering, and tables to be cleared within one minute of customers' departure. Although this could lead to exhaustion, physically and emotionally, many employees react to this pressure with attempts to infuse themselves with energy: 'if it's really, really busy - like how I deal with it is, the more busy it gets the happier I am. So I work with a massive smile on my face all the time, and I use my body in a way that creates energy.'[101] Another spoke of how the tight regimentation of time both made

[99] Interview L9.
[100] Interview L7.
[101] Interview L11.

‘keeping the pace’ a necessity, and spilt over into daily life: ‘it's very tight. I felt it really kind of affected my life, even after my job. You kind of enter - there is no way to escape it. Either you are in that pace or you are out. […] And indeed everyone kind of internalised it.’[102] Returning to Stanislavski’s discussion of speed, above, we can see that at Pret, a combination of tight temporal control and the need for constant alertness during performance is as much a factor in the way emotional labour is managed as the calls for authenticity and recruitment strategies highlighted in the previous chapter are.

At Hawksmoor, the nature of the longer durational performance with customers (over a number of hours) and the more luxurious and specialised nature of the restaurant’s offering requires a different, less rushed tempo of work. One employee describes the difference between her previous hospitality jobs and her role at Hawksmoor:

> But the thing is the turnover time for tables is so fast [at her previous workplace]. And I hated that. That was one of the biggest reasons I left because it became so monotonous. You couldn't connect with people because you were always under pressure, make sure they have the full meal within that time. […] I just hated it because I couldn't connect with people and yet all I’m doing is being monotonous like, hi, repeating myself, what are the specials. Just the same thing, because that’s all I have time for. And then when they do try to talk to me I can’t help but try and connect with them, but then the manager is like you need to – you know. I hate that. I don't get that at Hawksmoor because you have the time and freedom to speak with people which is what I love. And yeah you can take your time really. Unless its Sunday lunch.[103]

However, physical direction of the service encounter is still a crucial factor. The employee manual lays out a sequence of tasks necessary to do the job, and reminds

[102] Interview L6.
[103] Interview L12. Will Beckett, in our interview, also described the Sunday lunch service as ‘absolutely slammed’. Another employee suggested that the popularity of the Sunday roast is that it is the cheapest meal available at Hawskmoor: interview L13.

the reader to: 'Know the steps of service', echoing the 'task based' approach as explored earlier. In fact, the Hawksmoor employee manual also has parallels with the list of Pret behaviours (cited in the previous chapter), in its dramatization of standards for staff. As well as knowing the 'steps of service', Hawksmoor employees must: 'develop your steak chat', 'be able to tell the story of each dish in an interesting way' and 'guide customers in a way that really adds to their experience - your passion for our produce, knowledge of the menu and own personality all play a big role'.[104] As I will now argue, the study of Hawksmoor also illustrates that the construction of character is not solely down to the employee's discretion, but is at least partially dictated by the 'writing' of character traits for the business itself.

Company, culture and character

In May 2019 the Manchester branch of Hawksmoor's Twitter account posted the following:

> To the customer who accidentally got given a bottle of Chateau le Pin Pomerol 2001, which is £4500 on our menu, last night – hope you enjoyed your evening! To the member of staff who accidentally gave it away, chin up! One-off mistakes happen and we love you anyway.[105]

A few hours later, as the Tweet was going viral (to date, it has over sixty four thousand 'likes'), they followed up with a further comment:

> I'm sure you're all getting tired of this now, so one last thing, to the people who put homelessness in Manchester next to '£4500 wine?!' and suggesting we have no values: we've raised well over £1m for @ACF_UK, work with @WoodSt_Mission and @notjustsoupMCR. We

[104] Hawksmoor employee manual.
[105] Hawksmoor Manchester (@HawksmoorMCR, 16 May 2019) <https://twitter.com/hawksmoormcr/status/1128937017587453952>

have values.[106]

This public exchange illustrates a number of facets of Hawksmoor communications and PR strategy, as well as its overall branding. The first, of course, is the apparently easy going approach taken to the accidental serving of the wine, which is chalked up as an unimportant loss, and framed both as an opportunity to 'gift' the customers with a pleasant surprise, and to reinforce principles around Hawksmoor's approach to its staff. The employee, presumably already identified, is not chided or disciplined in this context, but rather told 'chin up!', and reminded of their employers 'love' for them. The suggestion of 'chin up' implies that there is a presumed level of upset or embarrassment felt, regardless of the lack of professional consequences for the mistake. Whilst the tweet articulates employment relations in terms of a discourse of familial bond, the reference to 'one-off mistakes' also suggests that a repeat offender may find this love is not unconditional.

In the follow up tweet, Hawksmoor also reiterates a number of key strategies of the company. The first is the use of the first person 'I'm sure you're all getting tired of this now' which far from an exception, is the register in which most of the company accounts are written. Hawksmoor's primary Twitter account is written almost exclusively in the first person, with various tweets suggesting or stating that founder and co-owner Will Beckett, is writing and running the account. Despite the huge reach of the brand then, a register of personal familiarity and intimacy is cultivated in its public communications, personifying the brand and imbuing it with a sense of a distinguished character. The insistence on the company's values, which are not specifically defined but exhibited through their charitable work, is also of

[106] Hawksmoor Manchester (@HawksmoorMCR, 16 May 2019) <https://twitter.com/HawksmoorMCR/status/1129002244005867521>

note. The value-set that drives brands and companies reliant on the production of emotional and affective experiences is a key part of their strategy. Finally, the use of 'we' serves to collectivise as well as humanise the business, offering a sense of a shared set of values, a shared understanding of the company's character. The now common sight of brands engaging with one another via public social media profiles also suggests a dialogue of characters. This can be both engaged in playful or light-hearted back and forth, or in active conflict with another.[107] Even in these more fraught instances, their use of social media to enact competition further cements this idea of character – complete with audiences being able to choose which they identify with or support more. I will argue that this collectivising of the company character has some of the most significant consequences for how performative labour is managed and disciplined in these workplaces.

Singh and Sonnenburg, in an article for the *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, outline the ways in which storytelling and 'brand performances' can be utilised by businesses in their social media strategies.[108] They argue that it is important for brands to create stories and themes which cultivate two-way conversations between companies and their customer base, allowing consumers to 'fit in their own experiences into the brand story'.[109] Prior to the emergence of social media, they identify branding as primarily controlled by the owners and managers, with little in the way of user-generated content and input. Social media changes this and, they argue, leads to the 'co-creation' of stories and narratives via interactions between

[107] For example, Marks and Spencer and ALDI supermarkets engaged in a Twitter feud over the sale of Caterpillar cakes: 'M&S hits back at Aldi's Cuthbert the Caterpillar cake revival', *BBC News,* 20 April 2021 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-56812445> [accessed 12 September 2021]
[108] Sangeeta Singh and Stephan Sonnenburg, 'Brand performances in social media', *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 26:4 (2012), pp. 189-297.
[109] Singh and Sonnenburg, p. 189.

the company and the public.[110] The authors draw on improv performance as a metaphor to help make their argument about the best way in which brands can utilise social media. Like improv, they argue that social media is a space in which brands and customers interact in an 'impromptu and uncontrolled fashion'.[111] Thus while traditional attempts at brand 'storytelling' could be equated to what the authors term 'traditional' theatre, the social media landscape lends itself to be read through the lens of improv. Outlining their dramatic metaphor they write: 'Scene 1 introduces the star (the brand) and supporting players (brand owner and consumers) in a story about the main character's entry into a whole new world (social media). Scene 2 presents the plot twist that keeps the performance interesting, and Scene 3 resolves the performance to be more suitable to social media.'[112] Under the section 'introducing the main characters and story' the authors identify the brand as the 'star', and the consumer as part of the 'supporting cast'.[113] The authors note that the uncontrollable element of this consumer 'co-creation' is one to be aware of. Consumers do not simply repeat stories as told to them by brand owners, but use the space and storylines offered by the brand to create and initiate their own stories within this frame.

The theatrical language here not only points towards how the cultivation of authenticity of character has become important in relation not only to the employee, but also for the company itself. Whilst Singh and Sonnenburg focus on the role of 'co-creation' played by consumers (and audiences), we can also think about the role that employees play in constructing and delivering the 'character' of the businesses they work for. Whilst employees at Hawksmoor do not receive a

[110] Singh and Sonnenburg, p. 90.
[111] Singh and Sonnenburg, p. 90.
[112] Singh and Sonnenburg, p. 90.
[113] Singh and Sonnenburg, p. 90.

written script with explicit instructions for dialogue with customers, a ‘score’ for performance does exist in the form of sequencing and physical cues. This blueprint for performance is focused on delivering the overall experience, the ‘story’ of the company, with dishes themselves described as having ‘stories’, and the employees expected to embody the character traits of the business, clearly defined for them in the manual or through training. This is mirrored at Pret, where the company itself adopts a similarly compelling ‘story’, in this instance one defined by charitable and environmental concerns. Thus it is not only employees who must cultivate authenticity, but also brands and companies themselves. The character of employees is defined by the overarching dramaturgical model of the firm, which likewise takes on its own ‘character’. Although employees are given guidelines and templates for behaviour, this approach allows plenty of space for improvisation, as the mechanism through which authenticity can be articulated within the framework of a story which has already been ‘written’ by management.

In the case of Pret, though less emphasis is placed on the individual input of employees, their emotional labour is central to developing the character of the brand overall, which acts as a marketing strategy. Cultivating this identification also helps serve as a motivator for the employees, who often mention the sustainability and environmental credentials of their employers as factors in their satisfaction. At Pret, which emphasises a focus on organic food and links to homeless charities, employees repeatedly raised these: ‘I feel it's good at the end of the day they donate the food to the homeless charities, which I really like. And obviously because I do environment science so they're really good with sustainability, from my perspective it makes me want to work for that company’, with others praising their use of sustainable sourced fish, and another highlighting the discrepancy between this image and other

brands selling fast food: 'I think also for the kind of image, brand, that Pret projects of itself - such as like, healthy, organic, clean, tidy, so you don't feel to yourself like oh my god I'm working at McDonalds, my life is so bad.'[114] At Hawksmoor, similar points were raised about their commitment to ethically and responsibly sourced beef, locally sourced food and attention to detail in the food chain. One employee, despite being vegetarian himself, praised them for this approach, and said it contributed to his happiness working there.[115]

The invocation of company values, characteristics and cultural traits thus works to integrate employees, and encourage a sense of commitment both to the brand itself and to the collective identity forged through it. At Hawksmoor, the jobs of those working front of house are tightly choreographed according to a service plan, and directed in relation to the prescription 'work hard, be nice to people'.[116] This slogan features prominently on the first page of its manual, and is repeatedly stressed by management and staff alike. In reviews of the company, current and former employees reiterated 'culture' and 'autonomy' as the most enjoyable and beneficial aspects of working for the company.[117] Many described Hawksmoor as having a 'fantastic' or 'great' culture, one 'instilled by management' and that staff actively subscribed to. This evocation of company culture often went hand in hand with the acceptance of 'working hard', with employees noting 'the culture of working hard and being nice' as being a 'pro' of the job. This emphasis on culture offers benefits to staff, but it also plays a disciplinary and control function. One employee notes that 'If you can't get on board with the culture quickly you won't last long', a perspective confirmed by Beckett himself who says:

---

[114] Interview L6.
[115] Interview L13.
[116] Hawksmoor staff manual.
[117] Hawksmoor *GlassDoor* reviews.

> We've got a director of HR and a learning development person, and this really strong culture where if you worked at Hawksmoor Knightsbridge and you didn't cut it, we wouldn't need to bother firing you, the manager wouldn't need to bother firing you, the staff would start saying she's not doing it right. She's not got what we've got. She doesn't care about the things we care about, and that bothers us.[118]

Here, management and its disciplinary functions are delegated to the collective body of staff, removing the direct intervention of management. By emphasising culture and character as key elements to successfully inhabiting the role, this managerial style ensures that teams will self-select, the implication being that your colleagues will make it clear that your presence is unwanted, and the pressure of the job will become so great that you will leave voluntarily. Such employees do not need to be fired; they are encouraged to understand that they are simply not the 'right fit' for the role. Company culture and character, the cultivation of which is often promoted to employees as a concession to make work more bearable, here also functions to outsource managerial responsibilities onto the teams themselves.

A similar process can be identified at Pret. Writing for the *London Review of Books*, Paul Myerscough has referred to Pret's own management style as a 'panoptical regime of surveillance and assessment', drawing a Foucauldian parallel.[119] Myerscough highlights how staff are not just watched by one another, but by mystery shoppers. The mystery shopper also plays a key role in the management process at Pret, where each store is visited by one of these anonymous customers each week, who assess staff on a number of factors including: cleanliness of the store; speed of service; selection of food on offer and, crucially, service demeanour. Dowling,

---

[118] Interview with Will Beckett, January 24 2019.
[119] Paul Myerscough, 'Short Cuts', *London Review of Books*, 3 January 2013 <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v35/n01/paul-myerscough/short-cuts> [accessed 25 June 2020].

writing on the 'mystery diners' in her own establishment, argues 'in the example of the mystery diner we can see that in order to increase productivity,
workers were measured in relation to an ideal standard of what they should be doing and how they should be behaving.'[120] These mystery shopper visits are directly tied to pay. If the store 'passes' their weekly inspection, each member of staff who works there (regardless of whether they worked the specific shift when the visit occurred) is given a one pound bonus for each hour they worked. Although this money is framed as a 'bonus' by Pret, in effect it is not viewed as such by the employees. Pret stores tend to pass their mystery shopper visits roughly 90% of the time, and the weekly 'bonus' therefore comes to be viewed as part of the pay. When the bonus is lost, therefore, this is experienced as a punitive cutting of the wage. For those working forty to fifty hour shifts a week, the bonus represents a significant amount of money, and tensions inevitably arise: 'So that [the mystery shopper] creates a lot of pressure on you. If you are the one who lost the bonus for the whole team you are going to feel some tension from the team.'[121] Mystery shoppers print the name of the person serving them on the till on their report, meaning if the bad report was attributed to service, management and staff are able to identify who the cause of the loss was. One interviewee described the mystery shopper as 'like secret police', with another expanding on how this led employees to distrust or blame one another: 'you perfectly know at that time, on that day, who was in charge of that thing. So actually, it's so bad. Because it's not, oh we lose points as a shop, but it's like – *you* made us lose two hundred pounds. And every week it's like that. We have a whiteboard and you go there and check.'[122] There are additional individual incentives, if a member of staff is

[120] Dowling, p. 127.
[121] Interview L5.
[122] Interview L5; interview L6.

deemed to have offered exceptional service they will personally receive an additional one hundred pounds, but the main function of the mystery shopper is to keep the store, as a collective, running smoothly. Mystery shoppers are a key technique through which the character of both the company and the employees is measured and enforced.

In considering the ways that companies increasingly attempts to codify character and subject it to forms of management which continue to bear the hallmarks of Taylorism, we can also see how character itself becomes a mechanism for the abstraction of emotional labour. Marx identifies 'concrete' and 'abstract' labour as key to understanding how commodities become comparable and exchangeable, and determining how exchange value is therefore expressed.[123] For the value of two different commodities to be comparable (for example, two theatre tickets is equivalent to one meal at Hawksmoor) they must be understood as expressions of the same unit: 'the magnitudes of different things only become comparable in quantitative terms when they have been reduced to the same unit'.[124] This unit, for Marx, is human labour time. Whilst the actual labour of the people who produce a specific commodity for its given use is understood as concrete labour, contributing to use value, abstract labour is what makes that commodity exchangeable with any another. Therefore, Marx writes:

> It is only the expression of equivalence between different sorts of commodities which brings to view the specific character of value-creating labour, by actually reducing the different kinds of labour embedded in the different kinds of commodity to their common quality of being human labour in general.[125]

[123] Marx, p. 140-143.
[124] Marx, p. 141.
[125] Marx, p. 142.

Barbara Foley argues that the abstraction of labour can be understood as the 'linchpin' of Marx's critique, and that the process through which abstract labour, which allows for the equivalence of commodities and their measurement by money, comes to predominance, in fact clarifies the law of value that he puts forward.[126] Marx, Foley writes, therefore offers us an 'unrelenting' critique of 'a social system in which value is measured by quantified labor, and labor has to be quantified in order to have value'.[127]

As we have seen throughout this research, studies of emotional labour often draw attention to its reliance on subjective elements and input from workers, which depends upon their unique personality and traits in service of their jobs. This can at first make emotional labour appear resistant to the process of abstraction which Marx identifies as an integral feature of capitalism, with such labour harder to quantify or reduce to a universal equivalence, due to its subjective qualities, and therefore make comparable. As this chapter has argued, closer attention to the ways in which such labour is managed and measured shows a different dynamic. In fact, via the logic of character, and its management through the use of specific techniques such as mystery shoppers, we can see how emotional labour does in fact become quantifiable, and therefore abstract and exchangeable. This argument builds upon Emma Dowling's response, as discussed in chapter one of this thesis, to Hardt and Negri's refutation of socially necessary labour time, which rests on her insistence that affective labour remains measurable.[128] Reflecting on the use of mystery shoppers in the restaurant in which she worked, Dowling writes that such a practise served to create use-value from the affective labour of staff, and that as an output,

[126] Barbara Foley, *Marxist Literary Criticism Today* (London: Pluto, 2019), p. 38.
[127] Foley, p. 38.
[128] Dowling, p. 118.

this was 'subjected to the calculating eye of capital and its measure, interested in the exchange value that can potentially be generated for the company and the correspondent profit rate.'[129] I will now turn to a consideration of how the management of character is executed in ways which have implications for the question of control over labour and the labour process. `

Self-managing the ensemble

Stanislavski, writing on discipline, reminds his students that: 'You are all going to be producing together, you will all be helping one another, all be dependent on one another. You will all be directed by one person, your regisseur.'[130] Whilst the first part of this statement chimes with the expectations of today's service workers, it is no longer true that one person will direct them. The mystery shopper, whilst acting like the anonymous critic lurking amongst the auditorium, effectively serves to ensure that staff manage and monitor each other's performances, dispensing with some of the need for direct intervention from those in higher positions. When the weekly wage is on the line, it is expected that staff will chide or pull up their colleagues who are deemed to not be performing to standard. The team takes on a sense of collective responsibility for one another's performances, as they are essentially paid as a group, but rather than this collectivity functioning to build bonds of solidarity between workers, it actually frames them as the watchful managers of one another: 'if I'm serving the mystery shopper and it's my name on the report for the whole shop, that kind of pushes you to be like, the whole shop is relying on me. And if I know a staff

[129] Dowling. p. 127.
[130] Stanislavski, *Building a Character*, p. 220.

member that's doing sixty hours that week and it's because of me that we don't get a bonus...'.[131] One team leader, when considering whether employees should 'act' if their authentic happiness is not within reach on a particular day, framed the necessity of this acting as a collective duty: 'never fake it but if you are going to struggle, and you have to, for the sake of the team you have to put that on, please do so. Because think of, not necessarily the money, but the whole team's performance.'[132] This example correlates to the approach at Hawksmoor where, although the mystery shopper is not a function, an environment is cultivated where staff themselves will monitor and discipline their colleagues if performance, or integration within the company culture, is seen to be lacking.

