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THEY CALL IT LOVE

WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK AND EMOTIONAL REPRODUCTION

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of the University of West London
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This thesis is a study of two sets of literature on capitalism, gender, and emotion. Firstly, it explores the writings of the Wages for Housework (WFH) movement – a network of Marxist feminist activist groups, founded in 1972, whose activity was centred on women's reproductive labour. Secondly, this thesis draws on the body of writing on emotional labour. Coined by Arlie Hochschild in 1983, this term describes the work of producing emotional states in another person. While WFH were attentive to emotional aspects of reproductive labour, their writings mention emotional labour only in passing. Hochschild's work concentrates on emotional labour in particular service occupations, but neglects broader issues of social reproduction.

Synthesising these bodies of work, I introduce the concept of emotional reproduction, thus applying the WFH perspective to the theme introduced by Hochschild. Emotional reproduction denotes processes across waged and unwaged forms of labour, intended to enhance the relative emotional wellbeing of a recipient, to the extent that they are able to participate in waged labour. These processes often take place in the private sphere, and are constructed as a typically feminine activity. I argue for the importance of understanding these processes as a form of labour, which is integral to capitalist social reproduction.

Through the notion of emotional reproduction, this thesis offers an account of gendered subjectivity. It highlights the construction of gendered and historically specific forms of skill, which are essential for emotional labour. I argue that the feminised skill for emotional labour tends to be exploited, in both waged labour and in many family arrangements. This labour, however, is simultaneously made invisible through the hegemonic understanding of subjectivity as personal autonomy, which obscures modes of emotional dependency.

The final two chapters of the thesis outline the political perspective of a Marxist feminism focused on the constitution of collective subjectivity through the refusal of emotional labour. Through the demand for the abolition of gender and the family, I offer an account of what resistance to current forms of emotional reproduction might look like. These involve contesting contemporary understandings of family, as well as building our collective capacity for other types of sociality.

Frequently cited works

– AR *The arcane of reproduction: Housework, prostitution, labor and capital* (Leopoldina Fortunati, 1995 [1981]).

– AWNP *All work and no pay: Women, housework and the wages due* (Wendy Edmond and Suzie Fleming [eds.], 1975).

– MH *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling* (Arlie Russell Hochschild, 2003a [1983]).

– NYWFHC *The New York Wages for Housework committee 1972-1977: History, theory and documents* (Silvia Federici and Arlen Austin [eds.], 2017).

– PWSC *The power of women and the subversion of the community* (Mariarosa Dalla Costa, 1972).

– RPZ *Reproduction at point zero: Housework, reproduction, and feminist struggle* (Silvia Federici, 2012).

– SRC *Sex, race, and class: The perspective of winning* (Selma James, 2012).

– WL *The work of love: The role of unpaid housework as a condition of poverty and violence at the dawn of the 21st century* (Giovanna Franca Dalla Costa, 2008 [1978]).

– WSC *Women and the subversion of the community: A Mariarosa Dalla Costa reader* (Mariarosa Dalla Costa, 2019).

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Introduction

This thesis is a study of feminist writings on work, emotion, and reproduction. I draw on the writings of Wages for Housework (WFH), a Marxist feminist movement founded on the premise that work coded as feminine is a central but structurally disavowed and devalued aspect of capitalist societies. The WFH activists were interested in the political potential of reproductive labour – that is, the work that goes into maintaining and replacing the labour force, and ensuring the general wellbeing of people. This work includes both generational replacement, such as pregnancy and child care, and the daily work of cooking, cleaning, doing laundry, and caring for the sick, disabled, and elderly. It also includes the work of building communities and social relations. A less visible form of this labour is emotional care, for which women have been made largely responsible. The central claim of this thesis is that reproductive labour has a pivotal emotional aspect, which is essential for reproduction of the workforce and for producing modes of sociality and subjectivity. This work, as the WFH authors knew, includes the work of soothing children and providing company for the elderly, but also the work of providing emotional comfort for partners, family members, and friends, and maintaining intimate forms of sociality. This work is commonly known as "love."

The past few years have seen a revived interest in Marxist feminist thought and issues of social reproduction, across academic and activist communities.[1] Reproduction is being rediscovered as a central terrain of anti-capitalist struggle. Taking up the legacy of

[1] The large body of work developed around the concept of social reproduction testifies to this interest within the academic sector. See for example Bakker and Gill (2003), Luxton and Bezanson (2006), and Bhattacharya (2017). With regards to WFH, several essay collections have been published over the last decade, including James (2012), Federici (2012, 2018a, 2018b), and Dalla Costa (2019). However, Louise Toupin's 2018 book and Christina Rousseau's 2016 PhD thesis remain, to my knowledge, the only book-length secondary literature on WFH. These texts are more historical in nature and explore the experience of the participants in WFH, whereas my research is based on the theoretical and political perspective presented by WFH members in their writings.

Marxist feminist works from the late 1960s until the early 1980s, this new wave of writing and activism aims to bring theories of reproductive labour into debates on the contemporary organisation of work under neoliberalism. This means expanding the focus on unwaged domestic labour, prevalent in much of the theoretical writings from the 1970s, to include various forms of waged employment in the reproductive sphere. Reproduction is an expansive field, consisting of the totality of the activities that sustain the lives of people under capitalism, and maintain their capacity to work. Reproduction, then, comes to occupy a contradictory position in capitalist economies, where it is necessary for the continued functioning of capitalist value production yet simultaneously devalued; geared towards the preservation of people's capacity to labour yet often excluded from the waged work place and the formal economy. It spans people's unwaged work in their homes and some types of work associated with the public sector, such as teaching and nursing. Increasingly, the term reproductive labour names the growing service economy and waged domestic work. Across these often disparate parts of the landscape of contemporary capitalism, people are working, with or without a wage, to ensure the relative wellbeing of themselves and other people. While incredibly common and mundane as a type of work, this activity has often been made invisible in economic and political analysis, including Marxist writings and organising. The task of the Marxist feminist tradition, in which I place my own research, is to make this work visible in order to struggle against its current organisation.

One reason for this neglect of reproductive work is that it tends to fall disproportionately on the shoulders of women, often without adequate remuneration or recognition. The capitalist economy is thus dependent on people doing this work of caring for each other for free, or for the low wages associated with reproductive service work. This work is often understood as unskilled, naturally feminine, and therefore women's duty

which should be carried out with little or no monetary reward.[2] It is often relegated to the so-called private sphere, and as such it is disavowed and excluded in modern economic and political discourses. Decades of feminist writing and agitation has begun to undo some of this privatisation.[3] Yet reproduction is still construed as primarily the responsibility of "the family," a social unit that is constructed as the opposite of the capitalist sphere of work – our haven in a heartless world. Such privatisation of the burden and cost of reproductive work, as well as the construction of a low-waged service economy, serve to maintain women's subordinate position in a supposedly post-feminist era in which most formal constraints on women's independent existence have been removed. It makes women responsible for the wellbeing of others and undermines their financial and material independence, while simultaneously constructing them as the subjects most suitable for this work, thus perpetuating the existence of a gendered division of labour.

This thesis pays particular attention to the emotional aspects of this process. While I argue that it is important to think about the connections between the material aspects of care and its emotional side, I will focus on what I call emotional reproduction. This term names the forms of work that go into maintaining people's emotional wellbeing, and their ability and willingness to continue to engage in capitalist forms of labour, often despite the considerable emotional strain produced by this work. Here, I draw on the concept of emotional labour, and specifically the feminised kind of emotional labour that is oriented towards "affirming, enhancing, and celebrating the wellbeing and status of others" (MH 165). Thinking about emotion across waged and unwaged sectors, I want to emphasise the work that goes into sustaining some degree of emotional wellbeing in people. I thus draw on a tradition of feminist writings on emotion initiated by sociologist Arlie Russel

[2] This is supported by numerous studies. See for example England, Budig, and Folbre (2001), Charmes (2015), and Folbre (2017).

[3] In what follows, I use the term "privatisation" to indicate how reproductive labour is constructed as an individual responsibility and relegated to the private sphere.

Hochschild's classic 1983 book *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*. In this text, Hochschild traces a shift in capitalist economies, in which the growing service economy relies on the increased commodification of our emotional capacities. She does this through a study of flight attendants, a traditionally feminised profession that not only involves serving food and drinks but perhaps most centrally functions to instil a sense of safety and emotional comfort in airline passengers. From this paradigmatic example, Hochschild draws out a theory of the importance of emotion across a number of service jobs, which are increasingly central in capitalist economies in Europe and North America. Following Hochschild, there have been numerous empirical studies of emotion in a broad range of work, primarily within the disciplines of sociology and management studies.[4] Within Marxist feminist theory, however, there have been few sustained attempts to understand emotional labour as a particular aspect of reproductive labour.[5] In her 2011 essay "On affective labor," WFH co-founder Silvia Federici suggests that emotional labour must be understood in the context of historical materialist feminist theories of reproductive labour, as well as the work of Hochschild. Neither in Federici's essay nor elsewhere in the WFH literature, however, do we find a WFH theory of emotional labour. This thesis is an attempt to develop such a theory.

In my use of the concept of emotional reproduction, I wish to both invoke and reconfigure Hochschild's term emotional labour. By using this concept, I want to point to a broader process than that usually described in accounts of emotional labour, and to include activities that would normally not be considered work. These activities may nonetheless contribute to the general emotional wellbeing of people, and should thus be politicised within the conceptual framework of reproduction. Like social reproduction more

[4] Some examples include James (1989), Smith (1992), Hall (1993), Leidner (1993), Wharton (1993), Pierce (1996), Paules (1996), Taylor and Tyler (2000), Korczynski (2003), Bolton (2005), Brannan (2005), Dowling (2007), and Simpson (2007).

[5] Notable exceptions include Weeks (2007), Bromberg (2015), Oksala (2016), and Whitney (2018).

broadly, emotional reproduction operates across spheres of unwaged and waged work. I therefore want to situate emotional labour within theories of reproduction, and in particular the theory and strategy developed by WFH. This theory emphasised the essential character of housework, and reproductive work more broadly, to the continued functioning of capitalist societies. The WFH writers/activists asserted that the sphere of reproduction is politically important and that the people engaged in this work occupy a potentially powerful position in anticapitalist struggles. Their theory thus describes this work as both indispensable to the reproduction of capital and the potential site of its disruption. In this thesis, I argue that the emotional and subjective aspects of reproductive labour are central to the disruptive potential of this work. My research centres on the question of how emotional reproduction is tied to the (re)production of gender difference, and how it can be mobilised in the construction of feminist subjectivity.

Wages for Housework as method and perspective

Founded in the summer of 1972, WFH was an international network of feminist organisations. At its peak, there were WFH groups in Italy, the UK, Switzerland, Germany, the US, Canada, Mexico, and Argentina. While the international campaign was disbanded in 1977, some groups were active into the early 1980s (Toupin 2018: 96). In the UK, the WFH campaign changed its name to Global Women's Strike, and continues to operate to this day. The theorists most commonly associated with WFH are Mariarosa Dalla Costa, Silvia Federici, Leopoldina Fortunati, and Selma James, active in the Italian, American, and British branches of the network. However, this thesis aims to go beyond these most familiar names, and cover a broader range of writers and activists, including Wilmette Brown, Ruth Hall, Giovanna Dalla Costa, and Margaret Prescod. Some of these authors were involved in the groups Wages Due Lesbians (WDL) and Black Women for Wages for

Housework (BWFWFH), which were autonomous from the main WFH groups but operated within the WFH network. I wish to pay more attention to aspects of the WFH writings, including sexuality and race, which are often written out of the standard narratives of the movement (Austin and Capper 2018: 447). Additionally, I look at the collectively authored manifestos, pamphlets and statements that the movement produced. While the writings of Federici, Dalla Costa,[6] James, and Fortunati continue to be central in my account of WFH, I want to emphasise the collective character of this movement rather than to conflate the WFH perspective with its best-known proponents.

The movement drew its political and theoretical position from Dalla Costa's essay "Women and the subversion of the community," first drafted in 1970 and published (together with James' essay "A woman's place") as the pamphlet *Power of women and the subversion of the community* in 1972.[7] In this essay, Dalla Costa laid the groundwork for an autonomous feminist movement, which she argued would have an essential position within the broader anti-capitalist left. With this text, Dalla Costa both drew upon and departed from the writings of the Italian workerist tradition. She had been a member of the workerist group *Potere Operaio* (Workers' Power) up until then, and the WFH perspective was strongly inspired by workerist thought. But her text also marked a certain distance between the feminist movement and the workerists. Workerism – a school of thought that became prominent in the early 1960s – stemmed from a re-reading of Marx's writings on the basis of the primacy of working-class activity. Its central figures included Mario Tronti, Raniero Panzieri, Romano Alquati, and Antonio Negri. Contrary to Marxisms that focused on capital as the cause of development, workerist theory staged a methodological inversion in which the activity of the workers was seen as the fundamental driver of

[6] Hereafter, the name Dalla Costa will refer to Mariarosa Dalla Costa unless otherwise specified.

[7] The authorship of "Women and the subversion of the community" is contested, and often both Dalla Costa and James are credited as its authors. In the 1973 and 1975 editions, the essay is signed by both of them. Additionally, James claims to have written several parts of it (SRC 43). Dalla Costa, however, argues that the essay was written by herself based on discussions with James and one other person (WSC 47-48). For a longer commentary on this issue, see Barbagallo (2016: 47-49).

change in capitalist society (Tronti 2019: 65). Through the workers' inquiry, a method which encouraged workers to investigate their own working conditions, these writers aimed to develop a theory adequate to the task of locating potential sites of struggle and antagonism between workers and capital (Cleaver 1979, Wright 2002). For the members of WFH, however, this included not only the factory work explored by the workerists, but also all the (often unwaged) work that goes into reproducing labour power. They criticised the workerists for being overly concerned with locating the technologically advanced vanguard, without recognising the potential power held by supposedly "backward" sections of the working class, including those without formal employment. The WFH movement thus staged an important intervention into workerism, and leftist movements more broadly, which tended to conceive of "work" as that which happened in the factories (Cleaver 2019: xi, SRC 100, NYWFHC 229).

Despite this critique of the workerists, however, the WFH writers continued to draw on workerist methods. They were interested in finding an account of capitalist society which emphasised the collective agency of those who are engaged in reproductive work. In this, they shared the workerist methodological move which, as Harry Cleaver writes, emphasised that every analysis must be two-sided, from the perspective of the workers as well as that of capital (1979: 64). What has been characterised as the "optimistic" character of workerism and its offshoots (Vishmidt 2015: 8), can thus instead be seen as an emphasis on the political usefulness of theory insofar as it helps us locate potential sites at which capitalism can be disrupted and workers can claim a more autonomous power. In this thesis, I draw on the conceptual methodology of the workerists, in order to locate possible sites of struggle. Federici uses the term "struggle concepts" – that is, concepts that name and produce antagonistic relations (NYWFHC 16). I share the WFH commitment to theory that is informed by the needs of political struggle and conceptual

work aimed at constituting and enhancing antagonistic subjectivity.

More broadly, I try to employ a historical materialist conceptual methodology, in which there is no clear-cut distinction between the "logic" of capital and its historical development.[8] Using concepts should always involve trying to locate the historical conditions of their appearance, as well as their usefulness for political movements. A concept can only ever describe a partial reality. The material conditions in which we situate such concepts should draw our attention to their necessary incompleteness, and therefore call for the need for other concepts. In this way, historical materialist theory moves between more abstract and more concrete levels, without losing its focus on the socio-historical conditions which gave rise to the phenomena it wishes to describe (Marx 1993: 100-101). These conditions, moreover, are not the result of individual agency but rather stem from the organisation of (re)production, a system within which people's needs are met within various relations of power. While these needs are partly grounded in the biological life of human organisms, such as our need for food and shelter, they can only be met in historically specific ways. Moreover, the constitution of various ways to meet those needs also gives rise to new needs. What constitutes a "need" is thus historically specific and varies according to the classed, racialised, and gendered assignment of people to various categories in society. This thesis questions contemporary constructions of those needs and the material, subjective, and emotional organisation of the labour that is necessary to meet them.

In trying to locate potentials for resistance and collective agency, I have also developed a method that foregrounds the most useful reading of a text. Somewhat contrary to standard academic practice, then, I do not seek so much to criticise these texts as to find a reading that can be productively utilised for political organising. In highlighting

[8] For a Marxist feminist discussion on logic and history, see Arruzza (2015a, 2015b), Farris (2015a), and Manning (2015).

what I think is useful for a contemporary feminist struggle, I have inevitably left out other possible readings, some of which would be more critical and perhaps more pessimistic, although not less "correct." I am thus not interested in finding the most "accurate" reading of the group of texts under study in this thesis, but rather aim to read generously and sometimes against the grain of the texts themselves, in a way that I hope will be helpful for the collective project of constituting historical materialist feminist sites of resistance. In reading these texts as both theoretical statements and activist texts, my goal is to produce an account of emotional reproduction that gives a fuller view of social reproduction as a site of struggle.

This method is consistent with the writings of WFH members themselves. Their aim was to produce theoretical and political concepts that could be utilised in their movement. For them, one of the key struggle concepts was that of work. While some Marxist feminists have opted to use the vaguer term "activity" to describe unwaged reproduction (Gonzalez and Neton 2013), I think it is important to use the concepts of work and labour across waged and unwaged spheres, both because of their analytical value and because they facilitate certain forms of struggle. The WFH project was fundamentally one of struggling against various forms of work. Following Kathi Weeks, I use work and labour interchangeably, thus not drawing a conceptual distinction that critiques work but maintains labour as a desirable activity, or places labour in the domain of the public or commercial and work in the private sphere (as Hochschild does in *The managed heart*). Weeks points out that such distinctions risk preserving the moral valuation of work/labour that the antiwork political project strives to undo (2011: 15). As Marjorie DeVault argues, the current usage of the term work emerged from the spatial and temporal distinctions inherent in "masculine" work under capitalism, in which the work place is separated from the home, which is constructed as a sphere of leisure. For women, however, this

conceptual distinction is blurry, as the home is a sphere of both work and leisure, thus conflating the experiences of the two terms. Thus, DeVault suggests, the term work is not wholly adequate for describing the activities of reproduction (1991: 5-6). However, Weeks writes that "[w]hat counts as work, which forms of productive activity will be included and how each will be valued, are a matter of historical dispute" (2011: 14). Following Weeks' approach, I think of the term work as a way of contesting the current organisation of activity, resources, and needs. At the risk of over-extending the concepts work and labour, I am interested in the political potentials of naming what is usually understood to be "leisure" as labour. This is because, as many Marxist feminists have pointed out, a woman's work is never done (WL 46, Morton 1971). For the members of WFH, using the term work was an essential aspect of their politics, enabling us to "call work what is work so that eventually we might rediscover what is love and create our sexuality, which we have never known" (RPZ 20). Until then, however, it is necessary to name our love as labour.

The concepts of work and labour have a multitude of definitions, often involving notions of effort and conscious activity, which is aimed at transforming a certain material. In trying to expand this definition, I want to challenge some pre-conceived notions of work. One important aspect of this is to question the association of work with active and conscious engagement with a material. What if we could think of work beyond the distinctions between activity and passivity? As the active has historically been considered a masculine principle, I ask whether such associations serve to make invisible much of the work that women have been tasked with. Similarly, the conflation of labour with conscious activity seems to value the mind over the body. As emotions are often constructed as passive states that come to inhabit a body, against the rational mind (Lupton 1998: 85-86), these associations of the terms labour and work seem to render the term emotional labour

an oxymoron. Finally, I want to suggest that emotional labour cannot properly be understood as either material or immaterial, but should be conceptualised as a subjective involvement that spans material, bodily, psychic, and social labour processes. I use the concept of work to describe processes that are unfree or involuntary, in the sense that we are compelled to do them in order to satisfy our needs and those of others. This means that these processes could potentially become non-work, through their disconnection from the conditions that compel us to perform them. While what we may legitimately call labour might always involve a product of some kind, this product will not always be recognisable as a "thing" separate from its producer. Similarly, all labour may involve effort on the side of the labourer, yet such exertion might appear as merely a natural expression of the labouring subject. In emotional labour processes, in particular, the result of such work is often invisible as a product, and thus comes to appear as an aspect of the personality of the worker. As Sophie Lewis argues, in such forms of labour "a feminized person's body is typically being further feminized: it is working very, very hard at having the appearance of not working at all" (2019a: 59).

The risk here is that the terms labour and work become so encompassing that they are rendered almost meaningless. This problem has often been noted specifically in conjunction with the term emotional labour – a problem which has been described as "concept creep" (Beck 2018: np). In response to this, some writers on emotional labour want to limit the use of the term to the context for which it was initially developed – the waged service industry (Bolton 2005: 55). While being wary of such conceptual creep, in which "emotional labour" comes to describe an ever-wider set of interactions, I think it is necessary to point out that emotional labour is an expansive type of work, that is potentially an aspect of a number of different activities. Most importantly, emotional labour of some kind is often an aspect of reproductive labour, so that it becomes hard to

disentangle emotional labour as a separate work process. Both reproduction and emotion are inherently expansive concepts, because of how the satisfaction of need span a whole range of activities. I thus argue against a priori distinctions between these terms and their opposites. Rather, I am interested in the political potentials of naming processes as work, and how such naming can transform our understanding of both those processes and the concept of work itself.

The distinction between work and non-work is a political distinction that is open to challenge. In the 1970s, as more women started to enter the waged work force, the feminist movement also started naming various activities that women carry out in their homes as work. This allowed them to denaturalise domestic labour as well as point to the similarities between the tasks they performed within their waged work and the tasks they had been carrying out in their homes. For WFH, such denaturalisation and comparison were key benefits of their use of the term work. Their use of the term allowed for interventions into leftist discourses, and for the use of labour tactics in the sphere of unwaged work. It also created analytical space for the shifting terrain of what has been constituted as "women's work," where many tasks were increasingly performed for a wage. Hochschild, carrying out her fieldwork for *The managed heart* during the period WFH campaigners were most active, captured the process of women's supposedly natural capacity for emotion being increasingly commodified in the growing (waged) service economy. She traced this backwards into the home, naming this capacity in its unwaged form as "emotion work." However, she was mainly interested in what she saw as the problem of the commercialisation of a previously "private" capacity, which she thinks of in terms of the increasing management control of, and alienation from, our capacity for feeling (MH 19). Using the WFH method of applying the term work to critique the supposedly non-alienated sphere of the home, I question Hochschild's distinction of

emotional labour and emotion work, which seems to posit emotion work as inherently freer. The term emotional labour, as I use it, is a conceptual and political tool for challenging the association of emotion with non-work and the spontaneous expression of our authentic selves.

While writing this thesis, I became increasingly interested in our understandings of such selves. This text can also be read as a critique of certain understandings of subjectivity, in particular (neo)liberal understandings of the self as a sovereign, autonomous individual ruled by rational decision-making. This theme has been a concern for feminist theory for quite some time. Feminists have questioned the construction of (implicitly masculine) selfhood as independent, rational, "self-made" subjectivity.[9] In this thesis, I want to emphasise the emotional aspect of this construction, which I argue is based on the construction of its opposite – the feminised subject of emotional labour. Combined with an emphasis on the private sphere as the "proper" place for emotion under capitalism, such constructions serve to maintain notions of gender complementarity and heteronormative family forms. It is thus bound up with a particular construction of the social, which I argue is entangled with the material organisation of home and waged work. This focus on the construction of the subject and sociality also helps us understand our subjective investments in maintaining the current system – how we work to (re)produce a way of organising the world that fundamentally limits the satisfaction of our needs and the expansive potentials of our desires.

Since the prime of WFH, women's economic and social status has changed quite drastically. As Fordist governance has been widely replaced by post-Fordist economic organisation and a neoliberal state, the status of women's labour has shifted, as has the notion of "women" as a collective subject. The writings of the WFH movement are of their time – seeking to intervene in feminist and leftist debates of the 1970s. Thus, in using

[9] See for instance Lloyd (1984), and Pateman (1988).

these materials, I am not suggesting that they are automatically applicable to the current situation. Rather, I am interested in the spirit of WFH as a political project. This thesis outlines the WFH project as it emerged in the 1970s, but also seeks to update and expand its vision.

The limitations of the WFH project are geographical as well as historical. The WFH authors were primarily interested in the working-class household in the European and North American countries in which WFH was active. This thesis shares this limitation, while acknowledging that reproductive labour has become an increasingly global issue. Through this spatial limitation, I also take a particular organisation of the household as my object of critique, one that is often presented as universal but is in fact deeply classed, and racialised as white. “The family” as an object of critique is primarily a white phenomenon, even though it affects people of colour in various ways. It is also bound up with the project of reproducing nation-states where whiteness is part of the national imaginary. While I cannot more than gesture towards this entanglement of gender, social reproduction, and white national projects,[10] I want to note that the normative household as presented in this thesis is a highly specific one. Indeed, only at an abstract level can we speak of “the family.” It is a construct that is simultaneously material and ideological, but with radically different material effects across society.

This thesis is a theoretical account of emotional reproduction. It deals with political concepts and theories. The first two chapters provide a general overview of the relevant literature, while the remaining three chapters are more oriented towards working out an original theory of the gendering of emotional reproduction. However, I will analyse and use the texts of WFH and Hochschild throughout the thesis. Thus, this thesis is unconventional in its structure insofar as there are no separate sections for methodology, theory, literature

[10] On this topic, see for instance Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989), McClintock (1995), and Farris (2015a, 2017).

review, and data analysis. While I draw on many interview-based studies, this thesis deals with concepts, texts, and theory rather than presenting empirical research on the theme of emotional reproduction. The aim of this research is to develop a theoretical perspective that can explain the persistent gendering of emotionally reproductive labour in the contemporary moment. I hope to provide analytical tools that can contribute to the political discourse on emotional labour and social reproduction.

The purpose of this thesis is thus not so much to give an account of WFH theory, history, or activism, but rather to reconstruct a WFH perspective that can usefully be applied to the theme of emotional reproduction. While many of the descriptive elements of the WFH writings are specific to the historical era in which they were written, I have chosen to start from the WFH perspective because it is still relevant for understanding reproduction today. This perspective, I argue, consists of four key points. Firstly, WFH is an antiwork perspective. It criticises the organisation of labour across waged and unwaged spheres. Going beyond the orthodox Marxist critique of the exploitation of industrial labour through the wage contract, it emphasises the capitalist reliance on reproductive labour across market, state, and domestic spheres. Secondly, the WFH perspective uses this antiwork stance to explore constructions of identity. Reading identity as both precondition and product of differentiated and hierarchical labour processes, it challenges naturalised understandings of gender and sexuality. Thirdly, the WFH perspective implies a critique of power, as it reads power differentials as the outcome of historically specific forms of labour. Drawing on workerism, it also suggests that the people made responsible for reproductive labour hold a potential power, which can be activated through the refusal of such work. Lastly, WFH holds that women's liberation will not come from their engagement in waged labour, but through the refusal of the current organisation of labour in both waged and unwaged spheres. The logical conclusion of the WFH perspective, as I argue

in chapter five, is thus the abolition of the family as well as the abolition of gender as the result of hierarchical and exploitative labour processes.

The project of this thesis is to apply the WFH perspective to the theme of emotional labour. The WFH writings are useful for understanding reproductive labour under capitalism, especially in its unwaged form. They also help us understand how gender is constituted as part of the process of such labour. Yet there is no explicit theory of emotion in the WFH writings. Hochschild's work, on the other hand, remains the most useful account of emotional labour, and the production of emotion as part of commodified services. Her writings, however, lack a focus on how these services form part of the wider process of social reproduction. By synthesising these accounts, my aim in this thesis is to intervene in contemporary debates surrounding social reproduction. Drawing on these two sets of literature, I produce an original theory of emotional reproduction. Emotional reproduction, I argue, is essential for understanding social reproduction more broadly, and thus for challenging the organisation of gendered labour under capitalism.

Chapter outline

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The topics of the different chapters are overlapping, and certain themes will reappear several times across various chapters. The first chapter broadly functions as a literature review, introducing the WFH writings on reproduction. Here, I outline some key aspects of reproductive labour, many of which will return in later chapters of the thesis. With WFH, I argue that the essential function of reproductive labour in capitalist societies is to reproduce labour power. This type of reproduction, then, is simultaneously the reproduction of people for themselves and as bearers of the central commodity in capitalist economies. I look at the exploitation of reproduction, and sketch the WFH strategy for resisting such exploitation. This involves

the denaturalisation of reproductive labour, questioning the “private” character of this work and the role of the state in maintaining the reproduction of the labour force, as well as looking at the demand for a wage for currently unwaged reproductive work as a way to challenge the social relations in which this labour is imbricated.

The second chapter looks specifically at emotional labour and emotional reproduction. This is a transitional chapter, which reviews some of the literature on emotional labour, while also moving towards an original account of emotional reproduction. I begin with critiquing a popular framework for understanding this work – the post-workerist conceptualisation of “affective labour” as a part of the trend towards increasingly immaterial labour. I contend that this argument, as presented by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri among others, does little to help us understand the gendered nature of such labour. I then turn to Hochschild’s writings on emotional labour and the body of work that was inspired by *The managed heart*. Exploring conceptualisations of emotion in relation to the self, I then look at emotional reproduction as an aspect of constructions of “love” and care, including the work of caring for children and ensuring the reproduction of the class system and the nation. In the last sections of this chapter, I return to the question of the increased commercialisation of emotional labour. This chapter explores emotional labour across unwaged and waged types of work, arguing that commercialised forms of work cannot be understood outside of the context of the gendered organisation of unwaged emotional reproduction.

The third chapter looks at the themes of reproduction and emotion from the perspective of gender. Here I ask what role emotional reproduction plays in constituting gendered subjectivity. The first section outlines the WFH perspective on gender, in relation to the exploitation of reproductive work and the violence that is necessary to maintain such exploitation. Then I return to Hochschild’s writings on emotion in its connection to

normative femininity, and the role of emotional labour in constituting gendered hierarchies. In the last section of this chapter, I ask whether the concept of emotional labour can help us understand the persistence of gendered forms of subjectivity and labour in the contemporary political moment, after the decline of the housewife as a normative labouring subject. Here, I explore gendered subjectivity through the notion of emotional labour, thus opening up possibilities to subvert and denaturalise such subjectivity.

In chapter four, I return to the WFH writings, this time reading them "politically" – that is, trying to locate potentials for resistance to and refusal of the regimes of labour to which we are subjected (Cleaver 1979). I look at the formal qualities of the WFH manifestos, and their aim to bring into being an autonomous feminist subject capable of refusing the naturalisation of reproductive labour. I then explore the writings of WDL, and lesbianism as a mode of resistance to heterosexual models of reproduction. I also explore the radical potential of emotion, as something which is not just an essential component of preserving the status quo, but also a necessary aspect of constituting feminist subjects. Drawing on the previous chapters, I read the WFH writings as a critique of gendered subjectivity and emotion, and consider how a feminist movement might utilise such critique to work towards a different organisation of (re)production.

The final chapter looks at some of the limitations of the mainstream feminist movement thus far, and in particular its articulation of "gender equality" as the goal for the movement. Drawing on the WFH critique of equality, I instead look to the demands for gender abolition and family abolition, which have been part of the legacy of communist, feminist, and queer movements. I then turn to broader considerations of what it would take to remodel emotional reproduction in more liberatory ways. This, I argue, would entail both the material remaking of the world and the reconfiguration of subjective and social aspects of life.

In my conclusion, I return to the political potentials of the concept of emotional labour and the WFH perspective on reproduction. I look at their implications for our understanding of work as well as political subjectivity. The conclusion thus takes up the guiding thread of this thesis, namely what it would mean to move away from contemporary understandings of emotion, the self, and the social, towards more collective ways of being.

Chapter one: Wages for Housework and reproductive labour

In this chapter, I will outline the WFH perspective on reproduction. This perspective lays the groundwork for a theory of emotional reproduction in the following chapters. Rather than taking emotional labour as a form of work existing separately from other types of reproductive labour, I want to establish a notion of emotional reproduction which forms a continuum with reproduction more broadly. To do this, I will draw out some key points of the WFH perspective, which establishes emotional labour as an essential but in itself insufficient aspect of reproductive labour. The first section starts with a brief contextualisation of WFH in relation to its political origin and some contemporary debates. Surveying the WFH writings, the chapter then centres on why reproduction is such a vexed issue in capitalist economies, as reproductive labour is simultaneously disavowed and necessary. The second section outlines themes of crisis and stratification, and the relation between reproductive labour and the state. It also takes sex as an example of reproductive work, which is regulated through various forms of state intervention. The final section then looks at reproduction from the perspective of workers – that is, as a site of potential struggle and antagonism. It brings up themes of political subjectivity and denaturalisation, to which I will return in chapter four. This chapters functions as a thematic review of the WFH literature, mainly written in the 1970s. Some themes outlined here will be less applicable today, yet they form part of the context from which the WFH perspective emerged.

Reproductive sites and the exploitation of work

WFH, often labelled "workerist" or "autonomist" feminism,[11] shares some of the theoretical

[11] See for instance Andrew Ryder's paper "Italian autonomist feminism and social reproduction theory"

and methodological premises of workerism, as outlined in the introduction. Furthermore, key members of the Italian WFH movement, including Dalla Costa and Fortunati, had previously been members of workerist movements (WSC 231, Fortunati 2013). However, it is unhelpful to describe WFH as a movement that merely applied workerism to questions of gender. Such a description misses the extent to which WFH formed a substantial critique of workerism, in particular the vanguardism that shaped much of the workerist movement (RPZ 28). Furthermore, it misses the influence of other theoretical and political movements on WFH. Notably, Selma James gained her political training in the Johnson Forest Tendency, a heterodox Marxist group led by CLR James and Raya Dunayevskaya. This group shared a similar political orientation to Italian workerism, but was much more aware of the hierarchies of power within the working class, and emphasised the political role of those who are marginalised and excluded by labour markets (Boggs 1963: 50, Wright 2002: 23, 85, 190, NYWFHC 18). We can see this influence in the theoretical importance that WFH affords to the "third world" (PWSC 48) and the significance of race in the writings of James in particular (SRC 92).

A different source of inspiration for WFH was the welfare rights movement, which organised primarily black women in the United States in the 1960s and early 1970s, to demand dignity and resources for welfare mothers (Nadasen 2005). Federici cites this as a key influence on WFH, as the welfare rights organisers emphasised that mothering is a form of work (NYWFHC 22). They also resisted the demand that welfare recipients should seek waged work. As Premilla Nadasen explains, black women have historically been valued primarily as waged reproductive workers rather than as mothers, and their revalorisation of black mothering must be read within this context (2005: 140). The welfare movement and WFH emphasised the work that particularly working-class women already

(2015). As Patrick Cuninghame suggests, however, it would be more accurate to present the autonomist movement as inspired by feminism rather than the other way around (2008: 2).

do, and how much of contemporary wealth is based on historically unwaged work, including the work of enslaved people. The founders of Black Women for Wages for Housework (BWFWFH), Margaret Prescod and Wilmette Brown, drew the link between wages for housework and reparations (Prescod 1980: 39, Brown 1986: 13). The idea that wages for housework should compensate for past labour and wealth extraction is visible in the WFH demand for retroactive wages (NYWFHC 44). This link between reparations and wages for housework finds a contemporary echo in Paul Preciado's assertion that "[i]f interest were applied to the debt for sexual services and colonial plundering, all women and colonized peoples on the planet would receive an annuity that would allow them to spend the rest of their lives without working" (2013: 123).

WFH developed a unitary theory of gender oppression under capitalism, which integrates gender and class in one analysis.[12] Here, the sphere of reproduction emerged as the central site of struggle. They extended the legacy of workerist theories of antagonism to reproductive work. Under capitalism, workers became separated from the means of production, a separation that entailed the split of production and reproduction. Production, now organised according to the capitalist logic of surplus-value extraction, moved decisively out of the home and into separate workshops and factories. Thus reproduction was constituted as a semi-autonomous site, as the wellbeing of workers was mostly ensured outside of their places of work. As I hope to show throughout this thesis, this separation is always tenuous and unstable, and does not always overlap with the distinction between private and public spheres, or between waged and unwaged work.[13] The WFH authors, however, shifted the political focus of workerism, from the factory to the community and the home.

[12] This approach is distinct from dual-systems theories, where patriarchy and capital are seen as distinct yet interlocking systems. For examples of this approach, see Hartmann (1981), and, as I will discuss below, Jónasdóttir (1994). For a collection of essays on "the systems debate," see Sargent (1981).

[13] For an extended discussion, see Gonzalez and Neton (2013).

