

A Gendered 'Managed Heart'? An Exploration of the Gendering of Emotional Labour, Aesthetic Labour, and Body Work in Service Sector Employment

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the gendering of labour performed in service sector employment through a review of the theoretical and empirical sociological debates emerging from this field of study. The concept of 'emotional labour', which involves the self-management of a worker's feelings and emotions, together with the more recent notions of appearance management undertaken through 'aesthetic labour', and the labour enacted upon the bodies of customers through 'body work' are analysed for the implications they have on reproducing or challenging the conventional gender order. Interactive service sector labour is found to be gendered in the sense that it is often gender-segregated, with men and women performing different types of labour. This paper explores further the way in which women are required to sustain a specifically gendered and (hetero)sexualised performance, which is arguably not always required of men. It is argued that even where such labour is *not* gender-segregated, and men take on the same labouring roles as women, such tasks are not experienced and enacted in a gender-neutral fashion. However, the possibility of gendered labour in the service sector being experienced as pleasurable, rather than as a wholly negative phenomenon, is also discussed. Taking Butler's (1990) concept of performativity, it is argued that it is the performance of gender that actively brings it into being. Thus, gendered scripts enacted through service sector labour reinforce traditional social hierarchies to ensure that the prominence of heterosexuality and hierarchal gender, class and 'race' relations remain intact.

KEYWORDS: Gendering, service sector, emotional labour, aesthetic labour, body work, heterosexuality.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional labour performed in the service sector 'cannot be regarded as a 'gender-neutral' phenomenon' (Taylor and Tyler, 2000: 78). Such labour necessitates the self-management of a worker's feelings and emotions 'to create and control the reaction of the customer' as a central tenet of their labouring role (Pettinger, 2005: 463). Due to gender stereotypes being capitalised upon by management, it is women who are disproportionately selected for jobs requiring 'emotional labour'. Women are viewed as possessing the allegedly innate talent of 'caring' required for such occupations, which are often also low-paid and accorded a subordinate status. Empirical research has also found that women are expected to enact a particular sexualised performance of emotional labour, encompassing overt displays of *heterosexuality* often achieved by 'flirting' with male customers (Filby, 1992; Hall, 1993). Such arguments have been critiqued, however, by those who suggest that emotional labour is not in fact 'gendered' (Nickson *et al.*, 2001). Others have suggested that while such labour *is* gendered, it is

gendered in that the emotional performances enacted are different depending on whether it is a woman or a man performing them (Hochschild, 1983). It has been further highlighted that gendered emotional labourers are not passive performers, but that many workers attempt to resist and challenge the gendered scripts they are expected to perform. Moreover, others argue that just because emotional labour *is* gendered, this does not necessarily entail negative consequences for those performing it, as many workers emphasise the 'pleasures' they gain from such employment (Wouters, 1989). It has been argued further that the very concept of 'emotional labour' disregards somewhat the importance of 'aesthetic labour' (Nickson *et al.*, 2001), and 'body work' (Wolkowitz, 2006) performed in the service sector, which are also structured upon gendered lines. This paper draws upon the theoretical and empirical literature in this field of study to glean a full comprehension of the gendered character of service sector employment. Such a task requires a focus upon the gendering of emotional labour together with a consideration of the how the concepts of aesthetic labour and body work intersect and interrelate within service sector employment in order to reproduce or challenge further the gender order.