This utilisation of 'participation' and 'culture' is a facet of management that Braverman also addresses, writing on the 'pretence of worker "participation,"' which is offered through minor freedoms such as the ability to 'adjust a machine, replace a light bulb, move from one fractional job to another, and to have the illusion of making decisions by choosing among fixed and limited alternatives designed by a management which deliberately leaves insignificant matters open to choice.'[133] He compares this to the marketing of cake mixes, aimed at housewives who are assumed either to resent using pre-prepared mixes or feel guilty about buying them. Companies, therefore, would 'arrange for the removal of the powdered egg and restore to the consumer the thrill of breaking a fresh egg into the mix, thereby creating an "image" of skilled baking, wholesome products, etc.'[134] At both Pret and Hawksmoor, employees are given the 'freedom' to offer free items to customers of their choosing, or given the responsibility for addressing complaints in the manner

[131] Interview L9.
[132] Interview L10.
[133] Braverman, p. xxi.
[134] Braverman, p. 27.

they best see fit, with the effect that some semblance of control has been handed to the worker. Employees at Hawksmoor mentioned 'autonomy' repeatedly as one of the major positives of their working experiences ('no micro-management, and you are given the autonomy to play to your strengths and develop things that could be better') which was often mentioned alongside being treated as 'adults' ('[Hawksmoor] encourages an adult environment and gives employees the autonomy', 'adult to adult management').[135]

In both examples, the employees are seen to function as an ensemble, working collectively rather than as individual actors minding their own contributions to the scene of service. Elyssa Livergant has argued that theatrical workshops, characterised by this type of dispersed collective ownership over the creative process, are 'instances of self and collective governance that produce and reproduce theatre and performance workers, and do so by engaging with ideas of "industry" and "community"'.[136] Whilst cautioning against any direct causality, Livergant also draws attention to the historical convergence between Richard Schechner's 1970's writings on theatrical workshops, in which he positions them as spaces dedicated to 'experimentation and reflection' which sit outside of the 'competitive order' of everyday society, with the restructuring of labour into a neoliberal, post-Fordist model.[137] For Livergant, the two are connected as the model of the theatrical workshop also serves as a template for the conditions of labour within this new economy: precarious, project based, but passionately committed to work through the belief in its possibilities for dis-alienation, and through a discourse of love. This return to the form of the workshop thus coincides with the integration of elements of the worker's character, and the

[135] Hawksmoor *GlassDoor* reviews.
[136] Elyssa Livergant, 'Workshops: The Cultural Politics of Theatre and Performance Labour' (unpublished doctorial thesis, University of London, Queen Mary and Birkbeck, 2014), p. 12.
[137] Livergant, p. 11.

associated demand for investment in, and satisfaction with, one's job, that bridge both these forms of artistic production with the new models of neo-management emerging from the late 1960s onwards.

I would argue, however, that some of these characteristics can already be found within the Stanislavskian model where, as discussed in chapter two, the importance of the collective is stressed as an alternative to some prior models of nineteenth century theatrical production where rehearsals rarely took place, and actors were often unaware and uninterested in the roles of the rest of the cast. As I have noted above, Stanislavski placed emphasis on responsibility and collective discipline in his actors, writing of the need for 'ethics, discipline and also the sense of joint enterprise in our theatre work'.[138] He goes on to stress this through an insistence that all workers in the theatre are dependent on one another, and that obstructing the collective work of rehearsal is to undermine the 'general purpose' of the group, also adding that 'anyone who upsets these conditions is being disloyal to his art and to the society of which he is a part'.[139] This moralising tendency, which Livergant argues became normalised within theatre, is increasingly articulated by those working in the service sector too. This encouragement of collective discipline, however, and the language of the ensemble or collective, also function to individualise and internalise the processes of management. Chow argues that 'psychologically-based actor training stems from an ideology of individual self-management – mental, physical, and emotional – that accompanies the emergent practice of management in the twentieth century', continuing that the resemblance between actor training and management theory results in an ideological imperative to 'act the part': 'this imperative demands

[138] Stanislavski, *Building a Character,* p. 213.
[139] Stanislavski, *Building a Character,* p. 228.

that one identifies with one's job on a personal, emotional, and even spiritual level.'[140] We have seen this imperative reiterated in the management literature at Pret, Hawksmoor and other examples where identification with the company is considered part of the job itself, a necessary step in the process of providing authentic performance.

These techniques are in fact visible at both Pret and Hawksmoor, with mystery shoppers, the formalisation of character requirements through training documents and literature, and so on being used to set requirements for employees. However, both workplaces also use forms of management which rely more on the employee internalising a managerial perspective, ensuring that they monitor not only their own performances, but those of their colleagues. When asked whether they ever felt their colleagues were regulating each other, one interviewee responded:

> Yeah. I feel like even just when people look at you, or you know, sometimes there is not even the need to say to people be straight, but just how people kind of look at you, just so much pressure. If you have three people, they don't want to smile but they're smiling. They don't want to be straight but obviously they have something to say to the fourth person like, what the fuck, we are all in this together. You have to do it. So there is a lot of pressure between people to people.[141]

The constant watchful eye of management which, unlike in the call centre, is difficult to maintain on the 'stage' of a restaurant or shop floor, becomes unnecessary. In the panoptical manner that Myerscough proposes, management becomes self-management, the impulse to self-direct triggered by various cues. Direct intervention and control is substituted by both incentives (such as bonus pay) and on subjective inclination to work according to company standards and expectations of character.

---

[140] Chow, p. 132.
[141] Interview L6.

Chow notes this process in the field of acting, writing that 'the single manager is no longer solely responsible for ensuring performance. Rather, each employee assumes a management function; they must all *perform*'.[142] And he argues that the actor, whilst proletarianized by the processes discussed in chapter two, is also a self-manager.[143] This is not simply due to their input into the creative process itself (as the worker who has to execute the design for the character) but as a freelancer who must market themselves and do the additional (often unpaid) work of crafting a brand, attending auditions, and so on. This 'self-manager' trope is represented in contemporary management where employees are increasingly asked to take responsibility for the direction of their own performances via the semblance and practice of greater input into the process. As argued above, however, this is not the liberatory or progressive development it may at first seem to be. This neo-management marks the encroachment of work into the worker's own sense of self and emotional life. As Paul Brook argues, emotional labour represents 'a more profound' form of alienation than even Marx imagined.[144]

As I have argued in this chapter, character becomes the organising logic for companies operating in the newly emergent experiential and emotionally driven service sector. But this focus on character within the workplace has resultant effects on the constitution of 'character' more broadly elsewhere in social life. The instrumentalization of authenticity in the workplace, as explored in this chapter and chapter three, thus has important ramifications for the process of subjectification more broadly. Fleming argues that processes of subjectification may previously have taken place primarily in sites such as the family, the neighbourhood or the church, where

[142] Chow, p. 140.
[143] Chow, p. 140.
[144] Brook, p. 16.

the idea of 'true' selfhood was developed and practised. Today, as capitalism insists of more and more of the employee's identity being subsumed into their labour, these processes now increasingly takes place within the formal sphere of work itself.[145] Some accounts of the changing nature of work suggest that the increasing spread of short-term project-based work - characteristic of the actor's labour conditions - have led to a disassociation with the workplace or a lack of class identity, such as was cultivated by and associated with heavy industry and communities of place in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[146] Fleming's argument suggests the opposite: that the increasing demand to bring the self to work results in work once again becoming the site of identity formation, but now in a different mode. The modern self, for Giddens, is defined by the continuous repetition of an (auto)biographical narrative built upon a sense of 'inner authenticity'.[147] The expression of this authenticity is increasingly bound up with the demands for certain forms of characterisation in the workplace.

As a result, we see a tension between businesses increasingly reliant on the personal authenticity as a resource in the workplace, whilst explicitly positioning such authenticity as existing outside of the workplace, in the practices of lifestyle, consumer habits, sexuality, fashion choices, ethnicity and culture. For Fleming, this means that 'non-work' becomes, in what he identifies as the 'managerial gaze', a 'romanticised "kingdom of individuals"', in keeping with the 'hyper-individualised' notions of authenticity being promoted.[148] Fleming concludes that 'capital is parasitically turning to non-work – that which is formally outside the zone of

---

[145] Fleming, p. 153.
[146] Guy Standing, for example, suggests that the new 'precariat' lack work-based identity and fall outside of any 'solidaristic labour community'. Guy Standing, *The Precariat*: *The New Dangerous Class* (London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2011), p. 12.
[147] Anthony Giddens, *Modern and Self Identity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p. 215.
[148] Fleming, p. 23, p. 58.

production – in order to enhance the accumulation process'.[149] Paradoxically, the parasitical nature of this demand means that the same processes of capital accumulation and value production which rely on these markers of non-work based identity to provide the stamp of authenticity are the same processes that deny or flatten the potential for these identities to be developed outside of the workplace. Whilst capital requires the cultivation of non-work identities for surplus extraction in the workplace, it simultaneously links that same personhood ever more closely to the workplace, and to the accumulation process – a tension that offers the potential for the deepening of these contradictions.

Conclusion

I have argued in this thesis that Stanislavski's system introduced new means of organising and producing character, and that one of his major contributions was the prioritisation of character, above plot, as the organising logic of drama. In this chapter, I have argued that although Stanislavski adopts a language of humanism throughout his own writing, the importance of repetition, discipline and a mechanistic approach to performance were key cornerstones of his practical training and the development of character. Pitches, through his consideration of the system in relation to scientific management, demonstrates how the organic language, used by Stanislavski to describe the actors holistic approach to performance, works in tandem with a more mechanistic methodology. The use of this language can also be seen in the language of businesses, as cited throughout this chapter, where similar choices are made. In not attending to the historical specificities and material conditions of

[149] Fleming, p. 47.

Stanislavskian based acting, critical theorists and scholars often miss links which would further an institutional and organisational understanding of how these approaches are reiterated within commercial workplaces. When looking at the direction and management of emotional labour, we can see that the 'deep' penetration into the personhood of the employee is more a characteristic of managerial approaches than it is of simply individualised coping strategies. It would perhaps be more appropriate to speak of 'deep management' in relation to emotional labour than 'deep acting'.

Accordingly, this chapter has argued that older and established models of management are still in operation in many workplaces which employ emotional labour, but are now mediated via the neo-management insistence on character and personality. It is here that we see a marked shift from the processes of control perfected by Taylorism, which Braverman describes as a system which was 'simply a means for management to achieve control of the actual mode of performance of every labor activity, from the simplest to the most complicated.'[150] By laying waste to a craft-based system in various domains of work, Taylorism ensured both knowledge and control were centralised. This was key because Taylor had concluded that the full potential of workers' labour power would never be realised whilst they still maintained control over the labour process itself. To change this, Braverman writes, 'control over the labor process must pass into the hands of management, not only in a formal sense but by the control and dictation of each step of the process, including its mode of performance.'[151] If what we are seeing in contemporary management is not

[150] Braverman, p. 62.
[151] Braverman, p. 69.

in fact a fundamental shift in the production process, is it still a shift in this mode of performance, specifically its control.

This chapter has also offered an account of how theatrical language and methods found their way into business literature in the latter half of the twentieth-century. I have argued that this was driven by the imperative to offer identification and fulfilment at work, in response to an increasingly high level of dissatisfaction coming from workers as the Fordist paradigm came to an end. Theatre and dramaturgical strategies thus offered ways of presenting 'authenticity' as a component of modern working life. Alongside this, however, I have argued that the integration of personal and subjective elements into the labour process necessitated new methods of control, management and measurement. I have detailed some of the ways in which management has attempted to address this by finding means through which to quantify performances at work, including via methods such as the mystery shopper. Crucially, I argue that a recentring around notions of 'character' has provided a way of organising these new components of work, and aided the process of abstraction in relation to emotional labour.

Whilst the emphasis on character applies to employees and their commitment to organisational performances, it has also come to be applied to corporations, businesses and brands themselves. In this chapter I have detailed some of the ways in which companies have been presented as exhibiting specific character traits themselves, and how consumers are also co-opted into the production of this via attempts at engagement on social media platforms. In the next chapter I will explore the implications of this further by turning my attention to the role of customers and audiences in consumer interactions, and the consequences on the development of their own character and subjectivity.

Chapter five: Playing the role of experiential audience

Introduction

Having used the previous chapter to examine the ways in which theatricalization, the language of performance and the logic of character have become increasing influential in the managerial direction of leisure and hospitality workplaces, I will now consider the circular nature of these developments and ways in which the increase of experience-led service and leisure provisions have in turn come to exert influence on forms of theatrical production themselves – focusing on immersive theatre. Whilst the theatricalization of the service space, and the demands it places on employees, have been widely explored in scholarship on emotional labour, the consequences for audiences and consumers are relatively neglected within the literature. In attempting to address these consequences, therefore, I have turned to an area of research in which the construction of the audience's relationship with such 'experience' led commodities has been explored in more detail, alongside the theatrical and performative constitution of such spaces – scholarship on immersive theatre. Specifically, I will look at the emergence and popularity of immersive theatre and in particular, forms of which combine dedicated performance provision with the consumption of food and drink. Immersive theatre proves to be a useful site for the exploration of the themes of this research due to the ways in which it refracts the questions of theatricalization of performance within the workplace back into a more normative theatrical space. I will argue that whilst the economic significance of immersive theatre has been overstated in some scholarship, it can still offer critical insight into processes of neoliberal subjectification and social discipline.

In his discussion on the rise of bourgeois aesthetics and ideology in the

eighteenth century, and the subsequent 'aestheticization of daily life', Joseph Roach argues that modern actor training and staging is part of the project of 'the internalization of social discipline', with theatre tied to attempts to make the historically produced appear as 'natural, universal, and timeless.'[1] This echoes with the discussion in chapter two of this thesis, where I argued that the rise of Stanislavskian realism in the twentieth-century materialised notions of emotional interiority and authenticity which reverberated beyond the stage, and helped to cement standards of social and everyday performance. Whilst newer immersive, participatory theatrical practices might at first seem far removed from the trajectory of psychological realism which I have discussed in this thesis, these practices actually show significant similarities with the theatricalised service spaces I have identified earlier, and which I have argued carry with them the influence of Stanislavskian psychological realism. We can therefore take a similar approach to thinking about the ideological underpinnings and consequences of these more contemporary trends in both performance and business. What forms of social discipline might be bound up in these practices? What types of historically contingent behaviours and idea's might be naturalised by their increasing prominence?

With this in mind, I use immersive theatre to assist in my discussion of how audience behaviour is being shaped and disciplined within an 'experience economy', in line with the discourse of authenticity which is prominent in the workplace and wider society today.[2] In exploring this, we can identify a trajectory from nineteenth century conceptions of character rooted in the promotion of the individual, but a specifically classed and gendered one, to a period in which the cultivation of a

[1] Roach, p. 159.
[2] Joseph B. Pine II and James H. Gilmore, *The Experience Economy* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press: 2011).

particular personality and subject position is increasingly a necessary element of selling one's labour power. In the contemporary context, the performance of individuality itself must be reproduced as a necessary trait, even for low-paid workers, rather than remaining the domain of the bourgeoisie or those occupying certain cultural status. Building on Adam Alston's idea of 'neoliberal values' in these spaces, and their broader social consequences, I argue that these processes are both indicative of, and contributing to, the wider fetishization of self, and the central positioning of 'authenticity' which is characteristic of the current stage of capitalism. Specifically, I will show how the construction and direction of the role of the audience, both in immersive theatre and in the service environments discussed throughout this thesis, contribute to a broader social disciplining of behaviour, concurrent with the notions of authenticity that have been explored throughout this thesis. In doing so, I will also look at the relationship between Stanislavskian realism and these newer forms, and discuss how his methods can, and have been, repurposed for immersive performance.

In previous chapters, my analysis has focused on the experiences of workers in service based jobs, considering questions of labour process, selfhood and character in relation to those who perform emotional labour. I have also recounted my experiences as a customer, at both Pret A Manger and Hawksmoor, explaining how the design and performance of these encounters has led me to question (and at times alter) my own behaviour as a participant. I will now turn my focus more concretely to the position of the customer and audience, taking this positionality as the primary focus of this final chapter. This pivot will allow me to survey and address the broader implications for processes of subjectification which can be seen occurring beyond the specific scope of the wage relation. If we recall Paul Brook's

critique of Hochschild's analysis as discussed in chapter three, we find that he argues that the emotional labour thesis as it currently stands is an incomplete one, failing to account for how the rise of emotional labour influences social life well beyond the workplace, in our personal lives and the ways in which our broader social relationships are structured.[3] In doing so, he mobilises Marx's theory of alienation, arguing that Hochschild's account can be strengthened by considering the elements of alienation which impact our social relations even when 'off the clock'.[4] In attending to the specifics of the consumer, audience and customer then, I seek to address this gap by offering an analysis of how processes of subjectification and the framing of character extend not just to workers, but to those who are participants as consumers.

The experience economy

If we consider the case studies addressed in this thesis in conjunction with other 'experiential' offerings, in the form of immersive theatre and dining, we begin to develop a broader perspective on how these environments are interconnected via their role in what Steven Miles has termed 'the experience society'. Miles defines this as a society in which experience becomes a new 'ideological terrain' leading to both an intensification of selfhood and an acceleration in forms of experiential consumption.[5]

---

[3] Paul Brook, 'The Alienated Heart: Hochschild's "emotional Labour" Thesis and the Anticapitalist Politics of Alienation', *Capital & Class*, 33:7, (2009), pp. 7-31.
[4] Paul Brook, p. 27.
[5] Steven Miles, *The Experience Society: How Consumer Capitalism Reinvented Itself* (Pluto: London, 2020), p. 1.

For Miles, the ideological power of consumption has become an increasingly integral part of society, but also a way in which identity is understood and structured. Citizenship, in this understanding, is defined by consumption, with leisure and tourism in particular operating as sites in which we engage in 'self-work' and the 'proactive propagation of self'.[6] This chimes with the work of other scholars who have looked at the way consumer choices and notions of citizenship have become entwined under late capitalism, via concepts like 'affective citizenship' and 'affective governance'.[7] For Jayne Raisborough, who utilises a Foucauldian framework in her analysis of 'lifestyle media' and the formation of self, neoliberalism remains an uneven process 'marked by inconsistencies and conflicts', but its overall result is nonetheless the creation of an ideal citizen who demonstrates both 'flexibility and enterprise' in their ability to navigate the challenges of a market economy.[8] Raisborough and others incorporate the state within their analysis of neoliberal subjectivity, referring to the work of scholars including Marquand who have studied the way public services in Britain became increasingly consumer focused, particularly since the New Labour government of the 1990s.[9] The state, and its provision of services thus contributes to the creation of citizen consumers, and normalises the language of consumerism within political and governmental rhetoric.

Raisborough argues that our conceptions of selfhood are imagined in relation to three processes of social change in late modernity: detraditionalization, deindustrialisation and globalization.[10] She argues that these processes have together

---

[6] Miles, p. 39.
[7] Otto Penz and others, 'Post-Bureaucratic Encounters: Affective Labour in Public Employment Services', *Critical Social Policy*, 37.4 (2017), pp. 540-561, (p. 541).
[8] Jayne Raisborough, *Lifestyle Media and the Formation of the Self* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 12.
[9] Raisborough, p. 13.
[10] Raisborough, p. 27.

‘corroded the cardinal points of self meaning and identity’ so that the result is an image of selfhood characterised by ‘fragmentation and instability’.[11] The various and uneven results of these processes mean that the self has moved away from a trajectory defined by ‘pre-given’ identities, and towards one of ‘self-authorship’.[12] In contemporary public life then, our notions of good citizenship become tied to the ideas of ‘self-determination, discipline and labour’ which contribute towards ‘an endless project of “becoming better”‘.[13] The work of these scholars, and their analysis of the relationship between state, subjects and selfhood provide important grounding for this chapter, in which I will consider the way in which questions of consumerism, citizenship and behaviour come to bear on theatrical and service based performances. In thinking through the same dynamics at play in these scenarios, I argue that in a similar vein to the ‘citizen’ to ‘customer’ formulation, the dynamics of subjectification which are increasingly prevalent in the experience-led economy construct the ‘customer-citizen’, whose patronage as a consumer is now subject to behavioural and ethical considerations more in line with notions of both civic responsibility and the reproduction of social values. I will now turn to my analysis of immersive theatre in order to develop this argument in full.