According to bourgeois ideology, the community and the family are the spheres of private life, separate from the logic of the market. In the history of reproduction under capitalism, reproduction has often been connected to the so-called private sphere, in ways that serve to obscure the extent of state intervention and how we reproduce ourselves as labour power. The WFH writers attest to the instability of the separation which structures much of the experience of life under the capitalist organisation of labour. Thus the concepts of reproduction and the domestic do not appear as stable or coherent entities in the WFH literature, but rather as sites that are continually put into question. As Arlen Austin and Beth Capper, describing the uses of the term housework in WFH activism and theory, write:

> Rather than a stable location, the house was understood, on the one hand, as a political-economic modality that regulated racialized, gendered, and sexual labor across multiple sites that included, but was not confined to, the heteronormative familial household and, on the other, as a mutable and contested form that, if imagined collectively, might yield an altogether different organization of sexuality and social reproduction. (2018: 446)

This wide definition of housework allows WFH writers to explore how this work takes place across multiple sites, in ways which nonetheless do not undermine the continual construction of the private sphere of family life. The relative incoherence of the concept of housework in WFH literature is similar to that of the concept of social reproduction, used in contemporary debates and covering many of the same relations of work. While there is no strict spatial boundary between the private and the public, these terms do name a certain experience of capitalist life. As Maya Gonzalez and Jeanne Neton write, “we do not define spheres in spatial terms, but rather in the same way Marx spoke of the two separated spheres of production and circulation, as concepts that take on a materiality” (2013: 57).

Similarly, Camille Barbagallo states that in the Marxist feminist perspective, capitalism operates through a "series of interlocking and contingent separations, many of them enforced through violence and extraeconomic means" which "encapsulates the production of value and, conversely, the devaluation of certain spheres, labours and subjectivities" (2016: 230).

As a response to the bourgeois understanding of the private sphere, as fully cut off from the public and thus non-political, functionalist theories of reproduction posited it as a sphere determined by production, where the organisation of personal life is a mere response to the demands of the logic of capital, and family forms shift according to the form of surplus extraction (Fraser 2011: 182). In a more orthodox Marxist vocabulary, the sphere of reproduction appears as a superstructure, responding to the needs of the economic base. WFH can be usefully read as a response to both of these tendencies – the understanding of "private life" as, on the one hand, non-political, and on the other, a mere response to the logic of capital. These authors fully reject that there is something private and thus non-political in the sphere of life external to the spaces of waged work (AR 21). Indeed, they stress that "we have always belonged to capital every moment of our lives" (RPZ 38). However, this does not lead them to conclude that the logic of production is the determinant factor of all of society. As I will outline below, the fact that reproduction is a site of permanent crisis and antagonism under capital means that reproduction cannot be fully subordinated to the logic of production and surplus-value extraction. As the WFH authors argue, struggles on the site of reproduction can have an impact on the organisation of waged work. Furthermore, struggles over reproduction have at various points led the state to intervene in capitalist production. The concept of capital in the WFH literature is thus more expansive than just the organisation of factories or the ownership of the means of production. Capital, here, is a set of social relations which structure life and

work. The separation of workers from the resources they need to live should be understood as an antagonistic relation of power, rather than the ownership of a set of things.

On these grounds, WFH can claim reproduction as a site of struggle. Capital has deprived most people of what they need to survive, yet a majority of workers need to be kept alive in order to maintain the extraction of surplus value. This paradoxical structure at the heart of capitalism, in which workers are both individually disposable and collectively indispensable, gives reproduction an unstable, shifting character. It also means that it can become a central location of antagonism, as the standards of reproduction, its resources and labours, are never given but are continually contested. The needs of capital, the state, and the workers themselves are often contradictory.

This leads the WFH authors to assert what Federici later has called the “double character” of reproduction, “as work that reproduces us and ‘valorizes’ us not only in view of our integration in the labor market but also against it” (RPZ 2, 99). Or, as Barbagallo puts it, under capitalism “people are reproduced as workers but also, at the same time, they are reproduced as people whose lives, desires and capabilities exceed the role of worker” (2016: 61). Because we are never reproduced fully for capital, but also for ourselves, reproduction is simultaneously a site of preservation and a potential space for the radical remaking of the world. It is this tension that enables WFH authors to call for a feminist struggle in the sphere of the community, a struggle they believe has the potential to radically disrupt the functioning of capitalist society. The struggle in the domestic sphere and the service sector, which together constitute the sites of reproduction, “subverts the image of social peace that has given capitalism the appearance of naturalness and viability” (AWNP 83).

A key tenet of the WFH strategy was to make visible the dependence of capitalist

society on the labour of reproduction, both waged and unwaged. This work is simultaneously glorified and invisible, valorised and devalued (NYWFHC 91, Weeks 2011: 124). The point, then, is not to make reproductive work visible for visibility's own sake, or to (morally) valorise it, but rather to highlight capital's structural yet disavowed dependence on reproductive labour in order to subvert both this work and capital itself. As I mentioned in my introduction, a useful reading of WFH emphasises its use of "struggle concepts," which do not merely describe phenomena but emphasise the potentials for disruption and antagonism. These concepts do not take capitalist domination as a given, but rather highlight relations of power in our daily life in order to facilitate struggles against such domination. In this way, the WFH perspective aims to expand and multiply the sites of struggle. This would imply the expansion of the ways in which we are reproduced for ourselves, rather than for capital.

However, it is not easy to separate these aspects of reproduction. We need to be attentive to the ways in which reproduction "for ourselves" is not an uncomplicated matter. WFH authors stressed that the working class is not a coherent unit, but rather characterised by various divisions and hierarchies (RPZ 21, SRC 67, 96). These are necessary for capitalist accumulation, in that they are constituted within the capitalist division of labour. Yet they do not only stem from a stratified labour market but also various hierarchies in "the community," or the spheres external to waged work. As I will argue in more detail in chapter three, the fact that we are not always reproduced for capital but also for ourselves enables men to exploit the surplus labour of women within the broader capitalist economy of surplus-value extraction. There is thus always a risk of romanticising "the community" against capital. Marina Vishmidt argues that in Federici's later writings, "all the good [is] on the side of 'communities'" – thus neglecting the violence and exploitation that structure relations within such communities (2014: xii-xiii).[14] The WFH

[14] For a similar reading of Federici's recent essay collections, see Gotby (forthcoming).

writings, however, are attentive to these forms of violence. A central reason for struggling within the community is to eradicate such hierarchies, in order to create a more unified working class, and to unite on the basis of the needs and demands of the most exploited within the class (SRC 58). In this reading of WFH, to exploit the surplus labour of other members of the class is also to reproduce for capital, since such exploitation reproduces the hierarchies of race and gender on which capital thrives.

While WFH writers are generally unwilling to use the term exploitation in this context, choosing instead to describe men as the controllers, agents, intermediaries, or managers of women's labour (AR 9, PWSC 33, WL 55, Federici 1976: 24), I think this reading is consistent with their general argument. Here, I use the term exploitation to denote processes that appropriate people's labour, whether or not such processes take place through the value form. Women are exploited insofar as they cannot satisfy their own needs (including their emotional needs) other than by labouring for other people. Men, on the other hand, tend to benefit from this labour insofar as they are both the direct beneficiaries of women's caring work, and because they are largely "freed" from performing caring work for others – they are often excused from fully reciprocating women's care and from the work of caring for children, the elderly and other dependants. Fortunati seems to imply this understanding of exploitation when she describes the "dual nature" of men's role as "exploiter and exploited," and writes that men too exploit women's labour, "for the satisfaction of his needs and not in order to extract surplus-value" (AR 174, 94). This is important also because exploiting others within the sphere of reproduction can potentially make one less vulnerable to high levels of exploitation within the sphere of the waged labour market. Workers who have the option of exploiting others' surplus labour have an advantage over those who do not, since they have more time and resources to invest in their waged work, and more leisure time to restore their capacity for labour

(Hochschild 1989a: 254). As Melissa Wright shows in her book about the myth of the "Third World woman," those most likely to be exploited in the reproductive sphere are also likely to be hyper-exploited and deemed disposable in the sphere of waged production work, something that in turn makes these workers vulnerable to high levels of violence in the community (2006: 2, 18).

Reproduction and value

To struggle on the site of reproduction is thus simultaneously a struggle to break the grip of capital's surplus-value extraction over our lives, and to work against the forms of violence and surplus-labour extraction that exist outside of spaces of waged work. For the WFH authors, the unwaged domestic work that primarily women do also produces surplus value for capital (PWSC 52, AR 8). Many authors of the contemporaneous "domestic labour debate" took issue with this perspective (Vogel 1973, Gardiner, Himmelweit and MackIntosh 1975).[15] This debate, initially aimed to deconstruct Marxist categories from the perspective of gender, eventually became mired in questions of value, and many of the later contributions affirmed a rather orthodox reading of Marx (Smith 1978, Briskin 1980).[16] Such critiques of the WFH authors, however, tends to miss the political stakes of their intervention. As Gonzalez puts it,

> this reaction has framed the discussion of reproduction since the publication of *The Arcane of Reproduction*: measuring its adequacy as a theory of value rather than understanding it to reveal what a theory of value cannot immediately disclose. [...] if the debate revolves around whether reproductive labor is *value-productive*, we are still missing the point. The point is the political, as opposed to the moral, viewpoint of the proletariat – that which arises from the wage

[15] For an overview of the debate, see Vogel (2013). Other key contributions include Benston (1969), Morton (1971), Harrison (1973), Gerstein (1973), Seccombe (1974), Himmelweit and Mohun (1977), Gardiner (1979), Molyneux (1979).

[16] For a more recent argument for the value-productive nature of reproductive work, see Mezzadri (2019).

and class relation of exploitation itself. (2013: np)

I agree with Gonzalez' assessment that Fortunati was incorrect in asserting that unwaged domestic labour is productive of surplus value, but that "according to Fortunati's own schema, it must remain external to accumulation" (2013: np). We can thus appreciate the political meaning of this assertion, as an intervention into Marxist debates of the time, while at the same time arguing that the WFH perspective would be more internally coherent if it had stressed that certain types of labour are indeed excluded from calculations of value, and that such exclusions are necessary for the functioning of value. Instead of affirming the value supposedly "hidden" in the commodity of labour power, the WFH theorists would have done better to emphasise the relatively arbitrary nature of value, and how various types of labour are valued or devalued (Weeks 1998: 124, Alessandrini 2012: 3).[17]

The devaluation of reproduction is at the core of the feminist critique of Marx, who neglected the dependency of value production on its constitutive outside – the devalued work of reproducing labour power. Constructing the value of labour power only in terms of consumption of goods (1990: 274), Marx mostly ignored how additional unwaged labour is necessary for the reproduction of the working class (Federici 2017: 26). This is despite, or perhaps because of, the fact that reproduction is labour-intensive and has as of yet been carried out at a relatively low level of technological development.[18] The domestic technology that has been introduced during the 20th century has not significantly reduced the time spent performing reproductive labour (Cowan 1983). Federici writes that "the only true labor saving devices women have used in the '70s have been contraceptives" (RPZ 47). Reproductive labour often depends on the continual presence of the worker, which

[17] Feminist theorist Roswitha Scholz calls this process "value dissociation" (2014: 125-127).
[18] This is not the case in some forms of waged reproductive labour, for instance nursing, where there are a multitude of advanced technologies in use.

suggests that it is difficult to make it more efficient (WL 79). As Gonzales and Neton put it, "[y]ou can not look after children *more quickly*: they have to be attended to 24 hours a day" (2013: 86, emphasis in original). While reproduction has been increasingly commodified over the past decades, it is difficult to fully integrate within the capitalist organisation of production and surplus-value extraction. This might serve to explain why reproductive work was relatively neglected in the writings of Marx, and why it continues to be devalued and disavowed in capitalist economies.

This devaluation of reproduction forms the condition for the devaluation of labour power, as unwaged labour goes unaccounted for in the setting of the wage. The wage appears as a fair compensation for the hours spent doing waged work, not for the process of reproducing oneself or others as labour power. Here, I agree with the initial formulation of this question in Dalla Costa's writings, where she states that "domestic work not only produces use values but is an essential function in the production of surplus value" (PWSC 31). Reading this statement as a weaker claim than the assertion that domestic work is directly value-productive, I think we can preserve the political stakes of this assertion without arguing that capital exploits unwaged work through surplus-value extraction.

In order to preserve the theoretical contribution of the WFH authors, however, it is important to stress reproductive work as productive of labour power rather than just use values. Arguments that domestic labour produces only use values, such as Margaret Benston's 1969 contribution to the domestic labour debate, tend to neglect the capitalist organisation of reproductive labour. Federici, defending the WFH framing of this question, argues that the use of the concept of labour power highlights "the fact that in capitalist society reproductive work is not the free reproduction of ourselves or others according to our and their desires." Furthermore, it emphasises "the tension, the potential separation, and it suggests a world of conflicts, resistances, contradictions that have political

significance" (RPZ 99). Labour power is unique among commodities in that it is carried by people with needs, desires, and a capacity to struggle against the conditions of its consumption. However, being reproduced as labour power also constrains those desires and capacities. Fortunati writes that under capital, workers are obliged to reproduce themselves "*only* as labour power, [...] individuals *cannot* create value *for* themselves" (AR 11, emphasis in original). Here, she seems to point to the devaluation of workers that takes place simultaneously with their constitution as value-creating labour power. We might thus think of Wright's assertion that the very valuelessness of female Mexican factory workers is what is turned into value by capital, as their cheap, disposable, and supposedly unskilled labour is a condition for the extraction of surplus value (2006: 87-88).

The key strength of the labour power perspective on reproductive labour, I would argue, is that it serves to highlight how labour power is constituted by "the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in the physical form, the living personality of a human being" (Marx 1990: 270), and that these "acquired and historically determined attributes [...] are not homogenous in all individuals" (AR 165). We can thus begin to see how labour power consists of acquired capacities, which are bound to the construction of gender and race. As I will argue in more detail in chapter three, gendering processes can be read as a set of "skilling" or "deskilling" procedures, which challenges the framework of the capitalist construction of skills and capacities as inherent in the carrier of labour power.

Here, I also want to note that the framework of labour power allows us to see how labour power is a commodity that cannot be sold by the reproductive labourer, "but only by the male worker himself" (AR 102). In other words, the person with a primary responsibility for reproducing labour power is not constructed as the owner of that commodity, but is rather alienated from it through a model of capitalist ownership of the self, which does not account for one's dependency on other people.[19] The wage contract, through which labour

[19] Not everyone has someone else perform reproductive work for them – many workers do this for

power becomes actualised as a commodity, excludes the social relations under which labour power is produced. In this moment, the capacities that constitute the use value of labour power also become naturalised as inherent in the subject, rather than acquired and historically specific. Labour power thus shares in the fetishised character of other commodities, in which the conditions of their production tend to disappear (Marx 1990: 165). It is important to note how capitalist societies excluded wage labour from constructions of the notion of dependency, so that (white, male) workers could become free to enter contractual relations and appear as independent owners of labour power (Fraser and Gordon 2011: 90).

This does not mean that what is needed is necessarily the increased visibility or moral valorisation of reproductive work. Mariarosa Dalla Costa, in her introduction to *The work of love*, suggests that visibility for its own sake is not particularly useful, since it does not imply a change in the structure of reproductive work (2008: 30). In fact, the valorisation of reproductive labour might consolidate the split between productive and reproductive work, with its attendant gendering of labour. This was most clearly the case in the Victorian valorisation of white women's care for their families, posited against the world of productive work (Coontz 1988: 215, Roberts 1997a: 55, 59).[20] This is why the WFH writers posed their activism as wages *against* housework, simultaneously drawing attention to reproduction and aiming to subvert it (RPZ 15-22). Federici states that "we are suspicious when we hear the press and the politicians celebrating motherhood and our capacity to love and care" (NYWFHC 91). Such celebration, she makes clear, does not translate into women's autonomy over their labour. However, we should note that in some cases the valorisation of the work of mothering, for example, can be a central part of the struggle for

themselves as best they can. But everyone has at one point been cared for by someone else, however insufficiently.

[20] Such valorisation also obscured the contribution of servants to the reproduction of white, bourgeois families.

the reorganisation of reproductive labour. For the mainly black women in the welfare rights movement, whose mothering work was rarely recognised and valorised, asserting that mothering is work was the first step to increased autonomy (Nadasen 2006: 139-140).

Because labour power is the central commodity of capitalist economies, the production of labour power is structurally necessary work. As Federici argues, “[i]f we were not at home doing housework, none of their factories, mines, schools and hospitals, could run, none of their profits could flow” (NYWFHC 91). In contemporary capitalism, there has been an increased reliance on commodified reproductive services, yet these are also not always recognised as necessary for the functioning of the economic system more broadly. As Barbagallo writes, “there is a concerning lack of acknowledgement of the dependent characteristics that full-time professional employment has with the ever-expanding low waged service industries” (2016: 141). In the era when WFH were active, a combination of state services and unwaged domestic work constituted the main horizons of reproductive labour. Both of these forms of labour practices have since become less prevalent, as there is less time for unwaged domestic work and fewer resources for state-provided services. However, the labour-intensive and often less profitable nature of reproductive work means that it has not been fully commodified, and some previously waged reproductive labour has in fact been pushed back into the sphere of unwaged work (Glazer 1993: xi, Gonzalez and Neton 2013: 86). The (partial) commodification of reproduction might in some sense have made these activities more visible as work, yet it is not certain to what extent such visibility has in fact amounted to an acknowledgement of the dependency of productive labour on various forms of reproductive labour. This also indicates a limitation of a politics of visibility of reproductive work, which does not necessarily change the material conditions of reproduction, leaving it continually marginalised by the organisation of waged productive work. Because of the structural devaluation (sometimes combined with moral

valorisation) of reproductive work, commodification of reproductive services does not solve the question of the simultaneous importance and neglect of reproduction in capitalist economies.

Neither does commodification capture the breadth of reproduction. While commodification has been part of the restructuring of reproductive labour under the neoliberal regime (RPZ 69, Barbagallo 2016: 14-23, O'Brien forthcoming), much of the necessary labour of reproducing labour power still takes place over a continuum of commodified services, unwaged work, and state-provided services. For example, Dalla Costa highlights the fact that commodified elder care often relies on women's unwaged work of filling in the gaps in commodified services and performing managerial roles, even as some of the manual labour has been outsourced to other, low-waged women (WSC 172). The continuity of reproductive work is necessary and points to the fact that a patch-work of commodified and state-provided services cannot fully compensate for the labour traditionally done by women for their family members. As I will discuss in more detail in chapter two, emotional bonds are central for ensuring the links between various types of reproductive work. This is why domestic work, as Dalla Costa writes, cannot only be measured as "number of hours and nature of work, but as quality of life and quality of relationship which it generates" (PWSC 19). In her pamphlet "Wages against housework," Federici states:

> It is precisely this peculiar combination of physical, emotional and sexual services that are involved in the role women must perform for capital that creates the specific character of that servant which is the housewife, that makes her work so burdensome and at the same time so invisible. (RPZ 17)

Fortunati and Giovanna Dalla Costa both note that this indicates a lifetime of reproductive

work, as people's reproduction depends on some form of stability over time, even when the exact types of work they need might change (AR 40, WL 37). As the New York WFH Committee write in a pamphlet, older women often take care of their grandchildren to allow their daughters to perform waged labour (NYWFHC 74). This is important since there is a tendency to conflate reproductive labour with the work of taking care of one's own children while they are young, thus neglecting the fact that many (waged and unwaged) reproductive workers perform such work within a range of relationships that are not limited to the care of children.

The continuity of reproductive labour means that it often consists of a multitude of different tasks. While some of these tasks, especially the seemingly more physical forms of labour such as cooking and cleaning, can be outsourced to low-waged reproductive workers, reproduction is more than the totality of discrete tasks. This leads Fortunati to assert that domestic labour appears as the most concrete, private, and complex of all work, "able to differentiate itself in an infinite variety of ways and in a variety of operations, and able to posit itself as qualitatively unique with regard to the work supplied by other female houseworkers" (AR 110). As I will go on to explore in chapters two and three, reproductive work has a role to play in the individualisation of people, through the tailoring of care to suit the individual needs of the recipient – a form of work which is not easily captured by the provision of commodified or state-provided reproductive services. However, the complexity of domestic work and caring work, and the multitude of different tasks that fall into these categories, is complemented by the construction of most types of reproductive labour as unskilled. Fortunati describes the unskilling of housework in terms of its appearance as a "natural force of social labour," which makes reproductive work appear as simpler than commodity production (AR 107). This naturalisation of reproductive work operates despite the fact that in capitalism, the separation of production and

reproduction, and the subordination of reproduction to production, continually threatens to disrupt the reproduction of labour power.

Permanent reproduction crisis

According to Federici, "[c]apitalism fosters a permanent reproduction crisis" (RPZ 104). The terms "crisis of care" and "crisis of social reproduction" have often been used over the past years (Fraser 2011, Thorne 2014). This crisis is explained by phenomena such as women's increased participation in waged work, cuts to state-provided reproductive services, and an ageing population in Europe and North America. In this account of the crisis, it emerged due to the decline of the welfare state and the Fordist model of the family wage. The term permanent reproduction crisis intends to highlight the fact that such a crisis is nothing new, but rather has been a permanent feature of capitalist accumulation. The reproductive crisis, however, is not expressed evenly but has differentiated effects on various demographic groups. The idea that a crisis of care has emerged with neoliberalism obscures the fact that the post-war organisation of reproduction never included everyone, but rather functioned according to differentiated reproductive standards (Dalla Costa 2015: 9, 27). Reproduction under capitalism is always stratified, most commonly according to factors such as class, race, and migration status. Additionally, reproductive needs are socially and historically constituted, which corresponds to a stratification of wages (Marx 1990: 748).

As I mentioned above, various forms of reproductive work are valorised differently, depending on the nature of that labour, who is performing it and for whom it is performed. For example, as Prescod argues, the waged reproductive work that black women have performed in white families has been considered more important than the work that the same women have done for their own families (Prescod 1980: 13-15). Dorothy Roberts

and Evelyn Nakano Glenn both point to the racialised differentiation of reproductive work, in which emotional, "spiritual" and customer-oriented work has been more highly valued than the "dirty," manual, and backroom forms of work that have often been reserved for women of colour (Roberts 1997: 51, Glenn 1999: 19). As certain populations are produced as "vulnerable to premature death" (Gilmore 2007: 28), others have to be reproduced a higher standard. Federici remarks that we must resist the conclusion that

> the indifference of the international capitalist class to the loss of life which globalization is producing is a proof that capital no longer needs living labor. In reality, the destruction of human life on a large scale has been a structural component of capitalism from its inception, as the necessary counterpart of the accumulation of labor power, which is inevitably a violent process. (RPZ 104)

Neoliberal capitalism, while seemingly hostile to reproduction, is as dependent on reproductive labour as previous forms of accumulation, and as dependent on living labour. However, it is at times more apparent that only some groups of people are reproduced as living labour. People belonging to surplus populations, and those who are excluded from formal labour markets, might be more aware of the permanent nature of the reproductive crisis. These populations, Dalla Costa remarks in her 1994 essay "Capitalism and reproduction," are increasingly "destined to extinction because they are believed to be redundant or inappropriate to the valorization requirements of capital" (WSC 220). However, it is not so much extinction of whole populations that is at stake, since capital relies on the existence of vulnerable surplus populations. Furthermore, Wright argues that entire groups of people are produced as temporary and disposable labour forces in terms that also produce individual workers as vulnerable to violence and death (2006: 18). In my final chapter, I will explore how these exclusions also contain radical potentials, as not

being reproduced as labour power might offer possibilities of other forms of life.

BWFWFH, together with other groups led by women of colour, organised against the stratification of reproduction when they broadened the question of reproductive rights to include not only abortion rights but the struggle against forced sterilisations. In a pamphlet, WFH draw attention to the global dimensions of population control and family planning, and write that in the US, forced sterilisation primarily affects black women and women on welfare, as the state does not want to pay benefits to raise children (NYWFHC 57).[21] Brown notes that sterilisation was often a condition for receiving a welfare check (1976b: 15). She points to the long history of racial capital when she writes that the "population of black people has always been a burning issue for international capital: [...] it has never ceased to concern itself with the size, age, sex, availability, manageability, and when need be, extinction, of the black population as a labour force" (1976b: 3).

Here, we can note that it is not only the number of people that is at stake, but the availability and manageability of the labour force, as well as black women's discipline as reproductive workers (Brown 1976b: 10). It should thus be clear that capitalist states attempt to promote a specific type of reproduction – one that creates a stable, disciplined labour force (RPZ 31). Biological and social reproduction become difficult to separate, as only certain forms of generational reproduction are encouraged by state policies. As Fortunati writes, the state intervenes against the reproduction of the "dangerous classes," which are not seen as part of the manageable working class (AR 19). In a later essay, Federici highlights the neoliberal state's reliance on criminalisation to control young working-class people of colour, thus producing workers without rights and punishing potentially disruptive elements of the working class (RPZ 105).

[21] For an extended discussion of the racist implications of sterilisations in the US, see Roberts (1997b). Forced sterilisations, however, were by no means only the expression of conservative politics in the US, but were also practiced in European social democracies. For instance, pioneering Swedish feminist and social democratic politician Alva Myrdal suggested that the Swedish state should sterilise less desirable (racialised and disabled) elements of the population, in order to secure a well-functioning welfare state. Sweden used forced sterilisation for several decades (Ekerwald 2001).

We can thus conceptualise the state's intervention into the politics of population as part of the broader politics of reproduction. The state, in fact, has had a central role in organising the forms of reproductive labour. While Nikolas Rose has argued that a key characteristic of the modern family form is its ability to internalise control and engage in self-management (1990: 173), it is important to recognise the role the state has played in situations of heightened reproductive crisis and as a manager for those who have been less willing to reproduce in a normative manner. Here, there is a parallel to the role that men play within the family – according to Giovanna Dalla Costa, the role of men as "controllers" of reproduction only becomes clear when women start to struggle over the terms of reproductive labour (WL 55). While all WFH writers articulate their politics against the state, as representative of collective capital, WDL and BWFWFH were particularly aware of the state's intervention into reproduction, through sterilisations of black women and loss of custody rights for lesbians and other "bad mothers" (Wyland 1976: 4). WFH member Antonella Picchio also emphasises the need of the state to control the inherently conflictual site of social reproduction, arguing that a great deal of social control is required to manage such conflicts (1992: 58).

The state, however, should not be understood as merely repressive but as an active organiser of unwaged and waged reproductive labour. In her book *Family, welfare and the state*, Dalla Costa notes that

> not only in the material sense but its reproduction on the psychic level, including its discipline and socialization – in which the correlate production of a new labour power required a specific relationship between the family and the labor market, the state needed to both regulate the labor market and strengthen the family. (2015: 20)

The family, she concludes, was at the centre of the New Deal in the US and post-war

welfare states more broadly, setting the standard for the type of reproductive labour that could produce a relatively healthy population (2015: 91, 94). The welfare state, while seemingly replacing some of the labour of the family, actually operated in continuity with it, often intervening in the "private sphere." While neoliberal regimes seem less reliant on traditional family forms, Melinda Cooper has convincingly shown that neoliberalism is based on normative family values, and operates on an often unspoken assumption of family support of the individual (2017: 9). The family, then, is an ideological and material supplement of the "free" individual assumed by neoliberalism. Our current political regime requires the continual management of reproductive labour, thus preserving some version of the family as a unit of reproduction and economic support.

For Fortunati, a central function of the state is the management of reproduction. She argues that the modern, capitalist state was shaped by the open reproductive crisis caused by capitalist industrialisation in the 19th century, when women and children were drawn into factory work to an extent that threatened generational replacement of the working class. She cites Marx's comments on the "unnatural estrangement" between mothers and infants that occurred in this phase of capitalist accumulation, which led to high rates of neglect and infanticide (Marx 1990: 521). In order to stave off this crisis, in which mothers lost their supposedly natural maternal instinct, the state had to intervene into the composition of the working class (AR 172). The total subordination of reproduction to the short-term interest of production, that is the extraction of absolute surplus value through the extension of the working day for all members of the class, was found to undermine the long-term stability of capitalist accumulation. The state, promoting such long-term stability, was thus forced to intervene and regulate the length of the working day as well as the employment of women and children. Working-class struggle over the conditions of its own reproduction also contributed to such regulation, which in turn

"*provoked a profound transformation of the state itself*" (AR 173, emphasis in original). The state thus participates in the creation of a "house working day" and the figure of the housewife (AR 165, see also Seccombe 1993).

This shift, in Fortunati's account, coincides with the shift from absolute to relative surplus-value extraction in the sphere of production.[22] In the sphere of reproduction, she argues, capital's logic is inverted, so that the limitation of the working day in the sphere of production correlates to the extension of the working day in the sphere of reproduction (AR 157-158). The figure of the housewife functions as the inversion of the general logic of capital, which subordinates reproduction to production. According to Fortunati, the houseworker's capacity for productive work is subordinated to her reproductive capacities, so that even when she is not "freed" from waged work, her reproductive capacities are primary. She thus cannot appear as labour power on the waged labour market without simultaneously appearing to capital as a "natural force of social labour" (AR 15). The point Fortunati is making here is similar to what Gonzalez and Neton argue in their essay "The logic of gender," when they discuss women's supposedly natural reproductive capacities. "This systematic differentiation", Gonzalez and Neton write, "– through the market-determined risk identified as childbearing 'potential' – keeps those who embody the signifier 'woman' anchored to the IMM [indirectly market-mediated] sphere" (2013: 76). The unwaged reproductive sphere thus continues to mark women even as they enter the sphere of waged labour.[23] This is despite the fact that many feminised workers, for various reasons, will never be mothers. We can read the WFH slogan "all women are housewives" as pointing to the perceived primacy of reproductive capacities even for those women who are neither mothers nor housewives. It also marks many women as part-time waged

[22] This also seems to be the argument of an unpublished text by Federici entitled "The development of domestic work in the transition from absolute to relative surplus value," which unfortunately appears to be lost (Federici, personal correspondence, August 2018).

[23] On this topic, see also the literature on the "motherhood penalty," for instance Budig, Misra, and Boeckmann (2012), Folbre (2017).

workers, or workers who will inevitably quit their jobs after a certain period of time (Pompei 1972: 2, Wright 2006: 29). Here, the terminology of "choice" of part-time work appears central for maintaining women's continued responsibility for reproduction. As Barbagallo remarks, mothers' waged work is often organised around childcare demands, and

> while [neoliberalism] mobilis[es] a language of gender equality and promoting the benefits of increasing maternal employment, one of the outcomes of the framing of childcare as choice has been to reaffirm traditional ideas that it is women who have the primary responsibility for children and their care. (2016: 103)

The discourse of choice points to the continuing relegation of reproductive labour to the private sphere. Even in the current organisation of reproduction, when much of this work takes place outside of the home, there is a continuing sense that reproduction is essentially a private matter. This, however, does not necessarily imply autonomy in the sphere of reproduction, since the possible choices are so circumscribed. Especially for those responsible for the reproduction of others, there is little material support for choices other than the most normative. As Fortunati argues, the apparent freedom of choice when it comes to individual relations, "this 'freedom' is matched by minimal real opportunity for individual relationships" (AR 25). For instance, the choices relating to child-care provision are often very limited by financial restrictions as well as a lack of individual relationships that could support child-care arrangements outside of the nuclear family. WFH writers thus criticised the idea that private life is a sphere of freedom, outside of capitalist domination. Instead, they argued that capitalist control extends to the sphere of unwaged reproduction.

According to Fortunati, however, the family must necessarily "*appear to be the least capitalist relations* that exist" (AR 129-130, emphasis in original). As I will go on to argue in chapter two, this creation of what seems to be an outside of capitalist relations is an

essential aspect of unwaged emotional reproduction, which must appear as natural and voluntary as opposed to the regulation of waged work. Dalla Costa writes that unwaged reproductive labour appears as a form of personal service rather than work (PWSC 26). This privatisation, in the sense of relegation to the private sphere, has an impact on emotional reproduction, as it can serve to individualise the recipient of reproductive labour. All privatised, unwaged reproductive care comes to appear as an investment in their person, thus strengthening their sense of personal value as well as satisfying some of their physical needs. Acts of physical labour can thus contribute to emotional reproduction insofar as they give the recipient a sense of being cared for. This care seems to refer to that person as an individual, especially if the acts of care are tailored to perceived unique and individual needs. In such a way, reproductive labour can appear to be outside of capitalist market logics, and provide people with a sense of individuality that appears to compensate for their dehumanisation in their waged work places (AR 110).

Sex as work

In this section, I will discuss some aspects of unpaid sexual labour.[24] This is because of the close connection between sex and notions of romantic love, and the similarities between emotional labour and sexual labour in terms of their supposed intimacy. For Federici, one of the central aspects of the privatisation of reproduction is through sex, as well as love. In her 1975 essay "Why sexuality is work," she describes how privatised sexuality spuriously appears as "a space of freedom in which we can presumably be our true selves – a possibility for intimate, 'genuine' connections in a universe of social relations in which we are constantly forced to repress, defer, postpone, hide, even from ourselves, what we desire" (RPZ 23). Sexuality thus comes to stand as the opposite of the

[24] On this concept, see Duncombe and Marsden (1996).

public world of work. Fortunati argues that paid sex work is stigmatised – deemed unnatural and criminal – on the basis of taking place in a less privatised manner and in exchange for money. For Fortunati, this represents one of the state's efforts to contain reproduction within the domestic space, so that women's reproductive work becomes split along lines of legality and illegality (AR 21, 44).[25] Here, it is interesting to draw on the history of queer sex, which is also less privatised due to the historical exclusion of queer people from the domestic sphere of the nuclear family (Houlbrook 2006). The decriminalisation of sodomy in the US, which took place through the 2003 Supreme Court case *Lawrence v. Texas*, stipulated that queer sex could be decriminalised through the protection of sexual privacy in the home (Eng 2010: 43). The private sphere is thus not understood as a merely domestic setting, but a spatial construction of heteronormative, unpaid sex. Such sex, Fortunati writes, is represented as a "reward" for those who work – that is, as part of the wife's duties towards her husband. The flip side of this is that those who do not formally work are seen as having no right to sex (AR 24). While this view has changed since WFH were active, the association between wagelessness and "deviant" sexualities remains. As Brown asserts, the sexual relations of welfare mothers are always deemed transgressive and excessive (1976a: 5).[26]

The WFH writers, then, do not draw a line between paid and unpaid sex on the basis of the former being work and the latter a space of freedom or self-expression. Instead, they both appear as simultaneously work and potential sites of resistance, although in different ways. Across her three essays on sexuality from 1975, Federici insists on the work-like character of much (hetero)sex in the current organisation of reproduction.

[25] Another difference, for Fortunati, is that unpaid, privatised sex tends to share the individualising character of privatised reproductive work in general, whereas paid sex is more depersonalised and standardised. According to Elizabeth Bernstein, however, this characteristic belongs to an earlier phase of organisation of sex work, while many contemporary forms of paid sex tend to use forms of "bounded authenticity," that is, sexual services that also contain an emotional and individualising component (2007: 103). In this sense, paid and unpaid sex work might be becoming increasingly similar.

[26] For more current examples of the fear of sexuality and reproduction while on welfare, see Roberts (1997b), and Lewis (2019a: 112-113).

Federici suggests that sex is work because it has been structured by the two imperatives of biological reproduction and the provision of pleasure to men. This does not mean that heterosexual women do not enjoy sex, as people can enjoy their work, but that their enjoyment is not primary to the organisation of sexuality.[27]

According to Federici, there is thus not only a duty to have sex but also a particular regimentation of sex (NYWFHC 144-146). Here, we can note that such sexual regimentation is not merely repressive, or merely implying the limitation of sexuality to biologically reproductive sex, but rather that the productive creation of pleasure comes to take a certain form. That form can be more permissive or more conservative. The liberalisation of sex in itself, WFH writers argue, does not make sexual relations non-work (RPZ 25, AWNP 21). WDL read heterosexuality as the naturalisation of the current organisation of reproduction (AWNP 21, 47). Similarly, Giovanna Dalla Costa discusses sex as a part of the work women have to do in order to fulfil their obligation within a marriage contract, and as work that gives women access to the means that they need to live (WL 63). While WFH members understood the struggle to criminalise marital rape as part of challenging men's right to their wives' bodies, they argued that such criminalisation could not fully address this work obligation (NYWFHC 153-154, Hall 1985: 88-92).

In *Women and the subversion of the community*, however, sexuality appears in a more ambivalent fashion. First, the pamphlet states that

> [c]apital, while it elevates heterosexuality to a religion, at the same time in practice makes it impossible for men and women to be in touch with each other, physically or emotionally – it undermines heterosexuality except as a sexual, economic and social discipline. (PWSC 30)[28]

[27] In 1982, when the "sexual revolution" of the 1960s and 70s appeared complete, Michèle Barrett and Mary McIntosh remarked that while women are no longer expected to be chaste, sex is still on men's terms (2015: 74).

[28] This sentence is similar to the argument in James' unpublished text "When the mute speaks", (1971a) (dated prior to the published version of "Women and the subversion and the community"), suggesting that it might be influenced or written by James. Different authorial voices, however, are not sufficient to explain this ambivalence.