CHANGES IN GENDERED EMPLOYMENT

Key economic, political and social changes over recent years have affected the gendering of work more broadly. Most notably, as Margaret Thatcher cemented her power in the 1980s there emerged a decline in many traditional working-class jobs and a shift to service sector employment. There were great technological advances and a demise in heavy industrial employment largely undertaken by working-class men, along with a growth in more flexible and part-time working contracts which spelt greater opportunities for women (Benyon, 2002: 87). There has been great debate within the sociological arena as to whether such changes constitute a 'feminisation' of the labour market as a whole. As Bradley *et al.* (2000: 74) argue, there has certainly been a 'feminisation' of the service sector in a numerical sense, as indeed in 1995 women constituted almost half of the total British labour force (49.6 per cent). However, 'men retain economic dominance' of the labour market, often being concentrated in higher-status occupations and more full-time roles than women, and it is very often the case that workplace cultures remain gendered 'in ways that persistently disadvantage women' (Bradley *et al.*, 2000: 91). The concentration of women within service sector employment, particularly in customer service roles, has led many sociologists to analyse the way in which gendered roles are actively reinforced and reproduced within such occupations. The concepts of 'emotional labour', and more recently those of 'aesthetic labour' and 'body work' have been utilised to try to address the ways in which gendered service sector employment is both challenged and maintained. Arguably, in light of the heterogeneity of service sector employment, these gendered processes will not be homogeneously applicable to *all* service sector labouring roles. It is thus vital that the distinctiveness of emotional labour, aesthetic labour and bodywork are addressed, while also highlighting the fluent boundaries between such gendered performances.

EMOTIONAL LABOUR PERFORMED IN THE SERVICE SECTOR

Increasing competitiveness between organisations in the service sector to provide high-quality employee-customer relations has inspired 'a more articulated and extensive customer care philosophy' (Noon and Blyton, 2002: 179). Such an emphasis led Hochschild (1983: 7) to coin the term 'emotional labour' to describe how workers are required in the service sector effectively to 'manage' their 'hearts', or 'induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind' in customers. Hochschild (1983: 7) is interested in the commercial organisation and deployment of emotions, and claims service sector workers who interact with customers have to manage their 'feelings' in order to perform a 'publicly observable facial and bodily display' in return for a wage. In undergoing emotional labour, workers are required to put on a *performance* of feelings. Indeed, Hochschild (1983: 97), when studying flight attendants, notes how even 'the recruitment literature explicitly addresses friendliness as an *act*'. Feeling rules are thus specifically set out by management. Flight attendants are told that to deal with irate passengers they must 'relax and smile', whilst the customer 'has no obligation to return empathy or even courtesy' (Hochschild, 1983: 105,110). Hochschild (1983: 136) suggests this constant performance 'poses a challenge to a person's sense of self' as it can lead to burnout or a sense of personal insincerity and cynicism. She makes a distinction between sincere 'deep acting' which can lead to a transmutation of self, and cynical 'surface acting' which can lead to eventual alienation of self.

GENDERED EMOTIONAL LABOUR

Some writers have suggested emotional labour is 'gendered' in the sense that it is largely gender segregated, with women comprising the majority of those who perform such work. As we will see later in this paper, men are also required to perform emotional labour when working in the service sector, yet as Hochschild's (1983) study of debt collectors indicates, the performance required of men differs significantly from that expected of women. For the most part, employers typically consider women as best suited to the performance of emotional labour due to their alleged 'natural' ability to 'care' for others (Finch and Groves, 1983: 3). Many occupations requiring 'emotional labour' within the service sector are certainly segregated by gender. As Toynbee (2006: personal correspondence) recently commented, even today women are still disproportionately represented in the service sector's five 'C's'; 'Catering; Cashier or Checkout, Clerical, Cleaning and Caring' occupations, most of which require a degree of emotional labouring. This is a familiar picture, as women throughout time have constituted around 78 percent of bar and waiting staff (Rubery *et al.*, 1992); men have comprised a mere '13 percent' of flight attendants (Hochschild, 1983: 15); '95 percent' of sheltered housing wardens in Cunnison's (1986: 188) study were female. Management recruitment practices have been cited as a reason for such gender biasing. Certainly Taylor and Tyler (2000) found that male managers recruiting telesales staff made stereotypical gendered assumptions about women possessing a 'natural' ability to 'chat' and build up a 'rapport' with others. Moreover, Cunnison (1986: 195) claims that 'expectations about women and caring' are already 'general currency in our society' and so she argues that there is in fact not always a need for management openly to articulate their expectations about women as 'natural' carers to new recruits. Rather, explicitly articulating such expectations would be to the detriment of

management as it would mean recognising that 'caring' is a 'skill', not something simply inherent within femaleness, and 'might result in claims for pay for work which now goes unpaid' (Cunnison, 1986: 194).