Immersive theatre and ‘Neoliberal value’

Adam Alston defines immersive theatre as a ‘participatory theatre style broadly premised on the production of experience’.[14] Whilst acknowledging the ‘flexible’

[11] Raisborough, p. 28.
[12] Raisborough, p. 20–21.
[13] Raisborough, p. 52.
[14] Adam Alston, ‘Audience Participation and Neoliberal Value: Risk, Agency and Responsibility in Immersive Theatre’, *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 18.2 (2013), pp. 128–38, (p. 131).

nature of such a label, Alston identifies various aspects which make up immersive theatre, such as its attempts to situate audiences 'within an aesthetic space in which they are frequently, but not always, free to move and/or participate'.[15] The emergence of immersive theatre can be traced back to the 1960s 'happenings', in which the construction of more participatory performance environments was designed to foster collectivity and democracy within a performance scene that was rebelling against the theatrical establishment as it was then represented. Gareth White notes that many of the pioneers of participatory performance - he names both Richard Schechner and Augusto Boal within this field - made claims about the political potential of these forms, based on the challenge they offered to the then dominant set up between audiences and performers.[16] Greater active participation from audiences, it was suggested, would lead to them to access some form of 'freedom' via the performance event. Such attitudes of optimism in relation to immersive performance persisted for some time. In 1997, for example, Kurt Lancaster wrote that these alternative forms allowed audiences to inject their own values and beliefs into performance, as well as allowing them to shed their usual 'restrictive social roles'.[17]

In the past two decades, however, with a new wave of immersive theatre gaining increasing popularity, scholars have taken a more critical approach, identifying a level of implicit coercion present within immersive theatre, one which often corresponds with neoliberal ideology. For White, the contemporary rise of immersive practices within theatre signals a return of methods which were

---

[15] Alston, 'Audience Participation and Neoliberal Value', p. 128.
[16] Gareth White, 'On Immersive Theatre', *Theatre Research International*, 37.3 (2012), pp. 221–35, (p. 222).
[17] Kurt Lancaster, 'When Spectators Become Performers: Contemporary Performance-Entertainments Meet the Needs of an "Unsettled" Audience', *Journal of Popular Culture*, 30.4 (1997), pp. 75–88, (p. 77).

popularised in the 1960s, but now without the political allegiances they may have once held.[18] For Alston, neoliberal 'values' such as entrepreneurship, individualism, and risk are deeply interwoven within these newer artistic practices.[19] Such ideals have impacted not only the material conditions in which immersive theatre is produced, via their funding models, but are also reflected in their very aesthetic framework – one which, by virtue of its participatory nature, has implications not only for theatrical workers, but also for audiences. Here it is useful to note the convergence of this reaction against established theatrical forms, with Boltanski and Chiapello's account, discussed in the previous chapter, of how a reaction against management and working norms in the same historical period led to the incorporation of employee concerns into the workplace, in a similar attempt to stymie revolt.[20] We can then argue that the spirit of the late 1960s, which sought after greater authenticity, input and autonomy, found articulation in both the business and artistic spheres.

Accordingly, the audience's role within the immersive environment is something theatre and performance scholars have frequently attended to, with debates emerging about the precise nature of the audience's involvement and its broader implications. One of the most significant themes in this literature is the economic role of audiences, and the contribution that their participation makes to the creation and reproduction of both value and values, more broadly. I will argue that some of these attempts to theorise the audience's role in the context of an economic understanding of immersive events have mischaracterised the relationship between value, workers (in this case, performers) and spectators, whilst those same

---

[18] White, p. 222.
[19] Adam Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre: Aesthetics, Politics and Productive Participation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 112.
[20] Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Verso, 2018)

arguments simultaneously highlight the valuable contribution such literature can make to our understanding of how processes of subjectification are enacted through immersive work. In order to address this I draw from theatre and performance scholars heavily because of the relatively scant attention which has been paid to the audience within the sociological and critical literature on emotional labour. As such, my discussion also highlights this topic as a further area of study in which theatre and performance can contribute to a more advanced understanding of emotional labour, with the caveat that such research must attend to economic categories carefully. If successfully applied, the insights offered through a consideration of the audience (or customer's) behaviour can begin to address some of the gaps in Hochschild's own theory as highlighted above.

In his survey of immersive theatre practices, Alston outlines some of the private and corporate projects initiated by the company Punchdrunk, founded by Felix Barrett and others in 2000.[21] Punchdrunk, which has played a pivotal role in the increasing popularity and spread of immersive theatre, have produced corporate work for companies including Louis Vuitton, Stella Artois and Nike.[22] These performances immerse audiences into what Alston terms 'brandscapes', where the theatrical or performance provision is designed to highlight the products of the company who have hired Punchdrunk's services. Alston charts the role these projects play in the broader economy of immersive theatre, and how companies such as Punchdrunk have come to see them as a necessary endeavour as part of a 'mixed economic funding' model, which combines money from public, foundation, philanthropic and corporate funds.[23] This kind of model became increasingly prevalent post 2010, when the then coalition

[21]Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre*, p. 120.
[22] Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre*, p. 126.
[23] Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre*, p. 128.

government in Britain announced large cuts to public arts spending under its austerity agenda. Arts Council England, in response, increasingly encouraged the integration of public and private funding, which in turn fed a discourse of artists as necessarily 'enterprising' and 'artrepreneurial'.[24] For Punchdrunk, an adherence to this model has also meant a number of corporate partnerships, as mentioned above, which have had an impact on both the politics and aesthetics of immersive theatre, and on the relationship and engagement with audiences. This strategy offers the potential of turning audiences into what Alston, following Max Lenderman, calls 'brand evangelists', spreading the word and effectively providing advertising for the companies who have employed the services of immersive theatre.[25] Maurya Wickstrom, in a similar vein, argues that corporations increasingly 'produce subjectivity as aspects of their brands through mimetic and identificatory processes akin to those of performance, somatic and embodied.'[26] Paralleling my own argument in chapter four of this thesis, Wickstrom notes that the 'character' of brands themselves is scripted for consumers through the commodity form.[27]

Alston argues that, in the context of brandscapes, audiences figure 'as subjects who facilitate the productivity of marketing campaigns.'[28] These campaigns co-opt 'the immaterially productive capabilities' of audiences, whose affective experience ends up resourced as a 'productive source of capital'.[29] Alston uses 'value' throughout his work on immersive theatre, with a number of different meanings. Often it appears to refer to aspects of neoliberal ideology adopted or taken up by the practices of

---

[24] Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre*, p. 120.
[25] Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre*, p. 127.
[26] Maurya Wickstrom, *Performing Consumers: Global capital and its theatrical seductions*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 2.
[27] Wickstrom, p. 6.
[28] Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre*, p. 127.
[29] Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre*, p. 128.

immersive theatre.[30] Under neoliberalism, Alston argues, the entrepreneur represents the 'ideal citizen-participant', and audiences, in turn, are now configured as entrepreneurial, risk-taking subjects in this manner.[31] However, this reference to value in terms of ideology throughout his work on immersive theatre becomes complicated by the argument about the productive nature of spectatorial participation in the 'brandscapes' described above. The argument that such audience's experiences are actually value-producing (a 'productive source of capital') remains unconvincing. It is unclear exactly what Alston means by differentiating the 'immaterially' productive capabilities of the audience from, presumably, material ones or indeed what these productive capabilities are. He does not explain exactly how the participation of audience members in these performances becomes equated with the creation of new value for clients. Whilst he insists on the way such brandscapes end with audience experiences used in the hands of capital, his symbolic use of value to refer to certain characteristics of neoliberal ideology throughout makes it harder to decipher how actual economic value is operating in such exchanges.

Elsewhere, Alston describes the same audiences as 'productive participants' in the sense that they provide economic value through their participation in the theatre event.[32] He argues that one key element of the 'experience economy' is the '"activation" of consumers as producing consumers', resulting in an affective engagement which serves as a source of profit, or contributes directly to the production of the product itself, via their participation.[33] Once again, the precise ways in which both 'value' and 'production' are deployed in this formulation remains unclear. As well as conflating the role of advertising in circulation with the creation

[30] Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre*, p. 129
[31] Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre*, p. 130.
[32] Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre*, p. 128.
[33] Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre*, p. 146.

of new value, such emphasis on the productive potential of content which emerges from a 'co-production' with audiences downplays the fact that it is precisely the *actors'* labour, as well as the other backstage and front of house workers, which continues to be a productive source for the employer. As Emma Dowling has shown in her study of affective labour within hospitality, it is the creation of 'experience' through the performative labour of staff (an experience which is purchased by the audience) which is a source of value for employers.[34] Losing this distinction is unhelpful, both in terms of identifying the labour process for those who are actually being exploited in this work, and in identifying any potential sites of tension which may open the possibility for change or resistance to these practices. Though neoliberalism as a system and ideology conjures the 'haziness' between production and consumption that Alston identifies, our critical work must in fact aim to undo rather than replicate this haziness.[35]

Alston's allusions here to the customers' ability to add value, within what is essentially an advertising exercise using the frame of immersive theatre, echoes a series of prior and ongoing debates about the role of consumers and customers, and their supposed productive capability, both in theatre and performance but also more broadly in contemporary capitalism. Miranda Joseph has notably argued for the expansion of Marxist categories of production to account for the myriad ways in which consumption is itself productive of capitalism and its social relations.[36] As a result, the idea of production becomes stretched to include not only reproductive work, but also private social activity, and things 'beyond the commodity' which

[34] Emma Dowling, 'Producing the Dining Experience: Measure, Subjectivity and the Affective Worker', *Ephemera*, 7.1 (2007), pp. 117–32.
[35] Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre,* p. 16.
[36] Miranda Joseph, 'The Performance of Production and Consumption', *Social Text*, 54.Spring (1998), pp. 25–61.

Joseph argues has become less and less material.[37] This social production, of activities, relationships, identities etc, then feeds back into surplus value production, which she argues is dependent on this more inclusive idea of production as 'all human praxis'.[38]

This element of Joseph's analysis chimes with social reproduction theory (SRT), which considers how human labour in its totality contributes to the reproduction of capitalism, both in and outside of formal work. Social reproduction theory builds upon Marx to account for the ways in which reproductive labour, via sites including the family, household, school and hospital, contribute to capital accumulation despite not falling within the boundaries of productive waged labour.[39] If human labour power itself, as Marx posits, is a 'unique' commodity, then SRT seeks to think through the ways in which this commodity itself is produced and sustained.[40] This also allows it to pay particular attention to gendered and racial dynamics of capitalism, as the burden of reproductive labour has often fallen on the most oppressed groups, via both the family formation, and the increased reliance on domestic and caring labour often performed by women and racialised minorities. The insights of SRT are important, particularly in offering a bridge between analysis of the workplace and its relationship with capitalist social relations as a totality. If we return to discussion in the introduction to this thesis about the uses and extensions of 'emotional labour' outside of employment relations, we can see how social reproduction might offer a useful lens to connect a focus on emotional labour's role in the workplace with concerns about how

[37] Joseph, p. 26.
[38] Joseph, p. 30.
[39] Tithi Bhattacharya 'Introduction: Mapping Social Reproduction' in *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentring Oppression* ed. Tithi Bhattacharya (London: Pluto, 2017)
[40] Bhattacharya, p. 3.

emotional management in our private lives might also be contributing to, and indicative of, emotional alienation more broadly. Indeed, this research has argued throughout for the significance of emotional representation and reproduction via cultural forms, and their relationship with the commodification of emotions that we see in the business practices explored. It has also argued that Hochschild's thesis is limited by confinement to the workplace – a weakness which SRT is able to address.

However, returning to Joseph's work, she goes further than identifying how private social activity contributes to the reproduction of capitalism. Joseph also argues for the necessity (and therefore productivity) of the labour of *consumption*, performed across society. Whilst Joseph acknowledges wage labour as a differentiated process from such consumptive labour (organised, procured and exploited differently), she still insists that such labour is productive, whereas many social reproduction theorists continue to maintain the distinction.[41] Martin Young has critiqued Joseph's application of Marx's ideas, arguing that her expansion of the organisation of production means the concept becomes synonymous with the organisation of society in general.[42] As a result, 'it undermines the logical basis for the theory of value to which it appeals'.[43] In making this critical move, Young argues that Joseph dismisses the significance of 'the workplace as a site of discipline', whilst moving critical focus to the consumption of goods within the global North, thus obscuring the actual production of commodities by wage labourers who are primarily in the global south (this is apparent when Joseph refers to the increasingly immateriality of the commodity, which is the case only if we are considering

[41] Joseph, p. 35.
[42] Martin Young, 'Theatre in the Time of Capital' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, Queen Mary, 2019), p. 38–39.
[43] Young, p. 39.

commodities produced in the north).[44] Joseph, like Hardt and Negri, offers an analysis in which, Young argues, 'value is measureless and, therefore, no longer a meaningful economic category.'[45] Young links this discussion to debates within theatre and performance studies regarding the role of the audience, citing Kershaw's work on audiences as 'co-creators' as one example of an approach which applies Joseph's argument that the 'work' of consumption on the part of the audience is in fact a form of productive labour.[46] This line of thought can also be seen in Alston's work, as cited above. Indeed, Joseph uses value in the Marxist economic sense interchangeably with a moral meaning, much like Alston, referring to the feminist writers who have recognised 'the many other kinds of value' that travel with commodities and within society.[47] Here Marx's use of value to refer to a specific part of the capitalist process is conflated for a moral judgement on the social 'value' or worth of people's activity. For Young, such an analysis runs the risk of displacing an analysis of those theatrical workers who in fact 'produce' the performance commodity, and instead privileging the audience – that is, the consumers.[48] The 'loosening' of Marxist categories which Young identifies in this school of thought leads to the foreclosing of 'methodological rigour', and means that such categories and terms by necessity end up having two meanings, the 'classical' Marxist one, and the newly expanded one.[49] As he argues, 'the expansion of these categories requires the retention of their precise applications'.[50]

---

[44] Joseph, p. 39.
[45] Young, p. 40.
[46] Young, p. 40.
[47] Joseph, p. 32.
[48] Young, p. 40.
[49] Young, p. 42.
[50] Young, p. 42.

Young's argument for the retention of economic categories, and a resistance to the conflation between commodity production and all other forms of social activity is relevant beyond these debates within the field. Elsewhere, similar discussions have found traction amongst those grappling with an increasingly 'digital capitalism'. Christian Fuchs and Sebastian Sevignani have argued that the 'digital labour' of online platform users constitutes exploited, but unpaid, labour.[51] Users, they argue, engage in the creation of free content, via platforms and websites, and 'these activities create value that is at the heart of profit generation', specifically via the creation of data which then operates as a valuable commodity to be sold onto targeted advertisers.[52] Consumers, in this formulation, are actively constructing the knowledge commons, the exploitation of which, Fuchs has argued elsewhere, has become key to capital accumulation under the rise of informational capitalism.[53] Thus, consumers become producers within a world of networked digital media, and these consumers then become productive labourers, not only exploited for capital like the actual employees of new media corporations but, in Fuchs's definition, 'infinitely exploited' by virtue of being unpaid.[54] Although Alston does not offer such an explanation of how he understands value and productivity in relation to co-option of audiences, we can see parallels between his claims and those of Fuchs, particularly as they both rest on the creation of value via participation in advertising. Both sets of arguments, however, are based on problematic premises and approaches to value, which lead both

[51] Christian Fuchs and Sebastian Sevignani, 'What Is Digital Labour? What Is Digital Work? What's Their Difference? And Why Do These Questions Matter for Understanding Social Media?', *Triple C*, 11.2 (2013), pp. 237–93.
[52] Fuchs and Sevignani, p. 237.
[53] Christian Fuchs, 'Labor in Informational Capitalism and on the Internet', *The Information Society*, 26 (2010), pp. 179–96.
[54] Fuchs, 'Labour in Informational Capitalism and on the Internet', p. 190-191.

to totalising conclusions offering little in the way of categorical differentiation, and even less by way of potential resistance to the control supposedly enacted by capital.

James Reveley, in a direct response to Fuchs, provides arguments which are equally applicable to a consideration of the claims made around immersive audiences.[55] Reveley counters Fuchs, Sevignani and others on the role of user participants by arguing that not only are such users not exploited, but that to pursue such a position creates problems for both the coherency of value theory itself, and for emancipatory politics.[56] Reveley shows that Fuchs' argument rests on the wholesale and uncritical adoption of Hardt and Negri's theory of the social factory, whereby production and exploitation are now part of broader society, having moved beyond the confined realm of the workplace and wage labour. Reveley counters by redrawing the distinction between the creation of value, and its realization through circulation, stating that people are no more being exploited as social media users or audience members, than they are as consumers when doing grocery shopping.[57] Where Fuchs conflates the data created by users with the users themselves (suggesting that it is they who become the commodity) Reveley insists that it is user generated data which is the commodity attractive to advertisers.[58] He argues that the activities of social media users can be better understood as 'free gifts' unwittingly given to firms, rather than through the lens of labour. Reveley also goes on to discuss the role of advertising itself within capitalism, showing that it cannot constitute a form of labour exploitation in its own right.[59] Advertising recipients, he writes, are not themselves exploited: 'they merely help reproduce the background social conditions of capitalist

[55] James Reveley, 'The Exploitative Web: Misuses of Marx in Critical Social Media Studies', *Science & Society*, 77.4 (2013), pp. 512–35.
[56] Reveley, p. 513.
[57] Reveley, p. 513.
[58] Reveley, p. 517.
[59] Reveley, p. 525.

production'.[60] This analysis can equally apply to the participants in both immersive brandscapes, as identified by Alston, and consumers in the service industry who are subject to techniques used to facilitate promotional activity (such as The Joy of Pret).

Reveley concedes that advertising can play an influential role via the formations of skills that users gain through their interactions with such sites, both technical skills and softer ones (including sociability and emotional intelligence).[61] Here, we see a more useful connection with Alston's work – specifically his consideration of the way in which immersive theatre audiences undergo processes of skills building, validation and subjectification through their roles in these environments. There is valuable insight to be gained here, if we avoid the red herring, which is the question of audiences and value production. Such an analysis reminds us that the audience's role is an important consideration in both theatrical and service contexts, but simultaneously means that this consideration does not invalidate an understanding of the actual employee's role in value creation. Whilst Alston's reference to 'value' in the economic sense is problematic, his discussion of neoliberal 'values' is helpful, if we avoid conflating the two. Having discussed these arguments at length, and made it clear that I do not find this a useful way of thinking through the audience/customer relation, I will now move on to considering the questions of subjectivity that are raised by immersive theatre.

Immersive dining

Alston, in his theorisation of the neoliberal values which underpin much immersive work, details how the promise of 'free roaming' in immersive settings rewards those

[60] Reveley, p. 528–29.
[61] Reveley, p. 529.

who take risk, put themselves 'out there' and explore the possibilities of the space as individuals.[62] In this sense, he argues, free roaming is a skill to be honed, one that can reap rewards for the participant spectator. Keren Zaiontz draws similar conclusions in her discussion of the 'narcissistic spectatorship' of immersive performance, defined as 'a mode of reception that valorizes uneven experiences as proof of distinct artistic encounters.'[63] Like Alston, Zaiontz points to these forms of spectatorship as being part of 'the neoliberalizing of audiences', where a 'singular relationship' between the individual and the performance is encouraged, often resulting in competitive behaviour between spectators who are encouraging to prioritize their own encounters above a collective experience, or above the experience and comfort of others.[64] Zaointz points to the work of Punchdrunk as paradigmatic of this, noting that their own guidance, issued for their production *The Drowned Man*, instructed audiences to 'take your own path' and be prepared to lose, or leave, their companions behind in search of the performance, as well rewarding individuals via one on one encounters with actors.[65] At both Pret and Hawksmoor, we can see how theatricalised service spaces increasingly promote a similar approach to consumer participation. Those who engage with initiatives such as The Joy of Pret through an enthusiastic individual involvement in the affective performance frame are more likely to be offered free food and drink. Those who attempt to engage with service staff on a register of 'authentic' personal interactions are thus rewarded appropriately. However, in both immersive theatre and 'servicescapes' (as discussed in chapter four), the fluidity and coherency of these spaces is contingent, and can be

[62] Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre*, p. 109.
[63] Keren Zaiontz, 'Narcissistic Spectatorship in Immersive and One-on-One Performance', *Theatre Journal*, 66.3 (2014), pp. 405–25, (p. 410).
[64] Zaiontz, p. 408, p. 413.
[65] Zaiontz, p. 409.

punctured at any moment.