A few pages later, however, the text demands the right to the freedom to have sex, as it is in women's interest to refuse to be "unsatisfied mothers for their husbands and children" (PWSC 36). Furthermore, Dalla Costa stresses that to "make love and refuse night work to make love, *is the interest of the class*" (PWSC 37, emphasis in original). Here, sexuality appears as a site of struggle that can be productively mobilised as a form of reproduction "for ourselves" as politicised subjects, both as women and as working class. We can thus note that sexuality is part of the dual character of reproduction. It might be necessary to simultaneously explore how sexuality becomes bound up with the practices of reproductive work (particularly for women in heterosexual relationships), and emphasise that sexuality can potentially form a site of disruptive sociality.

Especially for those whose sexual practices and identities are less closely bound to the intimate sphere of domestic heteronormativity, sexuality can be a site of reproducing otherwise. As I will discuss at greater length in chapter four, WDL in particular explored this tension with regard to lesbian sexual practices. Here, sexuality appears both as a form of work and as a potential for the reproduction of a radicalised form of subjectivity. According to Fortunati, lesbian sexuality can be politicised as a form of refusal to reproduce within the bounds of capitalist reproduction. Such heterosexualised capitalist reproduction, however, "is so influential that in practice it is difficult to modify or escape from it" (AR 34). As Andrew Ryder has noted, this argument prefigures Lisa Duggan's critique of homonormativity, insofar as it seems to suggest that the privatised form of heterosexual reproduction is dominant to the point that homosexual relations must to some extent exist within it (2015: np). In a similar vein, Austin and Capper write:

> Although WDL positioned lesbianism as an attack on work, they argued that lesbian sexuality was still reproductive of capitalist relations. Such an analysis, written well before the widespread legalization of gay and lesbian marriage, is prescient in its articulation of lesbian sex as a form

> of reproductive labor as opposed to common ascriptions of lesbian sexuality as "non-reproductive." (2018: 456)

The theoretical perspective of WFH, however, emphasises not only reading reproduction in terms of work, but also locating potential points of struggle within the sphere of reproduction.

Reproductive antagonisms

Whereas the previous sections of this chapter have discussed why reproduction can be a site of political struggle, this section begins to explore how such struggle might take place. This theme is developed further in chapter four. Here, I want to emphasise that reproduction is never a stable, coherent site that is merely functional to the capitalist economy. The WFH perspective involves formulating reproductive sites of struggle, where the functioning of capitalist accumulation might be disrupted. As Dalla Costa notes in her 1972 introduction to "Women and the subversion of the community," "[i]f your production is vital to capitalism, *the refusal to produce*, the refusal to *work*, is a fundamental leveraging of social power" (WSC 15, emphasis in original). While WFH convincingly established that reproductive work is indeed vital to capitalism, there are some notable difficulties to constituting a reproductive politics of refusal. Firstly, the dual nature of reproduction means that it is difficult to disrupt the reproduction of labour power without also harming people. Secondly, many types of struggles on the site of reproduction can be coopted by the state or become part of the expanded accumulation of capital.[29] The paradigmatic case here is perhaps the struggle for a shorter working day, as described by Marx, which was at least partly based on a concern for reproduction, and which led to the development of relative

[29] It should be noted that this also applies to more traditional workers' struggles within the sphere of production.

surplus value (1990: 341, 429). As we have seen, Fortunati argues that this struggle led to a profound change in the organisation of the state, as well as the state-sanctioned institutionalisation of a stricter division of labour (AR 165, see also Seccombe 1993: 75-80). A more contemporary example is the use of migrant labour to "solve" the current reproductive crisis, caused in part by white women's entrance into waged work (Anderson 2000, Farris 2017). Federici in particular is critical of how the women's movement's emphasis on entering into waged work merely displaced some of the burden of reproductive labour onto low-waged reproductive workers (RPZ 118).

These two problems have opposite effects – the first is the risk of harm to those who are recipients of care, the second is the risk that reproductive crises are "solved" in a way that increases the exploitation of reproductive workers while not threatening capital or the state. What is needed, then, are reproductive struggles that can address the concerns of reproductive work without displacing the potential harm of such struggles onto more marginalised groups. A core WFH organising principle is that the working class can only be unified on the terms of those more marginalised by the current organisation of capitalism (SCR 81). The issue, however, is to identify what those terms would be – a task made more difficult by the hierarchies that structure current politics. The hierarchies that structure the working class are often deeply naturalised. Any reproductive struggle must thus take such naturalisation into account.

If heterosexuality is the naturalisation of reproductive labour, and reproductive work entails the naturalisation of capitalism, such naturalisation must be undone. According to members of the English WFH collective, "[t]he routines of capitalist life have always given capital the appearance of naturalness (as if life couldn't be any other way) and the appearance of viability (as if nothing else could work as well)." They add that "[h]alting service work undermines this appearance of social peace" (AWNP 83). At the heart of the

WFH writings, then, lie various forms of provocation that can cause the denaturalisation of reproductive work, and the organisation of life under capitalism more broadly. As Gonzalez argues, the purpose of a text such as *The arcane of reproduction* is to uncover the "gender fetish" that Marx left unexplored, even as he exposed the wage fetish (2013: np). According to Fortunati, however, this work is often harder because of the "*higher and greater level* of ideological organization" that is necessary for the sphere of reproduction to operate without disruption (AR 9, emphasis in original).

This gender fetish operates through the capitalist configuration of the body as a "natural machine" (AR 119). Fortunati discusses this body-machine in relation to pregnancy, writing that women's bodies have been transformed into "*a machine for producing labor-powers*" (AR 72, emphasis in original). This is resonant with Lewis' work on surrogacy, which explores how pregnancy becomes the capacity to produce property (2019a: 78). While Dalla Costa writes about the "diminution of [women's] *physical integrity*" under capitalism (PWSC 28, emphasis in original), it is important not to think of this reconfiguration of the body as a merely repressive moment in the development of capitalism. Rather, as Federici argues in *Caliban and the witch*, we can think of the capitalist reconfiguration of the body as *enabling* it to be exploited in particular ways (2004: 141). We do not necessarily have to read the metaphor of the body as machine as a desire to return to a pre-capitalist body, but rather as a way of understanding how the body is implicated in and co-constituted through shifting relations of labour. We have already seen how the construction of subjectivity as labour power relies on certain acquired capacities. These capacities, as I will discuss in the next chapters, are simultaneously mental, bodily, and emotional. Bodily capacities under capitalism are thus constituted in such a way that facilitates various forms of exploitation.

Naming the supposedly natural capacities of the body as work is one strategy for

their denaturalisation. As Federici writes, “you work, not because you like it, or because it comes naturally to you, but because it is the only condition under which you are allowed to live. Exploited as you might be, you are not that work” (RPZ 16). Work, then, becomes a mode of separation and disentanglement – a way of saying that we are not reducible to our acquired capacities for labour. Affirming this is part of affirming our dual character as labour power and something more than labour power. In Weeks’ terms, it is a way of constituting a feminist subject, which is simultaneously created *by* and *against* the social relations of work (1998: 136). I will discuss these questions at greater length in chapter four. Here, I want to note that struggles within the sphere of reproduction might depend on our ability to create a distance between what we have been made into and what we could become (Weeks 2007: 248).

As we have already seen, WFH names lesbianism as such a site of struggle, in which feminist subjectivities of refusal can appear. This is not a merely negative movement of withdrawal, but rather reconstituting sexual desire and practice in a way that is less entangled with the configuration of nuclear families as the nexus of reproductive labour. However, for the WFH authors, there are multiple sites of possible struggle within the varied field of reproduction. One such site is the declining birth rate in European and North American countries, which WFH members read as a refusal of labour (AR 19, 146, RPZ 31). This is not a form of refusal that is universally applicable, as some (mainly racialised) groups are already seen as disposable (Brown 1986: 9, AR 19). Brown, writing from a black feminist perspective, argues that for those who are typically excluded from normative forms of reproduction, having babies might be a way of affirming the value of reproduction against the state and capital (1976b: 19). Raising those children against the demand for a disciplined labour force might also be a way of resisting capital accumulation (Federici 2018b: 62).

Part of women's struggle against reproductive work is also to force men to assume responsibility for this work, beyond merely "helping" their female partners. However, WFH were critical of reformist attempts that were aimed at making men share housework, as such politics merely reshuffles the burden of reproduction without directly intervening into the organisation of waged and unwaged work (SRC 84). Federici writes that "trying to educate men has always meant that our struggle was privatized and fought in the solitude of our kitchens and bedrooms" (RPZ 36). Instead, she wants to constitute collective feminist power capable of refusing housework. This attempt to create power through refusal is also a struggle for women's time for themselves (AWNP 86). Federici argues that more free time would allow women to become increasingly autonomous and political subjects, as it would free their time not for more waged work but rather for attending meetings or spending time with other women (RPZ 57).

Further, the WFH literature mentions a series of reclamation tactics, which range from shoplifting to migration (AWNP 55, Prescod 1980: 13). These are ways of taking back wealth that has been expropriated through the exploitation of the totality of work of the global proletariat. As Prescod argues, enslaved women's reproductive labour was an essential part of the slave system, which in turn created vast amounts of capital circulating in Europe and America. Migration from the Caribbean and other former colonies to the colonial metropoles is thus a way of trying to reappropriate some of that wealth (1980: 18).

We can thus see that there is a multitude of ways in which people struggle for their own reproduction. A problem with these strategies, however, is that they often appear as merely individual. Women are "seen as nagging bitches, not as workers in struggle" (RPZ 16). Constituting reproductive struggles, then, must also be a project of collectivising struggle. In order to do this, WFH tried to build links between these various aspects of reproductive struggle, by placing them in a shared framework of "housework." As Austin

and Capper notes, "[t]he conceptual impropriety of 'housework' propagated by the WfH movement at times led contemporaneous feminist critics to argue that this analytic was incoherent" (2018: 451). However, this broad conceptualisation of reproduction was needed in order to name a form of work that took place across different sites and in different forms of labour relations. The concept of housework itself is doing the political work of not only naming naturalised activity as work, but also of constituting a coalitional politics on the terrain of reproduction.

Wage struggles

The main WFH tool for achieving the denaturalisation of reproductive work was the struggle concept of the wage. While we should not reduce the WFH perspective to the struggle for a wage, it is important to understand what function the wage is fulfilling, as a political concept and demand. Drawing on the tradition of workerist organising, in which the struggle for wage increases across sectors of the working class was intended as a tool to overcome divisions of power within the class (WSC 160), WFH broadened the strategy to include those who are currently unwaged. This strategy also included those who are low-waged because of their proximity to unwaged and naturalised labour. Here, then, I partly disagree with Angela Davis' critique of WFH as neglecting waged domestic work (1981: 230-231). It is true that such work was partially sidelined in the better-known WFH texts, which focus on the figure of the unwaged housewife. However, the work of BWFWFH and WDL, as well as many lesser-known texts by various WFH collectives, highlight the relation between waged reproductive work, welfare, and unwaged work.[30] For WFH, a wage for currently unwaged reproductive labour would allow women to refuse the

[30] See for example "The home in the hospital" by the Power of Women Collective (1975), *Black women: Bringing it all back home* by Margaret Prescod and Norma Steele (1980), and *Women speak out* by the Toronto Wages for Housework Committee (1975). These texts all explore the continuities of waged and unwaged reproductive labour.

often dehumanising and low-paid types of service work into which especially women of colour are drawn (Brown 1976a: 8). Here, we can see how WFH form a continuation of the intellectual and political legacy of groups such as the National Welfare Rights Organization, who refused work outside their communities on the basis that they were already working as mothers. These women's labour as mothers was devalued because black women were primarily valued as waged workers, reproducing white families (Nadasen 206: 140, Prescod 1980: 13-14). Sara Farris has shown that in contemporary Europe, the labour of immigrant women of colour is devalued in a similar way, thus forcing these women to perform low-waged care work for others, often the same work that bourgeois white women have been able to refuse to do for free (2017: 15). There is thus a continued relevance of the legacy of the welfare movement and WFH, in the sense that they had a different perspective from the mainstream feminist movement which demanded the emancipation of women through labour-force participation.

A wage for housework, WFH authors argue, would strengthen the position of those women who do engage in currently waged reproductive work. As work such as nursing is low-paid and built around the same emotional responses of care, responsibility, and guilt as housework, WFH authors suggest, a wage struggle can only happen across currently divided sectors in ways which would strengthen both waged and unwaged reproductive workers. By making sure that the state and capital cannot rely on domestic work for free, the English WFH collective argue, they would also be forced to increase the wages of those who are currently working in low-paid service sectors and domestic settings (AWNP 87).

As Farris has shown, the Fordist economic era and the post-war family model constituted a historical moment in which both middle- and working-class women were mostly housewives without servants (2017: 132-133). Similarly, Barbagallo writes that in

this era, the construction of womanhood conflated two different historical subjectivities, "that of the 'non-working' middle-class housewife and that of the working-class domestic servant" (2016: 207). The perspective of the wage was designed to draw together differently located women, who at this point in time shared an interest based on the current configuration of a gendered division of labour. However, the WFH demand can also be read as an articulation of difference among women, as it was not aimed at allowing already privileged women to escape domestic labour off the backs of other women, but rather to address the interests of those who are charged with the responsibility of caring for others. Prescod argues that the struggle for more money would destroy the image of the "mammy" – a well-meaning and non-threatening black woman working to reproduce white people. Here, she also includes a struggle against the work that black women are doing in reproducing white women (1980: 14-15). As black women were charged with reproducing their own families as well as those of others, they were engaging in both waged and unwaged forms of labour. The struggle for the wage, for Prescod, is a part of destroying the labour relations that force black women to adopt a servile position in relation to everyone else (1980: 23). According to Federici, WFH was a struggle for those who were stuck with reproductive labour, and could not easily "move up" to do other forms of work (RPZ 58-62). For Brown, the struggle for wages for housework is a majority perspective, against the liberal feminist desire for token positions of power for a few privileged women (1986: 44). While the WFH perspective could be constructed as centring on the white, bourgeois women who are able to live up to the image of the idealised housewife,[31] it in fact sought to make sure that no woman was left with the "dirty work" as bourgeois women moved into the professions.

A core tenet for WFH organising was to not leave unwaged workers behind by

[31] Kalindi Vora makes this critique when she writes that Fortunati's work concerns "middle-class white women's labour in the household" (2019: np).

suggesting that there is a moral or political value in taking on waged work. WFH authors frequently critiqued leftist organising that suggested that women and other unwaged people should "join" the working class by becoming part of the industrial proletariat (Toupin 2018: 50).[32] In this way, WFH accused the male-dominated left of accepting a capitalist model of development. The authors of the text "Capital and the left" write that the difference between "the Trotskyist line – housework is barbarism i.e. all women to the factories – and the libertarian line – housework is socialism i.e. no work should be paid – is only a difference in tactics within an overall capitalist strategy" (NYWFHC 232). In this way, the WFH strategy is articulated against both liberal feminism, with its aim of allowing some (white, bourgeois) women to become the bearers of capitalist power, and the socialist strategy that suggested that class struggle can only be carried out by waged workers on the terrain of capitalist production (RPZ 38). James presciently warned against the construction of hierarchies among women in her essay "A woman's place," originally published in 1953. She describes how companies try to better control female workers by employing women as supervisors (SRC 30). The same warning is repeated in her writings from the 1970s, such as "Women, the unions, and work" from 1972 (SRC 62). Against attempts to enforce such hierarchies among women, WFH argued that career opportunities could never lead to liberation, as such "solutions" to women's status as unwaged labour depend on someone else doing reproductive labour (RPZ 62). Furthermore, Federici argues that individual solutions draw on a racist hierarchy between "modern," career-oriented women and supposedly backwards women doing reproductive work (NYWFHC 21).

The demand for wages for housework, Federici and Nicole Cox assert, is not a demand "to be let into the wage relation (for we were never out of it) but to be let out of it"

[32] The editors of *LIES* instead suggest that the WFH strategy was too dependent on women becoming proletarianised through the wage (2012: 220).

(2012: 37). Similarly, James insists that the wageless are not outside of the wage relation (SRC 104-105). Here, the WFH authors argue that the wage fetish is based not only on unwaged work at the formal work place, as Marx had shown, but also in the home. Many feminists of the time, however, were critical of this attempt to be let out of the wage relation, arguing that it would institutionalise women in their homes (Toupin 2018: 4). WFH responded that it was capital's organisation of reproductive work, not a wage for housework, that had relegated women to the domestic sphere in the first place (RPZ 37). As stated above, then, the WFH strategy was not intended to preserve the relations under which we currently work but to subvert them by giving the primary labour subjects more power over their conditions of labour (Toupin 2018: 211). Federici adds that the critics of WFH assume that currently unwaged work could become waged without simultaneously changing that work, an assumption that she strongly contests. She writes that we could not get wages for housework without "at the same time revolutionizing – in the process of struggling for it – all our family and social relations" (RPZ 15). This, she argues, is because the wage should not only be understood as a bit of money, but rather as a framework for the struggle for autonomy and power.

The demand for wages relies on a strategic inversion of existing power relations within the class. By making waged the currently low- or unwaged work of reproduction, and thus valorising it in money rather than merely in moral terms, WFH hoped to strengthen currently disempowered members of the class. This was a strategy of locating potential power (AWNP 10), similar to that employed by workerist writers. Constituting a seemingly powerless political subject as having potential power gave the WFH writers a tool for criticising leftist authors who took the disempowerment of sections of the working class as a given, due to that section's exclusion from formal labour. This is why WFH authors insist that they are strengthening the whole of the class through their selective

demands concerning workers engaged in reproduction (SRC 193). Federici and Cox argue against the idea that a wage would merely take resources from male workers and give them to women, instead arguing for a perspective where sectors of the working class can expand their power in a way that hurts capital and the state rather than other sectors (2012: 40).

This strategy also applies to the WFH perspective on divisions among working-class women. They argue that seemingly marginalised women, who have a different relation to reproductive work, have the potential power to strengthen their own position in a way that would give more power to all women. In the WFH writings, this applies specifically to lesbians, welfare recipients, and sex workers. This position is not intended to deny the stigmatisation that these groups face. Indeed, the writings of WDL and BWFWFH members in particular list the specific vulnerabilities to which these women are subjected (Hall 1977: 6, Brown 1976a: 1). However, the WFH authors tend to explain such vulnerability through reference to these women's refusal of normative conditions of reproductive labour, and the violence and stigmatisation that follows. Here, BWFWFH draw connections between the position of black women and sex workers, who are often subjected to overlapping forms of violence due to their "deviance" from normative (white, bourgeois, unwaged) forms of reproductive labour, particularly intense for those who are both black and sex workers (Black Women for Wages for Housework 2012: 230, see also Austin and Capper 2018: 452). In order to locate potential sources of power, the WFH authors tend to read such deviance as a refusal of reproductive labour on the terms set by the state. But they also understand that such vulnerabilities also give certain groups of women potential disadvantages, which means that they have a reason to organise autonomously in order to assert their needs. In chapter four, I will return to the notion of autonomy as a way of constituting political subjectivity.

Here, I want to point to the WFH retheorising of the workerist notion of class composition – a concept intended to track the changing internal structure of the working class and its struggles. This notion was often used to locate the most technologically advanced workers within the class (Wright 2002: 225). As the WFH writers point out, this tends to lead to a vanguardism where some sectors of the class come to represent the class as a whole (RPZ 28, NYWFHC 38). The WFH position instead entails an affirmation of the possibility of struggle from a multitude of points within the social totality, and the potential power of refusal that belongs not only to workers in key sectors of industry but to all those who participate in capitalist economies in some capacity. This includes students, the unemployed, and unwaged peasants as well as housewives (PWSC 25, SRC 66). It also includes those seemingly "unorganisable" members of the class who have an antagonistic relation to the state, such as people who are criminalised in various ways (Prescod 1980: 36). WFH struggles could thus expand to include those who have traditionally been dismissed as belonging to the lumpen proletariat (NYWFH 104). WFH also emphasises struggles of recipients of care, and the potential solidarity that could be fostered between reproductive workers and those they care for – including children, the elderly, and the mentally ill (SRC 73, RPZ 125). Instead of focusing exclusively on the struggles of factory workers, then, WFH writers affirm a broader notion of capitalism that extended to informal economies and unwaged workers, as well as focusing on the proletariat as a collective subject with needs.[33] As James suggests, it also entails an understanding of politics that did not pit a universal class struggle against the particularity of identity-based struggles, but instead reads identity as the "substance of class" (SRC 96). There is thus no "class in general" whose interests can be seen to represent the interests of the whole, as such universalising constructs tend to be based on the invisibility

[33] This conception of the class is often described using the workerist term "social factory," intended to explain how capitalist exploitation extends beyond the factory itself. However, this term is not widely used by WFH authors.

of dominant identities within the class (SRC 67). The concept of class composition thus has to be drastically rethought, in order to do justice to the multiplicity of potential anticapitalist struggles.

Rather than merely focusing on the disruption at the point of production of surplus value, WFH strategy seeks an understanding of the full circuit of capitalist production. This can mean interrupting the process "before" the surplus-productive moment – that is, at the stage of production of labour power. It can also mean disrupting the moment "after" production, in the realisation of surplus-value through the work of consumption. As we can see, these two moments are not distinct, but rather indicate the circular motion of capitalist accumulation, where various moments are interconnected and all necessary for the production of surplus value. Interventions in reproduction/consumption can take various forms, including rent strikes, strategic withdrawals of unwaged labour, "proletarian shopping,"[34] and the reappropriation of reproductive resources and services. The WFH strategy was thus not limited to the demand for the wage, but operated across a multitude of claims for more free time, more resources, and less work (SCR 77, 158).

As Guiliana Pompei argues in an essay based on one of the first meetings of the WFH movement, the claim for a wage should be understood as the reappropriation of wealth and power – including reproductive resources such as housing, transport, and health services (1972: 4). Reappropriation is a central term in the WFH perspective, naming both the previously invisible labour that is part of the capitalist production of wealth, and the strategies that result in the reclamation of control (RPZ 38, NYWFHC 34). This, paired with the demand for less time spent working, was intended to lessen the grasp of capitalist control over our lives. WFH is thus also a demand for the increasingly self-directed activity of workers, who can organise reproduction in a way that does not succumb to the demands of capital.

[34] A collective form of shoplifting, where a group of people enter a store to "liberate" goods.

The reclamation of wealth, both in terms of an adequate wage for reproductive work and the access to reproductive resources and services, is a strategy aimed at making capital and the state pay for reproduction. Through unwaged work, expensive reproductive resources, and "individual responsibility," capital has externalised much of the cost of reproducing the labour force. Claiming free reproductive services, as well as claiming an adequate wage for reproductive work, is a way of increasing the cost of reproduction for capital and the state. Fortunati writes that working-class reproduction has often been reduced to the bare minimum, where anything beyond mere survival is constructed as luxury (AR 19). A way of struggling against this is to construct new social needs, such as adequate and affordable housing or free child-care services, which continually increase the cost of reproducing the workers. In organising communal reproductive resources, this could also expand the social worlds of people, which are currently often restricted to various labour relationships within waged and unwaged spheres.

Thus, both the attempt to put a price on reproduction and to get the state to pay for reproductive resources such as health care and housing were part of the WFH project of reappropriation. This was simultaneously an attempt to "commodify" the reproductive labour capacity of the currently unwaged by demanding that the state pay for it, and decommodifying services and resources that workers have to pay for in order to survive.[35] The demand for a wage from the state mimics the commodification of work under capitalism, through the sale of labour power. However, this would not lead to the commodification of reproductive services, in the sense that they would become value-productive or paid for by consumers. Rather, it is an attempt to limit the exploitation of unwaged work. This type of "commodification" could be read as a form of alienation of labour, as it incorporates currently unwaged work in a market logic. However, WFH

[35] This discussion finds a contemporary echo in the debates around Universal Basic Income and Universal Basic Services. See Weeks (2011: 138-150), and Social Prosperity Network (2017).

wanted to show that there is nothing natural or non-alienated in this work as it is currently organised (RPZ 35).

This perspective thus strives to "commodify" reproductive work through the wage provided by the state, while at the same time decommodifying reproduction from the perspective of the recipients of care and services. Arguing for free housing, WFH writers claim that houseworkers were the only people paying rent for their workplace (NYWFHC 62).[36] Constructing the home as a place of work, then, allows WFH to question the conditions of such work places. However, the point is not just to improve the working conditions of houseworkers, but rather to undo the material and ideological lines between the domestic and the public, the reproductive and the productive. Such undoing, WFH authors argue, challenges the organisation of the totality of the capitalist circuit (RPZ 15).

In their political practice, however, WFH oscillated between reformism and radicalism (NYWFHC 19). Like most political movements, the WFH campaign worked within a radical political perspective but often engaged in reformist struggles, such as the Family Allowance Campaign, which aimed to increase the meagre sum of money women received to support their children (SRC 87, Toronto Wages For Housework Committee 1976). WFH, at its best, was able to operate on several levels simultaneously – as both a practical demand to improve the lives of working-class women, and as a revolutionary provocation for an end of the current organisation of our lives.[37] While this caused some confusion in the Women's Liberation Movement, it also allowed WFH to shift from reformism to a revolutionary perspective, according to the needs of a given situation. At the heart of the WFH demand as a provocation is the fact that capital would not be able to pay for the totality of reproductive labour. For the WFH activists, the aim is "to be priceless, to price

[36] This has become significantly more common today, with the rise of freelancing – another attempt by capital to externalise the costs of (re)production onto the workers. However, home-based production has a long history under capitalism. On this topic, see Staples (2007).

[37] See Weeks (2011: 131) for an extended discussion of the WFH strategy as provocation.

ourselves out of the market, for housework and factory work and office work to become 'uneconomic'" (RPZ 39). While the Family Allowance Campaign did not provide women with a great deal of financial resources, it was a way of holding onto some of the money that the state gives to women, in order to counteract capital's tendency to increase profit margins by externalising reproductive costs.

The demand for wages, then, is also a refusal to internalise the cost and effort of reproducing the working class. It is a refusal of the notion that some members of the class must necessarily be exploited by others in order for people to survive. The demand for more money was also the demand for an end to the inadequate remuneration of all the work that people perform. The current organisation of reproductive work tends to construct love as the reward for, and precondition of, labour, yet as we will see in the next chapter, love itself is part of the reproductive labour that people do for each other. Reproductive labourers are made to produce "the good life" (Berlant 2008: 19) for other people, in order to compensate for the damaged life of capitalist labour. A WFH perspective demands more than this meagre reward. It demands the continual expansion of the needs of the working class. As WFH members put it: "So far we have done it for love, not money. But the cost of loving is going up" (AWNP 88).

In this chapter, I have outlined a WFH perspective on reproductive labour and politics. I have introduced the problem of the reproduction of labour power for capitalist economies, and how that causes a permanent reproductive crisis. From the perspective of reproductive workers, I have discussed reproduction as a site of antagonism on which a multitude of struggles can take place. In the following chapters, I will concretise this in relation to emotional reproduction and the work of love.

Chapter two: Love as labour

This chapter explores theories of affective and emotional labour. I will review two sets of literature on this topic. Firstly, I will give a brief account of the tradition of post-workerism, which uses the concept of affective labour to describe a type of immaterial labour – that is, labour where the product is something other than a material object. I will explain why the "feminisation of labour" thesis, a central aspect of post-workerist accounts of affective labour, is insufficient as a foundation for a materialist feminist theory of emotional labour in contemporary society. While seemingly in line with a WFH account of gendered labour, the feminisation of labour argument in fact obscures the persistent gendering and devaluation of emotional labour.

Secondly, the chapter returns to the tradition of feminist sociology of emotional labour, starting with Hochschild's 1983 book *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*. Hochschild introduces the concept of emotional labour to describe a specific but increasingly common labour practice. Drawing on Hochschild's writings as well as later feminist theories of emotional labour, I will outline the foundation of a historical materialist account of emotional reproduction. I use the term emotional reproduction in order to indicate the essential nature of emotional labour for the reproduction of labour power, and capitalist social relations more broadly. Here, it is important to emphasise that while emotional labour is a specific type of labour, it cannot be properly understood outside of the context of reproductive labour. Contrary to post-workerist theorists, I read emotional labour not as an instance of immaterial labour but as a specific yet integral aspect of reproductive labour, thus linking it to more obviously material aspects of this work. I also want to note the complexities of emotional labour, which today spans the divisions between public and private spheres, and waged and unwaged work. While the concept of

emotional labour is most commonly applied to forms of commodified work, I want to highlight the links between this form of labour and unwaged reproductive labour (which I explored in chapter one) and the gendering of work (which I will study in more detail in chapter three). I use the term emotional reproduction to indicate a labour process that exceeds the type of work described by Hochschild.

The WFH theorists do not present a developed theory of emotional labour. However, I will trace their scattered mentions of this type of work, in order to expand on emotional labour as a specific instance of reproductive labour. I will argue that emotional labour has an important function in their writings, where it often appears under the name of "love." It is as love, then, that emotional labour is linked to other practices of intimate care work. This move seeks to complicate the description of emotional labour in the sociological literature, where it is commonly separated from "real" emotional bonds (see for example Hochschild 2003b: 7, 119, 132). Further, it serves as a critical interrogation of what we mean by "love" – a term that has had a central position in modern and contemporary ideals of "the good life," understood as normative investments in certain forms of reproduction. While reviewing some of the literature on affective and emotional labour, then, this chapter will also begin to detail the theory and content of emotional reproduction.

Affective labour, post-workerism, and gender

What would it mean to say that labour is increasingly immaterial and affective? In this section I try to work through the problematic of the relation between affect, gender and labour as it appears in the writings of the post-workerist tradition. The post-workerist moment emerged in the 1990s, after the decline of the organised labour movement. A group of theorists, some of them key thinkers of workerism and Autonomia, tried to rethink the nature of the working class in light of changed labour relations under post-Fordist

capitalism. Autonomia, a 1970s political movement which stemmed from workerism, demanded more flexibility and more freedom from capital. By the 1990s, however, many of the demands of Autonomia seemed to have come true in a perverse form – post-Fordism was based on the loss of the traditional stability of industrial labour, announcing a new era of flexibility, precarity, and work utilising interpersonal and cognitive skills. Instead of freeing life from labour, labour now seemed to be diffused over the entirety of life (Morini 2007: 46). As this new type of labour centred on verbal communication and affective relationships, the term "feminisation of labour" became widespread to indicate that many tasks were related to those traditionally conceived as "women's work." The general feminisation of labour, according to this theory, is connected to the increasingly affective character of work. In this section, I will provide a critique of this conceptualisation of affective labour, from the perspective of WFH feminism. Here, I will mainly focus on Hardt and Negri's *Empire* trilogy, as it provides the most extensive statement on affective labour, and appears to be the most useful for feminist theory.

Hardt and Negri offer a three-part definition of the feminisation of labour. Firstly, there has been a quantitative increase in women engaged in waged work. Secondly, post-Fordism has brought a qualitative shift in labour conditions, so that all people are now subjected to conditions traditionally associated with women, such as flexibility, part-time work and informal employment. Thirdly, post-industrial production is often centred around qualities associated with "women's work," and affective tasks are increasingly central in all types of labour (2009: 133). While Hardt and Negri emphasise that they are less concerned with the quantitative than the qualitative shift, there might be a link between the two – Cristina Morini suggests that the affective dimension of post-Fordist work might make women particularly attractive workers (2007: 46). This is true insofar as women are constructed as workers with a heightened affective capacity. The WFH authors, however,

would stress that this hinges on a particular construction of femininity rather than being an inherent quality in women as workers. For the post-workerists, the gender of the workers matters less. Post-workerists argue that feminised labour is now hegemonic, which means that it tends to include all forms of work and all workers, so that even industrial labour operates according to the logic of post-Fordist, immaterial labour (Hardt and Negri 2004: 113). Affective labour is a key aspect of immaterial labour more broadly: "Caring labor is certainly entirely immersed in the corporeal, the somatic, but the affects it produces are nonetheless immaterial. What affective labor produces are social networks, forms of community, biopower" (2000: 293). In this stage of development, Hardt and Negri suggest, "capitalist production is aimed ever more clearly at the production of not only (and perhaps not even primarily) commodities but also social relationships and forms of life" (2009: 133).

Elsewhere, Negri offers a definition of the term "becoming-woman of labour" as not only feminisation but a broadening of the social space of valorisation (2008: 64). There is thus a spatial shift, in which valorisation processes finally leave the confined space of the factory to infiltrate all spheres of life. This perceived shift raises questions of the possibility of measuring the labour time of production, and therefore of the status of Marx's theory of value as socially necessary labour time (Negri 1999: 80). Post-workerist writings tend to emphasise the power of new kinds of labour to break down boundaries, be they boundaries of space, time, gender, productivity and non-productivity, or employment and unemployment. This theoretical move opens up both problems and potentials for post-workerist thinkers.

One of the problems is how to think about the continuing stratifications of work. Hardt and Negri are eager to point out that much of immaterial labour, especially affective labour, is traditionally "women's work," and thus devalued. They also remark that the feminisation of labour is related to migration and the devaluation of immigrant workers (2009: 135). However, this concern for devalued workers is not integrated into their theory. The term

"the feminisation of labour," unlike "feminised labour," indicates a process, a *becoming*-woman of labour (see also Revel 2003). It is thus not a characteristic of a particular subset of labour, but the feminisation of *labour*, understood as a generic term. All of labour thus is increasingly "feminine." Clearly, not everyone is performing traditionally feminised tasks, such as child care. Instead Hardt and Negri suggest that affective and communicative skills are increasingly required in all forms of work, the work performed by men as well as the work performed by women. The main shift, according to this argument, is thus that "men's work" is taking on some of the characteristics of the tasks that have traditionally been established as "women's work." While they acknowledge that affective labour is primarily connected to women (2009: 134), their argument seems premised on the ever-increasing demand for the skills of affect. According to this argument, affective labour is characteristic of post-Fordist labour generally.

As we have seen, not only affectivity but a generalised precarity is part of the definition of the feminisation of labour. The problem here is that Hardt and Negri take this characteristic as a given aspect of feminisation without fully exploring how it is bound up with the exclusion of women from waged work and their primary responsibility for reproductive labour. The second group of characteristics of feminisation, relating to affectivity, seems more closely related to femininity as it is commonly understood. But extending the term "feminisation" (in the sense of affectivity) to people who are not normally feminised runs the risk of employing a "metaphysics of sexual difference," (Preciado 2013: 289) while simultaneously denying the political meaning of gender. Not only is "feminisation" imprecise as a term for affectivity, it also risks construing affect as an inherent quality or territory of "the feminine." As Hochschild notes, while women are generally constructed as more skilled in emotional work, some emotions are distinctly masculine in their cultural coding (MH 163). Furthermore, an unproblematised conceptual

association of feminisation and affectivity risks overlooking the fact that any perceived link between gender and a particular capacity for certain emotions is a by-product of gendered socialisation itself. While I argue that emotional labour is central in the constitution of modern femininity, affectivity takes on a different meaning when ascribed to people who are not feminised. The term "affective labour," understood as an increasingly generalised condition, tends to erase such differences. A materialist feminist perspective explores this type of work as having a historically specific link to a set of workers, rather than a seemingly essentialised trait that is generalised. The problem with Hardt and Negri's account is that it sometimes seems to posit certain characteristics as essentially feminine, while at the same time erasing the importance of gendered hierarchies from their account of labour. As Shiloh Whitney asks, "when all work is women's work, what becomes of women, and the usually unpaid, usually reproductive work that is traditionally assigned to us?" (2018: 641).

Moreover, as Federici has shown, the concept of affect for Hardt and Negri often has an ontological meaning derived from Spinoza's *Ethics*, where affect is closer to the concepts of force or capacity than emotion (2011: 64). This is certainly true in Negri's essay "Value and affect," in which he describes affect simply as the power to act (1999: 79). This double meaning of affect makes it less terminologically consistent, thus making its link to gender even more unclear.

There is also a whole set of issues relating to the historical aspects of the feminisation thesis. The term "feminisation of labour" suggests that labour was once masculine, which obscures the fact that most women have always worked, whether they were waged or not. Donatella Alessandrini argues that the post-workerist identification of post-Fordism with the impossibility of measuring labour time undermines the theoretical principles of the feminist theorists on whose writings post-workerists claim to draw, as

capitalist value has always been reliant on non-measured, unwaged labour (2012: 3).