GENDERED AND (HETERO)SEXUALISED PERFORMANCES

Women's emotional labour role often also includes a specifically sexualised performance. The female flight attendants Hochschild studied had to embody a particular image of conventional femininity which often constituted 'a beautiful and smartly dressed Southern white woman', and workers further had to undergo a routine 'weigh-in' from which they could 'in fact be fired for being one pound overweight' (Hochschild, 1983: 93, 101, 102). Furthermore, Hochschild (1983: 93-94) claims sexualised advertising by the airline including slogans such as 'Fly me, you'll like it', meant flight attendants not only had to be 'unfailingly helpful and open to requests' but also should 'respond to the sexual fantasies of passengers' by acting in a 'sexy' manner, flirting with customers as though their behaviour is not 'intrusive or demeaning'. This is an example of how, as Wolkowitz (2006: 81) argues, 'employers expect female workers to use their gender and (hetero)sexuality to increase custom and profits by flattering male customers'. Such a performance is particularly acute in strip club arenas, where females strip for a male audience. For as Wood (2000: 22-23) argues, the female dancer is required to not only embody a 'certain physical image' which epitomises 'sexiness', but also performs extensive emotional labour through creating an emotional environment which increases the status of her male client and which makes him 'feel cared about'. Moreover, it seems that even in service sector occupations which would not immediately be deemed a 'sexualised' environment, women still sustain this performance. Indeed, Hall's (1993: 452) study of waitresses in restaurants found giving 'good service' literally meant complying with traditional gendered scripts. Waitresses are positioned as 'sex objects', hired if they are 'young' and 'attractive' and will wear uniforms which convey a 'sexy' image, and must perform the 'obligatory job flirt', flirting with both male customers and kitchen staff (Hall, 1993: 456, 457). Similarly, female betting shop cashiers in Filby's (1992: 29-30) study were required to engage in the alleged 'womanly art of status enhancement' through 'sexy chat' with male punters. Moreover, the physical attractiveness of the female cashiers did not provide them with an empowering workplace role, as their beauty 'tended to contradict their credibility as purveyors of reliable information' in the eyes of male customers, who frequently went 'over the head of the female cashier to the male manager' with their inquiries (Filby, 1992: 28). Rather alarmingly, also, female emotional labourers often encounter sexist comments made by customers. Indeed, Taylor and Tyler (2000: 84) found that female workers in a call centre were expected to respond in a 'polite manner' to male customers who often interacted in an 'insulting, often sexualised, manner'. However, such sexism is often presented as a 'natural hazard' of the job for female emotional labourers (Coppock *et al.*, 1995: 76). The hegemonic gender order, as described by Connell (1995) as being one in which male dominance, and heterosexuality, hold utmost supremacy, thus remains largely unchallenged within emotional labouring roles in the service sector.

GENDER NEUTRALITY? THE CASE OF AESTHETIC LABOUR

Conversely, the idea that emotional labour in the service sector is gendered has been challenged. Indeed, social psychologists Erickson and Ritter (2001: 156) suggest that the negative emotional effects experienced from performing emotional labour, such as 'burnout' and 'inauthenticity' are not experienced to a greater extent by either women or men. Similarly, in their critique of the concept of 'emotional labour' more widely, Nickson *et al.* (2001) suggest emotional labour is not a gendered phenomenon. For them, emotional labour ignores the importance of appearance management performed in aesthetic labour, which is 'the mobilisation, development and commodification of the embodied capacities and attributes of employees to produce favourable interaction with the customer'. They claim that in order to perform companies' demand for aesthetic labour successfully, workers must possess 'faces (and voices) that fit', 'literally embodying the image of the company' as employees themselves are increasingly being 'regarded by employers as part of the service product' (Nickson *et al.*, 2001: 176, 178, 179).