Whilst Alston suggests that the audiences in theatrically constructed 'brandscapes' will almost uncritically go along with proceedings and provide positive publicity for brands, becoming 'evangelists', in practise this is hardly the case.[66] The relationship between performer, audience, and brand or corporate dictates in each environment are in fact engaged in a more complex process, with the needs or desires of each party subject to negotiation and pressure. To explore these claims further, I will now consider the example of 'immersive dining', in which theatrical and service-based performance collide – offering a useful site through which to consider the tensions between audiences and performers, as well as the continuity between theatrical productions explicitly identifying themselves as such and theatricalised elements within the service sector which may not.

Characterised by the combination of theatre and performance with the provision of food and drink for audiences, immersive dining has become a firmly established part of London's entertainment offering. Recent examples include: *Beauty and the Feast*, a 'wine and dine pantomime' held at The Vaults underneath Waterloo station;[67] *Le Petit Chef*, a six course 'storytelling' meal based on the silk route;[68] and *Alcotraz*, advertised as 'the world's first prison themed cocktail bar' where attendees are given orange jumpsuits and seated in cells for the evening.[69] Even with the restrictions placed on theatrical production during the Covid-19 pandemic, the popularity of immersive theatre is evident, with an immersive *The Little Mermaid*

[66] Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre*, p. 127.
[67] Darling and Edge, 'Beauty and the Feast' <https://www.darlingandedge.com/beautyandthefeast> [accessed 10 December 2018]
[68] Dinnertime Story <http://www.dinnertimestory.com/> [accessed 10 December 2018]
[69] Alcotraz <https://www.alcotraz.co.uk/> [accessed 10 December 2018]

cocktail experience opening in summer 2020.[70] These shows integrate the staging conventions of immersive theatre in which, as Sophie Nield explains, 'the audience inhabit the space of the play alongside the actors', with a 'supperclub' format, offering dining in an unusual space or as part of a broader entertainment event. [71] Whilst this fusing of genres can be enticing for audiences it also raises a number of questions surrounding immersive dining's categorisation: does theatre or food take priority during the event? Are staff present in order to perform, serve, or do both simultaneously? Where, or what, are the boundaries between the intentionally performative aspects of these shows and the necessary components of food service?

Nield, writing on what was then the relatively new phenomenon of immersive theatre in 2008, describes the 'moment of crisis' she experienced as a spectator at one such event.[72] Confronted by a performer dressed as a monk who spoke to her directly, Nield, embarrassed and unsure what was expected of her, found herself questioning her role in the action: 'who on earth is this monk supposed to think I am?'.[73] The questions raised in immersive theatre, of the role of spectators, the expectations placed upon them, and their interactions with performers, remain relevant when thinking through immersive dining, which often confronts the spectator with similar questions. However, the particular pressures of immersive dining, and the multiple fields it attempts to straddle, can add a further dimension to Nield's question, particularly in contexts where performers and actors are simultaneously acting, and serving food and beverages. As a spectator at these events I often found myself wondering not only who on earth I was supposed to be, but also 'who on earth am I

[70] The Little Mermaid Cocktail Experience < https://littlemermaidcocktail.com/london/> [accessed 22 April 2021]
[71] Sophie Nield, 'The Rise of a Character Named Spectator', *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 18:4 (2008) pp. 531-544, (p. 531).
[72] Nield, p. 531.
[73] Nield, p. 531.

supposed to think this performer is?'. To explore these questions I will use examples from visits to two immersive dining experiences: Gingerline's *Chambers of Flavour V3* held at a secret location in east London, and Shotgun Carousel's *Divine Proportions* at The Vaults in Waterloo. Whilst both events were firmly marketed as immersive dining and offered by well established companies who specialise in the format, each approached the fusion of theatre and food in distinct ways, employing contrasting staging devices and drawing noticeably different boundaries between the theatrical and dining elements. At both events I encountered moments where the pressures on staff to inhabit two simultaneous roles, or to seamlessly navigate the expectations of each, resulted in the tension between these elements manifesting itself in front of the audience – in turn leading to a sense of deep unease and confusion about our role as participants. This in turn raised questions of how we were being prompted to understand our roles as audience members, and how our own behaviour was being shaped in line with demands for performed individualism, enthusiasm and authenticity.

Gingerline, founded in 2010, is one of London's leading immersive dining companies, having successfully staged events including two previous iterations of their *Chambers of Flavour* experience. The company describes itself as 'a group of clandestine dining adventurers'.[74] It has cultivated a brand built on secrecy and exclusivity, traits which characterise each step of the process and which are promoted as an integral part of the experience itself, from the difficulty in initially obtaining tickets (each batch sells out rapidly and guests are encouraged to anticipate the next release via a countdown on the Gingerline website), to the lengthy set of rules that spectators are asked to follow even before arrival. At the time of booking guests are

[74] Gingerline staff induction manual, 2017. Not publicly available. Provided by a member of staff.

not told the location of the event, only that it will be within walking distance of a stop somewhere on the London overground. On the day of the event itself, approximately two to three hours before our arrival time, attendees receive a text message with precise directions to the venue. A dress code has also been communicated in advance: we are asked to wear one block colour of our choice accompanied by long, colourful socks. Upon arrival we are greeted by a member of staff who after taking our name and time slot (groups of about twenty at a time are admitted to the experience at half hour intervals), offers us a detailed explanation of the night's proceedings including a lengthy set of rules and regulations which are then reiterated in a small booklet handed to each guest. These rules of spectatorship include: the prohibition of mobile phones or any technology during the experience; photos only allowed in the pre-dining bar area; the expectation for attendees to keep the content of the show secret, and not share any details of social media; and a reminder not to touch any creatures or characters we encounter. The unspoken but assumed rules of spectatorship that can be said to exist in 'traditional' theatre are here made explicit for an immersive context, where the audience's expectations may differ. On stage, actors are unlikely to expect audience members to attempt to touch or directly interact with them, and experienced theatre goers are equally likely to understand that taking photos of the show is prohibited. The rise of immersive theatre, however, has upended many of these conventions, as audiences have been offered ever expanding opportunities to interact with, move through and experience performances with greater license and freedom.

This notion of endowing the audience with relative autonomy whilst managing the demands of the performance, and the safety of performers, results in a number of issues. Immersive theatre has undoubtedly become increasingly 'mainstream' within the entertainment industry, illustrated by the rise of productions

by the likes of Punchdrunk and Secret Cinema, who provide an immersive experience around the screening of popular films, and which recently signed a high profile deal with Disney.[75] This sense of immersive events being spaces where audiences can play out and pick the nature of their own 'roles' persists, with the desire to exercise freedom and autonomy in such spaces existing in tension with attempts to direct or control both the behaviour and outcome of the events. Whilst this sense of audience agency is often more illusory than real, the desire to enact a role of one's own choosing still underpins the appeal of these spaces, and often comes into conflict with the expectations of the producers. It is not the case that immersive audiences simply willingly 'play the part' as assigned to them by the performance and performers, rather they often push up against the constraints imposed upon them in the environment. Often this tension is exhibited through the desire to perform a release from inhibition, and the abandonment of normal duties and responsibilities.

Risk, safety and reward

As the popularity of this format grows, offering the promise of more freedom for audiences within the experience, the necessity arises for expectations around conduct and the rules of spectatorship to be more clearly laid out. This is signalled both by how deeply alcohol consumption is embedded into many of these experiences, and by the high occurrence of cases in which audiences mistreat or harass performers. This is both an issue of health and safety for performers, and one of assuring the

[75] Borys Kit 'Disney Movies to be Adapted as Immersive Experiences by Secret Cinema', *The Hollywood Reporter,* 23 January 2020 < https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/heat-vision/secret-cinema-tackle-disney-movies-immersive-experiences-1272343> [accessed 21 April 2021]

smooth operation of the event itself in a context where a theatrical production is bound by the extremely tight time constraints which characterise dining and its profit margins (at Gingerline, as outlined above, customers arrive for specific time slots and must be finished in time for the next group to arrive). Guidelines have been recently introduced for immersive theatre, with performers now undergoing more thorough training about how to handle audiences who have sexually harassed, intimidated and physically touched performers without their consent. As such, immersive events find themselves needing to establish clearer demarcations and guidelines for what constitutes acceptable behaviour, rather than leaving audiences completely free to pursue their own wishes. These issues have come to the forefront as the genre grows in popularity and more incidents are reported. In 2018, numerous incidents of sexual harassment and assault were reported by performers working at Punchdrunks's *Sleep No More* production in New York, with media attention in publications like Buzzfeed helping to amplify and bring attention to the case.[76] In 2019 Equity, the actors union, launched an immersive theatre network and survey to tackle problems impacting performers working in the genre, including the aim of establishing a new set of standards for companies to adhere to.[77] In an article for *The Stage* in the same year, safeguarding, consent and inclusion coordinator Brodie Turner is quoted describing some of the measures immersive productions have put in place, including code-words, radios, alarm buttons, CCTV and physical signals.[78] He explains an approach in which 'the nature of the show and the show's intention will be made

[76] Amber Jamieson, 'Performers and Staffers At "Sleep No More" Say Audience Members Have Sexually Assaulted Them' *Buzzfeed,* 6 February 2018 <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/amberjamieson/sleep-no-more> [accessed 21 April 2021]
[77] 'Immersive Theatre Survey Launched' *Equity*, 18 June 2019 < https://www.equity.org.uk/news/2019/june/immersive-theatre-survey-launched/> [accessed 21 April 2021]
[78] Anna James, 'Safety and immersive theatre: where should the boundaries be set?' *The Stage*, 3 September 2019 < https://www.thestage.co.uk/features/safety-and-immersive-theatre-where-should-the-boundaries-be-set> [accessed 21 April 2021]

clear, and expectations will be set […] The idea that once you put in rules you're starting to eat away at the magic is not something we fully subscribe to – rather we think the boundaries give you freedom because once you know where they are, you have a full space to enjoy without worrying where the line is.'[79]

At Gingerline itself, the manual for staff and employees outlines a number of potential 'scenarios' and suggested 'resolutions'.[80] This is already notable for its dramatic connotations, with scenarios laid out as potential dialogue from the customer, and staff imagining how they would respond. Scenario B reads: '"Those guests are disrupting the scene!"'. A number of potential resolutions are offered in response, including: 'Performer to warn intoxicated guests in character using firm but polite language', escalating to 'If guests persist on being disruptive, performer to warn guest out of character using clear instructions.', progressing to the point where the event manager is informed, with the final resolution the guest being removed by the event manager, who also checks on the performers themselves.[81]

This is a stark reminder that the immersive theatre event remains a workplace for performers, with necessary safeguarding and wellbeing measures having to be adopted. The necessity to outline these expectations is further underlined by the varying material and budgetary restraints facing immersive companies. Although the success of these shows has fuelled the demand for such experiences, few companies can afford the scale and detail offered by Punchdrunk and its large-scale productions, and those that cannot carefully delineate boundaries and offer guidelines for the audience, alerting them to the boundaries and limits of their spectatorial freedom. At both *Chambers of Flavour* and *Shotgun Carousel,* the

[79] James, 'Safety and immersive theatre'.
[80] Gingerline staff induction manual.
[81] Gingerline staff induction manual.

immersive experience did not offer multiple pathways for audience engagement, but was instead structured temporally by each course of the meal. Staff, whether in character or not, played a consistent role in managing this by shepherding audiences from one space to the next and taking on the role of ushers and facilitators, as well as performers and servers. Laura Drake Chambers, the director of *Divine Proportions*, has discussed the problems they faced with the show and incidents in which the consent and boundaries of performers were not respected by audiences: 'We walk a really fine line. […] It's escapism, and we want people to invest. We want people to tumble and tumble – but not too far. And agency for performers, constant stage management presence, good codes, good procedures – all of these things are the tools to find that sweet spot and protect it.'[82] Similarly to the approach suggested by Turner, Chambers adopted code words and signals to deal with problems, including a three-tiered 'traffic-light' system using words from Greek mythology in keeping with the theme and content of the show itself: 'green ("Medusa") to signal someone that needed an eye on them, through amber ("Minotaur") for someone who was taken out of the "world" and spoken to but allowed back in, to red ("Cyclops") for someone who was immediately ejected.'[83] The 'spectators' who Nield enlists in her writing to help her reflect on the audience's role in immersive theatre touch on similar concerns, with one noting that it would only take only violent incident enacted by spectators, during a moment of one to one intimacy with actors, for the entire genre to be thrown into crisis.[84] For another, the tension that comes from the unsettlingly close proximity between audiences and actors highlights the other side of this discomfort, revealing

[82] James, 'Safety and immersive theatre'.
[83] James, 'Safety and immersive theatre'.
[84] Nield, p. 534.

the ‘thinness’ of the performance, more so than the thinness of the spectators’ civility.[85]

At *Chambers of Flavour*, once the rules have been communicated, we are given a welcome drink and ushered into the bar area, designed as if we are surrounded by machinery with wheels, pipes, metal sheets and screws adorning the space. We are greeted by an actor who asks us if we have been before, checks our tickets, reminds us to order our drinks in advance (there is a suggested amount of drinks to purchase for each person, which is substantial, and another way in which alcohol consumption is encouraged and encoded within the event), and examines the suitability of our socks. Just before our 7pm timeslot we are gathered as a group and ushered up a set of stairs to meet ‘the General', who introduces us to our mission for the evening. We are told that we are being sent to track down the missing ‘flavourologist’ Lionel Stirling Grey, an inventor famous for having built a machine allowing him to travel to different dimensions in search of new flavour combinations. Grey has somehow got lost in his own machine and we are to search for him, with our only clue being one of his socks, given to us to take in case it assists us on our quest. During this introductory briefing the General takes the time to greet each member of the group individually and to assign responsibilities and tasks to as many specific guests as possible, and further offer some distinction between individual experiences during the night’s unfolding. She inspects our socks, getting on hands and knees to look closely at each pair. Having chosen her favourite pair of the evening, this audience member is tasked with looking after Grey's sock, and other audience members are then selected to take on different roles based on personal characteristics: someone is assigned the role of comedic mascot, another the most logical, another the group leader, etc. One

[85] Nield, p. 534.

by one we are then sent down a large slide, into 'the machine' where the journey begins.

These initial attempts to individualise the experiences of spectators and participants are central to Gingerline's stated mission to 'create the ultimate dining experience'.[86] In their staff handbook, we see many of the tropes and phrases used by companies including Pret, Hawksmoor and Trader Joe's. Staff are told that in order to achieve their goals, 'we must be brave, independent and revolutionise the dining experience, we must surprise and delight our customers as they step into the unknown. This starts with YOU!'.[87] Some of the ways in which staff are instructed to carry out these duties include direct parallels with the language cited by companies in previous chapters: 'be open and warm with the customers; show genuine interest in our customers' experience; listen and respond to them personally, using their name where possible.'[88] Here we see these trends traversing both commercial service and theatrical environments. The same jargon is used in these various contexts, demonstrative of a broader adoption of this discourse within the 'experience society' which Miles theorises. I will return to some of these parallels later in the chapter, when I consider the audience's co-construction of these interactions.

Audiences as co-creators

During the first scene or course at *Chambers of Flavour*, the General also serves food - a small salad in a tin, similar to army rations. This is indicative of the way the evening will proceed with food both fully integrated within the performance, served at

[86] Gingerline staff induction manual.
[87] Gingerline staff induction manual.
[88] Gingerline staff induction manual.

all times by actors performing in dual function as both their theatrical characters and waiting staff, and conceptually consistent with the staging of each room (tins of rations when with ‘the General'; a plant-based dish when in ‘the greenhouse'; and a deconstructed salad we have to prepare ourselves when in ‘the lab'). Each scene/course takes place in a different room and guests are seamlessly moved from one space to another to ensure there is no sign of additional assistance or food assembly itself. This contrasts with *Divine Proportions*, where the boundaries between performance and dining are much more starkly marked and enforced. Promoted as ‘blurring the lines between feast and fantasy’ and promising ‘out of this world entertainment’ with ‘hedonism and ritual ecstasy', *Divine Proportions* is structured around a Dionysian feast, with performances taking place between each course of the meal rather than concurrently with it.[89] The two elements thus alternate, rather than converge, and staff are divided clearly and accordingly between the two. Our food is served to us by waiting staff, identifiable by formal clothes with no theatrical ornamentation, and who do not give any indication of being in character or engage with guests on any other basis. The performers, likewise, are absent whilst food is being served, reappearing to enact scenes, dance, or interact, only between courses or whilst guests are eating. This arrangement could serve to highlight the food itself, ensuring that diners are able to pay full, undivided attention to their meals. Yet at *Divine Proportions* this does not seem to be the case. The menu bears little correlation to the overall theme of the evening and no commentary on, or explanation of, the food is offered during the event. At our table there is vocal impatience amongst the guests who, far from being attentive to the food in front of them, are instead eager

[89] ‘Divine Proportions', *The Vaults* <https://www.thevaults.london/divine-proportions> [accessed 10 December 2018]

for the next round of performances to start, as this seems to be the main attraction. This prioritisation of the theatrical components of the evening is only compounded by the venue itself, which is large, cold, narrow and unsuited to formal dining.

Although *Divine Proportions* offers a less 'immersive' experience than *Chambers of Flavour*, with a lack of cohesion between the two elements, some similarities remain apparent. Like *Chambers of Flavour*, guests are given an optional dress-code in advance ('dress like deities'), although few guests at our performance have complied with this instruction and it goes unremarked upon by the actors during their interactions. The event also involves the movement between different spaces, as upon arrival we are ushered into a bar space where the first course of bread and oil is served, and where the first of the performances takes place, before we are then ushered upstairs to the banqueting area. In both performances there are also moments where I find myself helping the staff when they are clearly struggling with proceedings. At *Chambers of Flavour*, the first of these encounters is deliberate and amusing for audiences. Having been sent down the slide by the 'General', we arrive to find the leader of our group, who having been sent down first, is now dressed as a lab assistant standing side by side with an actor who introduces himself to us as a flavourologist and colleague of Lionel Stirling Gray. This flavourologist then proceeds to hand out our alcoholic drinks and enlists his 'lab assistant' to help him (which the assistant/guest begrudgingly does). The actor prompts his assistant to hurry up, reminding him he has to 'sing for his supper' and speed up the work. The rest of the group take amusement at seeing one of us roped into the performance in this way, and the actor plays the scene for laughs, at one point making a remark about potentially encountering strange creatures or 'out of work actors' on our travels – a level of self-conscious referentiality which is built into the event and script.

At *Divine Proportions,* help is not deliberately enlisted, but rather needed as a result of the show's design. The first course of the meal is served in the bar area, a large open space which features trays hanging from the ceiling, with benches arranged around these for people to sit upon. By the time waiters begin bringing out platters of bread and oil as a first course, these hanging trays are filled with drinks glasses and bottles that staff have to navigate in order to lay the food. As my companion and I sit holding our drinks, an apparently agitated waiter hurries over, carrying a large platter, and gesturing with his head towards the glasses on the tray in front of us. We respond that they are not ours, at which point he asks us to remove them anyway as he needs help. We oblige, putting the drinks on the floor which allows him to place the platter and leave. Although we have done as he asked, we are surprised by his request and his seeming frustration at the situation for two reasons. Firstly, as a dining experience, the question of where to lay the platters and whether drinks purchased from the bar might infringe upon the dining system in place could easily be foreseen and factored into the service plan, ensuring waiters are not reliant on guests to help them. More tables or space could have been allocated, staff could have been sent to clear the trays before food was brought out, or two staff members could have carried each platter together. Secondly, at an immersive theatrical event, it is jarring to be directly approached by anyone not in character.