The post-workerist theorists tend to gesture vaguely towards an alleged historical rupture in which the labour conditions previously reserved for devalued workers (women, immigrants) become generalised (Hardt and Negri 2009: 133). However, I find the argument regarding the increased homogenisation of labour conditions unconvincing. While it might be true that many jobs are increasingly precarious, and that work tends to take over more and more of "life," this shift does not affect everyone in the same way, since not everyone experienced a clear demarcation between work and life in the Fordist era. Nor does it justify the claim that there has been a fundamental rupture in labour relations, as many people have been working under these conditions for a long time. What has happened is that much of factory labour, long the centre of communist political organising, has moved to the global South and/or been automated. Many workers in the global South, however, experience a factory discipline similar to that which European and North American workers lived under during the 19th and early 20th centuries, especially in industries where the (often female) work force is so cheap that it has not been replaced with machines (Wright 2006).[38] Here, the supposed shift towards immaterial labour and the "feminisation of labour" has not been felt in the same way. Nor is there much homogeneity between the working conditions of migrant women of colour, working as cleaners and carers, and white "creatives" and intellectual workers, working to realise themselves through their careers, as the immaterial labour thesis seems to suggest. This does not mean that these subjects cannot come together in struggle,[39] but that we must be mindful of political differences and hierarchies that are continually reproduced between them, at least partially through differentiating labour processes. A WFH perspective, as we have

[38] This use of women's labour instead of machines is nothing new. Marx writes that "women are still occasionally used instead of horses for hauling barges, because the labour required to produce horses and machines is an accurately known quantity, while that required to maintain the women of the surplus population is beneath all calculation" (1990: 517).

[39] The organising efforts of Precarias a la Deriva suggest that such solidarity can be useful – see their essay "Adrift through the circuits of feminized precarious work" (2004).

seen, implies centring the conditions and demands of those most exploited.

A problem with positing “feminisation” and immateriality as tendencies is that all other forms of labour come to appear as relics of the past, and boundaries between workers appear to be in the process of disappearing. It imposes a theory of work which is clearly based on a particular set of workers onto the working class as a whole. Post-workerist theorists, like the workerism they draw on, tend to generalise one aspect of labour and use it as a framework for understanding all other types of work (Wright 2002: 224). In the post-workerist case, this hegemonic labour is no longer the manual labour of the factory worker but the immaterial labour of the intellectual worker. As we have seen, Hardt and Negri stress that affective labour is also part of immaterial labour (2004: 111), although, as I have argued, it is not clear what this affective element means. Franco “Bifo” Berardi repeatedly mentions the “corporeality” of the collective working subject (2009: 105), but the theoretical emphasis of post-workerism is still very much on the intellectual aspect of immaterial labour, in which affective labour is not theoretically integrated. This is especially clear in concepts, such as Bifo’s “cognitariat,” which tend to reestablish a mind/body dichotomy while claiming to undo that very distinction. Here, it is also obvious that the shift towards immaterial labour, as the post-workerist construe it, depends primarily on technological innovations. A perhaps ironic virtue of Maurizio Lazzarato’s conceptualisation of immaterial labour is that it makes no claim to theorising feminised or embodied aspects of work. Rather, it unabashedly uses the traditionally masculine labour of the creative, technical, and scientific industries as a model for post-Fordist labour, thus producing a more conceptually coherent though obviously limited account (1996: 142).

Steve Wright observes that the workerist tended to see the most “advanced” fraction of the working class as a tendency for the whole class (2002: 225). Bifo does this explicitly, writing that he will focus on the most innovative form of contemporary work, which

represents the trend that is transforming the whole of social production (2009: 87). The limitations of using relatively privileged workers in the intellectual and creative industries as a model for the whole working class apparently does not trouble Bifo. Similarly, Paolo Virno does not problematise his theoretical move to use the cultural industries as a model for other kinds of post-Fordist work (2004: 61). Here, we can see a problem in the theoretical and methodological focus on "class composition" – it tends to make broad generalisations that are unhelpful for understanding the fragmentation of the working class. Some WFH writings can be read as being guilty of this tendency, exemplified by the claim that all women are housewives, and that the position of working-class women is determinant for all women (PWSC 19). However, WFH authors always start from a position of specificity, even when it is the broad specificity of working-class women. The post-workerists, despite oft-repeated claims to the contrary, seem to start from the "general" position of "workers," or the "multitude," which due to its lack of determination ends up being implicitly gendered and racialised as white and masculine. Federici writes that the concept of "feminisation of labour" in fact is a way of ungendering labour, as it pays little attention to the specificity of the work that women are expected to perform (2011: 64-67).

Indeed, there seems to be inherent problems in using a generalising term for understanding the gendering of labour, as gender is a social system which is built upon the violent division of people into different groups. Would the "becoming-woman" of men's work mean the end of gender as such? Hardt and Negri insist that it does not, but their theoretical framework cannot account for the persistence of gender. The flaw of post-workerist theory is its search for a hegemonic tendency, a universalising force, in the way that capitalism operates. While we must be attentive to shifts in capitalist relations, post-workerists seem to assume that these shifts will come to affect "everyone" in relatively

homogeneous ways. In this, they follow a long tradition of Marxist thinkers who have assumed that capitalism is inherently universalising and therefore will impose wage relations on everyone, and under similar conditions. A counter-tradition of feminist, post-colonial, and antiracist Marxists have contested this, and instead explored the limitations of capitalist universality. As post-colonial Marxists Alexander Anievas and Kerem Nişancıoğlu write:

> We can say that capitalism is defined by a contradictory fusion of universalising and differentiating tendencies, exerting both equalising and fragmenting pressures on social development. This systemisation of unevenness – so dramatically exemplified by the (re)production of systematic inequalities and power hierarchies within and between societies – is a necessary consequence of the expansionary, competitive logic of capital accumulation. (2015: 324 n60)

A similar tradition of Marxist feminism has emphasised the way that the privatisation of the home has come to create a form of internal "outside" of capitalist society, which necessarily appears as untarnished by capitalist processes of valorisation. As Gonzalez and Neton argue, there must be an exterior to value in order for value to exist (2013: 62). Both WFH feminists such as Fortunati and the German value-theory feminist Roswitha Scholz have theorised the division between the sphere of reproduction and the sphere of production (AR 8, Scholz 2014: 125-128). While the terms of this division have changed since the prime of the WFH movement, and indeed are continually open to renegotiation through political struggle, nothing justifies the abandonment of the theoretical principle of internal and external differentiation and exclusion of some forms of labour from the general process of capitalist valorisation. The division between gendered spheres of labour has not been dissolved, nor has labour melted into the undifferentiated sphere of "life," as Hardt and Negri's concept of "biopolitical production" implies (2004: 109).

What are the political stakes of this debate? What would the political meaning be of a hegemony of affective labour? Hardt and Negri are the most optimistic proponents of the immaterial labour theory, suggesting that its tendency towards hegemony will cause capitalist management to withdraw from the management of labour, becoming a mere parasite or mechanism of capture (2000: 62). Federici points to the empirically dubious status of this statement (2011: 68), but here I am more interested in its political implications. For Hardt and Negri, immaterial labour itself will create a common, due to its expansive nature that is not limited by a logic of scarcity. The politics of today is therefore not a question of confrontation with capital over the means of production, but the multitude's constitution of common wealth through immaterial production (2009: 283). Again, it is obvious that Hardt and Negri use intellectual production, especially scientific production, as a model for all immaterial labour. While it is easy to understand how knowledge can be reproduced without being diminished, this has different implications for affective labour. They do not explore what it would mean to say that affect is not limited by scarcity, and what material conditions would allow for this. While the claim about unlimited affect could be construed as a contestation of the current limitation of affect to romantic and familial relations, I think it instead points to Hardt and Negri's Spinozist understanding of affect as a vital force. This is especially apparent in their declaration that love is the ontologically constitutive force of the common (2009: 181). The post-workerist reading of affect is thus at odds with the feminist reading of reproductive labour, which tends to emphasise the material basis of the production of affect and the family as the locus of "love."[40]

Post-workerists often ignore that basis, claiming that immaterial labour itself can constitute the common, without any consideration for the material arrangements necessary to challenge the current forms of reproductive labour. Indeed, the insistence that

[40] See Wilkinson (2017) for a critique of Hardt and Negri's Spinozist notion of love.

immaterial labour in itself provides "the potential for a kind of spontaneous and elementary communism" (Hardt and Negri 2000: 294) obscures the fact that contemporary forms of immaterial labour are far from communist. It would be more useful to think about how immaterial and material labour alike produce many things we need, under social relations that we do not want. Especially when writing about affective labour, it is apparent that the post-workerists share the bourgeois, sentimental vision of the family and affective production, "a haven in a heartless world" now renamed "the potential for communism." As Susanne Schultz writes,

> Hardt and Negri's vague attempts to locate utopian potential in the new forces of production stand in a long left tradition of idealizing women's and reproductive work as spheres free from alienation and domination. In this conception, the gesture they make towards feminist theory (in a mere footnote) is perhaps better understood as a gentleman-like dismissal of feminist critique, a way of keeping feminist critique at bay. (2006: 79)

In *Empire*, Hardt and Negri gesture towards the feminist movement's struggle on the site of reproduction, but make it appear as though these struggles are primarily over the *valuation* of reproductive labour, rather than a refusal of such labour (2000: 274). The feminist refusal does not fit neatly into their conception of affective labour as somehow already communist.

In post-workerist writings, it appears as if feminised labour conditions are only politically relevant when they have become "generalised" – that is, when they affect white men. Now, it seems, the time has finally come to expand the sphere of the political to include everyday life. But what form can organising take in the age of post-Fordist labour? In post-workerist theory, the era of the union and the party is over. Two post-workerists who have a more rigorous understanding of gender, Judith Revel and Christian Marazzi,

both suggest that the feminist movement invented the forms of subjectivity, organisation, and struggle necessary for a post-Fordist radical politics (Revel 2003: np, Marazzi 2011: 52). If post-workerism is to have a lasting political function, it will hopefully be to broaden the meaning of revolutionary struggle beyond the confines of productive labour. But as I have suggested in chapter one, WFH feminists tried to do this in the 1970s. Furthermore, feminist theorists have been working on more robust conceptualisations of emotional labour since the early 1980s. The rest of this chapter will be dedicated to their work.

Emotional labour in feminist theory

Federici's critique of Hardt and Negri's notion of affective labour gives us a direction for reconceptualising this work within a feminist framework. As noted above, she criticises this concept for neglecting the gendered aspects of affect, and thus how different forms of work are productive of social difference, which she understands as fundamental to the reproduction of capitalist relations (2011: 63). Furthermore, she emphasises that placing affective work within the framework of immaterial labour severs the link between such labour and other types of gendered work. Care, she notes, depends on the integration of material and immaterial aspects (RPZ 100, 107). It is only through understanding affective labour as an integral part of the reproduction of labour power that we can imagine productive forms of refusal (2011: 71). In her essay, Federici mentions Hochschild as someone who has usefully conceptualised the gendered aspects of emotional labour (2011: 66). In the remainder of this chapter, I will explore whether Hochschild can help us develop a feminist understanding of emotional labour which avoids the pitfalls that Federici identifies. Questions around gender will as far as possible be deferred to the next chapter, although the strong link between emotion and gender makes them difficult to disentangle. Here, I will focus on Hochschild's writings and later feminist theory on affective and

emotional labour, while making more passing references to WFH writings. In chapter three, I will try to bring the analyses of the first two chapters together in an analysis of emotional labour as (re)productive of gender difference.

First, we might ask what emotion is. I cannot develop an extended theory of emotion in this chapter, nor do I think that a theory of emotion separated from social and political contexts would be very helpful. However, I do want to suggest that the concept of emotion might be more productive for feminist analyses than that of affect.[41] This is partly due to the conceptual instability of the term affect, which as we have seen is often used to denote a Spinozist understanding of power, intensity, and energy (Seigworth and Gregg 2010: 2, 6). In my conceptualisation of emotion, I try to move away from such associations. The conceptual distinction between affect and emotion is shifting, unstable, and often somewhat incoherent (Whitney 2018: 656 n1), but the terms nonetheless carry somewhat different associations. I argue that emotion is a politically more useful concept because it can be clearly linked to processes of management, regulation, and control. As Brian Massumi writes, "[e]motion is qualified intensity, the conventional, consensual point of insertion of intensity into semantically and semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action-reaction circuits, into function and meaning" (2002: 28). Affect, on the other hand, has more free-floating connotations, as one of its central aspects is that it consists of pre-conscious or non-conscious intensities, and therefore is less intentional than emotion (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez 2010: 132). For Massumi, the difference between affect and emotion is also a distinction of consciousness, as he suggests that affect is pre-cognitive, bodily, and unqualified (2002: 28).

The concept of affect also seeks to disprivilege the idea of a coherent subject, and the notion of internal psychological states. I maintain that it is a virtue of the concept of emotion that it implicitly refers to a notion of a subject, although as I will argue in the next

[41] In this thesis, however, I use the terms emotion and feeling interchangeably.

section, that subject need not be understood as a pre-given or "authentic" self. I am interested precisely in the "conventional" aspects that Massumi assigns to emotion, which I suggest can tell us something about the gendered constitution of the subject of emotional labour. Here we can recall Raymond Williams' phrase "structure of feeling," which reminds us that feeling is not random or spontaneous, but tied to various historical processes. As Williams writes, such a structure is not "recognized as social but taken to be private, idiosyncratic, and even isolating, but which in analysis [...] has its emergent, connecting, and dominant characteristics, indeed its specific hierarchies" (1977: 132).

With Federici, I also suggest that emotion better captures structures of antagonism than the term affect (2011: 70). Clare Hemmings criticises Eve Sedgwick and Brian Massumi for presenting affect as *difference* from social structure, without fully exploring how affective investments are central to maintaining such structures (2005: 550-551). This critique could also be made of Hardt and Negri, who are invested in the affirmation of the emancipatory aspect of affect, thus neglecting how affect or emotion form part of what binds us to oppressive structures. Given this, I am not convinced of the usefulness of the concept of affect, especially as a political term or as a way of describing a particular type of labour. As affect is used to denote pre-conscious social processes, emotion is better suited to describe those labour processes that involve the intentional orientation towards the wellbeing of others.

Some feminist theorists of affective labour do however start from hierarchies of power and difference. A notable example is Encarnación Gutiérrez-Rodríguez's book *Migration, domestic work and affect*, which explores how affect can both affirm and subvert relations of power. She suggests that affect is a more encompassing concept than emotion, as it includes intensities, sensation and bodily reactions, which can exist pre-consciously without being mentally conceptualised and named as emotion (2010: 5). However,

Gutiérrez-Rodríguez draws on the same conceptual background as Hardt and Negri, understanding affect as energy that can circulate through bodies. I find this way of conceptualising affective investments and processes less helpful, as it relies on a notion of vitalist energies that are transferred between people. Paradoxically, this can lead to a strangely reified concept of feeling, where the idea of the subject is replaced with substantial affects which travel between people and can be stored in a particular body. In an otherwise helpful essay, to which I will return later, Whitney describes affect as a by-product, where negative affect becomes a form of waste which can be accumulated in certain bodies (2018: 638). Here, affect appears as a very thing-like entity, which needs to be displaced or stored somewhere. The concept of affect thus tends to be conceptualised either as an unbounded and free-floating energy, or as a thing which can be passed onto certain subjects. Both of these conceptions run contrary to an understanding of emotion as labour or process, in which acts of expressing, suppressing and shaping emotion have to be constantly repeated and managed, and which are bound to the construction of labouring subjects. The term emotional labour, then, describes this work of managing emotion. The term "affective labour" cannot quite capture this process, as the conceptualisation of affect insists on its unmanaged nature.

In this chapter, I conceptualise emotion as a fundamentally social and rule-bound process. While often understood as something internal, a psychological state within the subject, emotion signals the subject's involvement with the world (Heller 1979: 7). As I will explore in greater detail below, emotion is not a spontaneous eruption but rather a profoundly social phenomenon, which is learnt and managed by the subject. Emotion, then, should be conceptualised not as coming from within the subject, but rather as a form of interaction between the subject and the social, though which the subject becomes involved in social practices. This includes hierarchies of power, which become part of the

subject through emotional processes.

It is not easy to pin down an exact definition of emotion, as it is by its nature an elusive phenomenon (Lupton 1998: 167). I follow Deborah Lupton and Alison Jaggar in their interest in emotion as a historically malleable and everyday concept (Lupton 1998: 5, Jaggar 1992: 117-118). With this I wish to emphasise that emotion is not a "thing" which we can identify and intellectually separate from other phenomena. Rather, in Jaggar's words, it describes a form of habit or a way of engaging with the world, which escapes simple dichotomies of activity and passivity. Emotions presume language and social order, and they are closely linked to social values and modes of evaluation (1992: 123-124). Emotions are not passive states that we simply endure, but neither are they things which a subject can fully control or will into being. They form part of the very constitution of the subject itself, and are fundamental to constituting the subject as a social being.

Subject and status

Several critics have argued that Hochschild's theorisation of emotional labour depends on a notion of an authentic self (Tracy 2000: 97, Weeks 2007: 244). However, I contend that her argument is more complex than that. She does draw on an understanding of a subject with "real" feelings, and argues that the capacity for emotion is a biologically given sense, which like hearing and sight has a signal function (MH 29). However, the realness of these emotions is also socially constituted. A Hochschildian understanding of emotional labour is not dependent on a notion of an authentic self, although she sometimes seems to argue for the existence of such a self. The notion of authenticity, Hochschild suggests, is a result of certain historical processes, in particular the commodification of emotional labour (MH 190).

This aspect of Hochschild's thought is underdeveloped and sometimes contradictory.

She is aware of the constructedness of the authentic self, yet her writing often seems to take this self as a given. Therefore, I want to turn to some other theorists of subjectivity, from which we can develop a notion of emotional labour which is not tied to notions of a pre-social self. I argue that the subject as we understand it is in fact a historical product, related to changes in social relations at the inception of modernity. As Cinzia Arruzza puts it, "a robust notion of the privacy of affects as characterizing what it means to be a unique individual arises with capitalism and modernity" (2014: np). Historian Lawrence Stone calls this "affective individualism" – the process through which an idea of an individual with a private and affective interior life became prominent, as well as a focus on the individual's emotional self-expression (1979: 151). In Lupton's words, the body and the self in the Middle Ages were conceptualised as "far less contained, privatized and controlled" than they are today (1998: 72). Both Michelle Rosaldo (1984: 146) and Theresa Brennan (2004: 2) refer to the idea of the emotionally bounded individual as a Eurocentric form of thinking. As such, it is tied to capitalist-colonial systems of power (Bhandar 2018: 4, 179) as well as gendered forms of labour. This is related to possessive individualism, a term that I will explore in greater depth in the next chapter. Here, I want to note that this understanding of the self is a real abstraction – we cannot simply do away with it intellectually, since it is implicated in real social relations. The fact that many modern philosophers have criticised this notion of the subject has not led to its disappearance, nor can we simply choose to understand our own selves as a mere bundle of experiences and social processes.

While subjective interiority thus appears as simply given and natural, we do not need to rely on notions of authentic subjectivity in order to suggest that the subject is not mere flux. Weeks argues that while there is no pre-given subjectivity, labour practices have an ontologising effect, a process through which the subject comes to appear as a stable entity through memory, desire, and habit (1998: 133). According to Arruzza, our sense of

ourselves as ontologically pre-given subjects exists in contradiction with another process in capitalist society, in which emotions come to appear as things, which are detachable from their subjects. In a parallel to Marx's concept of commodity fetishism, Arruzza calls this "affects fetishism," through which feelings come to appear as discrete entities, separate from their social context (2014: np). While affective individualism is an aspect of possessive individualism and a prerequisite for the commodification of labour power, affects fetishism is part of a general process of the commodification of things and services. This means that two seemingly contradictory developments – the focus on an "authentic" self and the view that emotions are detachable from the subject – are both part of a modern, capitalist structure of the subject (Oksala 2016: 295). This process, which according to Arruzza is experienced within the subject as a clash between two logics, is particularly noticeable in the commodified forms of emotional labour that Hochschild describes, which draw on supposedly intimate feelings in ways that people might experience as alienating (MH 90, 187). Nonetheless, it is also part of unwaged emotional labour, and constitutes an aspect of the emotional landscape of capitalist society more broadly.

This concept of the subject as a historical phenomenon is sometimes consistent with Hochschild's own account, and sometimes in contradiction with it. Hochschild writes that "we search for a solid, predictable core of self even though the conditions for the existence of such a self have long since vanished" (MH 22). Here, she seems to indicate that such conditions were once given, but have been undone by the flux of capitalist relations, rather than arguing that capitalism itself was one of the preconditions for the emergence of this construction of stable subjective interiority. However, in the next paragraph she goes on to suggest that we look to emotion as a way of establishing such a core self. Because emotions come to appear as indicators of an authentic self, she writes, they are given

more weight (MH 22). Hochschild's account thus wavers somewhat between describing our current understanding of an authentic affective subject as a historical product or as a pre-modern true self which is threatened by the logic of capitalism. In her later writings, Hochschild seems to have chosen the second option, although not without offering some critique of it (2003b: 24). However, we can use passages of *The managed heart* to build a non-essentialist notion of the subject. Here, subjective interiority is constructed through a process in which emotions become expressions of an authentic self, while simultaneously emerging as highly malleable and as material for labour.

It is not necessary, then, to read Hochschild as arguing for a stable and authentic subjective interiority. Even when she describes an experience of contradiction between an authentic inner self and imposed rules for emotion, both of these can be understood as historically constituted. Hochschild describes the process through which feeling becomes perceived as an object or a resource which we can manage or work on (MH 41) as well as our shifting understanding of which feelings are "real" (MH 45). Because we use emotion to locate our supposedly authentic selves, and because emotion is subjected to various forms of management, there is no need to posit emotion as the source of our core identity in order to derive a coherent theory from Hochschild's account of emotional labour. She writes that "we make up an idea of our 'real self,' an inner jewel that remains our unique possession" (MH 34). Indeed, we can read this conflict between the real self and reified emotion as a interiorised version of the dichotomy between private and public in capitalist society, which is historically constructed and unstable, but which nonetheless produces real social effects. This does not mean, however, that Hochschild's use of these categories, especially the distinction between private and public, is not sometimes unsatisfying or does not lead to an incorrect understanding of the role of emotion in capitalist public life. I will return to this issue towards the end of this chapter.

Before exploring in more detail what emotional labour is, I want to note that emotion has an important role to play in shoring up our sense of identity and subjectivity. Subjectivity in modernity is fundamentally bound to hierarchy, so that the notion of a coherent subject who is the master of its own capacities is tied to various forms of material and social inequality. However, these inequalities become invisible in the making of this subject, as it depends precisely on the erasure of the social. As Brenna Bhandar shows, the self-possessed subject of modernity was defined in opposition to the figures of the savage, the woman, and the child (2018: 183). This suggests that subjectivity is fundamentally related to status. It is my contention that emotional reproduction is central in the production of both subjectivity and status, and that we need a rather capacious understanding of emotional labour in order to understand this process. In her study of black maids and their white, female employers, Judith Rollins argues that the domestic labourer is not only economically exploited, but also suffers from psychological exploitation (1985: 156). The figure of the domestic worker produces a "contrast figure," which affirms the status and social world view of the employer while simultaneously making this work of affirmation invisible. It enhances the liberation of middle- and upper-class white women from participation in traditionally feminised forms of work, and thus establishes their status as hegemonically modern subjects (1985: 129, 180, see also Anderson 2000: 2). It also frees them to perform the more highly valued forms of emotional labour, especially the "spiritual" work of motherhood (Roberts 1997a: 55, Barbagallo 2016: 114). This implies that emotional reproduction can be understood in broader terms than Hochschild's definition of emotional labour, explored in the next section, seems to allow for. Furthermore, the production of gendered, classed and racialised status is a more central aspect of emotional labour than Hochschild suggests. Status in capitalist society is continually reproduced within the process of affirming some people's emotions while

disregarding the emotional wellbeing of others.

Definitions of emotional labour

Like any influential concept, emotional labour has been defined and redefined in numerous ways. Hochschild's original definition is stated in different ways, all of which require some unpacking. In the introduction to *The managed heart*, Hochschild writes that emotional labour is "the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display" which is sold for a wage (MH 7). The more detailed definition is that emotional labour consists of 1) face-to-face or voice-to-voice interaction with the public, 2) the production of an emotional state in another person, and 3) employer control of the worker's behaviour (MH 147). It is immediately clear that Hochschild draws a distinction between private and public (or commercial) forms of emotion management, where only the commercial form is true emotional labour. This is problematic from a WFH perspective, which focuses on the continuities between waged and unwaged work. Hochschild calls the private counterpart of emotional labour "emotion work," which functions in similar ways but is not subjected to a profit-motive. We can also note that this definition restricts emotional labour proper to jobs that include public-facing work, thus excluding, for instance, the emotional labour done by secretaries for their bosses (AWNP 10, 45).

Further, Hochschild argues that successful commercial emotional labour depends on the transmutation (or transformation from private to public) of emotion work, feeling rules, and social exchange (MH 118). Emotion work is defined as the management, expression or suppression of emotion (MH 7). Feeling rules are the often unstated social rules that dictate what emotions are appropriate in particular circumstances, and how they should be expressed (MH 56). Social exchange is the forms that our social relations take, in terms of the trading back and forth of social obligations (MH 19). Whereas private emotion work,

according to Hochschild, depends on the logic of gift exchange, transmutation demands that these processes are subjected to external control, in the form of rules imposed by a company. This means that when emotional labour is directed and controlled by employers, feeling rules (which are normally implicit) become explicitly stated in company manuals, and social exchange is forced into a narrower form, where it is performed by an employee for the sake of a customer (MH 119).

Taking these three definitions together, we can see that Hochschild uses a fairly narrow conception of emotional labour, which mainly defines the problem with emotional labour in terms of its commercialisation. Subsequently, academics have used the term in more encompassing ways, including emotional labour done for colleagues (Pierce 1996) and in the family (Duncombe and Marsden 1995, Mulholland 1996, Seery and Crowley 2000). This has led critics such as Sharon Bolton to argue that the term emotional labour is incorrectly applied (2005: 55). However, the problem with Hochschild's definition, and even more with Bolton's own and narrower conceptualisation of emotional labour (2005: 94-97), is that it produces a complex definitional framework which highlights minor differences while obscuring the continuities between various forms of emotional labour. While I partly agree with Johanna Oksala's insistence on the importance of analytically separating different types of emotional and reproductive labour (2016: 291), we also need to account for how similar logics are reproduced across waged and unwaged spheres. As Helen Colley has suggested, the conceptual distinction between emotional labour and emotion work makes social relationships within the family appear as being somehow outside capitalism (2015: 228). Therefore, I follow Nicky James (1989, 1992) in using emotional labour as an overarching term that spans both private and commercial settings. I use the term emotional labour to denote interactive work that produces, or is intended to produce, psychic or emotional effects in another subject. I include not only the work of

emotionally affecting someone else, but also that of constituting and reproducing emotional bonds. Emotional labour, I argue, always impacts the working subject as well as the recipient of emotional labour.

This leads us to questions regarding the connection between emotional management of the self and that of others. Here, Hochschild introduces the distinction between surface acting (which aims at creating a certain emotion in another person) and deep acting (which also influences the subject's perception of its own emotional states) (MH 33). This distinction has led to a discussion around false consciousness, since it seems that Hochschild assumes that people engaged in deep acting are duped by management (Leidner 1993: 5, Lopez 2005: 136). However, I want to focus on the continuity between the emotion management of self and others. Whitney writes that the strength of Hochschild's account compared to that of her followers is that she emphasises the connection between the management of one's own emotions and those of others (2018: 643). As Svenja Bromberg suggests, this can help us understand the role of emotional labour in the making of subjectivity, thus explaining how hierarchies of gender are experienced as part of the subject and not mere external constraints (2015: 112).

A focus on the link between emotion management of the self and the management of other people's emotions also allows for a deeper understanding of how emotion is not only cognitive and immaterial, but rather must be part of an embodied practice. As Hochschild writes, emotional labour crucially involves a "publicly observable facial and bodily display" (MH 7). Further, she defines emotion as "the awareness of bodily cooperation with an idea, thought, or attitude and the label attached to that awareness" (2003b: 75). It is thus not the case, as critics such as Witz, Warhurst, and Nickson have suggested (2003: 36), that emotional labour theory presents the worker as a mindful rather than embodied worker. Emotion as a theoretical paradigm allows us to move beyond simple dichotomies

of mind and body.[42] Emotional labour is embodied not only in the sense of using the body as a tool for communicating emotion, but also because emotion itself involves bodily dispositions as well as cognitive states. As I noted above, there are strong links between emotional and sexual labour. Federici suggests that emotive communication has a sexual component, as body and emotion are indivisible (RPZ 24). This emphasis on embodied performance serves to link emotional labour to the gendering of the body, something I will discuss further in chapter three.

With James, it is also worth noting that emotional labour is skilled work (SRC 167), even though it is rarely recognised as such. It involves techniques of emotional communication as well as the emotional management of the self (MH 33). Emotional labour does not just come "naturally" to certain personalities, as is often implied by mainstream discourses on emotion, but rather it has to be learnt. Hochschild and Federici both note that these techniques are closely related to the construction of femininity (MH 11, Federici 2011: 66).

Love and care

The primary function of emotional labour is to create good feeling. This is not always the case – Hochschild studies the masculinised work of bill collectors whose labour consists of instilling fear and deflating the status of the debtor (MH 139). However, for most companies, as well as much unwaged emotional reproduction, the aim is to increase the emotional wellbeing of at least one of the participants of social exchange. We can therefore understand emotional labour as a form of care, which is often an integral part of more physical or domestic types of care. Caring practices can involve various degrees of emotional labour. Hochschild's flight attendants perform a highly visible form of emotional

[42] For an extended discussion of emotion and embodiment, see Lupton (1998: 31-37).

labour, where smiling and comforting passengers are primary functions of the job. In some cases, care can involve a minimal degree of emotional labour, as the main aim is to satisfy physical need. Sometimes, physical care can be accompanied with emotional neglect or even abuse. We thus cannot take for granted that caring labour will necessarily work across both physical and emotional levels, but need to think of emotional labour as a semi-autonomous aspect of reproduction more broadly. However, as DeVault and others have shown, the satisfaction of physical needs, such as the need for food, often contains an emotional component (1991: 35, Carrington 1999: 32-33). I therefore want to think about emotional labour as a kind of organising principle of care, where "caring about" someone is in most cases an aspect of "caring for" that person (Ungerson 1983: 31). The intimate labour of care often results in emotional involvement, although that involvement might not consist of "positive" emotions such as love or empathy, but can also cause emotions such as disgust, boredom, or anger. Emotional labour can involve the management of such negative emotions as much as fostering feelings of love or affection. This, however, is also part of the creation of good feeling.

As Hochschild argues, the feelings of those with higher status are often granted greater importance than the feelings of subordinate people (MH 84).[43] Emotional labour thus tends to cater to those at the top of the social hierarchy. This is especially true of the creation of positive feeling, which as Hochschild states tends to move upwards in social hierarchies (2003b: 85). A prominent feminist account that centres on this aspect of emotional labour is Anna Jónasdóttir's theory of love power. Jónasdóttir contends that women are oppressed because they satisfy men's sociosexual needs without reciprocity, thus making men more powerful and confident, particularly in relation to women (1994:

[43] However, as I will discuss below, the feelings of children are nowadays often prioritised over those of adults, and children are often the recipients of emotional care. Fortunati highlights the subordination of the needs of parents to those of their children, as carriers of future labour power (AR 19).

26).[44] This theory is intended as a materialist account of women's oppression, which centres on the need for emotional, sexual and existential satisfaction, parallel to how Marxism is founded on a theory of physical need. Jónasdóttir is a dual-systems theorist in that she posits emotional needs as separate and parallel to the need for food, shelter, et cetera, thus arguing that women's oppression has an autonomous foundation (1994: 12-13). While my account of emotional reproduction shares some aspects of Jónasdóttir's theory, notably our focus on emotional need as an organising principle for material life (1994: 229), I want to emphasise that care must be understood as a continuum of physical and emotional needs. There is thus no viable distinction between sociosexual (gendered) needs on the one hand and material (class-based) needs on the other. From a WFH perspective, I argue that much emotional care takes place *through* various material acts of care (RPZ 107). While some forms of work require more "pure" forms of emotional labour, even the work of flight attendants includes material tasks such as providing food and drinks.

To explain how emotional labour works in intimate practices of care, Hochschild introduces the concept of gift exchange. This form of social exchange structures caring interactions, and specifies what is owed by various participants (MH 18). The conceptualisation of emotion as gift exchange explains how emotion is not a spontaneous and unruly form of expression, even though emotional gift-giving might be experienced as such. Rather, emotional expression is highly structured and bound up with various social forms, across both private and public spheres. Emotional gift exchange is not just the expression of emotion, but can also include the performance of various practical tasks (MH 84). These tasks are given emotional meaning as part of an ongoing social relation. Hochschild's study *The second shift* (1989a) explores how domestic work is incorporated in emotional and gendered systems of meaning when performed within the intimate setting

[44] See also Ferguson (1991) for a similar theory, based on a concept of sex-affective production.

of the home. Here, “gifts” such as cleaning and cooking might become emotional currency and contribute to the maintenance of the emotional bonds of the family. What counts as a gift thus depends on the broader social and economic context in which the intimate relationship is set. Subordinates generally “owe” more than dominant partners in relationships (MH 84). In the sphere of the heterosexual family, women are expected to contribute more to the continued emotional wellbeing of individual family members, as well as ensuring the maintenance of the family bond itself (Di Leonardo 1987: 442, Seery and Crowley 2000: 110). However, we can question whether emotional labour can be understood within a gift exchange framework when it is so deeply naturalised that it comes to be understood as an aspect of feminine personality (RPZ 16). In chapter three, I will explore how heterogendered understandings of complementarity become a way of sustaining relationships, a notion that does not rely on each participant contributing discrete “gifts” to an emotional exchange. Rather, it is based on a more continuous understanding of emotional reproduction.

Hilary Graham states that care is a way of making the fragmentary cohesive (1983: 26). Through caring practices, disparate acts are integrated into an emotional bond. Care most often involves a multitude of different tasks, some of which might be invisible because they consist precisely of the mental work that goes into coordinating the satisfaction of various needs (DeVault 1991: 56, 90). In some cases, more privileged women, who are wives and mothers, are seen as performing the labour of love even when they delegate much of that work to domestic workers. Because of the emotional bond between the mother-wife and her husband and children, emotional labour might become more visible when she performs it, while also being more naturalised. This is related to the conception of emotional labour as a form of zero-sum game, in which emotional bonds owe their intensity to their exclusivity.

Intimate relationships contain a potentially infinite number of tasks, as they are intended to meet the complex needs of individuals (AR 110). As Federici puts it, wives are expected to be "housemaids, prostitutes, nurses, shrinks" for their husbands (RPZ 20). Or as Giovanna Dalla Costa writes, care produces "a continuum of work" (WL 46). This continuum ensures that emotional labour, and reproductive labour more broadly, are not understood as a set of limited tasks that can be ticked off on a list. Rather, our contemporary understanding of loving relationships requires them to be "without measure" (WL 53). This supposedly infinite and unconditional nature of love, however, is unequally performed. For a woman, as I will argue in more detail in the next chapter, this might imply the expectation of being constantly available to meet the emotional needs of people she loves. Giovanna Dalla Costa writes that, for a woman, merely being present within the home is a form of work, as it means she is available to physically and emotionally reproduce other members of the household (WL 79). The problem of measurement of affective labour, which Hardt and Negri seem to assume is a recent development (2000: 209), has thus always been an integral and crucial aspect of this work, especially when it is performed unwaged and out of love.

Love, contrary to Hardt and Nergri's account of it in *Commonwealth* (2009: 181), is a highly privatised "resource." In contemporary capitalist society, love is constructed as an intensive emotion, but also something that is restricted to a limited sphere. Stone argues that affective individualism brought with it a notion of the subject which had a heightened affective capacity but for a more restrictive group of people (1982: 180). This is related to the construction of the "authentic" interior self that Arruzza theorises. However, some forms of waged emotional labour might require the worker to empathise with a larger group, especially for those in need of physical care such as children and the elderly, thus producing clashing principles of emotion management. This is also related to parenting, as

nannies sometimes appear as a threat to the exclusive emotional bonds of the family (Macdonald 2010: 137).

As the material acts of reproduction often operate through emotional bonds, and are co-constitutive with them, it is difficult to fully separate reproductive labour from emotional labour, or what the WFH writers call “love.” Love is constructed as a reward for this work, and what makes the work of reproduction sufferable (WL 57). It is also a feeling that hides the effort and skill that goes into caring (RPZ 21). While not all relationships based on care work or emotional labour involve love, it is important as an organising factor of many of our most important and enduring reproductive relationships. Many other forms of care are also constructed as being “worthy” or “good” work, and thus inherently rewarding. As WFH writers argue with regard to the work of nurses, this work involves many of the same emotional structures that bind people to their unwaged work in the home (AWNP 73). Hochschild notes that while intimate relationships are supposedly free from regulation, consisting merely of the spontaneous expression of love, feeling rules and emotion work may be more important the deeper the relationship, due to the heightened attachment to those relationships (MH 68). Here, we can return to the question of the constitution of the subject. While a breach of the rules of emotional exchange in an ephemeral service encounter might not generate anything more than annoyance, emotional neglect in an intimate relationship might be experienced as a threat to the subject itself, as intimate attachments are central to “the continuity of the subject’s sense of what it means to keep on living and to look forward to being in the world” (Berlant 2006: 21).