Nickson *et al.* (2001: 187) further recognise that these recruitment processes may favour the stylish 'middle-class youth' and thus recognise discrimination in the recruitment of aesthetic labourers on a classed basis. Their account thus in one sense admirably addresses Bourdieu's idea that it is the cultural capital a worker possesses that is another important factor in the recruitment of service sector workers. Individuals acquire what Bourdieu (1977: 93-94) terms 'hexis', that is, 'a durable manner of standing, speaking, and thereby of feeling and thinking' differently on a classed basis, and certain forms of cultural capital are not acquired and experienced by all social classes in the same way. Certainly not only possessing a middle-class eloquence, but also being able to purchase the very attire to display the working body aesthetically as middle class will be an option available to some workers but not others. However, Nickson *et al.*'s study found the requirement for workers to be aesthetically pleasing was not 'gendered' as aesthetic criteria were specified for both men and women. Aesthetic labour in the service sector, they argue, is not therefore 'gendered' as 'it is by no means only female embodiment that is being commodified as aesthetic labour' (Nickson *et al.*, 2001: 175).

Gender cannot be omitted from an analysis of emotional labour, however, and it certainly 'cannot be seen as outside or even separate from the commodification of aesthetics' (Wolkowitz, 2006: 88). As Wolkowitz (2006: 88) argues, although both genders perform certain tasks deemed as 'emotional labour', 'to say the work is not confined to either men or women *is not to say it is not gendered*' (my emphasis). Both men and women may be employed, but this ignores the fact that particular ideals of masculinities and femininities will be selected for different occupations. As Adkins (1995: 110) points out, aesthetic criteria in a hotel she studied were highly gendered, as, while both men and women were expected to be 'average height and weight', only the occupations defined by the company as 'women's work' stated the extra requirement for employees to be 'attractive'. Pettinger's (2005) study of the retail industry further highlights how service sector employment is both gendered and sexualised. She notes how female retail assistants were required to perform aesthetically conventional femininity which emphasised their heterosexuality through the use of particular 'make-up' application, 'hair' and 'self-presentation' (Pettinger, 2005: 474). Moreover, in occupations where *men* are required to perform emotional labour, such roles are gendered in that they are often 'masculinised'. Indeed, Hochschild (1983:

146) found that the male role of 'debt collector' is masculinised in that it requires 'open aggression' on the part of the worker. She further observes a contrast between performances of female emotional labour in which the job is to 'enhance the customer's status', and the role of male debt collecting which is to 'deflate the customer's status' (Hochschild, 1983: 139). Emotional labouring thus requires not only a gendered performance, but also the performance of overt heterosexuality.

REPRODUCING THE GENDER ORDER

It could be questioned whether men moving into the same emotional labouring roles as women would lead to a significant change in the gendering of work roles, with such roles becoming gender neutral and equally valued in terms of status. Indeed, it has been suggested that the emergence of Equal Opportunities policies in the 1980s which attempted to limit sex discrimination, the increasing opportunities for women to utilise the 'qualifications lever' and enter occupations which were traditionally male preserves (Crompton and Sanderson, 1990), and the entrance of some men into jobs that were traditionally defined as 'feminine', such as those requiring more emphatic customer service skills, the status of emotional labour might improve for both sexes. However, it seems that even when men and women engage in the *same* emotional labouring tasks, it is *men* who tend to benefit from gendered assumptions which accompany such roles.