At *Chambers of Flavour* an even more notable encounter takes place as we enter the space where the main course is served. The room is set out as a dining room, with a large table and children's toys on the seats. We are greeted by a woman named Dolly, who is dressed as a china doll, and it becomes quickly apparent that we are in fact inside a doll's house. Dolly's behaviour towards the guests is immediately hostile. She appears agitated as she encourages us to quickly seat ourselves and as she

struggles to establish everyone's dietary requirements. Having chided us for not getting settled quickly enough she begins to frantically serve us a starter, but realises she has offered the wrong food to the vegetarian guest in her haste, becoming confused as she tries to rectify the error. By this point in the evening the crowd are boisterous and large quantities of alcohol have been consumed. Dolly struggles to get the attention of the group, who are laughing and talking loudly between themselves. She repeats herself multiple times when she wants to be heard, and at one point stops all together as she waits for silence – much like a schoolteacher trying to alert the class to the fact that it's now time to pay attention – eventually saying 'no-one listens to me' whilst throwing her arms in the air in an act of exasperation. When the main course is delivered, single-handedly by Dolly, she places a large bowl of potatoes on the table and asks us to share them around, instructing us that the portion is small and we shouldn't be greedy. When the potatoes reach the end of the table, only a few are left and Dolly, appearing angry, walks along inspecting each plate individually in an effort to establish who has taken too many. As the meal finishes, she tries to engage us in a game where we have to recount important information about Lionel Grey's disappearance that we have gathered over the course of the evening, but becomes frustrated when we cannot remember the answers.

Throughout the scene the atmosphere is uncomfortable – audience members shout at and shush each other in an attempt to smooth the process and make it easier for Dolly, who appears to have dropped any attempt to stay convincingly in character and is merely voicing her frustration at the guests. Similarly to the encounter at *Divine Proportions*, audience members find themselves trying to assist the staff despite this clearly piercing the immersive fabric of the event, reminiscent of Nield's observation of the behaviour of immersive theatregoers: 'despite this uncomfortable sense of our

own inappropriate presence, we try to help the show. We try to play along. We do our best.'[90] Finally, as the meal draws to a close and we prepare to depart for the next room, she announces, 'I've just remembered who I am' and it is only at this point that she begins to explain that she is in fact Grey's wife, who has been trapped inside a doll dimension thanks to his machine. It appears that she had forgotten her lines earlier in the scene, and is now trying to rectify this by providing the missing information. In this moment, we become very clearly aware of our own behaviour as participants, and our role in ensuring the delivery of the performance. We come to see ourselves as co-creators of the event, as evidenced by our willingness to check each other's behaviour, and as partly responsible for its successful delivery. Here exists a tension, between the needs of the performance to proceed as designed, according to schedule and the pressures of food service, whilst it simultaneously relies on the input and interaction of guests to deliver the theatrical element successfully. Gingerline's staff manual demonstrates this. Staff are asked to consider, when guests arrive, 'are they needing any interactions? Play with them!'.[91] During the experience itself they are asked to look out for the guests comfort: 'Is a guest looking uncomfortable – how can you put them at ease? Do they need more/less interaction?' and 'Should you pass on a message via a server or the EM [event manager] to later chambers to give "extra love" (or perhaps a little less) to certain guests?'.[92] Simultaneously, they are reminded that the customer's experience should be 'effortless'. But without the 'efforts' of the audience during our interaction with Dolly, the performance would have fallen apart.

Thus the promotion of neoliberal 'values' of risk taking, individualism and competition, which are highlighted by some elements of the performance, exist in a

[90] Nield, p. 533.
[91] Gingerline staff induction manual.
[92] Gingerline staff induction manual.

tension with the concurrent reliance on the audience, as a collective, to both ‘co-create’ the event and enable the actors to successfully deliver their performances.

Of all the rooms that guests are led through during the *Chambers of Flavour*, Dolly's involves the most serving work, with two courses to be served alongside various accompaniments and side dishes. Whilst serving, she simultaneously has to explain her character’s back story, cater to dietary requirements, and conduct activities and games with the group to help them remember information which is needed to free Lionel in the next room, a room in which she also performs. The actor playing Dolly undoubtedly has more work to do than the other performers in the show, and at first glance this is assumed to be the source of her frustration. She is trying concurrently to manage the audience as a performer and manage the meal as a server. In both instances we are not behaving as ideal audiences or customers (attentive, quiet, alert to the proceedings), but are instead loud, distracted by one another and uninterested in what the performer/server has to offer. Her visible and vocal frustration means that some of us may have found ourselves feeling sympathetic towards Dolly and her convergence of responsibilities, and attempt to become a more respectful and concentrated audience. Within this frame we are also quick to accept a kind of discipline, altering our own behaviour according to the explicit dictates of Dolly, but also by picking up on her discomfort.

This interpretation is thrown into doubt, however, when we are escorted to the final room where Lionel Grey is eventually freed. As the pair perform a song and dance number together, we learn that Dolly has in fact turned into an *evil* doll as a result of her entrapment in the wrong dimension. This missing information, a product of the actor forgetting earlier lines, confuses our interpretation of her behaviour. We are left wondering how much of her behaviour was genuine frustration at the work,

and how much was in fact appropriate characterisation. Was Dolly an excellent actor, who fooled us into thinking she was out of character whilst in fact performing as an 'evil' character, or was this a coincidental colliding of roles? Whilst boundaries remain unclear in this scenario, points of tension, between the demands of the performance and the agency of the performers, as well as between the performance and the audience, are thus revealed.

Immersive realism

Returning to both Nield's question about who the performer is supposed to think the spectator is, and the reverse posed by me, in relation to immersive dining, both can be addressed via Campbell Edinborough's notion of 'corporeal self-alienation', which he argues often undermines immersive performances and leads to a confusion amongst the audience about their own role in the proceedings.[93] Whilst Edinborough acknowledges that a reliance on the Stanislavskian tradition for the construction of immersive performances might be deemed 'ironic', he argues that Stanislavski's notion of the 'circle of attention' offers a useful approach, once it has been broadened to encompass the audience as well as the performers themselves.[94] Stanislavski instructed his students to create a concentrated circle of attention during performance, encompassing some section of the stage, its objects, and the other actors within the scene, which allowed them to divide themselves from the audience, enclosing themselves within the circle 'like a snail in its shell'.[95] The circle of

[93] Campbell Edinborough, 'Using the Method to Be Myself: Adapting and Appropriating Historical Training Approaches for Interactive Performance', *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*, 9.2 (2018), pp. 174–88, (p. 179).
[94] Edinborough, p. 180.
[95] Stanislavski, p. 82.

attention, which Stanislavski used to help actors achieve the desired state of 'solitude in public', can in Edinborough's usage 'be read both as a tool of concentration and as a technique for avoiding the self-consciousness that arises when we feel ourselves being watched.'[96] Edinborough argues that by capturing the spectator within their circle of attention the performer can thus 'contain audience members within a moment of theatricality', rather than exclude from the stage and cast them as mere observers.[97] The spectator can begin to act as a 'co-creator' of characters by responding affectively to performers, who will be particularly attuned to their responses and behaviour, as part of their heightened awareness to things that fall within their circle. The Stanislavskian demand for actors to 'live truthfully' therefore becomes an injunction to facilitate a truthful affective response from the spectator as part of the performance itself.

Sharon Carnicke's work also reaffirms the applicability of Stanislavskian methods to immersive theatre. Carnicke charts the development of Stanislavski's thinking, specifically in relation to the actor's dual consciousness and their consequent relationship with the role or character.[98] Through his work, she argues, Stanislavski began to think of theatrical events as the source of the actor's 'genuine experience' itself.[99] As a result, time on stage is 'real time' and life experience, which in turn transforms his (and our) understanding of 'truth' in relation to acting.[100] Carnicke argues that as a result of these developments, Stanislavski's work becomes 'within reach of contemporary theatrical scholars' by breaking his

---

[96] Constantin Stanislavski, *An Actor Prepares*, (London: Methuen, 1986), p. 82; Edinborough, p. 180.
[97] Edinborough, p. 180.
[98] Sharon Marie Carnicke, *Stanislavsky in Focus: An Acting Master for the Twenty-First Century*, Routledge Theatre Classics, 2nd ed (London ; New York: Routledge, 2009).
[99] Carnicke, p. 144.
[100] Carnicke, p. 144.

definite ties to realism and making his teaching applicable to 'any dramatic style, including those yet to be invented'.[101]

I argued in chapter two that this reimagining of artistic truth, as whatever happens during performance, does not fundamentally alter the ideological underpinnings of Stanislavskian realism or render such categories meaningless. However, a reinterpretation and understanding of Stanislavski's work to integrate a more nuanced understanding of artistic 'truth' as based on what happens during the theatrical event (thus including the actions of the audience, if they are part of the event) does demonstrate how this more expansive interpretation of his work applies to immersive practices.

Edinborough and Carnicke therefore both demonstrate the ways in which Stanislavskian practice can be used in immersive performance, as well as offering examples of how it is frequently already utilised. With this analysis in mind, we can see that (counter to Carnicke's conclusion) whilst in the 'experience economy' participation is framed as choice, co-creation, and as offering access to some elusive authenticity, immersive theatre can, and in fact is, driven by the same naturalistic logics which have been explored throughout this research. Such performances continue to abide by notions of psychological and emotional realism, regardless of the dismantling of the traditional fourth wall or perceived penetrability of the performance. For these conventions to be dismantled, they first need to be present, and as my exploration of these performances above demonstrates, the logic of naturalism continues to hover over them. There are, of course exceptions, as Alston points out in his discussion of theatre company Shunt, whose work he claims frustrates the audience's desire for more active engagement, and in turn disrupts the

[101] Carnicke, p. 147.

forms of productive participation which he outlines.[102] Yet largely audiences are asked to uncritically accept the terms of engagement in an immersive context and not to question or deviate from the agreed possibilities. This means that questions of psychological realism as pertaining to character continue to be central to the design and functioning of these performances, but with a greater degree of active participation from audience members, who are increasingly also implicated in the same, often coercive, processes of character and subject formation which I have discussed in relation to actors and workers throughout this research.

In addition to the discussions around neoliberalism and the ethos of immersive theatre, such practices have also been compared to the experience of playing video games, and this 'gamification' of live entertainment is arguably an important part of the appeal of such events.[103] Rosemary Kilch has argued that immersive theatre is in fact 'more like a videogame than traditional dramatic theatre'.[104] Companies such as Punchdrunk, with their successful, large scale productions, have offered audiences unparalleled freedom to explore their performances, choosing which story arcs and characters to pursue, or avoiding them altogether and opting instead to immerse themselves in the immense detail of the sets themselves. Audiences in these shows have often also been encouraged to pursue hidden spaces and exclusive scenes, with actors offering 'one on one' performances for those in the right place at the right time. Thus the gamification of immersive theatre is often linked to the individualisation of spectatorship, where each audience member expects to have a distinct, unique, experience from the next.

---

[102] Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre*, p. 145.
[103] Rosemary Kilch, 'Playing a Punchdrunk Game: Immersive Theatre and Videogaming', in *Reframing Immersive Theatre*, ed. by James Frieze,(London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 221-229.
[104] Kilch, p. 228.

For Zaointz, the gamification of immersive theatre is in fact more individualising than in videogames.[105] She argues that whilst in the context of video games, multiplayer tactics have been used to foster greater collaboration as games become more immersive, in its theatrical iteration the same tactics are reimagined in the service of singular consumption.[106] Returning to Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More*, she notes that those who reviewed the show often ended up reviewing their *own* 'performances', and were led to 'evaluate their experiences in terms of "right" and "wrong" choices, or modes of spectatorship, that enable them to successfully "play the game"'.[107] This model then also encourages a reflexivity on the part of the audience that causes them to question the success of their own behaviour, measured along the individualising elements which have been described.

As this discussion highlights, the logic of realism and individualism runs through these events. Returning to Pret and Hawksmoor, we see parallels with the ways in which the 'gamification' method rewards some customers more than others, as well as how it leads to a similarly reflexive stance in the customer. I will now return to these case studies in order to draw out further the connections between them and the discussion of immersive dining.

Customers are, of course, constructed differently according to context and business models. At Hawksmoor, customers and servers are characterised as having at least a provisional parity. Employees noted this in their own reflections of working for the company, with staff and customers articulated as receiving an equal amount of care from the management: 'All Hawksmoor wants is for hospitality to be key, the customers to leave happy & for everyone that works there to be happy';

[105] Zaiontz, p. 409.
[106] Zaiontz, p. 409.
[107] Zaiontz, p. 417.

‘Hawksmoor is an incredibly generous company - to its employees and customers’; ‘making sure people are happy, customers and employees alike.’[108] This is also articulated by Beckett in his explanation of their foundational approach to the business. Describing the approach of the consultant they worked with before opening their first branch, Beckett explains:

> I think if you asked him initially what his sort of philosophy was of restaurants, I think he would have talked about like removing all of the kind of constraints that people have, or the formality or the routine of it, and just trying to kind of really pare it back to nice people doing nice things for other nice people. […] he just wanted to let people treat customers kind of in the way that suited them both. So we would hire – we wouldn't hire just anyone, we would hire people who believed in, I guess, certain things. But then we would really say to them, just be yourself.[109]

As well as positing staff and customers on an equal footing, the philosophy of ‘nice people doing nice things for other nice people’ also marks a departure from other restaurants in the same price point, where waiters more often attempt to avoid being even seen or heard. One long standing staff member explained that whilst Hawksmoor’s approach is not about ‘bothering’ the customer, it does involve a focus on ‘interaction’ which differentiates it from its competitors.[110] For staff, this approach also means that they often see themselves as part of the guest’s experience as much, if not more so, than the meal itself: ‘I occasionally get some good reviews, because Hawksmoor is also a lot about feedback and stuff. And they say, oh fabulous food, and thank you to (name) who made it really special and stuff. And that’s what I live for, I just – I just want – I don't want to be part of the meal but I want to be an addition of the meal.’[111] Similarly, Beckett explains that Hawksmoor also adapt

[108] Hawksmoor *GlassDoor* reviews.
[109] Interview with Will Beckett.
[110] Interview L13.
[111] Interview L13.

another approach borrowed from Danny Meyer, summarised as 'imagine the food is free'. This thinking conceptualises the value of the meal as more directly tied to the experience than to the food itself. Beckett elaborates: 'If the food was free and you just paid for the experience and how people looked after you – would you still feel comfortable with the price that you paid?'.[112] Thus the emotional and affective input of the servers is, as Dowling has argued, constitutive of the value of the product – the product in this instance being the overall dining experience rather than simply the tangible commodity of the food itself.[113] Hawksmoor's strategy for realising this involves both customer and worker engaging as active participants in a joint performance.

Zaointz, cited earlier, argues that the spectator's role in immersive theatre is also 'constitutive' of the performance event itself.[114] For Zaointz, this constitutive element comes from both the physical contact with the performance, as well as the absorption of the audiences 'self' within the environment or scenario. Whilst this may be in some ways true, and I have illustrated ways in which the audiences' input and engagement is necessary for the delivery of the performance, Dowling's emphasis on the constitutive nature of the worker's emotional (or in her framing, affective) labour offers an account that regrounds this discussion within a materialist analysis of value and work. Whilst the audience, or customer's, participation can be understood as an often necessary part of the realisation of a performance or service act, it remains unstable and subject to more implicit forms coercion and control by those whose labour is under direct management. It is still the worker's labour which is actually constitutive of value itself.

---

[112] Interview with Will Beckett.
[113] Dowling, p. 121.
[114] Zaiontz, p. 407.

Disciplining authenticity

This sense of parity and collaboration described at Hawksmoor is markedly different from Pret, where customers are more likely to be lured in with the tactics of gamification rather than treated as equal participants in an encounter. However, despite it being clear that Pret's corporate approach is to use these offers and promotions as a way of attracting customers, staff are extremely resistant to those who they perceive to be trying to play the game, or who they deem to be in-authentic. As one worker explains, 'I don't know what it is but you can tell what customers are genuine and which one's ain't. […] You can tell which customers are phoney. I can tell. And I won't give them anything free.'[115] This is corroborated by other interviews, where staff explained if they can tell a customer is 'trying', then 'we all purposely go, no', explaining that if it feels that the customer is 'forcing it on you […] you're kind of a bit like nah mate.'[116] This resistance also manifests itself in workers pushing back on management attempts to enforce the demarcation of authenticity more strictly. One explains this process:

> So, dealing with customers for me it's - I have to, before I deal with it, I have to think, are they genuine or are they not. But that's just me. I don't like being done over. Whereas my other manager would be like, alright, take it for free, just because she doesn't wanna deal with the hassle of it. Whereas me, I will happily deal with the hassle if I think that person is being phoney, just trying to get free stuff.[117]

[115] Interview L9.
[116] Interview L1.
[117] Interview L9.

In this instance, it is the staff themselves who are the harshest judges of the customer's performance. Whilst these methods are developed and implemented from on high, we can thus see how they ultimately come to structure not just employee relationships on the job, but an attitude to customers which ultimately reproduces the punitive logic imposed on staff through techniques such as the mystery shopper.

At Hawksmoor, this attitude is less pronounced, although still expressed such as by a server who explains that whilst the restaurant will almost always gift a dessert to a diner celebrating their birthday, this will be withheld if it is asked for:

> That's the totally wrong thing to do. And it's not about being arrogant or saying, well you asked you're not getting, it's that, why are you asking? […] Because I personally don't want to get the TGI Friday, oh it's your birthday we're going to sing you a song and give you free birthday cake, that's not what we're about. We're about making customers happy. And I'm sorry if you're going to ask, it's no longer coming from us, you're asking for something for free. Then we might not be disposed or inclined to do it as if it came from us. It's like, I dunno, I'm your friend and you say, 'so you bought me a birthday present'?[118]

Though once again demonstrating a familial and friendship based relation with the customer, this account also demonstrates the relative amount of power Hawksmoor employees have with customers. Whilst staff reiterate that they still have to abide by the rule of 'not arguing with customers', they are afforded the freedom to address problems in however they best see fit. At Pret, staff have little control over their work itself, with even the option of gift giving something that is largely centralised and closely monitored (as explained in previous chapters). Dealing with difficult customers, or handling complaints, thus becomes a route through which employees can exercise some control, assert themselves and demand respect. Stories of standing up to, or confronting, customers were common amongst those I interviewed, with

[118] Interview L13.

many detailing the ways in which they have said no, or challenged the behaviour of customers, with or without the support of their management. This becomes another way through which the relationship with customers is both notably different from that at Hawksmoor (there is no sense of joint endeavour in the cultivation of a transiently bound experience) and yet also one in which rules around behaviour and conduct are implicitly passed on to audiences and customers.

As we have seen, those who refuse to abide by the rules of engagement can be either punished or prodded in line with the performative expectations of the organisation and its staff. One employee at Pret explains the way in which team members would subtly reinforce prescription to the 'script' with resistant customers:

> Yeah we had this one girl, she would always ask people how are you? And you get these people who don't even say hello to you. You'd be like 'hello!' and they'd be like, 'latte to go.' So she'd be like, umm - she would say 'hi how are you?' And they'd be like, 'takeaway.' So she'd be like 'oh, you're takeaway?' Look at them like, are you stupid? So she's making them answer the questions.[119]

Clearly this approach is not one that is expected by Pret – there is no evidence that managers or the company management expect workers to discipline customers in such a manner. However, as outlined above, such response is a reasonable outcome in a system which perpetually pressurises staff to abide by behavioural dictates to the extent that customers non-compliance becomes an obstacle to their own labour process.