Love, I argue, is essential to constituting the individuality of people. In modernity, love has become that which confirms the value of a person, especially in the intimate sphere of reproduction (Berlant 2012: 102). More specifically, love entails focusing on the desirable qualities of the other (MH 236), and, as Theresa Brennan puts it, attending to the

specificity of the other (2004: 32). I argue that emotional labour processes often ensure that not only do acts of reproductive labour serve to satisfy the needs of individuals, but can also affirm the status of the recipient of care, and thus participate in the construction of individualism – what Brenda Seery and Sue Crowley refer to as "ego work" (2000: 110). This can include seemingly insignificant acts of reproductive labour, such as cooking a meal in a way that attends to the specific preferences of family members (DeVault 1991: 85, 90). It can also include acts that affirm your partner's gendered subjectivity (Holmberg 1993: 138, Ward 2010). All these acts contribute to the emotional evaluation of an individual, as well as ensuring that their basic needs are met. Here, needs become an expression of individualism through the construction of such needs as a form of unique self-expression. As I will discuss further in chapter three, it also contributes to gendered forms of status through the construction of masculinity as autonomy and femininity as dependency.

Furthermore, love places limits on the refusal of emotional and reproductive labour – in Giovanna Dalla Costa's words, one cannot stage a slowdown or a strike when it affects those one loves. Love can thus be used to extract an infinite amount of labour (WL 46, 54, 88). Mariarosa Dalla Costa describes love as a form of blackmail (PWSC 33). We can note the prevalence of the feeling of guilt in feminist writings on care and emotion (Hays 1996: 150-151, DeVault 1991: 134, Macdonald 2010: 28, AWNP 73). Guilt seems to tether people to the work relationships in which they are participants, and make sure that the work "owed" in that relationship is carried out. Even though it is a negative emotion, which people are likely to avoid, it is closely correlated to love. Hochschild notes that we can feel guilty for failing to feel the right thing, or feeling what is "owed" (MH 82). Guilt can be a threat to one's sense of self as a generous, loving person, and thus undermine a positive evaluation of the self (DeVault 1991: 134). However, it can also reinforce a sense of self –

the feeling of guilt can act as an indication that one is *actually* a good person (MH 32). Most forms of emotional labour induce the subject to take on an understanding of itself as generous and giving. According to Fortunati, women are characterised as generous because they perform the work of love (AR 75). Federici notes that emotional investment in the object of caring work can entail emotions of responsibility and pride, thus preventing the worker from cutting those attachments, even when they are exploitative (2011: 69).

With such forceful impediments, we can question Hochschild's claim that we are more free to renegotiate the emotional standards in private relationships than in commercial ones (MH 85). Many people do leave relationships that are emotionally unsatisfactory, and changed emotional standards over the last decades have made divorce more socially acceptable and presumably less guilt-inducing. However, Hochschild seems to suggest that the commercial logics of company management are more forceful than private emotional investments. But aside from the economic precarity of many people, which makes it difficult for people to break up family relationships, emotional investment can serve to maintain ongoing intimate work relationships in the private sphere, even when they are emotionally unsatisfactory. Hegemonic understandings of emotional life stipulate that emotional needs are best satisfied within the family, which might make it seem risky to opt out of even unfulfilling family arrangements. Barrett and McIntosh argue that the family has monopolised care in a way that makes it more difficult to build alternative forms of caring relationships (2015: 80). As Hochschild herself notes, persistent gender inequality deepens women's emotional "debt" and thus makes it more difficult not to fulfil family obligations. Even in supposedly egalitarian heterosexual couples, the wider context of gender inequality posits that women owe men gratitude for such relative equality (MH 85). This situation fixes standards for emotional exchange as well as contributing to the reproduction of gender within intimate relationships. Lauren Berlant argues that women

might experience some satisfaction from emotional labour, even when it is not reciprocated (2008: 19). Being perceived as emotionally generous, and watching loved ones flourish emotionally, is key to the feminised ideal of the good life.

Parenting and emotional reproduction

Within the context of the emotional reproduction of the family, parenting is different from the gendered patterns of obligation discussed above. While the child is in some sense subordinate to its parents, in contemporary capitalist society, children's emotional needs are afforded a greater social weight. In the modern period, children were increasingly constructed as a different kind of being from adults (Stone 1979: 149). Children are now seen as innocent and unsullied by the supposedly cold and unfeeling logic of capitalism (Cancian 1987: 18, Hays 1996: 31, 125). In Viviana Zelizer's words, children are increasingly constructed as economically worthless but emotionally priceless (1985: 3). Childhood is thus constructed as a zone of particular emotional intensity, and mothers especially are made responsible for meeting the emotional needs of their children. In the modern period, there has been a shift in parenting methods, as physical discipline was deemphasised at the same time as love came to appear as the primary tool for socialising children. Displays of parental love could be used to reward children, whereas the withdrawal of such displays became the primary means for punishing a child for bad behaviour (Hays 1996: 32). Love thus emerges as a disciplinary force.

This coincided with the rise of psychological experiments around childhood attachment (Brennan 2004: 32), as well as literature aimed at mothers which emphasised the need for a primary caregiver (Hays 1996: 55). Emotional needs were thus constructed in a way that meant that only one person could satisfy them. Even with the rise of "working mothers" and daycare centres, this notion of individualised parenting was retained or even

intensified. As Hochschild notes, mothers are constructed as primary parents – the people responsible for fulfilling their children's need for emotional warmth (1989a: 150). Here, emotional labour is intensely privatised in the sense that it is tied to a specific person and cannot be fulfilled in the same way by another adult. Emotional labour thus emerges as a zero-sum game, in which emotional satisfaction is linked to exclusive bonds. Sharon Hays calls this "intensive mothering," to signal its difference from other standards of parenthood. This type of mothering is labour-intensive and emotionally absorbing. While this emotional standard is closely associated with the rise of bourgeois culture, it affects working-class mothering as well, as it is tied to notions of aspiration and class mobility (Hays 1996: 3, 43). This form of mothering is based on the contradiction discussed above, where an increased focus on the subject's capacity for intense emotions is coupled with a notion of capitalism as devoid of emotion or, at most, as treating emotion as commodities.

Cameron Lynne Macdonald argues that this idea is also related to a form of emotional privatisation, where the nuclear family is seen "as an isolated unit with its own limited resources" (2010: 5). Mothers, Macdonald writes, are seen as having "blanket accountability" for how their children turn out (2010: 13). This, as I will discuss in more detail below, is fundamentally linked to the reproduction of class relations. Mothering is not, then, somehow separate from capitalism, but an important aspect of setting the emotional standards in capitalist societies. Seery and Crowley show that mothers are also assigned responsibility for constituting and maintaining the bonds between fathers and children, thus having a blanket responsibility not only for the emotional wellbeing of the child itself but for the emotional life of the family. Mothers are constructed as "love's experts" – working to interpret the emotional needs of different members of the family so that the family might continue to exist (2000: 122).

Weeks rightly notes that Hochschild tends to naturalise these intensive emotional

standards (2011: 158). Especially in her later writings, Hochschild takes the emotional needs of children as a given and constructs her critique of (waged) work from the perspective of those needs. Here, capitalist production is criticised from the standpoint of emotional reproduction, without an acknowledgement of how those spheres are intimately intertwined. Hochschild does note that this emotional standard tends to make parenting more labour-intensive, for instance when she writes that there is now a "third shift" (after waged work and domestic work) devoted to the emotional labour of soothing children, whose emotional needs have supposedly been neglected during the day (1997: 215). However, she does not question the need for such a shift, nor does she question her own assumption that children's emotional needs can only be met in the private sphere by a primary caregiver. We thus need to supplement Hochschild's account in order to construct a radical politics of emotional reproduction. While I agree with Hochschild's emphasis on emotional need, we should understand need as historically constituted and tied to specific forms of sociality, which entail potentially exploitative forms of labour. This construction of need can also mean that mothers' emotional wellbeing is sacrificed for the sake of their children (Fox 2006: 237). Emotional need cannot be taken as a given, as there might be competing needs that cannot all be satisfied, thus making it a shaky foundation for radical politics. Prioritising children's emotional satisfaction over that of adults depends on a cultural zoning of childhood as a time of particular emotional intensity. As Fortunati points out, mothers' own emotional needs then have to be adjusted so that they are satisfied through the emotional satisfaction of other family members (AR 77).

In *The managed heart*, Hochschild suggests that parental love is constructed as "natural" and unconditional, and therefore not in need of regulation. She writes that we think of this love as spontaneous, as nature supposedly "does the work of convention for us." However, she emphasises that we do rely on conventions to regulate these bond, as

they are sometimes difficult to sustain (MH 69). It thus seems that Hochschild is well aware that the sphere of the family is not a site of natural emotional needs, but rather that emotional expectations for what a parent-child bond should entail are themselves situated within a wider social context. The emotional site of the family, then, is not outside of the emotional regulation of waged work, but rather co-constituted with such regulation and responsive to changes in the broader emotional standards of capitalism.

The emotional needs of children have long been used to extract more emotional and physical labour from mothers. Fortunati criticises the literature aimed at mothers which establishes those emotional standards by claiming that children who are not loved enough become “maladjusted” (AR 75, see also Rose 1990: 163). This understanding of child care makes women morally responsible for both the current and future wellbeing of the child. Emotional reproduction, then, is constructed as the foundation of successful reproduction more broadly. Social problems are blamed on the supposed failure of women to love their children enough. Brennan emphasises the importance of emotional care through a reading of studies on the effects of a lack of love on orphaned children, which suggest that such children do not physically grow at an average rate. She uses this argument to undo the boundaries of the physical and the psychic, arguing that love itself is the basis of biological life and consciousness (2004: 32). However, under current social relations, this is easily turned into a moralising argument which blames a general lack of emotional and physical flourishing on individuals, most often mothers.

Emotional class reproduction

While we tend to associate reproductive work with the reproduction of people or labour power, it is important to remember that class distinctions themselves need to be continually reproduced. Macdonald notes that the work of status attainment, often taken

for granted, is primarily women's work (2010: 202). Much of this work takes place in the private sphere. Kate Mulholland, in her study of "self-made men," notes that men's social mobility often depends on the emotional labour which they receive in the home, which encourages them to inhabit individualist subjectivity. Unwaged emotional labour, she argues, is thus an essential input into capitalist accumulation (1996: 123, 148-149). As I noted in chapter one, the work that goes into reproduction remains invisible as it becomes part of labour power, thus disappearing the trace of emotional labour.

The emotional conditioning of children is also a fundamental aspect of reproducing capitalist class relations. Intensive mothering is responsive to the naturalised and individualised emotional needs of children, and therefore teaches them that those needs are important. Hochschild suggests that middle-class parents prime their children for high-status professions by centring on developing a capacity for decision-making (MH 157). Similarly, Hays writes that intensive mothering offers middle-class children self-esteem and independence (1996: 91). Macdonald uses the term "competitive mothering" for this kind of class transmission. Competitive mothering prepares children for success in their future careers, and is a way of ensuring the preservation or improvement of the family class advantage (2010: 21, 25). This form of parenting, in which families are competing over increasingly scarce resources, serves to constantly increase the emotional standards of childhood. Contra Hays, Macdonald writes that class reproduction through competitive mothering shows that there is no contradiction between the ideals of intensive mothering and the logic of the market. Intensive mothering is a way of translating the logic of market within the family (2010: 203).

Hochschild argues that middle-class families have long trained their children for emotion management, through stressing the importance of emotion. The child learns that their own emotions have a social importance, but also that they can be instrumentalised

and adjusted (MH 158). This form of parenting has an appearance of freedom, as middle-class parenting centres on the needs and desires of the child. But as I have argued above, those needs and desires are not given. Rather, they are created through the very process of parenting that is supposedly responding to them. Middle-class parenting, according to Hochschild, works not against but *through* the will of the child (MH 157). It is thus based on the construction of affective individualism. This creates the impression of freedom, yet the whole project of parenting is about educating that will in the right direction, and teaching the child to desire class reproduction. Hays notes that this is a very labour-intensive form of parenting, as reasoning with a child takes more time than simply telling the child what to do (1996: 64). This is the work that bourgeois women perform to ensure the reproduction of their own class status.

According to both Hochschild and Hays, working-class parents are more likely to emphasise obedience and discipline (MH 156, Hays 1996: 93). But Hochschild points out that with the increase in work requiring emotional labour, working-class parenting styles might change (MH 160). The demand for the emotional styles of discipline and deference, however, is still central for working-class jobs. As Federici argues, the availability of a stable, well-disciplined labour force is an essential condition of production (RPZ 31). Fortunati also writes about what she calls the "non-material labour" of creating work discipline and adaptation to work conditions. She argues that this work is as important as the work of feeding and clothing the family, stating that "[t]he continual reproduction of the working class, which is essential for capital, depends on these relationships, so too does its productivity, its work discipline and adaptation to a whole complex of living conditions" (AR 75). Hochschild argues that this is to prepare working-class children for work that does not require emotional labour per se – that is, work that aims to influence the emotional state of another person. Rather, working-class jobs tend to deal with things

rather than people (MH 154). However, this has changed since Hochschild wrote *The managed heart*, as more and more working-class people are part of what Macdonald and Sirianni describe as the "emotional proletariat," characterised by strict regulation of their emotional expressions at work (1996: 3). This means that working-class people engaged in the service industry might face similar demands to those of Hochschild's flight attendants, a profession which she describes as distinctly middle-class, especially since it draws on middle-class notions of femininity (MH 175). As low-waged reproductive service jobs become increasingly prevalent, Hochschild's remarks on the class-specific nature of emotional labour ring less true today.

Thus, as jobs involving emotional labour have become increasingly proletarianised with the growing service economy, it might no longer be the case, as Hochschild suggests, that working-class people "may enjoy almost complete freedom from feeling rules, although they have no right to set them for others," therefore enjoying "the licence of the dispossessed" (MH 155). Nor might it be the case that the outward behaviour of people in working-class occupations is all that matters, and that they have more freedom to enjoy their own interior lives beyond company regulation (MH 154, 159). Rather, capacities for management of negative emotions, both one's own and those of others, may be increasingly central in working-class jobs in the service economy. This would presumably put an increased emphasis on "people skills" in working-class upbringings. As Whitney writes, many of these jobs involve "the work of *metabolizing unwanted affects and affective byproducts*" (2018: 643, emphasis in original). As noted above, I am reluctant to use Whitney's conceptual framework of affect as by-products that can be passed around, although I share her understanding of the role of emotion in service encounters. In my terminology, working-class service jobs are mainly about the management of other people's negative emotions, rather than what Hochschild describes as the traditional

working-class emotional field of suppressing one's own boredom or fear (MH 154).

In the WFH literature, there is an emphasis on emotional labour as a "safety valve." The role of the woman in the working-class family, Federici suggests, is as a shock absorber for discontent (RPZ 18, 24). For the WFH writers, then, the work of emotional reproduction is less about commodifying one's capacity for emotion management as part of one's labour power, but rather about managing those feelings that are excluded from the waged workplace. However, this work is not merely oriented towards the suppression of bad feeling. It is also about creating the "other" of work, a site supposedly free from work discipline (RPZ 23). According to Fortunati,

> [h]ousework must appear like this because the more production work is made abstract, social, and simple – dehumanized – the more housework must compensate and 're-humanize' the production worker, creating the illusion that he is more than a commodity, a labor-power, that he is an individual with unique characteristics, and a real personality (AR 110)

Emotional reproduction, then, has a compensatory function, as well as an important role in constituting a sense of individuality and uniqueness. Similarly, Hochschild writes that the family is imagined as a "'relief zone' away from the pressures of work, where one is free to be oneself" (MH 69). Working-class emotional labour is thus not only about creating discipline but also about its temporal and spatial undoing. The home and the community must provide emotional satisfaction for those whose work conditions are the opposite of satisfactory. While working-class women have been charged with large amounts of waged and unwaged work, they often have to do at least some work of creating the home as an apparent site of non-work, thus obscuring their own labour in the domestic sphere.

Working-class emotional reproduction has historically not been confined to the privatised home to the same extent as bourgeois reproduction. But working-class sociality

that extends beyond the individual home is constantly under threat. The spatial organisation of working-class sociality and emotional reproduction is vulnerable to destruction, as increasingly limited forms of public space constitute an important precondition for many less privatised forms of sociality. Stephanie Coontz, looking at working-class organisation of space in the early 20th century, notes that there was a lack of distinction between the intimate life of the family and the life of the neighbourhood, indicating that emotional reproduction can take place across a wider spatial field (1988: 295). James, writing in 1953, similarly describes how working-class housewives come together to share their work and leisure (SRC 24). However, these spatial constructions of emotional life are difficult to sustain in the increasingly privatised landscape of contemporary capitalism. Federici argues that working-class forms of sociality are being destroyed by urbanisation and gentrification (RPZ 115). James briefly notes how domestic architecture plays a part in institutionalising the nuclear family as a model of sociality (SRC 103). The emotional and social needs of people are thus codified in the built environment, creating boundaries for sociality. The institutionalisation of nuclear family models often creates loneliness and a lack of emotional satisfaction for those outside the nuclear unit. Hochschild's first book, *The unexpected community* (1973), explores how such sociality can be recreated, beyond the confines of the family. In my final chapter, I will return to the topic of working-class emotional reproduction against the spatial organisation of contemporary capitalism.

The reproduction of the working class is thus both influenced by and resistant to bourgeois values, as well as creating different types of demands on those performing this work. If the emotional reproduction of the middle and upper classes tends to involve the work of creating class aspiration, the reproduction of working-class life might entail more compensatory types of emotional labour. This is also true of other marginalised groups.

BWFWFH and WDL writers discuss the emotional cost of racism and homophobia, and how members of black and lesbian communities have to work harder in order to compensate for the emotional harm of discrimination and violence (Prescod 1980: 28, Wages Due Lesbians London 1991: 19). Prescod also notes that migration entails much "emotional housework" in terms of adjusting to a new social environment and retaining a sense of personal value in the face of daily acts of racism (1980: 24, 28). Emotional labour is thus deeply imbricated in racialised modes of reproduction.

Whiteness also entails particular demands on emotional reproduction. White mothering in particular involves demands for "spiritual" work. Dorothy Roberts describes this in terms of white women's "exclusive" bond with their children, which is constructed as unique even when a child might spend more time with a nanny. This construction of motherhood, she argues, arose partly out of the institution of slavery (1997a: 57, 59). Hays argues that this 19th century ideal of white, bourgeois motherhood was centred around raising virtuous future citizens of the republic (1996: 29). Similarly, Rose suggests that in the modern era, the wellbeing of children became tied to the destiny of the nation (1990: 121). The bourgeois nation was pictured as a white nation, linking the spiritual reproduction of children to racial ideals of the subject. In practical terms, this was related to a racial division of labour within "women's work," where black, brown, and immigrant women were relegated to menial tasks whereas white women took on the spiritual and emotional guidance of both men and children (Roberts 1997a: 52). This spiritual work is more highly valued, and contributes to the ambiguous status of motherhood, which is simultaneously devalued and glorified (Macdonald 2010: 111). While this construction of motherhood relies on naturalised emotional labour, the spiritual duty of mothers has been used as a way of claiming rights for white, bourgeois women (Hays 1996: 29). Emotional labour can thus be used to create hierarchies among women. It plays into the ambiguous

status of reproductive labour, as it is in theory glorified as part of sacred motherhood, but in practice often invisible, particularly when it is performed by working-class and racialised women. These women do not perform the “right” kind of class transmission to ensure the reproduction of the white, bourgeois nation. Their work is therefore deskilled and subjected to various forms of control.

Commercialising feeling

Much of the debate around emotional labour centres on its commodified forms. Following Hochschild, most researchers of emotional labour have explored the use of emotional labour in the growing service economy (Hall 1993, Leidner 1993, Taylor and Tyler 2000, Korczynski 2003, Bolton 2005, Knights and Thanen 2005, Brannan 2005). This research has mainly been focused on ethnographic study of various professions and working environments, testing Hochschild’s claims against the experience of workers engaged in emotional labour. While focusing mainly on the private service sector, some writers have investigated public-sector work in for example nursing (James 1992, Smith 1992, Simpson 2007). As noted above, some authors have extended Hochschild’s original definition of emotional labour to include workers whose jobs involve ensuring the emotional satisfaction of their colleagues (Pierce 1996). These accounts also include a focus on workers’ resistance to the demands of commodified emotional labour (Paules 1996, Korczynski 2003). However, these strategies tend to remain tentative and operate on an individual level, due to management strategies aimed at quashing solidarity between workers (Federici 2011: 69).

Waged reproductive workers, such as carers and nurses, are at the centre of much of the contemporary problematic of emotional labour. Often migrant women of colour, their labour is introduced as a solution to the “crisis of social reproduction” that has emerged

both as a result of feminist struggle against unwaged labour, and capital's increased use of women's waged labour (RPZ 107, Farris 2015b). Linda McDowell suggests that in the post-Fordist economy, the need for domestic labour has declined, and the maintenance of capitalism has not been harmed by the withdrawal of domestic labour (1991: 408). But while the standards for the reproduction of labour power, including emotional needs, are highly variable, the current configuration of life has not abolished domestic work but rather shifted some of it onto public service-provision or waged domestic workers. Many of these jobs are low-waged and highly exploitative, especially since emotional labour is largely invisible as work and thus not adequately remunerated.[45] These types of labour also depend on creating emotional bonds between the worker and the recipient of care (who is sometimes the employer), which means that they are more easily exploitable (Uttal and Tuominen 1999: 768). While many mothers resist "being replaced" by a nanny or daycare worker as the child's primary caregiver, parents also expect a high emotional standard from their replacement caregivers and are often happy to exploit the bond between the caregiver and the child (Macdonald 2010: 114, MH 150).

In her later work, Hochschild describes what she sees as a particularly troubling form of outsourcing of emotional labour, through the employment of migrant care workers. This, Hochschild writes, results in a "care-drain" in the countries of origin of those workers (2003b: 186). Love is not a resource like any other, which can simply be imported. Rather, she argues, emotional work is carried out in more wealthy countries, but uses the emotional capacities of migrant workers. This then limits their capacity to provide care and nurturance for their own communities, resulting in an unequal global distribution of loving care (2003b: 192-193, see also RPZ 118, Parreñas 2009: 141).[46] Federici refers to the

[45] However, visibility in itself does not guarantee adequate remuneration.

[46] Lewis criticises the naturalising assumptions behind some of this research. She argues that the notion that the migration of female care workers automatically results in a loss of care for their children is based on the assumption that mothers should ideally be their children's primary carers (2019a: 130).

sites most affected by this uneven distribution as zones of “near-zero-reproduction” (RPZ 103). Migrant workers, who leave these zones behind, are themselves often lacking networks of care and protection in their countries of destination. As Bridget Anderson has shown in detail, the migrant status of many domestic workers, combined with a discourse of these workers as “part of the family,” make their work particularly exploitable while hiding exploitation under the semblance of familiarity (2000: 51). In some aspects, this resembles the system developed under slavery in the United States, where black women were made to care for white children (Hays 1996: 35, Prescod 1980: 14).

The commodification of care is related to not only the arrangement of waged work and the family, but also to varying constructions of need. Because labour power is the commodification of human capacities rather than a thing, standards for skill will shift according to the demands of capital. These might involve shifting standards for the psychic constitution of individuals. Some workers need only a minimally disciplined behaviour, whereas others need many years of intense subjectivation to various forms of emotional pressure. Yet the emotional standard of the working class is an issue open to political struggle. While the working class as a whole has struggled for a higher standard of living, members of this class are constructed as having varying needs. For instance, white workers typically have a higher standard of living than black workers, and can also expect a higher degree of emotional comfort and care. In a similar vein, Fortunati argues that sex work is productive of male labour power because men have the societal power to enforce their right to sex, whereas women do not have the same right to pleasure (AR 51).

The commodification of some emotional services might be the result of increased emotional standards and more leisure time. Higher standards of living often translate into greater access to emotional services for the wealthy. As Emma Dowling argues, establishments that cater to wealthy clients generally place greater weight on delivery of

emotional services (2007: 122). Similarly, Hochschild shows that there is a tendency for negative feeling to move downwards, whereas positive feeling tends to move upwards in the social hierarchy (2003b: 85). In general, then, those at the top of social hierarchies can expect more attention to their emotional needs and a greater degree of emotional wellbeing. Commodification processes contribute to this tendency, as the rich are able to pay for the emotional services they need.

As noted above, Federici does not share Hardt and Negri's optimism for the "new hegemony" of emotional labour and service work more broadly. While the waged condition of this work might allow for a greater degree of autonomy and ability to struggle over the conditions of work, WFH never strived for reproductive labour to be integrated into the formal workforce. Moreover, the commodification of emotional labour merely hands over control of this work from individual men to capitalists, rather than undoing the need for such labour. As we have seen, such transmutation might lead to more explicit forms of control. Despite the seemingly infinite character of emotional labour, Federici notes capitalists have done their best to find ways to manage and measure this work. She emphasises not the supposedly emancipatory character of affectivity, but its uses in binding workers to their own exploitation. According to Federici, the blurring of life and work is in no way a step forward in the struggle against capital, but rather a way in which capitalist control of our lives is intensified (2011: 69).

Much of the emotional labour literature explores how this control takes place. In many cases, it is a question of cultivating a certain "personality" in the workers, thus integrating the work with the worker (Weeks 2007: 241, 2011: 73). Hochschild notes how flight attendants are carefully screened before they are hired, to see if they have the required skills for interpersonal work (MH 97). In their study "Emotional labour and sexual difference in the airline industry," Steve Taylor and Melissa Tyler found similar patterns

persisting in hiring practices. Selection panels for flight attendants reported that they wanted to hire “personalities” that would “naturally” deliver emotional services – personalities which in most cases were female (2000: 83). Companies thus rely on internalised forms of emotion management, which are part of the worker’s “personality,” as well as the carefully codified external regulations described by Hochschild and Dowling.

Dowling notes that workers are expected to embody the emotional values stipulated by management, thus using their bodies as part of the performance of emotion (2007: 123). This is something that cuts across commodified and non-commodified emotional labour, as Federici and Fortunati both note that the work of love tends to draw on the body-personality of the worker as part of the naturalisation of this work (RPZ 16, AR 77). While measurability becomes central to the capitalist commodification and regulation of this work, it continues to draw on the supposedly natural personality of the worker, which in some sense exceeds that regulation and creates the conditions for hyper-exploitation. We thus need to look at how emotional labour participates in the reproduction of status based on gender, class and race – factors that are sometimes, though not always, translatable into exchange value (Anderson 2000: 2-7). Capitalists might be able to explicitly commodify this status production – for example by drawing on the racialised sex appeal of Asian women in certain airline commercials (MH 130, Forseth 2005: 47) – but often it is a more implicit externality of emotional labour.

Measure and control have the effect of making emotional labour into specific and finite tasks to be completed by the worker. Commodification, then, in some cases implies the loss of the infinite character of “love” discussed above. As emotional labour is scripted by company manuals, it becomes divided into discrete activities. Hochschild describes this as a form of deskilling of emotional labour, whereby agency over the work is increasingly removed from the worker (MH 120). However, Robin Leidner argues that the routinisation

of emotional labour might help workers control service interactions (1993: 5). It is likely that the scripting of emotional labour affords workers some control in relation to customers, yet the codification of emotional labour does not necessarily mean that workers are doing only what they told, as workers in some situations might feel compelled to give more emotional care than they are asked to do. This is particularly true across public sectors such as health care and education, which have faced significant cuts in recent decades, with resulting management calls for speed-ups. As Rebecca Selberg observes with regards to nurses, this allows for the hyper-exploitation of the caring capacities of an already devalued group of workers (2012: 223).

A somewhat different issue concerns the ability of commodified emotional labour to actually satisfy the emotional needs of service recipients. As noted above, the work of love involves tailoring emotional services to the specificity of the individual, thus continually reaffirming that very individuality in the process. The commercialisation of intimate services seems to imply the loss of this capacity, as services become increasingly standardised by management control. However, we should not assume that capitalist production automatically leads to standardisation. Capitalist logics, when it comes both to the production of status and the production of services, employ both standardising and individualising practices. High-end emotional services are often individualised as a part of their commodification. In some other types of care work, such as nursing, workers can offer individualised emotional labour as a “gift” to those they care for (Bolton 2005: 97). Here, emotional labour might not be formally integrated in the service itself, which is focused on the completion of physical tasks, yet management might rely on the empathy and sense of duty of its workers to provide emotional services for free (Selberg 2012: 73, 223). However, these processes of individualisation do not necessarily mean that the individual emotional needs of people are met, especially as both exclusive emotional

services and care services can be limited to those who have the means to pay for them, just as unwaged forms of emotional labour are often reserved for those who are part of a nuclear family. The satisfaction of emotional needs is sometimes tied to access to commodities and services, and capitalism continually generates such needs that can only be satisfied through market interactions.

In critiquing the commodification of emotional services, it is important to note that the private sphere of unwaged work can also be insufficient for meeting people's needs. The nuclear family form is not merely one form among others, as it has been institutionalised as the exclusive site catering to people's emotional needs. While other kinship forms have become less stigmatised, and the father-mother-child model has become more flexible, the hegemonic status of the nuclear family still means that this form is promoted at the expense of other forms of sociality (Barrett and McIntosh 2015: 47, 80). It is inscribed across legal, material, and ideological structures. Thus, those who live outside the nuclear family form, or are the primary caregivers within that form, lack much of the emotional support that such a model supposedly has been instituted to provide.

Private and public

For Hochschild, there are a number of problems with the increasing commercialisation of emotional labour. While she has resisted the critique that she thinks that emotional labour is more "free" in private than in commercial life (1989b: 439) it does often seem as if she thinks that the proper place of emotion is in private life. In *The managed heart*, she repeatedly invokes the profit motive and increased managerial control as processes whereby emotional labour is subsumed under a capitalist logic (MH 20, 182). She writes that in commercialised emotional labour, what matters is no longer the welfare or pleasure of participants but rather the company's internal regulations and profit (MH 119). In her

condemnation of the exploitation of commodified emotional labour, she cannot help but invoke a somewhat mythical outside, in which emotional labour is not commodified and therefore not exploited (Weeks 2007: 244). This is despite the fact that she is well aware of the gendered dynamics of emotion, which tend to place women in positions of private emotional exploitation.

In her later work in particular, Hochschild deplores the problem of the increasing commercialisation of the private sphere. She constructs intimate life and commercial life as two competing logics, in which the "cold" logic of capital is currently winning (1997: 49, 2003b: 26, 29, 2013: 102). While it is correct that commodification changes emotional labour, it is not necessarily the case that non-commodified emotional labour is preferable for participants. Indeed, Federici and Cox resist the claim that commodification equals exploitation and alienation (RPZ 35). Hochschild understands capitalism in Polanyian terms, where the unfettered and destructive market stands against the logic of community. From a WFH perspective, the logic of capitalism is always present in the very construction of the "community" as we know it.[47] This also means that the commodification of emotional labour and other forms of reproductive labour stems not only from the encroachment of capital logics upon private life, but also from the feminist refusal of unwaged reproductive labour (RPZ 49, Federici 2011: 67). Barbagallo argues that the use of commodified reproductive services might be a passive and individualised form of resistance to the neoliberal logic which seeks to place responsibility for forms of care, previously provided by the Fordist welfare state, in the private household (2016: 129). Arguing that emotional labour should be decommodified, as Oksala does (2016: 296), depends on the continued unwaged exploitation of women, at least in the absence of other forms of sociality. While rejecting Hardt and Negri's overly optimistic view that the "new hegemony" of affective labour can bring about communism, the WFH perspective implies that commodification is

[47] For a critique of the notion of community as inherently anticapitalist, see also Joseph (2002).

an ambivalent process, which might enable at least individual forms of refusal.

Hochschild is concerned that the increased availability of individually tailored emotional services is creating an increasingly commercialised culture in the private sphere. Already in *The managed heart*, she describes how commercialisation is present in people's intimate lives. While commodified emotional labour draws on "private" feeling, as when flight attendants are asked to imagine the cabin as their living room, corporate profit motives seem to infiltrate people's homes (MH 161). The idea of a distinct domestic sphere is in itself an invention of bourgeois society, and at times it seems that Hochschild tries to question this distinction by pointing to the paradox of companies drawing on the private sphere as supposedly unsullied by capitalism. In *The managed heart*, Hochschild suggests that the cultural emphasis on authenticity is a by-product of the commercial use of emotional labour (MH 192). In her later writings, however, Hochschild seems increasingly worried about the trend towards the commercialisation of intimate life. Personal services, she suggests, can separate us from the acts by which we used to say how much we care (2013: 23). She writes that "part of the *content* of the spirit of capitalism is being *displaced* onto intimate life" (2003b: 24, emphasis in original), suggesting that it was not present there before. This runs contrary to the WFH argument, as Federici and Cox suggest that "every moment of our lives function for the accumulation of capital." They state that the ideology that opposes the private and the public supports the subjugation of women in the home, as it makes unwaged work appear as an act of love (RPZ 35).

Indeed, as Weeks has shown, Hochschild cannot avoid invoking a fairly conservative ideal of the family (2011: 156). While she wants to promote a more inclusive notion of the family, going beyond the mother-father-child schema, she still defines family as adults who raise children, thus implicitly favouring a heteronormative model of family (2003b: 198). As Christopher Carrington emphasises, however, family consists of the work to create family,

rather than a set of roles (1999: 6). Weeks argues that while Hochschild presents a fairly normative model of the family, her writings simultaneously represent family as a matter of unique individual choice when opposed to waged work (2011: 158).

The distinction between private and public becomes important in this context because it determines the political perspective on emotional labour. If the proper place of emotional labour is in the domestic sphere, a political viewpoint is bound to posit private and commercial forms of emotional labour as oppositional, and presumably privilege the more "authentic" private forms. A WFH perspective, on the other hand, recognises the continuities of emotional labour across public and private spheres, while emphasising that there are different logics of capitalist accumulation operating in these domains. As Giovanna Dalla Costa argues, the existence of unwaged labour determines women's position on the labour market, and ensures that men can demand emotional labour from women (WL 95, see also Adkins 1995). The division of private and public has very real effects, but mainly because it produces various forms of exploitation. For example, the conflation of "work" in general with waged work makes unwaged work invisible and furthers its exploitation. The constitution of a private sphere, seemingly beyond labour law, also deepens the exploitation of waged domestic workers (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez 2010: 4).

Because we tend to think of love as the opposite of money, there is a limit to the commercialisation of emotional reproduction. Some emotional labour is thus continually relegated to the "private," whereas other forms have moved into waged workplaces and the service market. The public and the commercial sphere are often constructed as devoid of emotion, or operating according to a "cold" logic as Hochschild would put it (2003b: 214), whereas they are in fact suffused with emotion.[48] This is important because it helps us understand the persistent gendering of capitalism, after the demise of the family wage-

[48] See Konings (2015) for a general critique on Polanyian writings on capital, which neglect the emotional nature of the market. See also Zelizer (2005) for a critique of the distinction between public and private in capitalist societies.

model as the hegemonic form of the family. The next chapter will explore how gendered subjectivity is reproduced in contemporary society.

In this chapter, I have argued that notions of affect and affective labour are not sufficient for explaining the organisation of reproduction in capitalist society, especially in its connection to persistent hierarchies based on gender, race, and class. Rather, modern constructions of emotion, in relation to the construction of subjective interiority and "authentic" selves, tell us more about how care and feeling can serve to stabilise such hierarchies. The following chapter will continue to explore emotion in relation to subjectivity, with a particular focus on the gendering of emotional reproduction.

Chapter three: Gendering work

This chapter explores the gendering of work, in order to develop a materialist theory of gender relations under capitalism. Drawing on the work of WFH and Hochschild, as well as more recent historical materialist feminist writings, I will focus on how forms of labour, and emotional labour in particular, are constitutive of contemporary gender relations. As in previous chapters, I argue that gender is not a stable thing, but rather relations of division and hierarchy that involve processes of domination and exploitation.