Hochschild's research into this subject found that male flight attendants were not expected to adopt the sexualised performance required of female attendants, but instead were seen as proto-managers, rather than proto-mothers or girlfriends. Similarly, Taylor and Tyler (2000: 86) claimed that while female telesales staff performances were judged upon whether their interaction with customers could be both 'hard' and 'soft', the latter involving significant amounts of emotional labour, male staff would not have to perform emotional labour as long as they were considered to be 'good sellers'. Workplace performances were thus assessed along highly gendered lines, with emotional labour being seen as tantamount to the female work role, but as an optional extra for men. Similarly, Dean's (2005: 763) observation of the selection of television actors found that although women and men are judged 'within same or similar categories, these categories have different parameters' according to gender. For example, Dean (2005: 763) argues that with the specification for 'good looks', 'the accepted spectrum for men is more varied than for women and covers a wider age range'. On the other hand, McDowell (1997) claims men are now also required to display a 'sexy' appearance like many women who perform emotional labour. She further suggests that men in the workplace are now beginning 'to do gender in ways that parallel the social construction of femininity' (McDowell, 1997: 182). However, Adkins (2001) rightly highlights that whilst McDowell acknowledges that men can take on aspects of a 'feminine' identity, she rather ignores the fact that the opposite 'reversal' in gender roles rarely occurs, as women find it exceedingly hard to take on a 'masculine' identity at work. Men are also gaining credit for a performance of femininity which is assumed to come 'naturally' for women. Moreover, Adkins (2001: 690) cautions against assuming that men experience 'femininity' at work in the same way that women do, for she suggests men's performances of the aesthetics of femininity at work 'may not mean that men now experience the traditional cultural traps of femininity nor that men are now positioned as sex objects at work with women as subjects'.

RESISTING THE GENDER ORDER

The fact that emotional labour is gendered does not mean that workers cannot resist management's demands upon their gendered performances, however. As Noon and Blyton (2002: 198) argue, 'emotional display does not render women powerless'. In Hochschild's account of emotional labour, arguably 'the significance of human agency is downplayed while the ability of management to manage emotions is overemphasized' (Lewis, 2005: 567). In contrast, Lewis's (2005: 568) study of neonatal nurses found that nurses are not the 'passive providers' of emotional labour, but are active and skilled emotion managers. Hochschild does discuss, however, albeit somewhat briefly, the workplace resistance to performance scripts. She notes how individual workers may 'go into robot'; withholding 'deep acting' and may 'pretend to be showing feeling' by 'surface acting'; alternatively they may break the rules of customer interaction by being somewhat hostile to obnoxious customers (Hochschild, 1983: 129). This is further evident in Filby's (1992: 39) study of a betting shop, as female employees resisted performing gendered emotional labour 'by making subtle modifications in the physical presentation of self', such as altering their uniform, sneering instead of smiling at customers, and being sarcastic as opposed to cheerful. Similarly, Taylor and Tyler (2000: 90) document how gay male flight attendants subvert customer's stereotypes of them as the 'cabin crew queer' by actively parodying this identity. In criticism, however, through performing this sexualised stereotype gay flight attendants do little to challenge derogatory stereotypes of gay men, and thus in this sense they reinforce rather than subvert traditional sexual stereotypes. Another way in which emotional labourers can attempt to resist the gendered character of their labour is through collective 'communities of coping', which allow workers to exchange feelings regarding irate customers and management (Korczyński, 2003: 55). Indeed, even in the strip club environment there exists the opportunity for dancers collectively to resist gendered emotional labour which they consider unreasonable. Female strippers can group together 'as a defence mechanism' if some of the dancers are being harassed by male clients, for example by all clothing themselves and by refraining from dancing (Spivey, 2005: 425).

THE 'PLEASURES' OF PERFORMING GENDERED EMOTIONAL LABOUR

It could further be argued that gendered emotional labour does not inevitably involve negative consequences for its enactors. Certainly Pettinger (2005: 475) is keen to emphasise that 'workers may enjoy the gendered performance they put on'. Hochschild's work in particular has been criticised for taking 'a largely pessimistic view of the harm entailed by the commercialisation of feeling', thus ignoring the 'pleasures' of emotional labour (Wolkowitz, 2006: 77). Wouters (1989: 119) claims a flight attendant's job is 'pleasurable' as it entails staying in hotels and seeing countries they may otherwise have had no opportunity to visit. Furthermore, Bolton and Boyd (2003: 298), suggest workers can derive pleasure from a 'philanthropic' deployment of emotional labour in which workers give customers their labour as a 'gift', or 'that little extra', for example by truly empathising with a customer and therefore going beyond their normal work role. This is an important insight, for as Bolton and Boyd (2003: 295) suggest, Hochschild 'does not make any distinction concerning feeling rules in the workplace that are not commercially motivated'. Even Cunnison (1986: 189) who talks extensively of the 'pains' of emotional labour for female sheltered housing wardens, notes that such