At both Pret and Hawksmoor, we can see that the inherent tension in the realisation of emotional labour power is not just tied to the power dynamics between employees and management, but also between employees and customers. We can see

[119] Interview L11.

this as apparent in the relationship between the company culture (including both the expectations of staff behaviour and the ethos the company claims to promote itself), and the new modes of performance control which I have outlined in the previous chapter. One example is the division between front-facing staff, who must work to provide a friendly, genuine and hospitable service environment, and the 'backstage' of the kitchen, which relies on speed, efficiency and a labour process more comparable to the Fordist production line. This spatial division is highlighted by Pret employees but, interestingly, with different perspectives on the respective benefits of working in each area. Whilst one employee explained they preferred working on the shop floor because the kitchen 'is more like a factory' where 'you need to be really organised and physically working hard', in comparison to cashier work where staff are also working hard, 'but it's more about the customer service […] good relationships with people', another employee, although agreeing that the these were 'two different worlds', reasoned that 'in the kitchen you have the freedom to be who you want to be, you don't have to pretend to be anyone else, but if you work at the tills you need to be friendly with the customers and you need to smile at them and basically pretend you are someone who you are not.'[120] The ability to 'switch off' when working in the kitchen made the imperative to perform on the shop floor more apparent, opening up the potential for undoing some of the obscuring of emotional labour that was discussed in chapter three.

Exploring this inherent tension, however, also necessitates paying attention to the other figure in these encounters: the audience (or consumer). These business practices are relational by nature, and the dynamics of the exchange between employees and their audiences which I have explored in this chapter. If, as I have

[120] Interview L2; interview L5.

argued earlier in this thesis, the interior emotional life that was so crucial to the characters of dramatic realism has been replaced by one where the authenticity of one's emotional life is to be judged by outward performance, this expectation now bleeds into day to day life, through our commercial purchases, working interactions and social landscapes. It becomes not just the performers in emotional labour jobs that find themselves compelled to adopt these models of character, but the wider public or audience as well.

The pervasiveness of these attitudes can also be seen in how such approaches are not restricted to the large corporate entities of Pret and Hawksmoor. In an encounter at an independent coffee shop in London, during the course of my research, I had an experience remarkably similar to that described by the Pret employee above. Upon arrival, at lunchtime, I expected to be served swiftly but found that the line for coffee was fifteen people deep and moving slowly, with each customer taking over a minute to be served once they reached the front. Impatiently, I looked over the shoulders of the other customers to see why things were moving at such a pace: there was one worker on the till processing payments who then passed on orders to the second worker who was alone in making the coffee. The shortage of staff was not the only determinant in the pace of service. The man working on the till was engaging energetically with each customer, beginning every interaction by asking them about their day, taking their name for the cup, and continuing conversation with them if they were responsive. Between orders he began enthusiastically dancing to the radio and making jokes with his colleague. This had the effect of slowing down each customer transaction as well as elongating the time before the next one could begin. After an arduous wait during which I found myself feeling increasingly frustrated I eventually reached the front of the queue. The cashier greeted me and asked, 'how are you?'. I

chose not to respond directly to his question because my actual feeling at that moment was one of annoyance at the waiting time, but I thought that saying so would result in an uncomfortable conversation which would also further lengthen the time before I received my coffee. In addition I felt tired (quite probably as a result of not yet having had my afternoon caffeine fix), and did not want to expend the emotional and physical effort it would take to appear happy and cheerful in response. Equally, however, I did not want to be impolite, and understood that the worker was experiencing a busy period in a job which I certainly did not envy. In response, therefore, I simply asked politely for a black Americano - 'please'. Instead of accepting my decision not to engage with his question, the cashier repeated it: 'how are you?'. I was surprised at his insistence that I comply with the script, and immediately felt anger at being forced to engage with an unwanted conversation when all I wanted to do was purchase coffee. Aware that my lunch companion was still waiting and by now desperate to speed up the transaction, I firmly stated 'I'm fine. Can I have a black Americano please' without any pretence to genuine happiness. At this point the cashier took the order and the exchange was quickly completed.

I was left with a number of unresolved questions: if I had continuously refused to answer the cashier's question would I have not been served? Would we have repeated the script indefinitely, with him asking about my day and me repeating my coffee order over and over until one of us relented? Who had the power over the exchange in this situation? This encounter occurred towards the beginning of my research process, and whilst it took me by surprise and created a sense of discomfort, I found myself, moving forwards, more prepared to engage with the rules of participation that I could ascertain in any given service encounter. My behaviour had been 'checked', and I altered it accordingly. I was no longer merely a consumer of a

good but someone who felt actively compelled to engage in certain ways, and at least partially responsible for the unfolding of the interaction.

Conclusion

We can see that the confusion caused by the ambiguity surrounding the performers and their multiple roles in the examples above also becomes a matter for audiences themselves. There as both patrons, expecting a full meal to be served and enjoyed, but also active participants in some kind of quest, journey or ritual, which they bear some responsibility for completing. The 'skills' that Alston refers to in relation to immersive theatre become valuable in navigating these hospitality spaces, and in doing so these specific forms of participation also become normalised. Most notably, employees themselves adopt a vocabulary of authenticity through which they in turn assess the audience's emotional performances – rewarding those who demonstrate a genuine interest or involvement, whilst rejecting those who can be seen to 'put on' the display. Subsequently, customers are likely to, consciously or not, adopt the gestures that have resulted in reward.

In my own case, despite many attempts at eliciting free items, I had little success. This led to questioning my own behaviour, as simultaneously too artificial and yet not artificial enough – I lacked the skills to perform the level of nonchalant authentic happiness that I knew, as a result of my research, would be required. I found myself, across multiple encounters, adopting different tactics in my pursuit. Taking my headphones off immediately after entering a store to show my intent to interact with staff rather than ignore them, asking cashiers how they were, smiling as visibly as possible when approaching the desk and as much as possible attempting to make

myself seem 'open' (a phrase discussed in depth in chapter three). At Hawksmoor, I tried to engage my server in conversation, consciously making efforts to 'invite' them to participate in the social experience of the meal. I asked more questions about the menu than I necessarily desired answers to, in order to prolong the interactions and also make the waiter feel more involved and necessary. We can thus see how the 'co-creation' of these theatricalised encounters are at least partially coerced. Both my encounter with Dolly at Gingerline, and my encounter at the independent coffee shop demonstrate that we are not simply free to produce the experience we desire. The feeling that you have not correctly played your part is enforced through subtle, and unsubtle, social cues and pressures. In my comparison between immersive theatre and my case studies in hospitality, I have also argued that the logics of Stanislavskian realism persist even in environments where audiences and consumers are directly implicated and made part of the performance.

In considering the ways in which the demands for emotional labour and the theatricalization of work impacts on audiences and customers, I have been able to at least partially address those critiques of Hochschild which argue that her analysis fails to consider the broader social implications of the conditions she exposes. Whilst much of this thesis has prioritised the experiences and conditions of employees, this pivot has allowed me to identify some of the broader social processes at play, and the consequences that the normalisation of these experiences have beyond those employed. In particular, I have argued that in making consumers into 'co-creators' of performances in these encounters, our behaviour is being shaped and encouraged in ways which align with the discourse of authenticity which I have previously fleshed out. Whilst I rejected a theorisation of the audience or consumer's role in which they directly contribute to the production of surplus value, I highlighted areas of

scholarship which allow us to draw a bridge between the commercialisation of emotions in the workplace and the wider impact this has on social and private life. Where I have, in earlier chapters, discussed the ways in which repeat performances at work shape and form the subjectivity of the worker, I have here demonstrated how the increasing proliferation of such experiential led goods and services in turn relate to wider processes of neoliberal subject formation. Where I draw from scholars who point to how citizens in the political and social life are constructed as engaging with institutions via the lens of consumerism, I argue that even in consumer contexts where we operate on a commercial level, we are expected to behave in ways which make us responsible, implicated and subject to the offloading of discipling techniques used on workers.

I have also shown how 'resistance' to this behaviour is difficult to enact as the customer, or audience member. I have argued that we are encouraged and prodded to comply with the framing offered to us, and that deviation from the 'script', or non-compliance is often made difficult, or creates a scenario in which the exchange itself cannot be completed. In contrast, my account has also highlighted the power that workers have in these environments to reinforce, and therefore also potentially subvert, the behavioural expectations put in place. As my examples show, it is often employees themselves that reinforce demands for authentic interactions from customers and audiences, meaning these workers have some agency over the performance, even where they are tightly scripted. I have identified a number of areas where tensions are both present and apparent, between the demands of management and the desires and agency of workers. Whether and how workers might choose to exacerbate these tensions remains the clearest route for resistance to such practices,

which as I have argued, are increasingly widespread within both the theatre industry and the broader economy.

Conclusion:

Emotional labour in the time of Covid-19

Since I began writing this thesis the arrival of Covid-19, and the global pandemic which followed, has fundamentally altered the context of this research. A project which found its locus through in-person visits to coffee shops and restaurants involving the observation of, and interaction with, other people during their working days and leisure activities, ended up being mostly completed in the isolation of lock down. The final eighteen months of this research were conducted whilst stores and restaurants were shut, and the service and hospitality sectors turned on their heads.

For my specific case studies too, the impact was notable. In the summer of 2020 Pret announced the closure of thirty British stores, resulting in the loss of over three thousand jobs.[121] Hawksmoor made three hundred staff members across their restaurants redundant, only to rehire them on furlough once government assistance plans were made public.[122] Both companies also turned to new products and modes of delivery in attempts to dampen the financial impact of the pandemic. For Pret this involved an increase in delivery services, with items becoming available on platforms such as Deliveroo and Uber Eats, as well as the introduction of a monthly coffee subscription service allowing customers up to five hot drinks a day for the cost of twenty pounds a month.[123] For Hawksmoor, this manifested in the introduction of

---

[121] Harriet Brewis, 'Pret A Manger cuts 2,8000 jobs as 30 stores close', *The Evening Standard*, 27 August 2020 < https://www.standard.co.uk/business/pret-a-manger-cuts-2-800-jobs-a4534856.html> [accessed 9 September 2021]

[122] Daniel Thomas, 'Hawksmoor strives to outlive coronavirus pandemic', *Financial Times*, 3 May 2020 < https://www.ft.com/content/2630a23f-309f-48fb-842f-252f5379c129> [accessed 9 September 2021]

[123] Finn Scott-Delany, 'Pret a Manger: "click and collect is going to be really important for us", *BigHospitality*, 19 February 2021 < https://www.bighospitality.co.uk/Article/2021/02/19/Pret-a-Manger-on-how-delivery-and-click-and-collect-led-to-the-creation-of-its-coffee-subscription> [accessed 9 September 2021]

‘Hawksmoor at home’ meal kits, which were available to be delivered straight to homes across the country, complete with instructions on how to cook the meals using Hawksmoor’s prepped ingredients.[124] At the height of the pandemic, it seemed that not only was the future viability of many hospitality businesses in doubt, but that the entire model of the industry may be forever altered.

These challenges would also seem to pose fundamental questions to the relevancy of this project. The nature of these environments has been transformed for the foreseeable future, not only through the demands of social distancing and the threat of future lockdowns, but by the now ubiquitous presence of the mask, fundamentally altering the nature of the interpersonal relations so central to the analysis of emotional labour. This raises a number of questions which were not present at the outset of this research. In what ways might the landscape of leisure and hospitality be permanently altered by the changing conditions forced on the industry by Covid-19? Will the pandemic speed up processes of automation or elimination of jobs in these sectors, dispensing with the need for human emotional labour power? What will become of the social, interpersonal and emotional dynamics in these experiences, concerns which lie at the centre of this thesis?

In the case of Pret, the company’s fortunes during the pandemic have become a marker of both economic recovery and political priorities. When, during the summer of 2020, the British government first attempted to encourage people back to office work as part of attempts to kick start economic recovery, the policy became popularly referred to as ‘Save Pret’, the sense emerging that policy was being dictated by efforts to stop companies such as Pret from going bankrupt due to the lack of customers

[124] *Hawksmoor at Home* <https://thehawksmoor.com/hawksmoor-at-home/> [accessed 9 September 2021]

caused by the switch to at-home working patterns.[125] More recently Pret began providing weekly sales data to *Bloomberg,* who in turn have used these figures to offer a weekly updated map charting the economic recovery of the major global cities in which Pret has stores. *Bloomberg* use Pret's data to provide evidence of shopping and spending figures relative to pre-pandemic levels, as well as how many employees are returning to offices: 'The figures give a global perspective on where there's demand for breakfast and lunch as shoppers return to stores to splash their lockdown savings on so-called revenge spending.'[126] Named 'The Pret Index', the map uses a baseline of January 2020 for calculations, and compares progress according to those levels. Pret's transactions are here used as a marker for the 'health' of the economy, with the company itself becoming synonymous with the fate of work, specifically office work, in the aftermath of the Covid-19 restrictions.

According to the Pret Index, sales in central London have now returned to between seventy to eighty percent of pre-pandemic levels, representing a significant recovery at a time when many are still working from home. The final months of this research were completed as the leisure and hospitality sectors reopened, with people heading back to bars, restaurants and theatres after prolonged closure. Hochschild, in *The Managed Heart,* writes on the unrelenting desire for the 'unmanaged heart', for experiences free from the alienation or control of our emotional landscapes under capitalism.[127] Whilst I have argued throughout this thesis that such a promise is illusory, in that the alienating effects of emotional labour extend far beyond their

---

[125] Sam Knight, 'The Future of the Officer Lunch', *The New Yorker,* 28 September 2020 < https://www.newyorker.com/news/letter-from-the-uk/the-future-of-the-office-lunch> [accessed 9 September 2021]
[126] Thomas Buckley and Jeremy Scott Diamond, 'The Pret Index', *Bloomberg* < https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/pret-index/> [accessed 9 September 2021]
[127] Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1983), p. 190.

immediate application in the workplace, the desire for such experiences continues to find articulation. After a period of relative social isolation, it could be predicted that such demand will in fact surge – with the potential for companies and brands to effectively capitalise on people's desire for renewed interaction and sociability after the social isolation brought about by the pandemic. Whilst the pandemic raises new questions for the study of emotional labour, it also perhaps heightens the significance of these forms of work, at a time when the desire for authentic social experiences is magnified.

Commodity fetishism

This research has sought to understand the effects of emotions, personalities and private lives being subject to commodification via the labour process, in an economy increasingly reliant on these elements as part of labour power. It has looked at this question from three perspectives: the impact on the individual worker's sense of self; the management of such labour; the role of customers and audiences in such contexts. In doing so it has attempted to offer a rounded study of emotional labour both within the workplace, and its impacts outside of it. Accordingly, it has argued for two main principles in the approach to the study of emotional labour.

Firstly, that the workplace and the wage relation still remains a key site of analysis. This is in contrast to those who would argue that the nature of contemporary capitalist production makes a focus on labour power redundant, or that argues for an understanding of production which dispenses with Marx's labour theory of value. This also stands in contrast to those for whom emotional labour is a descriptive term

used primarily outside of the workplace, in reference to personal relationships and social interactions, such as those cited in the introduction.

Simultaneously, however, this thesis has also maintained that the impact of these increasingly prevalent forms of labour have effects that permeate social life well beyond the workplace. In contrast to those who would confine an analysis of emotional labour to the site of commercial work, this research has argued for an extension of our study to incorporate an understanding of how these processes shape and define subjectivity more broadly. As such, it marries a critique of those approaches outlined above with an analysis which bridges the gap between emotional labour at work, and emotional social relations outside of it. This thesis has therefore argued both that the employment relation remains key to understanding how power and control is exercised over the emotional performances of workers, and that work is itself a key site for the construction and reproduction of our notions of 'authentic', genuine or credible expressions of selfhood elsewhere in our lives. Whilst the role of feelings and emotions at work becomes more apparent, this thesis has argued that the articulation and use of those feelings and emotions has a material basis in power relations.

In making these arguments this research has also argued for the continued applicability of Hochschild's foundational work, in particular her grounding of the concept of emotional labour within a Marxist framework – which highlights both the exchange value of emotional labour as part of labour power itself and its alienating consequences for workers – and for an expansion of her framework to account for the ways in which the commodification of emotions via the sale of labour power has alienating effects beyond the workplace. As discussed in the introduction, Hochschild is right to caution against the overstretching of the term emotional labour so that it

comes to say little about the processes of control and exploitation which capital wields over people. Simultaneously however, this research has argued for the necessity of moving beyond an individualising frame of analysis which limits our understanding of emotional labour to direct effects on the worker only whilst they are at work. Instead I have argued that the effects of emotional labour and the theatricalised framing of commercial encounters extend beyond these individual experiences of work and come to have much broader social consequence. In particular, I have argued in chapter four that a reorientation towards questions of 'character' has come to shape how businesses are organised, with resultant effects on their treatment of both employees and customers. In chapter five I have argued that the logics of emotional authenticity as demanded of staff in these environments are also being passed on to consumers and audiences. This in turn has implications for how subjectivity is being shaped in line with the demand for the performance of selfhood, both at work and as consumers, according to dictates of authenticity that are increasingly shaped and directed by corporate business.

At the outset of this research I discussed the commodification of emotions as part of human labour power, with the rest of this thesis delving into the consequences that the increasing demand for this aspect of labour has created. Reflecting on the conclusions that the research has drawn; the question of commodity fetishism comes into view. For Marx, commodities are the result of acts of human labour, which become exchangeable with one another based on the socially necessary labour time embodied in them.[128] Commodity fetishism results from this relationship between human labour and the commodity being obscured, with commodities coming to be seen as 'things' which operate in relation to each other rather than in relation to the

[128] Karl Marx, *Capital Volume I* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1976).

people who produced them.[129] For Marx this means the commodity becomes a 'mysterious thing', with the social relationship of labour assuming a 'fantastic form of a relation between things'.[130] Barbara Foley, summarising Marx, describes the realm of exchange as a 'mystified (and mystifying site) where appearance substitutes for essence, surface for depth'.[131] We exchange and consume commodities with little thought to the human labour which produced them. Foley argues that commodity fetishism has 'psychosocial effects' which extend not only to all those involved in processes of production and exchange (i.e. consumers as well as producers) but also for literary works emerging from a society based on the law of value – and arguably, by extension, theatre and performance work.[132]

This thesis has argued that emotional labour itself is often constitutive of value in contexts where interactive 'experience' makes up the commodity on sale. As such, the consequences of commodity fetishism where the commodity itself is made up of human emotional material are profound. If commodity fetishism is, as Foley argues, about obscuring and naturalising the processes of capital, so that appearance and essence become confused, then this corresponds to the arguments this thesis has made regarding the naturalisation of 'authentic' emotional expression taking place under current conditions. Emotional labour both commodifies the worker's own emotional life and subjectivity as part of the sale of their labour power to the employer, and commodifies emotional displays and relations via sale to the consumer. This understanding restates the importance of Marxist political economy, even in looking at forms of labour that Marx himself did not attend to or imagine. Citing the process

[129] Marx, p. 166.
[130] Marx, p. 165.
[131] Barbara Foley, *Marxist Literary Criticism Today* (London: Pluto, 2019), p. 37.
[132] Foley, p. 38.

of commodity production via labour is key, whilst also accounting for how this very process contributes to the production of capitalist social relations as a totality.