The concept of gender as laid out here is most applicable to white and heterosexual gender norms. I have chosen to make this explicit rather than trying to include other forms of gendered subjectivity. This is because I am interested in how whiteness and heterosexuality contribute to the organisation of hegemonic gender positions. Other gender formations will only be theorised in so far as they form a horizon against which hegemonic gender is constituted. Although I cannot theorise trans subjectivities specifically in this chapter, most of the following is relevant to trans women as well as cis women, as femininity is not exclusively linked to a particular type of body. It is true, however, that people inhabit femininity differently, and thus receive different amounts of the social rewards and punishments associated with gender. But the work of becoming a gendered subject is never complete. Gender should thus be understood as ideal forms to which people are compelled to aspire, with varying degrees of success, but not as forms that can be fully inhabited by any individual. Gender ideals are often multiple and contradictory, making it impossible to live according to idealised gender norms. Idealised forms of gender are a way of extracting a certain amount of labour, which work despite, or because, actually fitting into hegemonic gender presentations is an unrealisable goal for most people. While these forms are partly ideological, they are also the simultaneous results

and preconditions of certain forms of labour.

In this chapter, I will draw on WFH writings and the works of Hochschild to outline a materialist theory of gender. The first section will return to the WFH writings explored in chapter one. After that, I will give an account of Hochschild's theory of gender, as well as some writings by followers of Hochschild. However, some additional theoretical work is needed in order to formulate a coherent theory of the gendering of emotional labour. In the last section of this chapter, I draw on a broader set of texts, in order to produce a theory of gendered subjectivity and emotional labour in the contemporary moment.

Femininity as work function

For the WFH authors, femininity is a work function (RPZ 8). As such, we can understand it not in terms of a natural trait or a psychological predisposition, but rather as a historically acquired capacity for a certain type of labour. Both Fortunati and Federici emphasise femininity as skill, which is learnt from infancy (AR 62, RPZ 34). This capacity, however, is deeply naturalised, as modern understandings of gendered difference have anchored hierarchies of gender in bodily types (Federici 2004: 115, 135). The naturalisation of difference led to an understanding of gender as inevitable biological destiny (RPZ 37). This has served to hide women's work *as work*, and instead conflated this labour with women's bodies and personalities. The construction of work as conscious activity has also obscured the fact that femininity is a work function, as feminine gender becomes equated with bodily and emotional states, which are in turn constructed as passive. As I argued in my discussion of emotion, however, such states must be conceptualised beyond the active/passive dichotomy, which tends to reproduce splits between body and mind. Gender, like emotion, is neither a passive state nor necessarily fully conscious activity. This, however, does not mean that it is not labour. Federici writes that housework "has

been transformed into a natural attribute of our female physique and personality, an internal need, an aspiration, supposedly coming from the depth of our female character" (RPZ 16).

Here, we can see how gender is constructed as expressive of a pre-existing authentic self rather than as a form of labour that needs to be constantly repeated. Weeks argues that an understanding of gender based on labour can help us move beyond both voluntarism and determinism, as the concept of labour invokes both constraints and continual, creative remaking. Drawing on Judith Butler's notion of performativity, but grounding it in an ontology of labour, Weeks understands the labour of gender as constitutive of an experience of relative coherence of the subject (1998: 124-133). This is helpful for understanding the WFH reading of gender, insofar as gender emerges as an effect of labouring practices as well as a precondition for that labour, pointing to the constructedness yet relative stability and coherence of gendered subjectivity.

While the focus of WFH is on femininity as an attribute of the main labouring subject of reproduction, it is important to note that masculinity should also be understood as a work function. Feminised subjects tend to have a primary responsibility for reproducing gender (Holmberg 1993: 137, Ward 2010: 240), but men also perform gendered labour, although of a different type (Floyd 2009: 99). Furthermore, the effects of gendered labour tend to cohere around masculine subjectivity in such a way that men can reap the benefits of the gendering labour of others. We can note that there is a tendency to distribute the burden of gendered labour onto feminised subjects and the rewards of such labour onto men. This too is a form of gendered exploitation. It is thus not only women's care work in the traditional sense which is exploited, but also women's work of continually reproducing gender. This exploitation operates through assumptions of heterosexual gendered complementarity, in which difference is constructed around the need for one's "other half."

Despite women being the primary labouring subject in this relation, they are reduced to the status of object through notions of complementarity (PWSC 29). Moreover, femininity comes to appear as gendered particularity, thus hiding masculinity as an effect of gendering labour. Again, we can see how (gendered) capitalism is based on a series of ideological inversions, so that the exploiting subjects come to appear as active, independent, and universal while the exploited come to appear as dependent, passive, and particular.[49]

As I remarked in chapter one, the issue of exploitation in the WFH literature is rather thorny and partly contradictory. WFH authors claim that women are primarily exploited by capitalist relations of value extraction (AR 50). They do this in order to maintain a notion of working-class coherence, even as they identify gender as a major strand of difference that cuts across classes (PWSRC 19, SRC 96, AR 39). Here, I diverge somewhat from the WFH writers by arguing that women as a group are exploited by men as a group. This is a stronger claim than the one usually made by WFH theorists, as it suggests that gender is an inherently exploitative relation. In this way, it prepares the ground for the gender abolitionist politics which I will lay out in chapter five. This assertion does not entail that all women are exploited or that they are all exploited to the same extent, nor does it suggest that all men benefit from the exploitation of women in comparable ways. But it does imply that all feminised subjects are affected by the exploitation of a majority of women. As feminist philosopher Diemut Elisabet Bubeck suggests, all women are vulnerable to gender-based exploitation, even if they as individuals are not exploited (1995: 183). We can note that the compounded vulnerabilities of race, gender, and class leaves working-class women of colour particularly likely to be exploited in the most strenuous and least valued types of reproductive labour.

Arguing for the existence of gender-based exploitation is not the same as embracing

[49] For a workerist account of the concept of inversion, see Tronti (2019: 24).

a dual-systems model, yet it does imply nuancing the unitary model somewhat. While capitalism is the dominant mode of production, within which all other forms of exploitation are situated, capital is not the only hierarchical formation that is structured around people's labour. This is because surplus value extraction, while dominant, is not the only mode of exploitation. Other forms, such as the extraction of use values or surplus labour, are historically more common than exploitation based on surplus value (Marx 1990: 344-348). And while exploitation based on surplus value is currently the dominant form of exploitation, other forms did not disappear with the rise of surplus-value extraction. We can see this in the organisation of the so-called informal economy, where labour is not organised by contractual wage relations, but which might nonetheless be integrated in the circuit of capitalist production.

The fact that gendered exploitation is not primarily or exclusively organised in terms of surplus value does not mean that gender-based exploitation should be understood as in any sense pre-capitalist in nature. The rise of capitalism constituted the condition for gender-based exploitation as we know it. As I have suggested above, capital depends on zones of non-value. Gender-based exploitation is thus not outside capitalism, but neither does it necessarily operate according to the same logic that structures capitalist production. This does not mean that patriarchy is somehow an independent system, as dual-systems theorists would argue (Hartmann 1981), nor that it is pre-capitalist in its form, as some Marxist feminists have suggested (Benston 1969). In order to counter the tendency to present patriarchy as transhistorical, we must be aware of both continuities and differences of gender relations in the transition to capitalism.

It is not simply the case that capital "created" gender exploitation in order to extract surplus value, as Fortunati suggests (AR 31). Nor is it the case that divisions such as gender and race exist in order to split the working class, as WFH authors often seem to

argue (PWSC 45, AR 39, 167). It is true that divisions within the working class are exploited by capitalists to create competition between workers, simultaneously suppressing wages and decreasing the political capacities of the working class. But this argument does little to explain why the divisions within the class are traced along the lines of race, gender, and other forms of hierarchical difference. Gender is not reducible to its function as a tool of the capitalist power to divide and rule. Every form of domination exceeds its merely functional deployment in capitalist value accumulation.

As I noted in chapter one, Fortunati writes that men do exploit female houseworkers, and that this exploitation is based on the satisfaction of needs (AR 36, 94). However, she states that this production is productive for capital, and therefore unproductive for the male worker (AR 50). Her argument is somewhat confusing since housework could reasonably be seen as productive both for capital and for male workers. Yet it seems that Fortunati is committed to using the term “productive” only in its limited sense of being productive of surplus value, in which case it could not be productive for workers, who are by definition excluded from benefiting from surplus-value production. However, as Marxist theorist Michael Lebowitz argues, labour can be productive outside the strict parameters of capitalist value production (1992: 135). He insists that exploitative relations, based on for example gender, can exist among workers themselves (1992: 151). Similarly, Bubeck suggests that exploitation can take several forms under capitalism (1995: 81). Another example of exploitative relations would be the one in which (primarily white and bourgeois) mothers transfer some of their domestic “duties” onto less privileged workers. This is a form of exploitation based on surplus labour, constituted mainly along lines of race, migration status, and class. It is a way in which, as Roberts suggests, (some) women’s greater “equality” with men can lead to increased hierarchy and exploitation among women (1997a: 77).

The WFH writers waver somewhat on the issue of exploitation. Often it seems that they do suggest that gender relations are inherently exploitative. The fact that WFH writers are not entirely consistent when it comes to the question of whether women are exploited by men is apparent in their treatment of lesbian relationships. While they suggest that these tend to take on some of the aspects of heterosexual relations, they nonetheless argue that lesbianism is less exploitative for women than entering a heterosexual relationship (WL 114, RPZ 15). This would not make sense if it is only capitalism that benefits from women's labour, since lesbian relationships can contain the same work of reproducing labour power as heterosexual relationships, especially for lesbians who have children. The difference between lesbian relationships and heterosexual ones, Hall suggests, is that lesbian relationships do not produce the power hierarchies inherent in heterosexual relationships (1975: 5). The argument that lesbian relationships are less labour-intensive than heterosexual relationships suggests that the WFH writers consider heterosexual arrangements exploitative in ways that benefit capital, but which also benefit men. This, I would argue, is the logical conclusion of Federici's assertion that femininity is a work function. The accumulation of gendered difference that Federici suggests took place in the transition to capitalism (2004: 63, 115) coincided with men's use of women as commons – that is, as natural resources to be exploited (2004: 97). As we have seen, it is crucial for the existence of this particular exploitative relation that it appears to be outside of capitalist monetary relations, and that it therefore appears as a natural and personal service relation (PWSC 26). Dalla Costa insists that the exploitation of gendered relationships is more intense under capitalism than in pre-capitalist social structures, as capital brought with it "the more intense exploitation of women *as* women" (PWSC 21, emphasis in original). She writes that "between men and women power as its right *commands* sexual affection and intimacy" (PWSC 30, emphasis in original). Just as

capitalist power is the power to command labour, so gender is the power to command the labour of intimacy. Thus, we cannot conflate exploitation under capitalism with the capitalist exploitation of surplus value.

As I have argued, however, this command of gendered labour is not merely external command. Gender functions through the internalisation of the command for emotional and reproductive labour. Somewhat paradoxically, this can operate through the internalisation of the requirement to sacrifice oneself. The WFH authors note that the ideological figure of sacrifice is at the core of normative femininity (AWNP 73). Giovanna Dalla Costa writes that especially in the capitalist heartlands, women are made to identify strongly with the needs of others, particularly their loved ones (WL 85). Mariarosa Dalla Costa notes that the training that women receive from childhood is “a preparation for martyrdom” (PWSC 41). Not only are women trained to sacrifice themselves for others, they are also encouraged to derive pleasure from this work (RPZ 17, 25). Like Hochschild’s description of emotional labour, then, the labour of gender demands that the worker not only performs the work but also enjoys it (MH 6). The work of love also comes with an imperative to remodel subjectivity itself in the image of this work, which is similar to the way in which Hochschild describes the process of deep acting (MH 33). The feminised working subject is disciplined by this imperative to enjoy work or suffer the individualised blame for failing to enjoy it. As Federici writes, if you do not like it, “it is your problem, your failure, your guilt, and your abnormality” (RPZ 17). Through notions of sacrifice, femininity functions as a disciplinary tool for extracting more work. Emotional labour in particular, as we have seen in chapter two, should ideally be “infinite” in nature.

Love, violence, and reproduction

When women fail to enjoy, or start resisting this work, they are met with various kinds of

violence (RPZ 24). One form of violence is the pathologisation of women's resistance or non-enjoyment of emotional labour. Federici describes how women are called "insane" when they resist housework, and how "going crazy" has historically been one of the only ways for women to get out of their responsibility to care for others (NYWFHC 129). Those who fail to perform and enjoy the naturalised labour of femininity, then, are likely to be pathologised, and even criminalised (Roberts 2017: 189). This is particularly the case for those who do not perform gendered labour within normative nuclear families. Brown notes that the ideal of the white, bourgeois family functions as a disciplinary norm, against which black families, and black women in particular, are pathologised (1976b: 8). This in turn justifies intense state surveillance of those women deemed deviant, as well as state interventions such as the loss of custody of one's children.

Giovanna Dalla Costa describes the forms of psychological violence that structure women's labour within the family, which are deeply entangled with normative ideals of femininity and love (WL 54). Furthermore, resistance can be met with physical and sexual violence. For WFH, unlike some other feminist currents of the 1970s and 1980s, sexual and domestic violence is not primary to gendered domination. Masculine domination thus cannot be located in some psychic propensity for sadism. Violence is not for its own sake but for ensuring the continued reproduction of the world as we know it. Dalla Costa's book *The work of love* is a detailed exploration of how domestic and sexual violence function to control reproductive labour. This violence, she suggests, cannot be understood separately from heterosexual constructions of love. Violence is thus not "deviant" with regards to "normal" heterosexual relationships. Dalla Costa contends that violence is authorised by love, because the marriage contract appears as a contract of love rather than labour, and thus love is what is "owed." Men have the right to use force to ensure that such emotional debts are paid (WL 54). As violence takes on the appearance of "love," then, it is primarily

a tool for disciplining women's emotional labour. It is only when the normative demand for love fails that men's function as controllers of domestic work becomes explicit through the use of physical force (WL 55). As Federici puts it, men can "supervise our sexual work, to ensure that we would provide sexual services according to the established, socially sanctioned productivity norms" (RPZ 25). They can thus lay claim to women's bodies, energy, and time. This violence, Giovanna Dalla Costa contends, is internal to the work that women perform (WL 39). The threat of gendered violence also acts to keep women anchored in the domestic sphere, insofar as sexual violence is portrayed as the natural result of women's entrance into public spheres (WL 71, see also Wright 2006: 74).

These forms of violence, according to the WFH authors, are the result of the ways in which relations of domination are structured under capitalism. Moreover, women are made

> to service the male worker physically, emotionally, and sexually, to raise his children, mend his socks, patch up his ego when it is crushed by the work and the social relations (which are relations of loneliness) that capital has reserved for him. (RPZ 17)

Here we can see the compensatory function of emotional labour, and how emotional reproduction is a central condition for the continuation of capitalist labour relations. In the WFH theory of emotional reproduction as a "safety valve," there is also the idea that men can displace the violence of capitalist exploitation onto their partners. As Federici writes, "the more blows the man gets at work the more his wife must be trained to absorb them, the more he is allowed to recover his ego at her expense" (RPZ 18). However, we should be wary of theories that are premised on the notion of a general economy of violence.[50] Such theories seem to presume that violence is a vital force, which necessarily passes from body to body. Similar to the theories of affect that I discussed above, such accounts

[50] See for instance Cohen and Monk (2017).

of violence tend to reify it, thus ignoring the fact that some people do not pass on negative emotions or violence. As the WFH writers suggest, feminised workers are mainly made to absorb anger and frustration, without necessarily externalising it and displacing it onto someone else (PWSC 40).[51] However, I think there is something to be said for the theory that *masculinity* functions through the displacement of anger onto others, as masculinity is partly constituted on a seeming monopoly on aggression and violence. As Hochschild suggest in her account of masculine emotional labour, a failure to perform anger might threaten a person's status as a real man (MH 146). Perhaps the most masculinised of all emotions, anger is often an expression of power and entitlement (Shields 2002: 146).[52] Anger thus creates a position of agency, while constructing other people as receptacles of negative emotion (Whitney 2018: 639).

In Dalla Costa's words, the heterosexual woman must try to emulate the image of "'the heroic mother and happy wife' whose sexual identity is pure sublimation, whose function is essentially that of receptacle for other people's emotional expression, who is the cushion of familial antagonisms" (PWSC 40). There is thus a requirement to perform happiness while simultaneously being on the receiving end of negative emotions – a characteristic that is familiar for those who are engaged in reproductive service jobs (MH 171). However, the individualisation of emotional labour within families makes that relationship more effective while also more burdensome for women (RPZ 17). The people cared for in the family must believe that they "can only be reproduced by this one woman in one particular privatized individualized situation" (AR 110). There can thus be no breaks or holidays for the wife-mother (WSC 54). She is always on call, in order to ensure the continuous reproduction of her loved ones. As I noted in chapter two, Giovanna Dalla

[51] However, women are capable of being violent and abusive as part of their caring labour. On this topic, see the description of women's violence towards children in the WFH text "Portrait of a housewife" in *The Activist* (1975).

[52] In the next chapter, I will look at feminist attempts to constitute collective practices of anger.

Costa argues that the mere presence of the woman in the home is a form of work (WL 79). Her continual presence serves to soothe tensions and offers the promise that care is available when needed (Seery and Crowley 2000).

These forms of labour are, as we have seen, produced as natural aspects of women's bodies and personalities. As Fortunati argues, it is considered natural that men consume love, whereas women's "generous" personalities are productive of love (AR 75). While women are the main producers of love, their work is simultaneously "paid for" by the love they receive from their male partners (RPZ 24). The construction of women as generous also implies that for women, love is its own reward – to perform the work of love is a sufficient source of pleasure, so that no other remuneration is needed. As Federici notes, women are expected to express gratitude towards their male partners, as "they have given us the opportunity to express ourselves as women (i.e., to serve them)" (RPZ 24).

It is the emotional factor of heterosexuality, Fortunati argues, that forces women into unequal and unwaged exchange (AR 14). While heterosexual love appears to be a relationship of reciprocity, women must be prepared to take on domestic and emotional labour for the men they are involved with (AR 14, 74). It is the legitimacy of normative heterosexuality, compared to both paid sex work and sexual relations outside the heterosexual work ethic, that binds women to their work, as it offers the emotional reward of being a properly gendered subject. This legitimacy produces emotional investment in the institution of heterosexual monogamy, which, as Berlant suggests, maintains the association between "the good life" and heterosexuality (2012: 21). The "positive" and productive force of love, then, rather than just the punitive logic of violence, maintains inequality and exploitation. We participate in it through our emotional investments in one another and ourselves. Through investment in the good life of heterosexuality, many

women also participate in their own exploitation.

This is not to suggest that women could simply choose not to be exploited, but rather, that women are active participants in gendered relations and not mere victims of patriarchy. A central lesson of Marxism is that people are made to engage in work under conditions not of their own choosing. While gendered relations are exploitative for most women, they can also produce forms of subjective rewards for those who do gender well, and in particular for white, bourgeois, and heterosexual women who are able to perform femininity according to normative standards. While gender is contradictory and unstable, and no one is fully able to live up to gendered ideals, aspiring to these ideals takes a lot of work but is also rewarded. Supposed failure or refusal to live up to these norms, or the racialised exclusion from them, can lead to violent punishment. Brown explores how gendered ideals are co-constructed with whiteness, so that "white women are the legitimate objects of beauty, of love, of femininity. Black women are not" (1976a: 4). Federici argues that femininity in the transition to capital was reconfigured from an association with uncontrollable sexuality to signifiers such as docility and chastity (2004: 103). While this modern, capitalist construction of femininity was based on an idealised notion of white, heterosexual, and bourgeois women, it functioned as a disciplinary tool cutting across races and classes. However, femininity retains some of its contradictory meanings, which facilitates its manipulation as a technique for extracting labour and controlling workers (Wright 2006: 29, 37).

Similarly to black women, lesbians are subjected to punishments for their supposed failure to live up to heterosexualised norms of femininity – forms of violence and exclusion that also serve to warn other women not to become lesbians (AWNP 24). Heterosexuality, while seemingly a private form of desire, is the structure of capitalist family relations (AR 24). Heterosexuality is thus a form of discipline, or a work ethic (Toupin 2014: 107). It is

from this work, and the approval that comes from it, that women learn to derive their sense of identity, their sense of being "real women" (NYWFHC 145). Heterosexual desire is also constructed as a natural bodily instinct, whereas lesbianism is deemed unnatural. Lesbians are thus often excluded from the subjective rewards that comes from performing gendered labour well.

The WFH writers are attentive to how the gendered body, while appearing as a natural given, is in fact the result of labour. Fortunati argues that this is part of the "non-material" (that is, emotional) reproductive labour that women do. The feminised body thus becomes part of the product of gendered labour. In this type of production, she writes,

> the raw materials and the means of work are incorporated within the female houseworker herself, within the individual. This implies that her non-material needs must not and cannot exist except as needs to satisfy the non-material needs of the male worker and her children. It also implies that she, apart from being labor-power is also a mere machine in the continuous cycle of non-material production. In this sense the female houseworker is capital's greatest technological invention. Thus, lipstick, powder, make-up in general are part of the process of non-material production, because they are added to the woman's body to effect a material change. (AR 77)

In a similar vein, Federici and Cox suggest that a woman has to "put hours of labor into reproducing her own labor power, and women well know the tyranny of this task, for a pretty dress and hairdo are conditions for their getting the job, whether on the marriage market or on the wage labor market" (RPZ 32). Here, the WFH authors seek to denaturalise this intervention into the bodily configuration of women by naming this activity as work. Fortunati's striking invocation of the feminised body as capital's greatest technological invention serves as a reminder of the constructedness of the capacities of the body, as well as the naturalisation of such capacities so that they appear to be outside of the labouring subject's control.

Women's labour, especially that which is sexual or maternal, is conflated with their bodies and constructed as a natural instinct. It is turned into a "natural force of social labour" (AR 11). This naturalisation, as we have seen, is essential for the capitalist use of reproductive labour. According to Fortunati, it is thereby rendered "simple" labour. She writes that "reproduction work is work that can be reduced to simple work where the woman's simple labour-power – that contained within her body – is used *as it is*, without any need of specific development" (AR 107, emphasis in original). The capacity for reproductive labour is thus turned into a natural quality of certain bodies, whose function is primarily to carry out that labour. We can note that the naturalisation of feminised labour, and particularly emotional labour, makes that work appear not only as unskilled labour but also makes it invisible *as* labour. There is no separation between the work and the person, rather the "personality" of the worker tends to subsume the work. Women's emotional labour is thus constructed as natural expression of their spontaneous feeling, something that is in turn used to further exploit this labour. This apparent deskilling of emotional and bodily forms of labour is thus a central part of the general devaluation of reproduction. However, we have seen that WFH see gender as the development of capacities rather than a lack of skill. According to James, race and gender function as imperatives "to develop and acquire certain capabilities at the expense of all others. Then these acquired capabilities are taken to be our nature, fixing our functions for life, and fixing also the quality of our mutual relations" (SRC 96). The "deskilling" and invisibility of gendered labour is itself a skilled vanishing act, which becomes part of the acquired capacities of gender.

For the WFH authors, then, the feminised sphere of love and emotion is a form of skilful work that becomes conflated with the working subject herself. Her body and personality, her supposedly passive and unskilled emotionality, become resources to

exploit – or as Federici would put it, a form of commons. In this process, her labour is hidden. In the next section, I will look at Hochschild's understanding of gender in relation to emotion, before returning to the notions of subjectivity and capacity in the last section of this chapter.

Gendered feeling: Hochschild on femininity

In Hochschild's work, femininity emerges as a central factor for the performance of emotional labour. However, it is not the case that emotional labour as such is simply feminised, in a way that conflates femininity with emotion. Rather, the link between emotional labour and gender is more complex, and masculinity is also built partly around a gendered enactment of emotion. Furthermore, emotional labour needs to be thought of not merely in terms of internal feeling, but in stylised bodily performance of emotion. As Whitney points out, there is an affinity between Butler's emphasis on performativity and Hochschild's use of the dramaturgical metaphors of surface acting and deep acting. She writes that "the affective laborer's deep acting achieves the effect of expressing an interiority that seems to precede the performance, but in fact is cultivated by it" (2018: 645). Emotional labour thus contributes to the production of gendered interiority, through uses of bodily performance.

Women, according to Hochschild, tend to do more emotional labour than men, and they generally do it in a specifically feminised way. She explains this difference with reference to women's weaker socio-economic position in society, and their socialisation in patterns of behaviour which privilege the needs of others. Women generally have a more restricted access to economic resources, and therefore tend to make a resource out of emotion (MH 163). However, this resource is one that implies the subject's subordination to others, rather than a thing that can be owned or fully controlled. Hochschild writes that

women thus perform “emotion work that affirms, enhances, and celebrates the well-being and status of others” (MH 165). This production of other people’s status means that women’s emotion work continually produces their own lack of status.

As Hochschild notes, women have traditionally been described as manipulative in their use of emotion, while paradoxically also being constructed as in the grips of uncontrollable emotion (MH 164). But although women, like everyone else, are capable of using emotion to achieve their own ends, femininity prescribes that emotion should primarily be used in the service of others. Women are constituted as subjects whose emotional “adaptability” tends to position them as inherently responsive to the needs of other people. To illustrate this, Hochschild points to women’s tendency to act as “conversational cheerleaders,” enhancing the social performance of others (MH 168). This pattern is explored in greater detail in Pamela Fishman’s study of conversational patterns within heterosexual couples, where she found that female participants were much more likely to actively demonstrate that they were listening, continuously affirming their partner’s opinions and choice of conversational topics (1978: 402). While this pattern might seem insignificant as a form of gendered exploitation, Carin Holmberg demonstrates its importance when she stresses that men use the confidence they gain from their female partner’s emotional support to position themselves as superior to their partner (1993: 188). Small, but reiterated, gestures of support that women make are thus used to perpetuate their subordination. This does not mean that women are to blame for their own oppression, but neither are they passive victims of gender oppression and exploitation. Rather, women tend to actively participate in the continual reproduction of a reality based on gender hierarchy.

Hochschild uses the term emotion work to stress this active dimension of women’s gendered behaviour. While she has been accused of not giving due weight to the agency

of emotion workers (Wouters 1989: 22, McQueen 2016: 52), Hochschild does not oppose agency and structure, but instead provides a model where agency works *through* structure and vice versa. Emotion workers, and women in general, are active participants in creating social realities, even when those realities continually marginalise them. Women, Hochschild points out, are also active in the labour of erasing any signs of emotion work – that is, they actively disguise their own labour under the banners of niceness and natural femininity. Hochschild invokes Ivan Illich's term "shadow labour" to name this "unseen effort, which, like housework, does not quite count as labor but is nevertheless crucial to getting other things done" (MH 167). As Jean Duncombe and Dennis Marsden argue, women's emotion work may actively obscure the degree of their exploitation (1995: 163). Emotional labour is a form of invisible background condition that enables more visible forms of labour and production to take place.

This invisibility is premised on a differential valuation of emotion based on gender. If women's emotional expression is in some sense more visible *as emotion*, it is because men's emotional expressions tend to be interpreted as a statement of fact. Hochschild writes that when men express anger, "it is deemed 'rational' or understandable anger, anger that indicates not weakness of character but deeply held conviction." In contrast, "women's feelings are not seen as a response to real events but as reflections of themselves as 'emotional' women" (MH 173). While women thus perform more of the invisible work of catering to others' emotion, they are nonetheless deemed to be excessively emotional themselves. David Knights and Torkil Thanen write that women often have to do the additional emotional labour of controlling undesirable "feminine" emotions (2005: 39). In a similar vein, Marjukka Ollilainen notes that while seemingly gender neutral, emotional rules are often gendered in such a way that "appropriate" emotions come to be regarded as masculine, while those deemed inappropriate are coded

as feminine. This serves to empower those expressing “proper” emotions, while marginalising those who are thought to express improper emotions. (2000: 85). There is thus a circular association of femininity and emotion, in which femininity is devalued due to its connection with emotionality while emotion becomes devalued when coded as feminine. The view that women are more emotional, Hochschild argues, is used to invalidate women’s feelings (MH 173). Similarly to Hochschild, Fishman and Holmberg both note that this gives men a greater claim to constructing a generally accepted view of the world, as their arguments are coded as rational rather than emotional. Thus, while women work harder to maintain social relations, men have greater control over the content of the world view created in those interactions. Women thus often work to affirm a construction of the world that persistently subordinates them (Fishman 1978: 404, Holmberg 1993: 137). This tendency serves the reproduction of gender hierarchy and women’s subordinate position, especially within heterosexual relationships.

For Hochschild, it is the fact that women tend to form intimate connections with men that differentiates gendered oppression from hierarchies based on race or class (MH 169). This intimacy explains the primacy of emotional labour within gendered oppression, as this labour creates the social relations that perpetuate gender. While race and class oppression and exploitation primarily play out at work or in public, gender is continually reproduced through intimate family relations. And while gendered violence is commonly represented as belonging in the world outside the home (WL 79), in most instances of rape and gendered violence the perpetrator is known to the victim, and sexual violence primarily takes place in the home (Hall 1985: 64, 88). Emotional labour has been increasingly commodified since women started to enter the job market in greater numbers, yet gendered oppression at work is distinctly shaped by relations formed in the private sphere. This gives heterosexual gender relations a distinct character, as the subordinated are

tasked with forming intimate bonds of love with their oppressors, and adapt their emotional lives to the needs of those who subordinate them. Hochschild writes that since “men and women do try to love one another [...] the very closeness of the bond they accept calls for some disguise of subordination” (MH 169). Emotional labour, then, not only reproduces more general forms of gendered exploitation and oppression, but also masks oppression as love, while at the same time producing the need for such obfuscation. As Giovanna Dalla Costa notes, this ensures that even violence and emotional abuse can pass as expressions of love, rather than control of women (WL 87).

Hochschild writes that men tend to feel more entitled to their partner’s nurturance than women do (1989a: 254). Here, she expresses an idea similar to Jónasdottir’s theory of love power, where women have the “right” only to give love and sexual affection, but not to receive it (1994: 26). This runs contrary to the received knowledge that women are more emotionally demanding in intimate relationships, common even in some of the feminist literature on love, such as Francesca Cancian’s *Love in America* (1987). These writings, perhaps inadvertently, reproduce the notion that men are expressing their love differently, and that it is unfair of women to demand full reciprocity. They thus mobilise the trope of men as “inexpressive,” and what Stephanie Shields identifies as the paradigm of masculinity as self-control (2002: 53). This trope, as Duncombe and Marsden point out, reinforces an unequal division of power, in which men can create distance and power by withholding emotional expression (1993: 236). It also means that women often have to rely disproportionately on other women for emotional support, as they are less likely to receive emotional care from their partners (Holmberg 1993: 167). According to Tamsin Wilton, this suggests that heterosexual women’s friendships tend to function as support-systems that serve to uphold male dominance by naturalising men’s lack of reciprocity. Such support-systems, Wilton argues, are analogous to battlefield hospitals, aiming to minimise the

emotional harms of heterosexual relationships without challenging the source of that harm (1992: 507).

However, the fact that women are generally more trained in handling the feelings of both self and others does not imply that men are less emotional. Hochschild argues that it is plausible that “men may manage feelings more by subconscious repressing, women more by conscious suppressing” (MH 165). As noted above, it is not necessarily the case that men experience fewer emotions, but that such emotions are expressed, perceived, and interpreted in gendered ways. In fact, emotions are an essential aspect of what Hochschild calls gender strategies, for both men and women. The term strategy is meant to denote the active element of people’s relationship to gender, implying that gender consists not just of received ideas or socialisation but lived practice. Hochschild argues that gender strategies are not “merely” ideological, in the sense of a set of ideas covering over social hierarchy. Rather, such strategies consist of the sum of ideology, emotion, and action (1989a: 192). A gender strategy, Hochschild writes, is “a plan of action through which a person tries to solve problems at hand, given the cultural notions of gender at play” (1989a: 15). Often, gender strategies correspond to our sense of an authentic self (2003b: 130). As Bromberg argues, the concept of emotional labour indicates that gender is not experienced as external but rather conceptualised as an inherent aspect of the subject (2015: 112). As I will argue in chapter five, the internalisation of gender through emotional attachment makes it more difficult to abolish. However, as Hochschild notes, gender strategies are often fractured and incoherent (1989a: 190). This opens a space for developing contradictions within those strategies, and potentially changing them in the process.

In *The second shift*, Hochschild explores the thesis that women’s gender strategies have changed quicker than those of men. She calls this a stalled revolution, in which

women have partly abandoned ideologies of the nurturant housewife, in favour of an ideal of combining housework with waged work. However, the material support for this ideological shift is missing, which forces many women into the position of having to perform the majority of unwaged work while having less time to do so (1989a: 8-11, 267). Furthermore, men have changed more slowly than women, holding on to a model of gender more closely associated with Fordism, where men were breadwinners and women caregivers (1989a: 12). The contradictory demands of gender ideology and reality, Hochschild found in her study, force women and their partners to develop family myths, which cover up the gap between ideal and practice (1989a: 207). These myths are themselves a form of emotional labour, as they must be continually affirmed and reproduced in order to maintain the relationship of affective intimacy between family members.

While this account is compelling, it produces a notion of men as "behind the times" – as just needing to change their ways in order to produce a more egalitarian future. This seems to suggest that it is not gender itself but men's non-contemporary attitudes towards gender that must be changed. In Hochschild's most recent book, *Strangers in their own land* (2016), this morphs into an account of the white men "left behind," whose anger at the economic and political developments of post-Fordism we must empathise with.[53] In a similar vein, some arguments in *The second shift* already point to Hochschild's later valuation of the emotional intimacy of family life over the "cold" capitalist logic of the work place. For instance, her notion that women have abandoned the traditionally female subculture of nurturance in order to pursue careers, and thus assimilated to male culture (1989a: 208), suggests that someone should ideally hold on to the ideology and practice of femininity. It also neglects the fact that much of that "feminine subculture" has in fact moved into the sphere of waged work, a trend which *The managed heart* was one of the

[53] See Bhambra (2017) for a trenchant critique of this book.

first books to explore.

Women have thus not necessarily abandoned the “warm” logic of emotional labour just because they are increasingly engaged in waged work. While some women, deriving status from their class and race, have been able to participate in high-status waged work on almost the same terms as men, they have done so on the backs of less privileged women who engage in traditionally feminised work. Hochschild’s argument in *The second shift* and *The time bind*, that women have abandoned the values of the home, runs contrary to the argument of *The managed heart*, where Hochschild notes that many women have been made to commodify exactly those values (MH 171). While the specificity of the oppression of women is deeply rooted in the intimate sphere, this sphere has never been disconnected from its outside, and the exploitation of women has always been shaped in various ways by the constitution of those spheres as parts of a totality. Contemporary forms of gender oppression depend on the mutual constitution of these spheres.

This claim is supported by Hochschild’s own insistence that male and female flight attendants are doing different jobs, as men tend to specialise in more physical tasks whereas women are assigned the work of creating good feeling (MH 174). Women joining the waged labour force to an increasing degree does thus not necessarily imply that they have become part of the male culture of work. Rather, as we have seen, it is at least partially the case that the “female subculture” of nurturance has been increasingly commodified – a tendency which Hochschild is also worried about. Hochschild’s claim that female service workers are constructed as a different type of workers from their male counterparts has been supported by several subsequent studies of emotional labour in different sectors (Adkins 1995: 148, Pierce 1996: 187, Brannan 2005: 433). This also implies that there is a problem with the type of quantitative measure that is sometimes

employed in the literature on emotional labour, including by Hochschild herself, which attempts to list the number of workers employed in sectors requiring emotional labour (MH 244-248, Wharton 1993). While Hochschild states that numerically more women are employed in these sectors (MH 171) that claim is not necessary for supporting the argument that emotional labour is carried out primarily by women. For example, male flight attendants are included in the list of service workers who are assumed to be carrying out emotional labour. But Hochschild found precisely that male flight attendants could often avoid aspects of the work that required such labour (MH 176).

In Hochschild's study, male flight attendants were also less likely to be the targets of negative emotion, which is a feminised position according to what I have called the safety-valve theory of emotional labour. Customers were much more likely to unburden their negative emotion, such as anger and distress, on female service workers. Here, we can return to Whitney's notion of emotional labour as that which does not necessarily create a good feeling in the customer but is rather the offloading of negative feeling onto the worker (2018: 643). While I am hesitant to adopt Whitney's metaphor of by-products, for reasons outlined above, I agree with Whitney that this function is important to explain the continual production of subjectivity and hierarchy through the process of emotional labour, and that Hochschild does not fully account for this form of production. Whitney argues that Hochschild's understanding of gender and subjectivity as preceding the process of emotional labour tends to obscure how gender (as well as race and class) is continually and dynamically reproduced in the affective transfer of the labour encounter (2018: 653). However, in my account in this section, I have emphasised a reading of Hochschild in which femininity is co-constitutive with the emotional labour process. It is thus important to stress the role of what Hochschild calls "emotion work," for it is only by understanding how unwaged and seemingly "private" types of relationality constitute the feminised subject that

we can understand that the person entering a job requiring emotional labour does not enter it with a pre-social or authentic form of subjectivity, which is then merely "commercialised." Rather, we must think about how emotion work and emotional labour are parts of a continuum of gendering work.