workers can derive 'satisfaction' from the fact that they perform a job which is viewed as 'socially necessary'. Moreover, in their analysis of The Body Shop, Martin *et al.* (1998: 429, 451, 459) found that female workers and customers alike can benefit from what they term 'bounded emotionality'; a 'close-knit, intimate community' of emotional expression through which workers can discuss 'intimate personal issues with co-workers'. Workers reported feeling that they could 'be themselves' during their performance of emotional labour in this company (Martin *et al.*, 1998: 460).

The degree of 'pleasure' gleaned from performing gendered emotional labour should not be overemphasised, however, as the 'pleasures' gained may not outweigh the amount of 'pain' it entails. Certainly there are limits to the extent to which stripping can be experienced as a 'pleasurable' occupation, for as Ronai and Ellis (1989: 296) state, it is an occupation which 'pays well, but costs dearly'. Workers often experience what Hochschild (1983: 186) terms a 'transmutation of self' as a dancer's constant performance of a specific sexual self can hinder their ability to create 'an authentic sexual self' outside of the club (Deshotels and Forsyth, 2006: 234). Furthermore, Martin *et al.* note that while initially the performance of emotional labour within The Body Shop was experienced as 'pleasurable', as the company expanded and a predominantly male management team arrived it became less personalised and harder to maintain a sense of 'community'. They found many workers attempted to resist the bounded emotionality by questioning its authenticity, or simply by failing to listen to a co-worker's emotional concerns, thus 'eroding the company's well-developed sense of community' to some extent. Moreover, due to the pace and stress associated with their performance of emotional labour, the company had to provide its own counselling service for workers. More disturbingly, they claim 'employees who preferred more restrained forms of emotion management were sometimes pressured to display more open emotionality', thus suggesting that resisting management demands is not a simple process (Martin *et al.*, 1998: 460).

GENDERED MANAGEMENT OF THE SELF AND THE CUSTOMER'S BODY THROUGH 'BODY WORK'

So far we have discussed how service sector labourers manage their own bodies, through controlling their emotions and feelings and engaging in appearance management. Recently, however, Wolkowitz (2006:146) has argued that a distinction should be made between the gendered work emotional labourers perform on their *own* bodies, but often also upon the bodies of *others*, through what she terms 'body work'. She suggests little attention has been paid to those 'whose paid work involves the care, pleasure, adornment, discipline and cure of others' bodies', such as beauticians, hairdressers, nurses, sex workers and undertakers (Wolkowitz, 2006: 147). Wolkowitz suggests body work performances are also highly gendered, for while doctors (largely a male profession) work on the more complex areas of a patient's body, by carrying out surgical procedures, for example, nurses (overwhelmingly female) are consigned to the role of care-givers and have to deal with the less dignified elements of body work, such as bedpans and bedsores. We thus again witness the fact that the pleasures and pains of interactive service sector employment differ along gendered lines, as the less dignified elements of body work, often performed by women, may arguably be experienced as less pleasurable than more dignified work tasks.

Furthermore, Wolkowitz argues that the performance of 'body work' can be more dangerous for some workers, such as sex workers, due to its emphasis upon intimate contact. She suggests that the 'dirty-work' part of body work and the lower status forms of service sector body work may be consigned to subordinates on gendered, classed and racialised terms. As Wolkowitz (2006: 142) argues, in terms of stripping arenas, due to management privileging certain 'types' of women based on class, racial and other social factors, some women 'lack the embodied cultural capital necessary for obtaining work in the better-paid clubs'. Chapkis (2000: 187) similarly suggests that among both clients and club managers 'there is a bias in favor of white women'. Due to such racism, women of colour are 'disproportionately clustered in the least well-paid and most stigmatized sectors of the sex industry' (Chapkis, 2000: 187). Such women may thus have little capacity to defend their own bodily boundaries, as due to their gender, class and 'race' status, they may be denied 'access to types of work that carry more opportunities to exercise discretion' (Wolkowitz, 2006: 141).