Performance and emotion

Foley's argument about the effects of commodity fetishism extending to literary and art works produced under conditions of capitalism also relates to this thesis's use of theatre and performance studies to both understand emotional labour in commercial environments and to argue for the constituent relationship that dramatic forms have with the types of emotional expression being demanded in the workplace. This thesis has built upon Hochschild's own definition to argue that emotional labour, as social displays of feeling commodified via the labour process, should also be understood as performance. As such, the research has aimed to make a contribution both to the scholarship on emotional labour and contemporary work, and to the renewed interest in questions of labour within theatre and performance studies itself.

Much has been written about the labour of performance, and about the performance of labour in recent years. As I outlined in chapter one, literature on emotional labour, immaterial labour and working conditions under neoliberalism has often drawn on performance, and theatre specifically, to paint a picture of increasingly precarious employment relations defined simultaneously by spectacle and theatricalization, and a drive towards quantified measures of 'authenticity' in both employee commitment and consumer experience. Theatre and performance scholars, likewise, have shown attention to theatrical representations of labour, as well as the conditions of production facing performance itself. This research has argued that theatre and performance has insights to offer the analysis of work, particularly that

which involves performance or theatricalization itself. In particular, I have argued that the labour conditions of actors themselves holds valuable insights into the conditions facing other groups of workers.

The changes brought by the onset of the pandemic, as discussed at the outset at this conclusion, have also impacted the theatre industry, suffering from the closure of productions, and drama schools, where practical in-person training has been disrupted by social distancing and lock downs. Once again the repercussions of the pandemic raise questions of how theatre and performance can contribute to our understanding and analysis of what is happening in other areas of the economy. This might be most obviously signalled by the onset of masks as part of daily life. The mask of course poses questions for the study and understanding of the function of emotion, character and personality in work. Does the mask offer protection for the employee, a shield against some of the demands toward performance that were otherwise expected of them? Does it represent a barrier against forms of emotional dissonance discussed in chapter three? Does it potentially create the pressure to overcompensate the 'experience' of such environments via other means, adding to additional pressures of staff elsewhere? Does the use of masks in these contexts lead to a devaluing of the interaction, or a change in the customers' relationship with the staff and the company or establishment itself?

As both the hospitality and the theatre industries navigate attempts at economic recovery, the potential to further an analysis which brings them together becomes apparent. In September 2021 Punchdrunk, one of the immersive theatre companies discussed in chapter five, announced plans for a new show at a permanent

base in Woolwich, London.[133] Long known for their use of masks, both on spectators and those who staff and steward their shows, Punchdrunk's return encapsulated many of the issues addressed in this thesis. With the economic challenges facing theatre even more greatly heightened post pandemic, Punchdrunk announced their new production would be in collaboration with Porsche. The mixed economic funding model, reliant on corporate and private donors, as discussed in chapter five seems to be becoming further entrenched, with a production which does not serve as an explicit brand-scape but nonetheless is reliant on the support of corporate partnership. Furthermore, Punchdrunk announced the new show would incorporate newly designed masks which both continue the company's existing style, and incorporate Covid requirements. Further research might focus on the question of the mask, using the many contributions of theatre and performance to explore the effects and consequences of its widespread adoption in non-theatrical 'performances' at work.

One of the ways in which I have sought to build on Hochschild's argument is to elaborate on, deepen and correct her approach to legacies of nineteenth century naturalism and realism. There are many additional avenues of research that can emerge from such an approach. This research has focused on the development of Stanislavskian based training in British and American actor training, and its subsequent impact or translation within businesses. It has considering the formalised routes of entry into the profession and their historical development, thinking throughout about the implications that the gradually shifting landscape of actor training in the twentieth-century has had upon the theatricalization of business elements elsewhere. Today, drama schools and actor training are once again in a

[133] Chris Wiegand, 'Punchdrunk to stage epic "future noir" drama in old London arms factory' *The Guardian*, 6 September 2021 < https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2021/sep/06/punchdrunk-stage-the-burnt-city-royal-arsenal-london-arms-factory-immersive-trojan-war> [accessed 9 September 2021]

period of transition, and perhaps even crisis, whose effects remain to be seen. Indeed, chapter two of this thesis attempted to offer some account for the trajectory of actor training in Britain which proved difficult to pull together given the piecemeal and inconsistent nature of existing accounts. This area in itself would be a valuable topic to research in more detail – a materialist account of the relationship between British television and theatre and drama school provision is a hugely important component of theatrical history which is largely unwritten and difficult to trace.

Future research could also complicate the connections made in this thesis, between Stanislavskian psychological realism and emotional labour, by considering other methods of training, looking more specifically at other practices, traditions and specific teachers whose work is also utilised in actor training. Examples might include modes of performance which depart significantly from the Stanislavskian paradigm such as the work of Augusto Boal, which has been explored in Sarah Saddler's work on the use of Boal's forum theatre within training in Indian businesses, or Brechtian methods.[134] The interplay or relationship between theatrical estrangement and the types of alienation that this thesis has explored in relation to emotional labour might also offer an avenue for more considered study of the ways in which employees can, and do, resist the emotional demands placed on them at work, and what kinds of strategies the increasing prevalence of such jobs might necessitate or bring to fruition. Whilst this research has thought about such work as performance, and how a myriad of theatricalised elements have come to shape such labour performances, this other avenue might allow for a consideration of how such performances can be subverted, reclaimed, or overturned via the use of alternative performance strategies and modes.

[134] Sarah Saddler, '"Think differently, get creative": producing precarity in India's corporate theatre culture industry', *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 22:1 (2017) pp. 22-35.

Avenues of resistance

In addition to the challenges I outlined above, the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, combined with the repercussions of Britain's formal exit from the European Union, have also resulted in significant labour shortages since opening restrictions have lifted. With stores reopening, businesses have been unable to recruit workers to make up for those laid off during lockdown.[135] Whilst this has impacted sectors across the economy, service and hospitality have been particularly badly hit, with companies desperately seeking staff to make up for the shortfall. Both Pret and Hawksmoor have reported being affected by shortages, with efforts taken to appeal to and recruit new employees. At Hawksmoor, the company began offering up to two thousand pounds worth of bonuses to any member of staff who recruited and recommended a friend (providing that friend went on to pass a probationary period and enter formal employment with the company).[136] At Pret, signs advertising the jobs and pay rates have gone up at stores around the country.[137] Notably, the hourly rate displayed in these signs includes the mystery shopper bonus, further adding to my argument in chapter four that this bonus is experienced and treated by staff as part of the wage itself, with its withholding effectively a form of punishment via pay docking.

The staff shortage issue also calls attention to a potential shift in power in the industry, with workers gaining strength during a period where companies cannot

---

[135] Office for National Statistics, *Vacancies and Jobs in the UK: August 2021,* 17 August 2021 < https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/jobsandvacanciesintheuk/july2021> [accessed 9 September 2021]

[136] 'Restaurants get creative in bid to plug staff shortage', *BBC News*, 23 May 2021 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-57218978> [accessed 9 September 2021]

[137] Lead Stanfield, 'Pret A Manger under fire for poor staff pay – "Can't afford lunch!"', *The Express,* 2 September 2021 <https://www.express.co.uk/life-style/life/1485662/pret-a-manger-staff-pay-twitter> [accessed 9 September 2021]

afford to lose more staff, and where there are other hospitality jobs readily available. Throughout this thesis, the questions of organization from workers and points of tension have persistently raised their heads, without clear answers. As I argued in chapter five, the wide ranging social implications of performative emotional labour make attempts to break with, or pierce the frame of, these forms of control increasingly difficult to imagine. Yet with this shift in the balance of power come new opportunities. Most recently, Pret workers threatened strike action over the loss of pay related to the mystery shopper bonus which I discuss in chapter four.[138] After the outbreak of Covid-19 and the closure of a number of Pret stores, the company announced in summer 2020 that the one pound hourly bonus for staff who 'passed' the mystery shopper inspection each week would be scrapped. With stores reopening, the company eventually reinstated the bonus at half the original rate, fifty pence per hour.[139] The threat of industrial action attracted mainstream news coverage, with the likes of *The Guardian* reporting it as a significant development in a workplace (and industry) notoriously difficult to unionise. Less than a week after the threats were made public, Pret backed down and reinstated the full bonus pay, leading to the strikes being called off. It remains to be seen what the longer term consequences of the current labour shortages are, as well as the impact of Covid-19 on attempts to organise amongst workplaces like Pret and Hawksmoor, but the current conditions appear to open up new possibilities.

In writing this thesis I have found that when I explain to people the topic of my research, they often launch into a description of their own work, either past or present, in which they see some element of emotional management and performance

---

[138] Sarah Butler, 'Pret to restore staff bonus after workers threaten strike action', *The Guardian*, 12 August 2021 < https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/aug/12/pret-to-restore-staff-bonus-after-workers-threaten-strike-action> [accessed 9 September 2021]
[139] Butler.

being expected. When I describe the concept of emotional labour and its relationship to performance, or acting specifically, people are quick to relay their own experiences of ‘putting it on’ or coming under pressure to conform to institutional demands. I am often told ‘I do sometimes feel like I’m acting’. For many, the idea of emotional labour, and of performing emotions in particular, helps them to name something they have long felt but not had the language to describe. It makes visible the, often difficult, work which many are expected to do as part of their employment, as well as to maintain social and familial bonds. Whilst emotional labour may have become an increasingly contested term, at times used with an imprecision which is problematic, these responses over the years spent on this research confirm for me its political potency and analytical value. This project was inspired by the recognition of such potential, and the desire to uncover in more detail exactly what is taking place in these encounters and contexts. I hope it has gone some way to offer an insight into these workplace practices, and contributed to unveiling some of the ways in which our emotional performances are increasingly subject to control, measurement and alienation in our working lives.

Works cited

Abercrombie, Nicholas, Lash, Scott, and Longhurst, Brian, 'Popular Representation: Recasting Realism', in *Modernity & Identity*, ed. by Scott Lash and Jonathan Friedman (Oxford; Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 115–41

Abraham, Rebecca, 'The Impact of Emotional Dissonance on Organizational Commitment and Intention to Turnover', *The Journal of Psychology*, 133.4 (1999), pp. 441–55

Ahmed, Sara, 'Smile!', *feministkilljoys,* 2nd February 2017 https://feministkilljoys.com/2017/02/02/smile/ [accessed 23 June 2021]

'Airline crew threaten a no-smile strike', *NDTV*, 11 December 2012 <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/airline-crew-threaten-a-no-smile-strike-507174> [accessed 23 June 2021]

Alcotraz <https://www.alcotraz.co.uk/> [accessed 10 December 2018]

Alexandrowicz, Conrad, 'Pretty/Sexy: Impacts of the Sexualisation of Young Women on Theatre Pedagogy', *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*, 3.3 (2012), pp. 288–301

Alston, Adam, 'Audience Participation and Neoliberal Value: Risk, Agency and Responsibility in Immersive Theatre', *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 18.2 (2013), pp. 128–38

———, *Beyond Immersive Theatre: Aesthetics, Politics and Productive Participation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016)

Aquilina, Stefan, 'Stanislavsky and the Impact of Studio Ethics on Everyday Life', *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*, 3.3 (2012), pp. 302–14

Arruzza, Cinzia, 'The Capitalism of Affects', *Public Seminar* (August 2005) <http://www.publicseminar.org/2014/08/the-capitalism-of-affects/> [accessed 28 February 2018]

Auslander, Philip, *From Acting to Performance: Essays in Modernism and Postmodernism* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1997)

Barnes, Kenneth, *Welcome Good Friends* (London; Peter Davies, 1958)

Barnes, John, 'Theatre School' (BBC, 1993)

Beck, Julie, 'The Concept Creep of Emotional Labor', *The Atlantic*, 26th November 2018 https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2018/11/arlie-hochschild-housework-isnt-emotional-labor/576637/ [accessed 23 June 2021]

Beech, Dave, *Art and Value: Art's Economic Exceptionalism in Classical, Neoclassical and Marxist Economics*, 2016

Benedetti, Jean, *Stanislavski and the Actor* (London: Methuen Drama, 1998)

Bhattacharya, Tithi, 'Introduction: Mapping Social Reproduction' *in Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentring Oppression* ed. Tithi Bhattacharya (London: Pluto, 2017)

Boltanski, Luc, and Chiapello, Eve, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2018)

Bolton, Sharon C., and Boyd, Carol, 'Trolley Dolly or Skilled Emotion Manager? Moving on from Hochschild's Managed Heart', *Work, Employment and Society*, 17:2 (2003), pp. 289–308

Bourdieu, Pierre, 'The essence of Neoliberalism'*, Le Monde Diplomatique*, December 1998 <https://mondediplo.com/1998/12/08bourdieu> [accessed 23 June 2021]

Boyle, Michael Shane, 'Performance and Value: The Work of Theatre in Karl Marx's Critique of Political Economy', *Theatre Survey*, 58.1 (2017), pp. 2-33

Braverman, Harry, *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1998)

Brewis, Harriet, 'Pret A Manger cuts 2,8000 jobs as 30 stores close', *The Evening Standard*, 27 August 2020 < https://www.standard.co.uk/business/pret-a-manger-cuts-2-800-jobs-a4534856.html> [accessed 9 September 2021]

Brook, Paul, 'In critical defence of "emotional labour": refuting Bolton's critique of Hochschild's concept', *Work, Employment and Society*, 23:3 (2009), pp. 531-548

———, 'The Alienated Heart: Hochschild's "Emotional Labour" Thesis and the Anticapitalist Politics of Alienation', *Capital & Class*, 3.7 (2009), pp. 7-31

Brown, Roger and Carasso, Helen, *Everything for Sale? The Marketisation of UK Higher Education* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013)

Buckley, Thomas and Scott Diamond, Jeremy, 'The Pret Index', *Bloomberg* < https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/pret-index/> [accessed 9 September 2021]

Burns, Elizabeth, *Theatricality: a study of convention in the theatre and in social life* (London: Longman, 1972)

Butler, Judith, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory', *Theatre Journal*, 40.4 (Dec) (1988), pp. 519–31

Butler, Sarah, 'Pret to restore staff bonus after workers threaten strike action', *The Guardian*, 12 August 2021 < https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/aug/12/pret-to-restore-staff-bonus-after-workers-threaten-strike-action> [accessed 9 September 2021]

Camilleri, Frank, ‘Of Pounds of Flesh and Trojan Horses: Performer Training in the Twenty-First Century’, *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 14.2 (2009), pp. 26–34

———, ‘Towards the Study of Actor Training in an Age of Globalised Digital Technology’, *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*, 6.1 (2015), pp. 16–29

Carnicke, Sharon Marie, *Stanislavsky in Focus: An Acting Master for the Twenty-First Century*, Routledge Theatre Classics, 2nd ed (London; New York: Routledge, 2009)

Carlson, Marvin, ‘The Resistance to Theatricality’, *SubStance*, 31 no. 2/3.98/99 (2002), pp. 238–50

‘Cathay Pacific Smile Strike: Cabin Crews Threaten To Withhold Services Over Pay Dispute’, *Huffington Post Canada,* 13 December 2012 <https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2012/12/13/cathay-pacific-smile-strike_n_2292796.html> [accessed 23 June 2021]

Cederström, Carl and Fleming, Peter, *Dead Man Working* (Winchester, UK: Zero Books, 2012)

‘Central for Business’, Central School of Speech and Drama, <https://www.cssd.ac.uk/content/central-business> [accessed 16 March 2020]

Chambers, Colin ‘Developments in the Profession of Theatre, 1946-2000’, in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre, Volume 3: Since 1895,* ed. by Baz Kershaw, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 377–96

Chambers, Jonathan, ‘Actor Training Meets Historical Thinking’, in *The Politics of American Actor Training*, ed. by Ellen Margolis and Lissa Tyler Renaud (New York: Routledge, 2009)

Chow, Broderick D.V, ‘An Actor Manages: Actor Training and Managerial Ideology’, *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*, 5 (2014), pp. 131–43

Clare, Ysabel, ‘Stanislavsky's quest for the Ideal Actor: the System as Socratic encounter’, *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*, 7:2 (2016), pp. 148-164

Conquergood, Dwight, ‘Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research', *TDR: The Drama Review*, 46:2 (2002), pp. 145-156

Counsell, Colin, *Signs of Performance: An Introduction to Twentieth-Century Theatre* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1996)

Dacre, Kathy, ‘Teaching Stanislavski’ (Palatine, 2009) <https://www.heacademy.ac.ukmy.ac.uk/system/files/teaching-stanislavski.pdf> [accessed 28 June 2017]

Darling and Edge, ‘Beauty and the Feast’

<https://www.darlingandedge.com/beautyandthefeast> [accessed 10 December 2018]

Davies, Will, *The Happiness Industry: How the Government and Big Business Sold Us Well-Being* (London, New York: Verso, 2016)

Davis, Tracy C., *Actresses as Working Women: Their Social Identity in Victorian Culture*, Gender and Performance (London ; New York: Routledge, 1991)

Delgado-García, Cristina, *Rethinking Character in Contemporary British Theatre: Aesthetics, Politics, Subjectivity*, CDE Studies, Volume 26 (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2015)

Denzin, Norman K., *Performance Ethnography: Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Culture* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003)

Dinnertime Story <http://www.dinnertimestory.com/> [accessed 10 December 2018]

'Divine Proportions', *The Vaults* <https://www.thevaults.london/divine-proportions> [accessed 10 December 2018]

Dowling, Emma, 'Producing the Dining Experience: Measure, Subjectivity and the Affective Worker', *Ephemera*, 7.1 (2007), pp. 117–32

Drucker, Peter, 'The Coming of the New Organization', *Harvard Business Review* (January-February 1988), pp. 45-53

du Gay, Paul et al, 'Character and Organization', *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 12.1 (2019), pp. 36-53.

Edinborough, Campbell, 'Using the Method to Be Myself: Adapting and Appropriating Historical Training Approaches for Interactive Performance', *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*, 9.2 (2018), pp. 174–88

Elsom, John, *Post-War British Theatre* (London ; Boston: Routledge & K. Paul, 1976)

'Fernald brings Realism to RADA', *Plays and Players*, February 1957

Fisher, Mark, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?*, (Winchester: Zero Books, 2009).

Fleming, Peter, *Authenticity and the cultural politics of work*. Oxford University Press, 2009, Oxford and New York.