In Hochschild's account, masculinity functions as a "status shield," which protects the subject from emotional abuse. It also affords men a higher degree of authority than women, to the point of young men being mistaken for the managers of their more senior female colleagues (MH 177). Hochschild notes that both male and female flight attendants not only accepted this distribution of authority, but "made it more real" by acting as if their gendered status corresponded to their status within the workplace. This allowed men to be less tolerant to abuse than women (MH 178). In this sense, gender and status are not merely pre-given in the labour process, but rather continually enforced through gendered agency. In a footnote, Hochschild adds that only heterosexual men tended to act as if they had more authority than they actually did, signalling that heterosexuality is an important factor in stabilising gendered hierarchy (MH 179). Hochschild writes that women were expected to have a higher tolerance for abuse, an assumption that resulted in female workers being targeted and scapegoated, while simultaneously decreasing their ability to defend themselves from such abuse. Instead, women are expected to show deference to customers, especially male customers, and to respond to abuse with a smile (MH 6, 178). As Whitney points out, these processes are part of the production of gender as such. She notes that

> the exploitation of affective labor that happens at its intersections with race and gender works by producing depleted embodied subjectivities: ones whose affects are diminished in their force as affections, constructed as non-intentional, non-agentic, or nonauthoritative, and who thereby are constructed as affect disposals. (2018: 639)

Here, the notion of depletion becomes important for naming the effect of emotional labour on those who perform it, as agency is often constructed as an opposite of "being emotional," while emotional labour at the same time reinforcing other people's capacity to act.

However, this does not affect all feminised subjects in identical ways. As Whitney argues, drawing on the research of Gutiérrez-Rodríguez (2010), migrant and racialised women tend to be affected differently by emotional labour than the white, middle-class women that Hochschild studied (2018: 650). Hochschild's flight attendants performed various versions of the idealised femininity of the white bourgeoisie. These draw simultaneously on sexiness and care, producing an ideal mother-girlfriend figure, who is constructed as both emotionally and sexually available to (male) customers. As Hochschild puts it, female flight attendants are expected

> to *enact* two leading roles of Womanhood: the loving wife and mother (serving food, tending the needs of others) and the glamorous 'career woman' (dressed to be seen, in contact with strange men, professional and controlled in manner, and literally very far from home) (MH 175, emphasis in original)

This form of emotional labour is more explicit than that of the domestic workers interviewed by Gutiérrez-Rodríguez. It is built on the performance of a limited but flexible set of gendered norms, which can respond to differing emotional needs. Because women are expected to respond to a number of needs in others, it is essential to femininity that it can contain multiple and sometimes contradictory versions of womanhood. Hochschild shows how flight attendants developed various bodily techniques to perform femininity, from "sexual queen" to "Cub Scout den mother" (MH 180, 182). These forms of femininity are highly limited and constricted by normative patterns, yet they afford female workers

some flexibility in using different types of femininity to achieve various ends. This gives female workers some agency to act *through* femininity, but it does very little to undo gendered emotional labour as such. As I will show in the next section, more flexible types of gender presentation do not necessarily undo gender, but can sometimes make gendered divisions more adaptive and thus more persistent.

Hochschild's theory of emotional labour enables us to understand the gendered subject as deeply shaped by labour practices. While Hochschild has been rightly criticised for overstating the instrumentalisation of emotion in waged work and thus neglecting how emotional labour is itself productive of emotion (Whitney 2018: 645), a reading which emphasises the continuities between waged and unwaged work can to some extent mitigate such issues. Hochschild can also help us understand gender in terms of flexible and sometimes contradictory strategies and performances, which nonetheless fundamentally shape the subject's self-perception and sense of an authentic interiority. Writing *The managed heart* in the transition from the Fordist to the post-Fordist economic system, Hochschild managed to capture how notions of femininity based on unwaged work could be commodified and turned into a type of waged work. However, as Hochschild notes, the terms of this commodification would be different for the feminised worker than they had been for the hegemonic male worker of previous capitalist eras. She articulates this in terms of alienation of feeling, a concept which is inadequate because it seems to assume that earlier forms of subjectivity were more authentic (Weeks 2011: 86). But we can take up the problematic that Hochschild gives us, namely how femininity, the seeming antithesis of the logic of capital, could be turned into a commodity on the capitalist labour market.

Contradictory requirements: Contemporary labour and femininity

In contemporary capitalist societies, the gender model has shifted since the WFH authors described all women as housewives. If Fordism produced relatively homogenous experiences among women in the core capitalist countries, post-Fordism seems to have given rise to increasingly stratified conditions. Many women have achieved prominence in the "masculine" spheres of finance and politics. The second-wave feminist movement won legal rights and increased sexual freedom for women. Yet gender hierarchy persists. In this section, I will argue that an emphasis on emotional labour and its attendant forms of subjectivity can help us to think through persistent patterns of gendered power. A focus on domestic labour is not sufficient for this. Rather, emotional reproduction as a perspective allows us to see the continuity between domestic and non-domestic settings. I therefore complement the perspectives of WFH and Hochschild with a theory of gendered subjectivity. This, I argue, can account for the persistence of gendered differentiation in contemporary liberalism, even as the breadwinner model of the family is no longer hegemonic.

Neoliberal, post-Fordist society has brought with it an increased valuation of flexibility (Weeks 2011: 70, Adkins 2002: 8). As we have seen in chapter two, this is part of what is included in the concept of feminisation of labour. Yet in the post-workerist tradition, the connection between flexibility and femininity is not entirely clear. Flexibility has often been understood as a form of detraditionalising of gender, so that gender expression appears less rigid (Adkins 2002: 16). However, as Lisa Adkins points out, such detraditionalisation does not necessarily mean that gender hierarchies disappear; rather they are reconstituted in new ways (2002: 84). This is because the post-Fordist economy and the neoliberal political system continue to rely on hierarchical divisions within the workforce, as well as the availability of devalued reproductive labour, even as those hierarchies seem to have

disappeared.

In chapter two, I discussed how emotional labour implies the creation of status and subjectivity. These forms of labour are processes in which dominated subjects participate rather than passively endure. For example, Holmberg found that the women in her study were more likely to express a high valuation of traditionally masculine traits than were their male partners (1993: 137). Yet as Whitney argues, feminised forms of labour function to decrease the degree of perceived agency that labouring subjects possess, as their emotional expression is not understood as making something happen in the world, but merely a reflection of their own susceptibility to emotion (2018: 653).

Agency and sovereignty, Marek Korczynski suggests, are associated with masculine forms of subjectivity (2013: 32). In this context, sovereignty denotes the capacity to act as the ruler and owner of oneself, and to not be influenced by others or by "irrational" emotion. This form of subjectivity can be understood as produced by the work of feminised subjects, who are lessening their own agency through the production of masculine sovereignty. In this section, however, I will also explore how some women have been able to lay claim to this type of sovereignty, even if this claim is necessarily partial and unstable. This has occurred as a result of both feminist agitation and neoliberal modes of subjectivation, which emphasise choice and individual responsibility (Barbagallo 2016: 131). As we will see, however, this individual responsibilisation simultaneously quietly enforces gendered norms and forms of labour, as well as supporting "traditional" family patterns, while seeming to allow for more agency for women.

The increased participation of women in the waged labour force has enabled white, bourgeois women to achieve a greater degree of power and independence. These women might have their own needs met to a higher extent because they can appear as carriers of valuable, "skilled" labour power. It has also enabled them to at least to some degree refuse

the burden of reproductive labour, often by partially outsourcing it to designated reproductive workers. In capitalist society, reproductive labour is devalued and deemed incompatible with sovereign subjectivity, since this type of labour privileges the needs of others. Such needs, rather than individual will, become the orienting force of this labour subject. Inhabiting sovereignty therefore means refusing the work of reproducing others. The fact that some women have been able to lay claim to sovereignty and agency has not done away with the distinction between those who perform reproductive labour and those who do not. It has merely redrawn the lines of these groups, allowing for some flexibility for a highly select group of women. These women might themselves struggle to fully inhabit this form of subjectivity, since it is constructed as the opposite of the femininity that they were often raised to perform. “Career women” may thus also feel the need to emphasise that they are mothers first and foremost, in order to inhabit normative femininity. In Macdonald’s study, such women emphasised that they were investing in their own careers in order to produce a better future for their children (2010: 35).

Barrett and McIntosh argue that under capitalism, the unit for “self-support” is not the individual but the family (2015: 47). Similarly, Melinda Cooper and Wendy Brown both suggest that the constitution of sovereign liberal personhood depends on what it has disavowed, namely a form of subjectivity that creates community and dependence (Brown 1995: 155-157, Cooper 2017: 57-58). For Cooper, this matters in neoliberal politics because it simultaneously celebrates individualism and depends on traditional family values. She writes that “the neoliberal position [...] does not so much eliminate moral philosophy as posit an immanent ethics of virtue and a spontaneous order of family values that it expects to arise automatically from the mechanics of the free market system.” She adds that “[t]he nature of family altruism in some sense represents an internal exception to the free market, an immanent order of noncontractual obligations and inalienable services

without which the world of contract would cease to function" (2017: 57-58). The supposedly "traditional" world of family values is thus a precondition for the production of the forms of sovereign subjectivity on which neoliberalism depends, and the construction of the notion of the market as a site of freedom through contractual models of obligation. This contradicts much of the theoretical work that has viewed neoliberalism as the disappearance of "traditional" and non-contractual values.[54] Individualism cannot subsist on its own, since people are vulnerable and require other people to meet their need for care. Liberalism thus produces split forms of subjectivity, one hegemonic form and one that is necessary for that hegemony to persist.

The term possessive individualism, as coined by C.B. MacPherson, is helpful for understanding the constitution of the hegemonic form of subjectivity under capitalism. As MacPherson writes:

> Its possessive quality is found in its conception of the individual as essentially the proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to society for them. The individual was seen neither as a moral whole, nor as part of a larger social whole, but as an owner of himself. [...] The individual, it was thought, is free inasmuch as he is proprietor of his person and capacities. (1962: 3)

As we have seen, however, not every subject can inhabit possessive individualism to an equal degree (Bhandar 2018: 179, 183). As the hegemonic subject position of capitalism, it hides other forms of subjectivity. Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon suggest that when wage labour was re-coded as a sign of independence, white working-class men came to appear as independent at the cost of other subjects (2011: 91). In this way, possessive individualism can be understood as the commodity form of subjectivity. As I touched upon in chapter one, Marx argues that the commodity *appears* to have an inherent value, thus

[54] See Adkins (2002) for an overview of this literature.

hiding the social source of that value in relations of production. The commodity form thus makes invisible the labour it took to produce that commodity. We can note that possessive individualism is simultaneously a result and a precondition of the commodification of our capacity to labour, so that such capacity appears as a commodity belonging to ourselves and thus ours to sell for a wage. As with the case of the commodity form, the form of possessive individualism makes invisible the labour that goes into forming that very subject position.

The production of possessive individualism, however, is not an automatic result of capitalist economic relations, but requires continual reaffirmation. As Fraser and Gordon show, independent subjectivity relies on its outside – the gendered, classed, and racialised modes of dependency which have been increasingly constructed as psychological traits rather than social positions (2011: 94). The labour of affirming individualism becomes invisible through the very form of possessive individualism, as the possessive subject appears to owe his capacities only to himself. Furthermore, it depends on a subject that does not inhabit possessive individualism. As Coontz argues, "[s]elf-reliance and independence worked for *men* because *women* took care of dependence and obligation" (1992: 53, emphasis in original). Emotional reproduction is not merely concerned with maintaining existing relationships, but with creating such relationships in the first place. That is why the subject of emotional labour appears as the opposite of possessive individualism – it is a subject fundamentally concerned with building the relationality of society. Capitalist subjectivity is thus organised around a split between possessive individualism and emotional altruism – a split that maps onto gendered subjectivity. The labour of building affective relations is structurally hidden in a world where the term "work" appears as the opposite of intimacy and emotion. This construction of individualism is related to the supposed "emotionality" of women. Individualism is built around self-

possession and control of one's own emotional life. Women are constructed as lacking precisely the ability to be the master of their own feelings (MH 166). Femininity is thus understood as the condition of not being a sovereign individual, but rather being the passive victim of emotional states (Shields 2002: 9, 38).

The split subjectivity that is produced by capitalist economies creates a contradiction at the centre of many women's lives, as they are increasingly called upon to embody both of these forms of subjectivity. Under capitalism, Joan Acker remarks, the worker is constructed as abstract and disembodied, thus lacking ties to other people (1990: 150). However, feminised people are often tasked precisely with producing such ties. For these women, post-Fordist society implies a contradictory state, especially since neoliberal politics has been based around the reduction of state provision of reproductive services and the reprivatisation of much reproductive labour (Glazer 1993: xi, Gonzalez and Neton 2013: 89). This serves to bind many women to particular forms of work, as well as creating a continuing disadvantage for the women who are engaged in "masculine" types of work. The conflation of femininity and motherhood reinforces this relation, even as many women do not have children. Hochschild writes that

> because [women] are seen as members of the category from which mothers come, women in general are asked to look out for psychological needs more than men are. The world turns to women for mothering, and this fact silently attaches itself to many a job description. (MH 170)

Given that they are positioned as "mothers" at work, feminised workers are clearly differentiated from the disembodied worker that Acker describes. Moreover, motherhood attaches itself even to those female workers who are not engaged in mothering work. As I noted in chapter one, Fortunati understands this in terms of the subordination of women's productive capacity to their reproductive capacity (AR 15). Gonzalez and Neton argue that

the naturalising assumption that all women are *potential* mothers forms the basis for women's low value on the labour market, as a potential cost of reproduction is turned into an expression of women's worthlessness (2013: 76).[55]

While biological reproduction thus appears to be the essential function of feminised bodies, it is in fact unevenly distributed across such bodies (RPZ 73). Enslaved black women, excluded from the construction of femininity, were subjected to regimes of forced biological productivity, while simultaneously being denied the right to relate to their children as kin (Federici 2004: 89-90, Roberts 1997b: 33). Thus not all women have been constructed as mothers in similar ways. Racialised women have often been denied the status of motherhood, based on the assumption that they are naturally unqualified for the "spiritual" labour required to raise a child (Roberts 1997a: 62). Instead, these women have been more valued for their waged reproductive labour, and are made to take on the work of "mothering" white families while at the same time being made invisible as carers (Prescod 1980: 14). For many working-class women, especially women of colour and migrant women, the contradictory demands of waged work and domestic work are nothing new. But many of these women are engaged in the sector of waged reproductive work. For these workers, there is less an issue of the contradictory claims of various forms of subjectivity, and more of lacking resources and time. This creates a situation where workers might become depleted from their caring labour in both waged and unwaged forms of work.[56] These women might thus experience the downsides of the exploitation of femininity without the rewards of being understood as a properly (white, bourgeois) feminised subject.

As proper femininity is simultaneously rewarded and devalued, professional women

[55] This point is supported by the argument that the gender pay gap is in fact a "motherhood penalty," as women are penalised for having children while it does not affect the earnings of men. See for example Budig, Misra, and Boeckmann (2012). According to Melissa Wright, the assumption that female factory workers in the Global South will want to become mothers means that they can be legitimately be fired after two years of work (2006: 37).

[56] For an account of depletion as a result of care work, see Rai, Hoskyns, and Thomas (2014).

might find themselves in a double bind. In many cases these women are pressured to distance themselves from reproductive labour and "traditional" femininity, while at the same time preserving some aspects of it so as to not appear as gender deviants (Whitney 2018: 652, Hochshild 1989a: 221, Gutiérrez-Rodríguez 2010: 135). Here, we can use Hochschild's notion of gender strategies to understand how people try to cover over the contradictory construction of femininity. The disavowal of "traditional" femininity is often mapped onto race, where women of colour and migrant women are constructed as inhabiting a more "backwards" type of femininity, compared to the modern and more sovereign subjectivity that white, bourgeois women can claim (Whitney 2018: 651). As Farris shows, this has been translated into the political demand, coming from both right-wing politicians and some feminist organisations, that migrant women should be compelled to perform wage work in the reproductive sector, in order to escape their "backwardness." However, these women are made to engage in the very sectors that white women, aspiring to inhabit a "modern" subjectivity, are seeking to escape (2017: 119, 130, 137). Having a career thus becomes the test of "modern" (or masculine) subjectivity, compared to the devalued position of "traditional" (feminine) wagelessness. Ironically, this ignores the fact that women of colour have historically been more likely to perform waged work than white women (Glenn 1992: 3). Even when passing the test of having a waged job, migrant women of colour are often stuck in a devalued form of feminine positionality due to their persistent association with care work.

Gender, flexibility, and emotional labour

Feminised subjectivity is itself not necessarily internally coherent. As Melissa Wright has shown in her study of feminised factory work in China and Mexico, the coexistence of several versions of femininity means that different aspects of femininity can be mobilised in

ways that increase gendered domination and exploitation. Underpinning what she calls the myth of the disposability of the “Third World Woman” are contradictory constructions of women as more docile and dexterous than men, and simultaneously as mere unskilled physicality in need of constant control, as the unruly feminine body constantly threatens to disrupt the flow of production (2006: 2, 37). The construction of feminine passivity and docility is thus unstable and flexible. Yet this flexibility itself enables the hyper-exploitation of women workers, as well as their vulnerability to violence, both inside and outside the sphere of production. Here, gendered subjectivities emerge as the effects of gendered forms of production and control. In places of work, both the home and the formal economy, gendered subjectivity is simultaneously presupposed and reproduced.

It is important to note, with Robin Leidner, that such flexibility does not necessarily undo the naturalisation of gender. Instead, people are often able to fit more flexible gender presentation within their conceptualisation of a gender binary (1993: 196). This implies that various forms of femininity can coexist and sometimes come into contradiction, without undoing the continual devaluation of what is deemed feminine. A more flexible construction of gendered work, where women are not only housewives but waged workers, does not necessarily threaten this devaluation. Federici notes that women are now increasingly exploited for their cheap labour power rather than just their unwaged services (2018a: 53). Yet this devaluation is centrally connected to the unwaged nature of much of reproductive labour, which remains even as we have seen a trend towards commodification of some reproductive work over the past decades. Nona Glazer notes that this trend is not unilinear, and that there is a significant degree of flexibility in the reproductive sphere, where various forms of reproductive work tend to shift back and forth between waged and unwaged spheres according to the commodification cycles of the market and the expansion and retraction of state services. She suggests that women are

supposed to act as “sponges” that can absorb unwaged and waged work (1993: 12). Again, femininity is constructed as a form of receptivity, whose flexibility is the capacity to adapt to the varying needs of others.

The neoliberal and flexible construction of femininity might thus imply the increasing exploitation of women across the waged and unwaged spheres. While women’s participation in the waged labour force puts temporal limits to their unwaged work in ways that necessitate the use of commodified reproductive services (Farris 2017: 174), many women are nonetheless participating in the unwaged care of family and friends, often in ways that impinge on their leisure time. These women thus have less time and capacity to reproduce their own labour power. The reproductive labour these women perform need to be fitted with naturalised understandings of femininity and care in order for them to be de- and recommodified according to the needs of various people and institutions. Women’s flexibility becomes the work of responding to these needs, accepting previously waged work back into the private sphere according to the current organisation of state services, and the always partial and limited forms of commodified reproductive services that the so-called free market provides.

Flexibility, then, means different things for different subjects within the post-Fordist economy. For feminised subjects, it means the ability to absorb the work that has been relegated to the private sphere after the reduction of state services, as well as the stresses and shocks of an increasingly precarious economic position for many people. As Federici writes, “women have been the shock absorbers of economic globalization, having had to compensate with their work for the deteriorating economic conditions produced by the liberalization of the world economy and the state’s increasing disinvestment in the reproduction of the workforce” (RPZ 108). As in the sphere of waged labour, the notion of flexibility tends to have negative connotations for those who are exploited. For masculine

subjects, neoliberal constructions of flexible subjectivity might entail more desirable forms of mobility and reflexivity – the ability to change according to the subject's own desires. Adkins suggest that this form of flexibility, while presented as the undoing of hierarchy, is in fact more available to some, in her examples men and heterosexual people (2002: 84). Selberg, in her study of nurses in a hospital deploying neoliberal management techniques, notes that some female nurses are allowed upward mobility, insofar as they can inhabit a form of youthful, modern energy and individualism that is seen as desirable within these regimes of the self. In liberal versions of feminism, this is portrayed as a form of the undoing of gendered norms and as a less strict gender division of labour. However, as Selberg points out, this does nothing to ease the burden of those women who are left doing the undervalued and often invisible work of caring for patients (2012: 314-315). In fact, neoliberal "rationality" tends to exacerbate the pressures of these positions, through regimes of austerity and outsourcing. Thus, liberal feminism has often simply neglected issues of reproduction while celebrating women's entrance into management positions.

The production of caring labour subjects is not exclusive to women, but extends to other people in feminised positions. Christopher Carrington explores how gay and lesbian relationships tend to produce a more feminised partner, whose main responsibility is the reproduction of the couple. This position is not predetermined by gender, but tends to be contingent on external factors such as employment and income. However, Carrington describes how the division of domestic labour within the couple becomes retrospectively justified with reference to internal factors such as personality and proclivity for domestic work (1999: 193, 200). Furthermore, this creates a hierarchy in which the person investing more time in reproductive work tends to be more dependent, since they have less access to material resources and less time for participation in waged work (1999: 222). Even in couples who present themselves as more egalitarian and flexible, then, the division of

reproductive labour tends to be naturalised and attributed to the personality of the caregiver.

However, feminised subjects of emotional labour are not themselves necessarily harmed from the labour practices of emotional care. Emotional labour is ambivalent in its effect, both on work subjects and on recipients of care. Several critics of Hochschild have pointed to the fact that she only accounts for the mental costs of emotional labour, and not its rewards (Korczynski 2013: 57, Erickson and Ritter 2001: 149, Wharton 1996: 102). The rewards of emotional labour, according to these authors, are one of the redeeming features of this work. However, we should be wary of deriving moral or political value from the pleasures that some people performing emotional labour can derive from their work. It is not necessarily the case that such pleasures make labour practices better. In fact, people can derive pleasure from practices that are limiting and harmful for themselves and others. A case in point is the pleasure that heterosexual women derive from their participation in intimate coupledom, which is a source of exploitation as well as rewards. As Berlant argues, we often have optimistic affective investments in the very things that damage us (2006: 21). Contra Hochschild, Amy Wharton suggests that women are not more likely to suffer from the psychic costs of emotional labour than men are (1993: 224). While this might be true, this statement does not imply that women as a group benefit from performing emotional labour. Rather, some subjects can derive pleasure from the fact of their proper performance of femininity that is often embedded in emotional labour practices. Conversely, men who are performing feminised emotional labour might have to deal with the cognitive and emotional stress of combining their work with their investment in masculinity (Simpson 2007: 65-72). Berlant suggests that women, while shouldering the burden of routing their own emotional needs through the needs of others, might also derive some pleasure from receiving their “own value back not only in the labour of recognition

she performs but in the sensual spectacle of its impact. In this discursive field, women's emotional labour places them at the centre of the story of what counts as life" (2008: 19).

As women and other feminised people are made disproportionately responsible for the needs of others, they become hyper-exploitable across waged and unwaged spheres. Adkins and Lury read gendering through the sexualisation of women's work on the waged job market, in which feminised workers cannot fully be the owners of their own labour power (1992: 180). Female workers, according to Adkins, are made into sexual objects by managers, colleagues, and customers (1995: 134, 139). They lack the status of subjects able to freely sell their labour power through the wage contract, as men can lay claim to their effort and time (Adkins 1995: 159, Pateman 1988: 135). Similarly, Rosemary Hennessy argues that feminised labouring subjects have a looser grasp of their labour power, as their capacities have never really been their own, and thus not theirs to sell. She uses the term "second skin" to articulate this loose relation to one's self as commodity: "When a feminized second skin accompanies the exchange of labour power for a wage, it offers a tacit promise to the buyer that the supervision of the physical life and living personality of the bearer of this commodity is out of her hands" (2013: 142).

Because of this, emotional labour itself is often only semi-commodified. It cannot achieve the status as a saleable product separable from its seller, because it is deeply naturalised and seen as inherent in the personality of the worker. This is part of the reason why emotional labour is often not a service in itself but rather an invisible component of other services. Furthermore, as Tyler and Taylor argue, there are "aspects of women's work which take place *outside* of formal, contractual relations of exchange, yet upon which formal contractual relations of commodity exchange depend" (1998: 166, emphasis in original). Mulholland similarly stresses the paramount yet unrecognised status of emotional and reproductive labour in capitalist economies, when she suggests that emotional labour

is essential to entrepreneurial masculinities and an indispensable input into capitalist accumulation (1996: 148-149).

Similarly to Hochschild's argument regarding gift-giving, Taylor and Tyler utilise models of gift exchange to understand feminised emotional labour. Yet as we have seen, this labour is not necessarily recognised as a gift. While Hochschild suggests that domestic labour within couples works through an economy of gratitude (1989a: 85), emotional labour cannot necessarily be recognised as such. Its essentially invisible quality, where its visibility *as labour* would undo its appearance as "authentic" emotional performance, separates it from other reproductive types of work (Shane 2019: np). Hochschild does note that not everything can be acknowledged as a gift (1989a: 18), as this depends on the given social context, in which gender sets the framework for what is "owed" by a person of a specific gender (MH 79).

Emotional gift-giving, even when recognised as such, cannot be seen as a truly voluntary form of participation in emotional exchange. Bolton uses the term "gift" to denote nurses' chosen work of care of patients, outside the demands of the wage contract (2005: 97). However, such "gifts" are hardly voluntary. Rather, Selberg notes that a sense of duty compels nurses to give more care than they are paid for (2012: 223). Emotional labour becomes a form what Taylor and Tyler call "compulsory altruism" (1998: 169). This, in turn, is closely connected to the emotional logic of sacrifice discussed above. The psychic structures that the WFH authors identified as belonging to femininity in general, then, remain powerful especially for those women who are engaged in care work, and who are emotionally invested in being a "good person" (Selberg 2012: 237), that is, good women. The compulsory nature of much emotional labour, and care more generally, is particularly evident when care is decommodified. When state provision of reproductive services is cut, or when capitalist investment retreats from unprofitable forms of reproductive labour,

family and friends are often made to perform the work of care in an unpaid capacity. Here, the emotional attachment to the person in need of care, as well as the feminised imperative to perform emotional labour, might compel women to pick up care for family or friends even when it limits their capacity to care for themselves.

Gendered skill

In this section, I return to the theme of gendered labour in terms of skill and capacity. As we saw in chapter one, Fortunati remarks that the construction of labour power as a saleable commodity is based on various historically acquired capacities. In line with the WFH argument outlined above, I argue that such capacities are deeply gendered, thus emerging as the natural capacities of the gendered body. Kevin Floyd, drawing on Butler, underscores that "skill refers to nothing if not fully corporealized knowledge" (2009: 95). Gendered skill is the knowledge of the body, enacted through repeated practices which bring gendered subjectivity into being. The gendering of the self, then, takes place through various routinised operations which, as Weeks argues, become incorporated in the subject through habit and memory (1998: 133). Expanding on Floyd's notion of skill as corporeal knowledge, I want to emphasise that bodily performance is also part of emotional skill. Emotional skill is embodied knowledge, as supposedly pre-existing inner states are communicated through words and bodily expressions – a process which simultaneously constitutes emotion through verbal and bodily communication. As I have shown in chapter one, the construction of the body as having certain capacities is a way of enabling particular kinds of exploitation. This, as James points out, also frees others from doing such labour (SRC 96), thus facilitating workers' exploitation by other workers.

Through the framework of gender complementarity, the emotional labour that women do is constructed as something men lack or are incapable of doing. Barrett and McIntosh

suggest that men have “deskilled” themselves in order to avoid responsibility for domestic work (2015: 145). As I argued in chapter two, emotional labour is a central organising principle of various forms of care, especially the unwaged care work of the home. Mulholland notes that men’s “incapacity” for feeling has absolved them of responsibility for care work, while also obscuring their own emotional need. Women’s supposedly natural emotional skill frees men from having to take responsibility for reproductive labour, while simultaneously allowing them to enjoy the benefits of such work (1996: 144). Through the separation of men from emotional skill, men are excused from carrying out emotional labour, while appearing as “self-made” and not owing anything to the people who have cared for them. Similarly, Duncombe and Marsden write that men are less likely to perceive and be influenced by the emotions of others (1993: 230). This suggests that men do not possess the same capacity for emotional reproduction. Masculinity thus appears as lack of capacity for care, or an emotional ineptness, allowing men to ignore the needs of others and giving them the right to the care of women without having to reciprocate (Coontz 1992: 63). In this way, gendered exploitation is essential to the construction of gender as such, as supposedly complementary sets of skills. According to Coontz, the construction of gender in capitalist economies “meant specialization in one set of behaviours, skills, and feelings at the cost of suppressing others” (1992: 53).

As women are generally tasked with the work of adapting to the emotional needs of others, the creation of good feeling, or “the good life,” becomes part of feminine skill for emotion management. Hochschild suggests that the creation of “natural niceness” is a key feminised skill (MH 132, 167). Feminised waged workers are hired for this skill – their supposedly natural personality – thus facilitating their exploitation in both waged and unwaged spheres. As we have seen, Hochschild notes that the performance of feminised emotional labour relies on a set of bodily techniques, which are drawn from private life but

also taught to women in some professions. Here, there seems to be some recognition that emotional capacities have to be created through social processes, and form part of the constitution of particular social relations. Yet, Hochschild argues that such training often draws on an imaginary of the home as the natural site for emotion, and crucially, as a scene of non-work (MH 105). Emotional skill is thus presented as something that feminised workers merely need to transfer from their intimate life to their workplaces – a natural capacity that can be expanded to include customers and colleagues.

As I noted above, Hochschild also looks at the masculinised emotional capacity for anger, which is required in certain jobs. This work is not directly reproductive, in the sense of contributing to the wellbeing of other people, yet it might serve to maintain certain hierarchies which are important to the current organisation of society. Hochschild writes that more masculine types of emotional labour "typically deflate the customer's status" through expressions of anger and the use of aggressive, derogatory language (MH 144-146). As we have seen, failure to perform such deflation is read as a sign of not being a man (MH 146).

For Floyd, industrialisation typically meant the deskilling of traditionally masculine types of work, so that masculinity in the 20th century had to be expressed through skilled consumption and leisure activity such as sports and do-it-yourself home improvements (2009: 99-114). However, Fraser and Gordon argue that masculine independence was created precisely through the form of waged work, in contrast to other subjects' perceived inability for independence (2011: 94). Similarly, Federici describes the masculinity of the industrial era as a "patriarchy of the wage" (2004: 97). With regards to traditionally masculine, manual forms of waged labour, Cynthia Cockburn notes that the construction of "skill" depends on a process of exclusion of women from certain types of work. She writes that "men have built their own relative bodily and technical strength by depriving women of

theirs, and they have organised their occupation in such a way as to benefit from the differences they have constructed" (1983: 204). In Hochschild's study, we can note that masculine skilfulness can be created not just through traditionally masculine types of work such as heavy physical labour or mental labour, but also through the usually feminised work of emotion management.

As I have emphasised above, it is not the case that the skills of femininity are best conceived through the construction of leisure time, which as DeVault argues is typical of masculine experiences of work (1991: 5). Rather, femininity as a set of skills implies the blurring of women's waged and unwaged labour. Much women's consumption is often best conceived of as working on the body, rather than a result of leisure time (AR 77).

Despite this skilled performance of feminised emotional labour across private and public spheres, femininity is constructed as fundamentally passive, a mere "receptacle" for the displaced emotions of others (PWSC 40). The naturalisation of feminine labour requires the skilful erasure of femininity as activity. As I argued at the beginning of this chapter, the ideological inversions of life under capitalism places activity on the side of the exploiting subjectivity. Similarly, Whitney argues that femininity emerges as non-agentic through the displacement of others' emotional expression (2018: 639). Put differently, women's naturalised skill in managing the emotional needs of others seems to reduce their own capacity for independence and sovereignty. The labour of care becomes read as an expression of the personality of the carer, inverting the dependency of others on this labour. According to Fraser and Gordon, "the persons of female nurturers became saturated with the dependency of those for whom they care" (2011: 109-110). They note that women's heterosexualised economic dependency on men historically has been constructed as a "good" type of dependency, but as more women have entered into waged work, all forms of dependency are increasingly characterised as psychological deficiency

(2011: 99). As we have seen, then, the feminised skill for emotional adaptability is increasingly constructed as undesirable and backwards, while remaining structurally necessary as a complement to possessive individualism.

This chapter has drawn out some points from WFH writings on gender, emphasising gendered exploitation and violence as well as the construction of femininity as a work function. Looking at Hochschild's writings, I have explored the entanglement of emotional labour and gendered performance, in particular through the constitution of various forms of feminised emotional labour. In the final part of the chapter, I have outlined a theory of gendered subjectivity, in which the sale of labour power is tied to a model of subjectivity that both excludes and depends on the emotional labour of others. This theory seeks to explain the continued existence of gendered hierarchy in neoliberal capitalist economies. In contemporary capitalist economies, I argue, many women are put in the contradictory position of having to work both for wages and for the subjective rewards of attending to the needs of others. While women's positions have become more flexible and the gendered division of labour is less rigid than it was at the start of the second-wave feminist movement, feminised forms of labour and subjectivity have endured. To a large extent, the most devalued forms of reproductive labour have been displaced onto working-class women of colour. The persistence of binary, complementary models of heterosexual gender, however, means that most women are made to develop capacities for feminised labour. Exploring gender as a type of skill or capacity for labour, I argue, is an important way to denaturalise gendered positionality. In the next chapter, I will look at how our capacity for emotion can be changed and expanded, in ways that are conducive to a materialist feminist project of remaking reproduction.

Chapter four: Wages for Housework and the strategy of refusal

In this chapter, I will explore the political perspective of WFH. Through a reading of the movement's pamphlets, I highlight the strategy of refusal of work that stems from the WFH perspective. This will include attention to the formal elements of these writings, in particular the manifesto form that characterises much of the WFH writings (Weeks 2011: 117).[57] The particularities of this form lead me to return to the question of political subjectivity, which is a precondition for collective forms of resistance. Here, I argue that we need to be attentive to the emotional practices that WFH propose, which are essential to their political strategy. Reinventing emotional practices as a way to build counter-power, WFH members sought to create new pathways for organising seemingly disparate groups of women. WFH endorsed organisational autonomy as a way of constituting collective feminist subjects, which foster solidarity without erasing specificity. This is particularly the case for the autonomous groups within the WFH network, Black Women for Wages for Housework and Wages Due Lesbians. Through a study of the WFH writings of lesbianism, I ask what it means to refuse the labour of love. In the last section of this chapter, I return to the demand for wages for housework, and its political potential for feminism.

Manifestos, form, subjectivity

The power of women and the subversion of the community, the founding document of WFH, mobilises the capacity for struggle in its very title. It establishes both the subject and the scene of refusal. Recalling my discussion in chapter one, it performs the inversion of

[57] It is interesting to note that the key WFH texts that do not seem to fit the formal characteristics of the manifesto, *The work of love* and *The arcane of reproduction*, were both published after the decline of the international WFH movement, in 1978 and 1981 respectively. In *The arcane of reproduction* in particular, we find a style more akin to *Capital* than *The communist manifesto*.

power that is typical of WFH and workerism more broadly. The title of Dalla Costa's pamphlet stages a form of workerist inversion, by placing power on the side of the seemingly disempowered subject of women, and opens the struggle against capitalism to the site of the community. In this, it uses a common rhetorical gesture of the manifesto form – namely to call into being its own audience. Manifestos, Martin Puchner notes, typically address a recipient who does not yet fully exist, through the use of performative figuration (2006: 31). Similarly, Janet Lyon argues that the manifesto tries to unite its audience by naming an oppressor and exhorting to action (1999: 15). By invoking the power of women, as well as naming the community as the site of women's subversive potential, the pamphlet attempts to name a struggle while at the same time calling it into being.

While this founding document does not present a coherent list of demands, and the first version did not even advocate for wages for housework, it prepares the ground for an autonomous feminist subject capable of struggle on the terrain of the domestic. It establishes the manifesto's characteristic pronoun "we," the collective subject which will struggle against exploitation (PWSC 38, Lyon 1999: 24, Weeks 2011: 215). In this, it rhetorically performs a movement that does not yet exist. It inaugurates the WFH practice of forming collective feminist subjects through a shared relation to work and exploitation; as Dalla Costa asserts, "all women are housewives" (PWSC 19). On this basis, a "we" of a shared exploitation can come together across differences. It performs the denaturalising argument so common in the WFH literature, by suggesting that the quality of being a woman is nothing more than having a particular relation to work. Variations of this statement appear in later WFH manifestos, in more complex and sometimes contradictory ways. Here, the WFH writings perform a form of anti-aspirational identification. Federici writes that "career women" do not want to identify as housewives, since this position has

been posed as one of weakness, “a fate worse than death” (RPZ 15). But, she adds, “[w]e want and must say that we are all housewives, we are all prostitutes, and we are all gay, because as long as we accept these divisions, and think that we are something better, something different than a housewife, we accept the logic of the master” (RPZ 22). WDLs foundational manifesto “Fucking is work” contends that “all women are straight [...] all women are lesbians” (1975: 25-26). This contradictory statement reads sexual identity not as a given but as a shifting identification that depends on perspective and the potential for subversion. While “all women are straight” from the perspective of the dominant power of heteronormativity and heterosexual work relations, all women are potentially lesbians in the sense of engaging in a collective refusal of this work. Across the differences located by the various WFH manifestos, there is a feminist collectivity struggling not against difference per se, but against political hierarchies based on those differences.