NOT JUST A GENDERED 'MANAGED HEART'

Through an analysis of emotional labour performed in the service sector, together with a further exploration of the work service sector labourers carry out on their appearances and the bodies of others, it has been shown that such service encounters are not only mediated by gender, but many other social hierarchies. Gender stereotyping still predominates in the service sector, ensuring that it is women, due to their allegedly 'innate' propensity to 'care', who are disproportionately selected for the majority of occupations involving emotional labour, aesthetic labour and body work. Such a notion also prohibits interactive service labour being regarded as a 'skilled' occupation deserving of a higher status and wage. Moreover, even when men *do* engage in such labour, and even if this means having exactly the same job title as women, their roles are still gendered. Male 'emotional labour' is frequently given a more 'masculinised' status, as evidenced by Hochschild's debt collectors, and easier criteria by which to measure their performance of emotional labour than that to which women are subject, as in the case of Taylor and Tyler's male telesales staff. Furthermore, male emotional labour is often viewed as 'exceptional' as men perform a task not 'naturally' deemed appropriate for their gender (Adkins, 1995: 107). Thus, following Butler (1990), who suggests that gender is a performance, and that it is the performing of gender which actively brings it into being, it could be argued that gendered emotional labour actively serves to reproduce the 'gender order' of contemporary society in which men are privileged relative to women (Connell, 1995). Moreover, as Wolkowitz's work importantly highlights, through recruiting on biased terms, employers ensure that traditional social hierarchies mediated not only by gender, but also class, race and sexuality, remain reinforced. The less favourable, lower status service sector tasks thus continue to be allocated to the less privileged members of society.

Workers are certainly not passive performers, lacking agency, who do not attempt to resist the gendered scripts laid out for them, however. Indeed, the resistance tactics and 'communities of coping' that labourers develop to resist the gendered performances required of them have been highlighted (Korczynski, 2003). Equally, the gendered character of service sector encounters is not inevitably experienced as oppressive by its enactors. Many workers may glean 'pleasure' from the gendered scripts they perform. However, in conforming to conventional gender roles and engaging in performances

which routinely emphasise the dominance of heterosexuality as *the* sexuality, particularly if such performances are even enjoyed by their performers in certain circumstances, such service encounters are unlikely to challenge the gendered, raced, classed and sexualised status quo.

CONCLUSION

It appears that there has been little substantive change 'in the ways in which gender routinely enters in everyday working situations' in interactive service sector employment (Morgan, 1992: 75). As this review of empirical and theoretical research has highlighted, through overwhelmingly casting women as carers, requiring them to maintain an overtly feminine and heterosexual appearance; through male service sector workers' role often entailing a masculinised performance; and with stereotypes of alternative sexualities remaining unchallenged, such as gay male flight attendants continually being cast as effeminate, the dominance of heterosexuality and of male privilege remains largely intact in service sector employment. Not only does interactive service work reproduce gendered and heterosexual hierarchies, such labour also reinforces many other traditional social injustices. Indeed, the significance of Wolkowitz's contribution to gendered service sector employment debates, aside from the fact that it recognises labour performed not only upon the service provider's own body, but also upon the service recipient's, is that it highlights the inattention many previous sociologists concerned with emotional and aesthetic labour have paid to 'race' and ethnic diversities for influencing the deployment of service sector labour. Future research into service sector employment must thus address the way in which employees are required to manage their feelings, appearance and perform body work which reproduces the structural inequalities of 'gender, "race", age, social class, ability, sexuality' which mediate the performances expected of individual workers, and in particular, consider whether such performances are experienced as a 'pleasure' or a 'pain' for the individual worker (Wolkowitz, 2006: 96).

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