Foley, Barbara, *Marxist Literary Criticism Today* (London: Pluto, 2019)

Foucault, Michel, 'The Subject and Power' in *Michel Foucault*, ed. L Dreyfus and P Rabinow (Brighton: Harvester, 1982),

Francombe, Ben, 'Falling Off a Wall: Degrees of Change in British Actor Training', *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, 21.3, pp. 176–87

Freeman, John, 'Drama at a Time of Crisis: Actor Training, Performance Study and the Creative Workplace', *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 13.4 (2012), pp. 1-22

Fuchs, Christian, 'Labor in Informational Capitalism and on the Internet', *The Information Society*, 26 (2010), pp. 179–96

Fuchs, Christian and Sevignani, Sebastian, 'What Is Digital Labour? What Is Digital Work? What's Their Difference? And Why Do These Questions Matter for Understanding Social Media?', *Triple C*, 11.2 (2013), pp. 237–93

Fuchs, Elinor, *The Death of Character: Perspectives on Theater after Modernism*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996)

Gale, Maggie B., 'The London Stage, 1918-1945', in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre*, ed. by Baz Kershaw, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), VOLUME 3: SINCE 1895, pp. 143–67

Garber, Marjorie, *Character: The History of a Cultural Obsession*, First edition (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020)

Gardner, Viv, 'Provincial Stages, 1900-1934: Touring and Early Repertory Theatre', in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre*, *Volume 3: Since 1895,* ed. by Baz Kershaw, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 60–86

Giddens, Anthony, *Modern and Self Identity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991)

Gill, Rosalind, and Pratt, Andy, 'Precarity and Cultural Work in the Social Factory? Immaterial Labour, Precariousness and Cultural Work', *Theory, Culture & Society,* 25 (7-8) (2008), pp. 1-30

Grazian, David, *Blue Chicago: The Search for Authenticity in Urban Blues Clubs* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2003)

Grove, Stephen J., Fisk, Raymond P. and Dorsch, Michael J., 'Assessing the Theatrical Components of the Service Encounter: A Cluster Analysis Examination', *Service Industries Journal*, 18:3 (1998), pp. 116-134

Guerrier, Yvonne and Adib, Amel, 'Work at Leisure and Leisure at Work: A Study of the Emotional Labour of Tour Reps', *Human Relations*, 56 (11) (2003), pp. 1399–1417

Hardt, Michael and Negri, Antonio, *Multitude – War and Democracy in an Age of Empire* (London: Penguin, 2005)

Hartley, Gemma, 'Women Aren't Nags – We're Just Fed Up', *Harpers Baza*ar, 27 September 2017 <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/features/a12063822/emotional-labor-gender-equality/> [accessed 23 June 2021]

Harvey, David, 'Neoliberalism as Creative Destruction', *The Annals of the American*

Academy of Political and Social Science, 610: March 2007, pp. 22-44

Haunschild, Axel and Eikhof, Doris Ruth, '"Bringing Creativity to Market: Actors as Self-Employed Employees"', in Creative Labour: Working in the Creative Industries, ed. by Alan McKinlay and Chris Smith, Critical Perspectives on Work and Employment (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), pp. 156–73

Hawksmoor at Home <https://thehawksmoor.com/hawksmoor-at-home/> [accessed 9 September 2021]

Hochschild, Arlie Russell, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1983)

———, 'Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure', *American Journal of Sociology*, 85.3 (Nov) (1979), pp. 551–75

Horgan, Amelia, *Lost in Work: Escaping Capitalism* (London: Pluto Press, 2021)

Hornby, Richard, 'Stanislavski in America' in *Stanislavski on Stage*, eds. Kathy Dacre & Paul Fryer. (Stanislavski Centre, Rose Bruford College, 2008)

Hudson, Lynton Alfred, *The English Stage, 1850-1950* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1972)

Huffington Post Canada, 'Cathay Pacific Smile Strike: Cabin Crews Threaten To Withhold Services Over Pay Dispute', 13 December 2012 <https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2012/12/13/cathay-pacific-smile-strike_n_2292796.html> [accessed 23 June 2021]

Hughes, Jason, 'Bringing emotion to work: emotional intelligence, employee resistance and the reinvention of character', *Work, Employment and Society* 19:3 (2005), pp. 603-625

Hurley, Erin, *Theatre and Feeling* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010

Hurst, Phoebe and Onibudo, Wunmi, 'How Pret Took Over the British High Street', Vice, 2019, <https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/n7jjjd/pret-a-manger-history-business-model> [accessed 16 March 2020]

Ikeler, Peter, 'Deskilling Emotional Labour: Evidence from Department Store Retail', *Work, Employment and Society*, 30 (2016), pp. 966–83

Illouz, Eva, 'Introduction: Emodities or the making of emotional commodities' in *Emotions as Commodities: Capitalism, Consumption and Authenticity*, ed. Eva Illouz (Oxon, New York: Routledge, 2018)

'Immersive Theatre Survey Launched' *Equity*, 18th June 2019 < https://www.equity.org.uk/news/2019/june/immersive-theatre-survey-launched/> [accessed 21 April 2021]

Ivancheva, Mariya, ‘Unbundling: A New Gendered Frontier of Exclusion and Exploitation in the Neoliberal University’, *Matter: Journal of New Materialist Research*, 1 (2009), pp. 99–104

Jackson, David, ‘Stanislavski, Emotion and the Future of the UK Conservatoire’, *Stanislavski Studies*, 5.1 (2017), pp. 75–83

James, Anna, ‘Safety and immersive theatre: where should the boundaries be set?’ *The Stage*, 3rd September 2019 <https://www.thestage.co.uk/features/safety-and-immersive-theatre-where-should-the-boundaries-be-set> [accessed 21 April 2021]

Jamieson, Amber, ‘Performers and Staffers At “Sleep No More” Say Audience Members Have Sexually Assaulted Them’ *Buzzfeed,* 6 February 2018 <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/amberjamieson/sleep-no-more> [accessed 21 April 2021]

Jansz, Jeroen and Timmers, Monique, ‘Emotional Dissonance: When the Experience of an Emotion Jeopardizes an Individual’s Identity’, *Theory & Psychology*, 12.1 (2002), pp. 79–95

‘Join Our Team’, *Union Square Hospitality Group*, [https://www.ushgnyc.com/join-our-team/] <accessed 10 March 2020>

Johnston, Josée and Baumann, Shyon, *Foodies: Democracy and Distinction in the Gourmet Foodscape*, Cultural Spaces Series (New York: Routledge, 2010)

Joseph, Miranda, ‘The Performance of Production and Consumption’, *Social Text*, 54 Spring (1998), pp. 25–61.

Kennedy, Dennis, ‘British Theatre, 1895-1946: Art, Entertainment, Audiences - an Introduction’, in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre*, *Volume 3: Since 1895,* ed. by Baz Kershaw, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 3–34

Kershaw, Baz , ‘British Theatre, 1940-2002’, in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre*, ed. by Baz Kershaw, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), VOLUME 3: SINCE 1895, pp. 291–326

Kilch, Rosemary, ‘Playing a Punchdrunk Game: Immersive Theatre and Videogaming', in *Reframing Immersive Theatre*, ed. by James Frieze, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 221-229

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara, ‘Performance Studies', in *The Performance Studies Reader* ed. by Henry Bial (London, New York: Routledge, 2004)

Kit, Borys, ‘Disney Movies to be Adapted as Immersive Experiences by Secret Cinema’, *The Hollywood Reporter,* 23 January 2020 < https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/heat-vision/secret-cinema-tackle-disney-movies-immersive-experiences-1272343> [accessed 21 April 2021

Knight, Sam, ‘The Future of the Officer Lunch’, *The New Yorker,* 28 September 2020

< https://www.newyorker.com/news/letter-from-the-uk/the-future-of-the-office-lunch> [accessed 9 September 2021]

Knights, David and Willmott, Hugh, 'Power and Subjectivity at Work: From Degradation to Subjugation in Social Relations', *Sociology,* 23:4 (1989), pp. 535-558

Lacey, Stephen, *British Realist Theatre: The New Wave in Its Context 1956-1965* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1995)

Lancaster, Kurt, 'When Spectators Become Performers: Contemporary Performance-Entertainments Meet the Needs of an "Unsettled" Audience', *Journal of Popular Culture*, 30.4 (1997), pp. 75–88

Langhamer, Claire, 'Love, Selfhood and Authenticity in Post-War Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 9.2 (2012), pp. 277–97

Lapavitsas, Costas, *Profiting without Producing: How Finance Exploits Us All* (London ; New York: Verso, 2013

Lehmann, Hans-Thies, *Postdramatic Theatre* (London, New York: Routledge, 2006)

Leidner, Robin, *Fast Food Fast Talk: Service Work and the Routinization of Everyday Life* (University of California Press, 1993: Berkeley)

Livergant, Elyssa, 'Workshops: The Cultural Politics of Theatre and Performance Labour' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, Queen Mary and Birkbeck, 2014)

Lovell, Terry, *Pictures of Reality: Aesthetics, Politics, Pleasure* (London: British Film Institute, 1980)

Lutz, Catherine A., 'Emotion, Thought, and Estrangement: Emotion as a Cultural Category', in *The Emotions: A Cultural Reader*, by Helena Wulff (ed) (Oxford ; New York: Berg, 2007)

———, *Unnatural Emotions: Everyday Sentiments on a Micronesian Atoll & Their Challenge to Western Theory (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988)*

'M&S hits back at Aldi's Cuthbert the Caterpillar cake revival', *BBC News,* 20 April 2021 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-56812445> [accessed 12 September 2021]

Marowitz, Charles 'British Acting is Divorced from Reality', *Plays and Players*, March 1957

———, 'A Conversation with Stanislavsky', *Plays and Players*, March 1958

Marx, Karl, *Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/preface.htm > [accessed 9 December 2016].

———, *Capital Volume I* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1976)

McDowell, Linda, *Working Bodies: Interactive Service Employment and Workplace Identities*, Studies in Urban and Social Change (Chichester, UK ; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009)

McGivering, Jill, BBC News, 'Smile strike for Cathay Staff', 6 January 1999 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/249888.stm> [accessed 23 June 2021]

McKelvey, Patrick, 'A Disabled Actor Prepares: Stanislavsky, Disability, and Work at the National Theatre Workshop of the Handicapped', *Theatre Journal*, 71.1 (2019), pp. 69–89

McKenzie, Jon, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2001)

Meyer, Danny, *Setting the Table: Lessons and Inspirations from One of the World's Leading Entrepreneurs* (London: Marshall Cavendish, 2010)

Miles, Steven, *The Experience Society: How Consumer Capitalism Reinvented Itself* (London: Pluto, 2021)

Mitchell, Roanna, 'Seen but Not Heard: An Embodied Account of the (student) Actor's Aesthetic Labour', *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*, 5 (2014), pp. 59–73

Moore, Peter, 'Pret A Manger – Behind the scenes at the 'Happy Factory', *The Guardian*, 14 April 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/small-business-network/2015/apr/14/pret-a-manger-happy-coffee-chain> [accessed 16 March 2020>

Morgan, Watson, and Hemmington, 'Drama in the Dining Room: Theatrical Perspectives on the Foodservice Encounter', *Journal of Foodservice*, 19 (2008), pp. 111–18

Myerscough, Paul, *'*Short Cuts*'*, *London Review of Books*, 3 January 2013 <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v35/n01/paul-myerscough/short-cuts> [accessed 21 October 2016]

NDTV, 'Airline crew threaten a no-smile strike', 11 December 2012 <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/airline-crew-threaten-a-no-smile-strike-507174> [accessed 23 June 2021]

Nield, Sophie, 'The Rise of a Character Named Spectator', *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 18:4 (2008) pp. 531-544

Noah, Timothy, 'Labor of Love: The enforced happiness of Pret A Manger', New Republic, 2013, < https://newrepublic.com/article/112204/pret-manger-when-corporations-enforce-happiness> [accessed 16 March 2020]

Ocejo, Richard E., *Masters of Craft: Old Jobs in the New Urban Economy*

(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017)

Office for National Statistics, *Vacancies and Jobs in the UK: August 2021,* 17 August 2021 < https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/jobsandvacanciesintheuk/july2021> [accessed 9 September 2021]

Office Space, dir. by Mike Judge, (20th century Fox, 1999)

Oksala, Johanna, 'Affective Labor and Feminist Politics', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 41.2 (2016), pp. 281-303

Penz, Otto, et al, 'Post-Bureaucratic Encounters: Affective Labour in Public Employment Services', *Critical Social Policy*, 37.4 (2017), pp. 540-56

Pine, B. Joseph and Gilmore, James H, *The Experience Economy* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2011)

Pitches, Jonathan, *Science and the Stanislavsky Tradition of Acting.* (Routledge, 2009)

———, 'Introduction' in *Russians in Britain: British theatre and the Russian tradition of actor training,* edited by Pitches (London, New York: Routledge, 2012)

Price, Robert, 'The Drama Centre 1963-2022. Annie Tyson. The rise and fall of this influential school', *The History of Actor Training in the British Drama School*, October 2020 <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/the-drama-centre-1963-2022-annie-tyson-the-rise-and/id1535319541?i=1000496722250> [accessed 13 September 2021]

'RADA Business', Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, <https://www.radabusiness.com/> [accessed 16 March 2020]

'RADA Business: Research', *Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts,* <https://www.radabusiness.com/about-us/research/> [accessed 24 February 2021]

'The RADA Approach', *Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts*, <https://www.radabusiness.com/rada-approach/> [accessed 16 March 2020]

Raisborough, Jayne, *Lifestyle Media and the Formation of the Self* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)

Rawlins, Trevor, 'Studying Acting: An Investigation into Contemporary Approaches to Professional Actor Training in the UK' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Reading, 2012)

Rebellato, Dan, *1956 and All That: The Making of Modern British Drama* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1999)

Redmond, Adele, 'Drama school to close after review reveals course "pushed students

to the edge"', *Arts Professional*, 12 March 2020 <https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/drama-school-close-after-review-reveals-courses-pushed-students-edge> [accessed 13 September 2021]

Restaurants get creative in bid to plug staff shortage', *BBC News*, 23 May 2021 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-57218978> [accessed 9 September 2021]

Reveley, James, 'The Exploitative Web: Misuses of Marx in Critical Social Media Studies', *Science & Society*, 77.4 (2013), pp. 512–35

'Review of the Cherry Orchard, Sadlers Wells', *Plays and Players*, June 1958

Ridout, Nicholas, *Passionate Amateurs: Theatre, Communism, and Love* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2013)

———, *Stage Fright, Animals, and Other Theatrical Problems*, Theatre and Performance Theory (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

———, 'Performance in the Service Economy: Outsourcing and Delegation', in *Double Agent* (London, 2008), INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS, pp. 127–31

Roach, Joseph R., 'Theatre History and the Ideology of the Aesthetic', *Theatre Journal*, 41.2 (1989), pp. 155–68

Rosaldo, Michelle Z., 'Toward an Anthropology of Self and Feeling', in *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self and Emotion*, ed. by Richard A. Schweder and Robert A. LeVine (Cambridge, London, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 137–58

Saddler, Sarah, '"Think differently, get creative": producing precarity in India's corporate theatre culture industry', *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 22:1 (2017) pp. 22-35

Sennett, Richard, *The Corrosion of Character* (New York: Norton, 1999).

Seymour, Diane, 'Emotional Labour: A Comparison between Fast Food and Traditional Service Work', *Hospitality Management*, 19 (2000), pp. 159–71

Schechner, Richard, *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2000)

———, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, (London: Routledge, 2003)

Scheiber, Noam, *The New York Times*, 'At Trader Joe's, Good Cheer My Hide Complaints', 3 November 2016 < https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/04/business/at-trader-joes-good-cheer-may-hide-complaints.html > [accessed 23 June 2021]

Scott-Delany, Finn, 'Pret a Manger: "click and collect is going to be really important

for us", *BigHospitality*, 19 February 2021 <https://www.bighospitality.co.uk/Article/2021/02/19/Pret-a-Manger-on-how-delivery-and-click-and-collect-led-to-the-creation-of-its-coffee-subscription> [accessed 9 September 2021]

Shepherd, Simon, 'The Institution of Training', *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 14.2 (2009), pp. 5-15

Shirley, David, '"The Reality of Doing": Meisner Technique and British Actor Training', *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training*, 1 (2010), pp. 199–213

Shirley, David, 'Stanislavsky's Passage into the British Conservatoire', in *Russians in Britain: British Theatre and the Russian Tradition of Actor Training*, ed. by Jonathan Pitches (London ; New York: Routledge, 2012)

Shouse, Eric, 'Feeling, Emotion, Affect', *M/C Journal,* 8.6 (2005) <http://journal.mediaculture.org.au/0512/03shouse.php> [accessed 13 September 2021]

Singh, Sangeeta and Sonnenburg, Stephan, 'Brand performances in social media', *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 26:4 (2012), pp. 189-297

Standing, Guy, *The Precariat*: *The New Dangerous Class* (London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2011)

Stanfield, Lead, 'Pret A Manger under fire for poor staff pay – "Can't afford lunch!"', *The Express,* 2 September 2021 <https://www.express.co.uk/life-style/life/1485662/pret-a-manger-staff-pay-twitter> [accessed 9 September 2021]

Stanislavski, Constantin, *An Actor's Handbook* (New York: Routledge, 1963)

———, *Building a Character* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013)

———, *An Actor Prepares* (London: Methuen, 1986)

Stanislavsky, Konstantin, and Jean Benedetti, *My Life in Art* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2008)

Styan, J. L., *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice 1* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981)

———, *The English Stage: A History of Drama and Performance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

Tait, Peta, *Performing Emotions: Gender, Bodies, Spaces, in Chekhov's Drama and Stanislavski's Theatre* (Aldershot ; Burlington Vt: Ashgate, 2002)

Taylor, Fredrick Winslow, *The Principles of Scientific Management*, 1911

Taylor, John Russell, *The Rise and Fall of the Well-Made Play* (London: Methuen, 1967)

Taylor, Phil and Bain, Peter, '"An Assembly Line in the Head": Work and Employee Relations in the Call Centre', *Industrial Relations Journal*, 30 (1999), pp. 101-117

The Leading Role', *Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts*, <https://www.radabusiness.com/courses-individuals/leading-role/> [accessed 24 February 2021]

The Little Mermaid Cocktail Experience <https://littlemermaidcocktail.com/london/> [accessed 22 April 2021]

Thomas, Daniel, 'Hawksmoor strives to outlive coronavirus pandemic', *Financial Times*, 3 May 2020 <https://www.ft.com/content/2630a23f-309f-48fb-842f-252f5379c129> [accessed 9 September 2021]

Thomson, Peter, 'The New Drama and the Old Theatre', in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre*, ed. by Joseph Donohue, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), VOLUME 2: 1660 TO 1895, pp. 405–22

Trader Joe's, '*Customer Experience: A Trader Joe's Love Story*', internal training document 2016

Trader Joe's employee manual, *The Employers Handbook* <https://www.theemployerhandbook.com/files/2016/11/NagleULP.pdf> [accessed 24 February 2021]

Trott, Ben, 'Affective Labour and Alienation: Spinoza's Materialism and the Sad Passions of Post-Fordist Work', *Emotion, Space and Society*, 25 (2017), pp. 1–8

United States of America Labor Relations Board Charge Against Employer, *The Employers Handbook* <https://www.theemployerhandbook.com/files/2016/11/NagleULP.pdf> [accessed 24 February 2021]

Various authors, 'Emotional Labor: The MetaFilter thread condensed', *Google Document,* <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0UUYL6kaNeBTDBRbkJkeUtabEk/view?pref=2&pli=1&resourcekey=0--cIZNncO06RZSD8dC47K2Q> [accessed 23 June 2021]

Vincent, Steve, 'The Emotional Labour Process: An Essay on the Economy of Feelings', *Human Relations*, 64.10 (2011), pp. 1369–92

Virno, Paolo, *A Grammar of the Multitude* (Cambridge MA and London: Semiotext(e), 2004)

Walden, Keith, 'Whose Method? Culture, Commerce, and American Performer Training', *New Theatre Quarterly*, 19.4 (2003), pp. 318–25

Weeks, Kathi, 'Life Within and Against Work: Affective Labor, Feminist Critique, and Post-Fordist Politics', *Ephemera*, 7.1 (2007), pp. 233–49

White, Gareth ‘On Immersive Theatre’, *Theatre Research International*, 37.3 (2012), pp. 221–35

Wiegand, Chris, ‘Punchdrunk to stage epic “future noir” drama in old London arms factory’ *The Guardian*, 6 September 2021 <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2021/sep/06/punchdrunk-stage-the-burnt-city-royal-arsenal-london-arms-factory-immersive-trojan-war> [accessed 9 September 2021]

Williams, Kirk, ‘Anti-theatricality and the Limits of Naturalism’, *Modern Drama* 44:3 (2001), pp. 284-299

Williams, Raymond ‘Drama in a Dramatized Society’, in *Writing in Society* (London: Verso, 1985), pp. 11–22

———, ‘Lecture on Realism’, *Screen*, 18 (1977), pp. 61–74

Wickstrom, Maurya, *Performing Consumers: Global capital and its theatrical seductions*, (New York: Routledge, 2006),

Young, Martin, ‘Theatre in the Time of Capital’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, Queen Mary, 2019)

Zaiontz, Keren, ‘Narcissistic Spectatorship in Immersive and One-on-One Performance’, *Theatre Journal*, 66.3 (2014), pp. 405–25