Another typical mode of WFH’s political writings is more similar to the form of the workers’ inquiry,[58] in that it offers a more detailed interrogation of the conditions of various groups of women, typically using the “I” pronoun to describe the daily practices of different groups of working women.[59] These texts are intended to interrogate the practices of work, and locating potential points of struggle in the commonalities of this work, while remaining attentive to the differing labouring conditions of various groups of women. I think the term workers’ inquiry is more appropriate than consciousness raising to name these practices. WFH (together with many in the Italian women’s movement) were critical of the framework of consciousness raising, as it seemed to place undue emphasis on psychological states as a tool for change (WSC 234). Instead they sought to tie women’s situation to material conditions, and change these through struggle concepts such as the wage. However,

[58] A type of investigation, proposed by Marx and frequently used by the workerist movement, which often used questionnaires or self-description to explore the routines and conditions of labour. For extended discussions of this type of writing, see *Viewpoint* Issue 3 (2013), and *Ephemera* 14(3) (2014).

[59] See for example Toronto Wages for Housework Committee’s pamphlet *Women speak out* (1975), various texts in *All work and no pay* (Edmond and Fleming 1975), and “Portrait of a housewife” in *The Activist* (1975).

these forms of inquiry are not divorced from the concept of consciousness, as the sometimes blurry line between descriptive inquiry and the constitutive manifesto form indicates.

The power of women and the subversion of the community also performs another characteristic feature of manifestos, namely to create a sense of antagonism and uncompromising immediacy (Lyon 1999: 9, Pearce 1999: 314). The new subject of WFH feminism refuses to negotiate with capital, but rather aims to overthrow it. “[W]e must discover forms of struggle which immediately break the whole structure of domestic work, rejecting it absolutely” Dalla Costa contends (PWSC 34). The demand for wages for housework later became the perspective that embodied such total rejection. It draws the line between those who perform this work and those who currently benefit from it. This line constitutes an antagonism that up until now has only existed as a potential, because of women’s lack of a collective subjectivity which could constitute a counter-power to the exploitation by capital. Such collective subjectivity depends on the total refusal of reproductive work, not an individualist strategy of moving into traditionally masculine types of work (PWSC 48). In the WFH document “Notes on organisation,” the authors stress that “[w]e need a campaign for WFH because we need to struggle not around or against some particular aspect of housework but against the totality of this work, against housework as such” (NYWFHC 36). While this demand has often been understood as reformist by the majority of the feminist movement (Toupin 2018: 46), its proponents present it as the only demand which could challenge the capitalist structure of reproduction (RPZ 39). The demand for wages, Federici contends, “is a revolutionary demand not because by itself it destroys capital, but because it forces capital to restructure social relations in terms more favorable to us and consequently more favorable to the unity of the class” (RPZ 19).

While the form of the struggle, the demand for a wage, is still to be discovered in *The*

power of women and the subversion of the community, Federici's "Wages against housework" takes the WFH perspective as a given. The text begins with the naming of the conditions of exploitation against which the feminist movement must struggle:

> *They say it is love. We say it is unwaged work.*
> *They call it frigidity. We call it absenteeism.*
> *Every miscarriage is a work accident.*
> *Homosexuality and heterosexuality are both working conditions... but homosexuality is workers' control of production, not the end of work.*
> *More smiles? More money. Nothing will be so powerful in destroying the healing virtues of a smile.*
> *Neuroses, suicides, desexualization: occupational diseases of the housewife.*
> (RPZ 15, emphasis in original)

This short verse stages an antagonist relation between a "they," that mystifies these conditions, and a "we" that reveals seemingly disconnected incidents as part of the collective situation of feminised subjects. Neuroses and miscarriages are no longer private misfortunes, but rather occupational diseases and work accidents. The text invokes the emotional aspects of this work – smiles will not come for free anymore since they are not expressions of love but of a labour practice. The struggle for the wage fundamentally changes the meaning of those smiles, and even destroys their healing virtues. Women's supposed "frigidity" is turned into a moment of struggle against sexual labour by being renamed absenteeism. The WFH writings are full of examples of how women's expressions of discontent with their conditions are individualised, and therefore need to be reinterpreted and reinserted into a political framework of resistance. As noted in chapter one, Federici observes in the same text that "[w]e are seen as nagging bitches, not workers in struggle" (RPZ 16). The text, however, performs a reinterpretation of this

"nagging," so that the women engaged in it can understand themselves as already participating in this collective "we" and ready to take their hitherto individualised complaint to a new level of collective antagonism.

This reinterpretation is necessary for the text to move from a description of the conditions of housework to a call to action. Again, there is an immediacy and urgency to the text. The writing is suspended between the need to describe women's working conditions in order to bring a collective subject into being, and the need to treat this subject as already in existence, on the verge of grasping the power necessary to abolish reproductive work completely. Puchner refers to this as the manifesto form's impatience with itself (2006: 22), a desire for the words to immediately translate into action and a direct intervention into the world. Similarly, Lyon writes about the manifesto's appearance of being both word and deed (1999: 14). Federici contends that

> [f]rom now on, we want money for every moment of it, so that we can refuse some of it and eventually all of it. Nothing can be more effective than to show that our female virtues have already a calculable money value: until today only for capital, increased in the measure that we were defeated, but from now on, against capital, for us, in the measure that we organize our power (RPZ 20)

The repetition of "from now on" and "until today" creates a textual temporality of intervention, and sets the stage for the uncompromising threat of refusing "all of it." The temporality of this refusal stages a utopian present from the moment of reading. From this very moment, we will refuse to work for capital, calling into being an active politics of refusal and antagonism which starts *now*. Here, the antagonistic relation between women and capital appears more clearly. The wage measures the contribution of women, "against capital, for us." It is capital, then, which is the main enemy, a move that allowed WFH to

claim for themselves a pivotal role in working-class struggle, and stage a epistemological and political inversion – what appeared as the most intimate (the smile, the miscarriage) is now the most political. The shift in verb tense in the last sentence ("we were defeated [...] we organize our power") produces a "foreshortened history of oppression" (Lyon 1999: 14) that becomes a call to action, producing the future in the present moment.

James' writings are exemplary in creating interventions in left political discourse, in which the seemingly marginal becomes central. We have seen in chapter one that this move produces a redefinition of the working class, in which those excluded from waged work become essential political actors in the struggle against capital. I want to highlight how this rhetorical practice stages what Lyon refers to as the manifesto form's habit of challenging the universality of modernity's political subject. She sees this as particularly typical of the feminist manifesto, which is "both a challenge to and an affirmation of universalism" (1999: 39). In the WFH writings, that problematic universalism is the bland leftist understanding of the typical member of the working class as white, straight, male, able-bodied, and supportive of the police (Wages Due Lesbians London 1991: 28). For James, the aim of the feminist struggle must be to build enough power to make men join the feminist, anticapitalist revolution: "Now we demand unity on our terms: they must support *us*" (SRC 81, emphasis in original). WFH constitutes its own selective universality by producing an array of "all women are..." statements, which can be shifted and transmuted according to the needs of the political moment. WFH members understand the totality of the working class as a fractured collective constituted by shared exploitation, and an antagonistic relationship to the wage relation which facilitates that exploitation. This shared enemy produces a fractured universality from the specific point of view of the result of such exploitation for differentiated groups, and the call to unite behind those most harmed by the current organisation of work and resources. The movement sought to

intervene in the field of revolutionary politics to institute a political subject not dependent on sameness, but rather differently located groups with a shared desire for an end to their exploitation.

James produces the type of writing that is typically associated with the manifesto – that of a list of demands. This is familiar from the modern foundation of the manifesto genre, *The communist manifesto*, which presents a list of ten demands for the nascent communist movement (Marx and Engels 2018: 61-62). Like the Communist League, the WFH campaign sought to produce demands that "appear economically insufficient and untenable, but which, in the course of the movement, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order, and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionising the mode of production" (Marx and Engels, 2018: 61). In the WFH formulation, the demands that would revolutionise the mode of (re)production were characteristically antiwork in nature. In her pamphlet "Women, the unions, and work," James puts forward six demands for the movement, the first two of which are: "1. WE DEMAND TO WORK LESS. [...] 2. WE DEMAND A GUARANTEED INCOME FOR WOMEN AND FOR MEN, WORKING OR NOT WORKING, MARRIED OR NOT. WE DEMAND WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK" (SRC 72). The tone is similar to many WFH pamphlets, which tend to conclude with lists of demands (NYWFHC: 54-77). In its most poignant form, a WFH flyer from 1974 states:

> Now we want to decide WHEN we work, HOW we work and WHO we work for. We want to be able to decide NOT TO WORK AT ALL. [...] Now we want back the wealth we have produced. WE WANT IT IN CASH, RETROACTIVE AND IMMEDIATELY. AND WE WANT ALL OF IT (NYWFHC: 44)

Through its threatening tone and its immoderate demand, the statement inverts the emotional "blackmail" that WFH writers contend is characteristic of women's condition

under capitalism (AWNP 10). Instead, WFH assert that now "we" will take control of the exchange between labour and capital. This demand for the reclamation of wealth recalls the workerist contention that capital is the passive side of the class antagonism, merely supervising the work and capturing what workers produce. It also performs what Felicity Colman refers to as the affective praxis of the manifesto form (2010: 383). Through its demanding and immoderate tone, WFH seeks to constitute an autonomous feminist subject capable of collective emotional practices. I will return below to the question of which emotional states the WFH campaign sought to evoke. Here I want to note that these texts derive their power not necessarily from their political stringency but from their capacity to produce subjective states. Weeks points out that early versions of *The power of women and the subversion of the community* objected to the demand for wages for housework. In later editions, however, that demand could be made with "strength and confidence," thus persuading Dalla Costa to embrace it (2011: 136, PWSC 53 n16). The emotional charge of the demand, and its capacity for creating a collective feminist subject, are as central as its content.

The centrality of subjective demands is apparent when thinking of the goal of the manifesto form – to make a group of people unite behind the perspective and demands advanced by the manifesto. For the manifesto's word to materialise as action, it has to enlist people who can carry out its vision. In *Constituting feminist subjects*, Weeks argues for the utility of deriving feminist subjectivity from the practices of feminised labour, so that Marxist feminism can move beyond a mere description of structural determinations (1998: 88, 129). This framework is useful for understanding WFH writing practices, which are centred on a type of workers' inquiry on the one hand and the manifesto on the other, seeking to explain how a forceful feminist subjectivity can arise from the conditions that exploit it. Rather than just abandoning reproductive labour, or searching for a subjective

formation which escapes it, the WFH strategy seeks to constitute antagonistic practices on the very terrain on which we are exploited. The textual task is "*to find a place as protagonist in the struggle*" (PWSC 36, emphasis in original). WFH authors are invested in transforming gendered labour from a technique of management to a technique of resistance.

Weeks suggests that it is these characteristics of the WFH writings, rather than their theoretical contributions, which make these texts non-functionalist. She argues, in line with her earlier critique of "systems theory" in Marxist feminism, that the WFH manifestos seek to disrupt a form of writing where "capital is attributed a kind of monolithic unity and sole agency, and workers are reduced to the victims of its machinations" (2011: 127). Drawing on the traditions of Italian workerism and American working-class self-activity (SCR 291), WFH indicated that "[w]hat might be functional constituents of capitalist production have the potential to be, and at various moments in history have in fact become, its active and potentially subversive antagonists" (Weeks 2011: 127). Capitalism creates contradictory conditions which constitute the possibility for non-functionalist, antagonistic subjects and practices to develop. Weeks cautions that feminist standpoints and subjectivities are not given within these conditions, but must be achieved (1998: 136). For that, they need to affirm autonomous struggle as a mode of organising.

According to the WFH authors, autonomy from male-dominated organisations on the left is essential for revolutionary feminism to create antagonistic practices that can develop the specific contradictions inherent in the sphere of reproduction (PSWC 26). This entailed women's self-organisation, as the workers most directly affected by such contradictions. As WFH members state in their collectively authored "Theses on wages for housework": "Autonomy from men is Autonomy from capital that uses men's power to discipline us" (NYWFHC 34). Autonomy is not the same as separatism, as its goal is to develop

solidarity with other movements and sufficient power to force the male-dominated left to concede to the demands and perspectives of revolutionary feminism. The purpose of autonomy is not to withdraw from organising with men but to find the demands on which such organisation would become possible, without erasing the specific exploitation of reproductive labour. The point is not to plead with men or enlighten them, but to show that autonomous organising in the community is a source of power for the working class. As Federici succinctly states: “Power educates. First men will fear, then they will learn because capital will fear” (RPZ 36-37). Similarly, black and lesbian women formed autonomous groups within the WFH network, and sex workers organised autonomously in WFH-affiliated groups such as the English Collective of Prostitutes (SRC 117). This idea is most forcefully formulated by Brown. In her text “The autonomy of black lesbian women,” she argues that organising autonomously, and putting forward “our particular vantage point of struggle” enables black lesbians to connect with other women without being marginalised as black women, made invisible or assumed to be heterosexual (1976a: 6-7). This argument is connected to the WFH thesis that potential points of struggle can be found everywhere, and that one does not have to “join” the industrial proletariat in order to be a revolutionary subject. Autonomy, then, is construed as a source of strength for groups traditionally marginalised within left movements, so that all of the working class can gain the power necessary to confront capitalism.

Emotional antagonisms

In terms of emotional states, autonomous subjectivity must move from one form of affectivity to another in order for this confrontation to become possible. The emotional states associated with femininity, such as fear, guilt, and anxiety, can be shifted through the constitution of collective subjectivity. This shift does not necessarily imply more

"positive" emotional states. Somewhat contrary to Weeks, who proposes laughter as an affirmative model of feminist engagement (1998: 137-142), I argue that feminist movements can make use of "bad" feelings. These feelings, however, must be collectivised in order to become useful. Here, I use Jaggar's concept of outlaw emotions to think about how this shift can come into being. Jaggar observes that emotions, while socially constituted, are not fully determined by social structure. Those who "pay a disproportionately high price for maintaining the status quo" are more likely to experience outlaw emotions – that is, feelings that are not condoned in a certain social situation (1992: 131). In Hochschild's terms, such emotions do not pay the social "debt" owed by particular individuals (MH 81). When isolated, the individuals experiencing outlaw emotions might be understood by themselves or others as insane or emotionally disturbed (Jaggar 1992: 131).[60] As Federici writes, "[m]any women have rebelled and are rebelling in this way. They are called 'insane.' In reality, they are women who have not found any other way of refusing being exploited except by putting themselves out of use, out of being used" (NYWFHC 129). In reading the "insanity" of women as a tacit form of refusal, non-normative or undesirable feelings can become "politically (because epistemologically) subversive" (Jaggar 1992: 131).[61] Forming a collective feminist subjectivity, which is also a collective of feeling, allows people to find other ways of refusing. Such refusals seek to turn the effects of exploitation outward rather than internalising them.

One way of refusing was explored by the Geneva WFH group *Collectif L'Insoumise*. Their practice, more radical than many of the other WFH groups, included direct actions, occupations, collective fare dodging, and prisoner solidarity. It also included a more direct appeal to the emotional elements of struggle, as they focused on collective forms of organisation for "bad" and "angry" mothers. Refusing the glorification of motherhood as

[60] This is similar to Sara Ahmed's notion of an "affect alien" (2004: 221).

[61] There is a long history of writing on women and madness, including Phyllis Chesler's *Women and madness* (1972).

self-sacrifice, *Collectif L'Insoumise* celebrated the mothers "whom society and right-thinking people consider bad because they don't do exactly what the state, the family, the Church, and the cops want them to do." These women "don't have the smell of resignation and sacrifice; instead, they have the good scent of revolt and freedom!" (cited in Toupin 2018: 196). The recuperation of anger as a political practice allowed *Collectif L'Insoumise* to move beyond individual fear of punishment for risky behaviour. They used their writings to inspire collective feelings, such as the anger, frustration, and discontent that Lyon sees as the typical emotional states of the manifesto (1999: 61). Refusing to be "good" mothers – that is, refusing the work demanded by the ideal of self-sacrificing, white, bourgeois motherhood – the group sought to mobilise those women who wanted more for themselves. They called on "Those who are trying to live as they like, Those who complain everywhere, at unemployment, at taxes, at the job, [...] Those who don't live only for their kid" (cited in Toupin 2018: 201).

Their practice was thus not one of fostering "better" feelings than the resentment they already experienced, but rather to mobilise those feelings in a way that amplified liberatory possibilities (Jaggar 1992: 133). Outlaw emotions, Jaggar argues, are not in themselves subversive but can be put to use in revolutionary political projects when integrating revolutionary values. They are appropriate to radical politics when characteristic of a society in which human suffering and exploitation is lessened, or conducive to establishing such a society (1992: 132-133). She suggests that emotions have a valuable epistemological function, as "conventionally inexplicable emotions may lead us to make subversive observations" (1992: 133).

In terms of emotional labour in particular, it is easy to see how outlaw emotions are essential to its refusal. Emotional labour can be described as the work to suppress or hide such emotions, in order to foster more "appropriate" feelings. I want to highlight the

collective production of anger as a way of refusing feminised emotional labour. While anger is a common emotional state in more masculine forms of emotional labour (MH 146), it is the feeling that must be managed and suppressed in feminised occupations, as well as absorbed from others, in order to create a spirit of "niceness" (MH 24, 113, 167). While the recuperation of anger within a feminist project might seem to simply affirm a more masculine emotional style, I want to suggest that it is essential to the refusal of emotional labour. This does not imply that it is the only emotional state worth amplifying, or that more feminised emotional states are to be discarded. Rather, we should recognise the political power of anger when put in the use of those who are exploited and oppressed, who are expected to respond to violence with compliancy. This also implies a more equitable access to various emotional states, thus moving away from the constitution of "authentic" gendered being through emotion. In this way, the broadening of the feelings available to feminised subjects might lead us towards a horizon of gender abolition, which I will discuss in the next chapter. A different and wider emotional practice could open the potential for a different, non-feminised subject without affirming the emotional practice of possessive individualism which I discussed in chapter three.

Anger is an ambivalent feeling, often used to oppressive ends, not only by men but also by women against other women (NYWFHC 102). As emotion is contextual in its nature, we must pay careful attention to the political nuances of anger. In her "A note on anger," Marilyn Frye suggests that female anger is not an outlaw emotion per se. Women are allowed to express anger within their "proper domain" – that of the kitchen (1983: 91). It is when women's anger exceeds the reproductive sphere that it becomes threatening to the emotional ordering of the world. As Audre Lorde observes, "[e]very woman has a well-stocked arsenal of anger potentially useful against those oppressions, personal and institutional, which brought that anger into being. Focused with precision it can become a

powerful source of energy serving progress and change" (1997: 280). Lorde argues for the use of anger to resist white, heterosexual, bourgeois femininity, which also perpetuates oppression of other women. Yet, anger can be dampened by individualised feelings of fear and guilt. Federici remarks that "one of the main obstacles women have always met, every time they have wanted to refuse this work, has been the fear of damaging their families, the fear of being seen as bad women rather than as workers on strike" (NYWFHC 25). Similarly, Lorde writes:

> For women raised to fear, too often anger threatens annihilation. In the male construct of brute force, we were taught that our lives depended upon the good will of patriarchal power. The anger of others was to be avoided at all costs, because there was nothing to be learned from it but pain, a judgment that we had been bad girls, come up lacking, not done what we were supposed to do. And if we accept our powerlessness, then of course any anger can destroy us. (1997: 283)

From a WFH perspective, there is no need to accept powerlessness, as women are in fact not powerless. In mobilising through the refusal of work, women display their power. This can be through small acts of defiance, such as when the female flight attendants in Hochschild's study stop smiling, or refuse the work of presenting their smiles as "genuine" (MH 129). Through the escalation of collective anger, this could turn into Shulamith Firestone's "dream action for the women's movement," the smile boycott (2015: 81). Or in the WFH formulation, only smiling when we are paid for it, thus undermining the supposed authenticity of women's emotional display. Hochschild notes that women who do not smile tend to be read as being angry (MH 128).[62] Failure to show "positive" emotion, then, is automatically understood as anger. This clarifies the link between anger and refusal, in which refusal to produce niceness immediately marks one as an emotionally deviant

[62] This is especially true of black women, who are frequently constructed as angry and threatening (Lorde 1997: 282)

subject.

As noted above, WFH authors interpret many types of behaviour as forms of refusal of feminised work. Individual acts such as divorce and shoplifting, and states such frigidity and depression, are all read as symptoms of a more generalised disenchantment with the ideological power of gendered work. Through refusing to perform work, especially work that is normally invisible as such, a feminised collective subject could lay bare a source of power that was previously unknown. However, refusal can take many different expressions, and is dependent on what kind of labour is demanded of particular subjects. As I have shown in chapter one, Brown reads black women's higher birthrates as a form of refusal of the racist attempts to discipline black women's sexuality into normative, white, and bourgeois forms of reproductive labour (1976b: 9).

The WFH strategy of refusal can also be understood as a refusal of the individualising and isolating features of emotional labour. WFH authors take aim at the conditions of the reproduction of labour power, which under capitalist conditions are necessarily isolating. Refusing to reproduce oneself and others as labour power also means opening up the possibility for other forms of sociality. Weeks, drawing on Firestone, reads feminist refusal in terms of diffusion of the capacity for affectivity, which is currently narrowly situated in the sphere of the family and romantic love, and increasingly, in the sphere of waged work (2017: 55). This takes us beyond the binary framework of refusal versus valorisation of reproductive work, which Federici sets up in her 2012 introduction to *Revolution at point zero* (RPZ 1). Refusal instead becomes a tool for the valorisation of a different form of life. As I noted in chapter one, Federici's later writings, such as *Re-enchanting the world* (2018b) downplay the importance of refusal of reproductive labour in order to go straight to its valorisation, leaving her with few tools for criticising its exploitation (Vishmidt 2014: xii, Gotby forthcoming).

In the earlier WFH writings, however, refusal is central. Here, refusal is also a strategy of denaturalisation. Refusing the work of love also means cutting the link between womanhood and reproduction, something which the strategy of valorisation cannot do. Through refusing to work for love, women simultaneously undermine the apparent givenness of femininity. In "Wages against housework," Federici argues that we must "*refuse that work as the expression of our nature*, and therefore [...] refuse precisely the female role that capital has invented for us" (RPZ 18, emphasis in original). Through a feminist antiwork politics, femininity stops being functional to capital.

However, as the Tri-Veneto WFH Committee noted in 1974, "[t]he price we women pay for this refusal is high. Men block our struggle, they blackmail us, they beat us, they kill us" (NYWFHC 260). In order to protect women from such violence, feminist collectivities need anger, but also solidarity, as an alternative form of sociality. This depends on the development of alternative emotional practices. WFH writings and activism encouraged the emotional practice of solidarity with other women. In *The power of women and the subversion of the community*, Dalla Costa argues that solidarity exists not for defence but for attack, coming "together with other women, not only as neighbors and friends but as workmates and anti-workmates" (PWSC 36). This means that solidarity relies not only on empathy, as a feeling-with more vulnerable others, but an unlearning of emotional responses that obstruct coalition-building. With the WFH political inversion, in which those seen as the most powerless are re-described as powerful, there is a need for a similar reinterpretation of emotional practices. Again, we can think of the WFH writers' strong identification with the frequently dismissed position of the "backward" housewife, but also their identification with welfare women and sex workers. For WFH writers, solidarity can act as a check on women's anger against those in more marginal positions, as in when housewives display anger against women on welfare. Federici writes of such

housewives, “[h]er anger is an immediate expression of her envy for the fact that she, the housewife, is not able to refuse that portion of her work and does not have some money of her own” (NYWFHC 102). Here, the feeling of anger towards those who are more stigmatised is reinterpreted as a feeling of envy of those who are able to refuse. This emotional response of individualised anger has to be unlearned in order for feelings of collective anger and power to develop.

Similarly, several WFH groups put out statements in solidarity with sex workers, in response to the increased repression they faced from the state.[63] WFH interprets this as another form of violent response to women’s refusal of dependence and wagelessness. The San Francisco Wages For Housework Committee states that “[a]lthough the government tries to isolate our struggles, we refuse to be divided. All work is prostitution and we are all prostitutes. We are forced to sell our bodies – for room and board or for cash – in marriage, in the street, in typing pools or in factories” (2012: 225). This should be read in contrast to feminists who consider sex work as an exceptional form of violence against women, and thus separate sex workers from “non-deviant” women.

Sexual refusals

Against the respectability politics of the anti-sex work position, WFH authors read sex workers as being on the forefront of the struggle against sexual labour. BWFWFH draw connections between the policing of black women’s supposedly excessive and deviant sexuality with the repression of sex workers (2012: 229, see also Austin and Capper 2018: 452). Similarly, WDL London state that “[a]s lesbian women we, like prostitute women, refuse to accept that it is women’s ‘nature’ to sleep with men and to sleep with them ‘for love’” (2012: 226). As I noted in chapter one, the WFH authors understand lesbianism, like

[63] See *LIES Journal* Issue 1 (2012) for a collection of such statements.

paid sex work, as a form of refusal. The lesbian refusal to sleep with men undermines men's power to command sexual labour. This does not mean that lesbianism is reducible to abstinence, or refusal in the merely negative mode. Refusal, as I suggested above, is not a passive act of withdrawal of labour, but rather the construction of alternative modes of being.[64] In the remainder of this section, however, I will focus on lesbianism from the perspective of refusal of the labour of love, as a way of moving away from a merely individualised notion of lesbian identity, towards the idea of queerness as political practice. The WFH authors describe lesbian relationships as a form of resistance to the work ethic of heterosexuality. Heterosexuality, WDL Toronto write, is the morality that says that all women "naturally" serve men sexually and emotionally (1975b: 21). Furthermore, as the group states in its founding document, the existence of lesbianism makes sex visible as labour, and a woman refusing this work is engaging in a partial refusal of her work as a woman (1975a: 25). Hall argues that the rejection of heterosexuality is also a rejection of the notion that sexuality is a private matter (1975: 1). Lesbianism, for WDL, thus has an explicitly political meaning when integrated in the overall WFH perspective. Like sex workers, lesbians refuse to sleep with men "for love" (Wages Due Lesbians London 2012: 227). In the WDL critique of heterosexuality, "love" is, as Weeks puts it, a way of desiring one's own unfreedom (2017: 49). Refusing the narrow, institutionalised form of love opens up a space for practices of resistance.

For the WFH authors, lesbianism thus has an important role as a political practice, rather than as a given identity category. Lesbians occupy a pivotal position in the WFH struggle, as they are at least partially prefiguring the direction of the movement as a whole. In Toupin's words, WDL presents lesbianism as "an organizational form of women's struggle against work" (2018: 214). In refusing part of the sexual and emotional

[64] Here, there are some similarities with the Autonomia concept of exodus (Virno 1996). However, like the WFH authors, I prefer the notion of autonomy as it does not indicate a moment of withdrawal.

labour that is assigned to most women, lesbians show that such resistance is possible – that there are other ways of being. Coming out as a lesbian, Federici states, is going on strike (NYWFHC 144). Similarly, Fortunati writes that homosexuality reflects a refusal of capitalist organisation of personal relationships (AR 24), and Giovanna Dalla Costa contends that lesbianism is an attack on the naturalisation of heterosexuality as the only form of sexuality (WL 71). While this refusal does not completely free lesbians of the labour of femininity, it does attack the structure of the family and its attendant work relations (Hall 1975: 1).

Lesbian practices thus strike at the heart of gendered relations of labour. It is a rejection of the isolation of heterosexual institutions (Wages Due Lesbians Toronto 1975a: 22). It is also a rejection of the narrowing of the sexual field, where romantic relationships with men are defined as fundamentally different from friendship with women. As Federici writes,

> early in our lives we must learn to draw a line between the people we can love and the people we just talk to, those to whom we can open our body and those to whom we can only open our 'souls,' our lovers and our friends. (RPZ 24-25)

Lesbianism implies the work of beginning to undo some of these lines, and the separate emotional spheres they impose. These lines, Federici suggests, were never stable in the first place. Indeed, WFH writers frequently argue that lesbian identities stem from a capitalist organisation of labour, in which women are more likely to work with other women than with men (James 1971a: 13). Here, capitalist conditions are contradictory in that the gendered division of labour encourages homosociality while excluding homosexuality, and organises "leisure time" heterosexually (Hall 1975: 2). This demarcation is never fully sustainable since "our bodies and emotions are indivisible and we communicate at all

levels all the time" (RPZ 24). Lesbianism thus counters the restrictions on emotional and sexual practice imposed by the heterosexual work ethic.

However, WDL did not only present lesbianism as refusal, but described the forms of violence and labour that lesbianism entails. Because lesbian relationships are made invisible by the societal celebration of (heterosexual, romantic) "love," and lesbians are frequently subjected to physical and emotional violence, lesbianism brings its own form of emotional reproduction. Thus the very refusal that lesbians stage when they reject the labour of loving men also makes lesbians more likely to be marked as targets for disciplinary violence. As I suggest in chapter two, such violence in turn increases the need for a different kind of emotional labour. Hall argues that while lesbianism is a refusal of emotional labour, it can also bring more work because "there's so much pressure all the time on all of us that we are continually having to struggle to hold each other together and keep sane" (1977: 7). Such emotional pressure, however, might point to the uses of negative emotions in creating and sustaining counter-hegemonic forms of collective subjectivity. Heather Love writes that "[m]odern homosexual identity is formed out of and in relation to the experience of social damage" (2007: 29). The experiences that Hall describes can thus tell us something about how damage can lead to the creation of new and collective forms of care.

Lesbianism, while containing some utopian elements, is not in itself a revolutionary form of sociality because it still exists within a structurally violent system of capitalist reproduction. Opting out of this system is not an individual choice. Hence, WDL authors reject the idea that moving to a separatist lesbian commune could somehow solve the contradictions of reproductive labour (AWNP 23). Against a strategy of withdrawal and separatism, WDL practiced solidarity with heterosexual women, based on partially shared material conditions. The autonomous structure of WDL made sure that lesbian concerns

would be heard in WFH activism, and WDL members were aware that solidarity could not come at the cost of ignoring difference under the generic label of "women." However, they did pay careful attention to the ways in which lesbian women are not liberated from being interpellated by feminised labour (Toronto Wages For Housework Committee 1975: 22). Contra Monique Wittig (1992: 20), the WDL writings suggest that lesbians are unfortunately still women, to the extent that they are called upon to perform various forms of reproductive work. This is because reproduction is not confined to the heterosexual relationship, but stretches across a range of different social relations, including waged work. WDL members argue that lesbians constitute a precarious labour force likely to be concentrated in low-paying service work.[65] While lesbians are denied the label of "real women" because of their rejection of the intimate labours of heterosexual romantic "love," they are nonetheless captive in a broader logic of gendered reproduction (Toronto Wages For Housework Committee 1975: 23). For the WFH writers, the most important limitation of lesbian separatism is that lesbianism does not exist outside of the capitalist organisation of the reproductive sphere. As we have seen, Fortunati argues that the form of heterosexual coupledom is difficult to escape, even for people in homosexual relationships (AR 34). It is thus not enough to make the individual decision to not take part in relationships with men. As long as heterosexual formations dominate the social totality, lesbian relationships are likely to reproduce at least some of the structures of reproductive work that operate in heterosexual families. As Federici puts it, "homosexuality is workers' control of production, not the end of work" (RPZ 15). Only the end of capitalist production and reproduction could fundamentally change the current organisation of the heterosexual nuclear family, the household, and the gender division of labour, and vice versa; only the

[65] According to Margot Canaday's research on queer work in the US in the 1950s and 60s (2019), this was more likely to be true for femme lesbians, whereas butches were more often engaged in blue-collar work or excluded from waged labour. Such exclusions led to a widespread acceptance of femmes as the breadwinner in working-class lesbian couples.

abolition of the family could spell the end of capitalism.

Thus, WFH did not advocate for political lesbianism in the same way that many radical feminists did. Federici writes that the movement cannot impose a new model for sexuality when the goal of the movement is self-determination (NYWFHC 145). In the WFH literature, there is also a sense that relationships with men could be different. Men are only the enemy in so far as they have been assigned a role of control over women. The deeper problem is a gender division of labour that sets men and women against each other. Heterosexual relationships would have to be radically reconstituted through the subversion of that division of labour, which according to the WFH authors would require the overturning of the capitalist system as we know it. While some WFH writers could be read as what Adrienne Rich calls heterosexual reformists (1981: 9), they do not think heterosexuality can be "fixed" just by changing the division of labour within the household, as the socialist feminist authors who Rich cites argue. This is especially true since so much of gender as we know it is organised around heterosexual arrangements, and it would perhaps be misleading to even speak of heterosexuality if those formations of gender were drastically subverted.

The WDL authors add that we do not know how many women are (or could be) lesbians, because for many lesbianism has not yet become a viable choice for many women (Wages Due Lesbians London 1991: 1). They argue for wages for housework on the basis that it would give women, both lesbian and (currently) heterosexual, more time and freedom, and more options to build emotional and sexual relationships differently (Wages Due Lesbians Toronto 1977: 4). The demand for wages thus becomes not only a way of refusing some of the labour of femininity, but also a tool for undermining heterosexual institutions. As WDL Toronto members poignantly state: "Wages for housework means wages against heterosexuality" (1977: 12).

Wages for refusal

Here, we need to return to the question of what the demand for wages for housework is supposed to do. As noted in chapter one, Federici contests the argument that a bit of money would not make much of a difference, and argues that we could never get that money "without at the same time revolutionizing – in the process of struggling for it – all our family and social relations" (RPZ 15). This is especially true of currently unwaged emotional labour, which as I argued in chapter two, changes its meaning in the process of becoming commodified. As we have seen, however, the unmeasurable quality of emotional labour places limits on its commodification. The political potential of wages for housework as a demand is also its unreasonableness – it would be impossible to adequately remunerate all currently unwaged and low-waged work. Oksala states that gender equality could only be reached under capitalism if all currently unwaged feminised labour was commodified (2016: 300). Yet waged work in capitalism depends on the unwaged work of producing sociality and wellbeing, thus making a total commodification structurally impossible. The demand for wages for housework, and in particular for the totality of emotional labour to be remunerated, is thus unrealisable under the current order of things. Far from being a reformist demand for an allowance, wages for housework as a political demand becomes a tool for pointing to the structural exclusions in the production of value. It is an immoderate demand for the totality of that immeasurable work to be remunerated retroactively. As I have noted above, WFH rejected the "myth of liberation through work." The demand for wages for housework was meant to allow women to say "we have worked enough" (PWSC 47).

This leads us to the strategic potential of the WFH demand. By locating the struggle in the sphere of the home and the community, the members of WFH wished to highlight that rather than being a non-political and non-productive domain, political struggle over

reproduction could cause significant disruption to the capitalist circuit. While WFH never became a mass movement, and never accomplished their aim of refusing reproductive labour, its members understood the potential of an antiwork struggle on the site of the community. As Dalla Costa contends: "*No strike has ever been a general strike*" (WSC 54, emphasis in original). The political potential of a coordinated refusal of work is thus as of yet unexplored. A nascent wave of feminist organising, however, is using the name of the strike to invoke the refusal of reproductive work – a refusal which is simultaneously impossible and necessary (Barbagallo 2018, Gago 2019).

I agree with Federici's claim that the demand for wages for housework cannot be understood divorced from its context – that is, the attempt to constitute an antagonistic feminist subject capable of refusal (RPZ 15). As we have seen, this also depends on a politics of emotion, in which anger and the emotional practice of solidarity constitute modes of refusal which are essential for the struggle for a different world. These emotional practices involve both recuperating "bad feelings" and unlearning habitual and constraining emotional responses. The WFH project thus depends on recuperating outlaw emotion, to broaden the horizon of possible emotional practices. Here, emotion becomes communal. It is no longer the "inner truth" of an individual, but a collective habit that can become a political tool. As Weeks points out, the feminist collective is also a desiring subject (2011: 134). It wants more than what is offered. It refuses to be content with reforming the site of reproduction, and refuses the call for men to "help" with domestic labour. Such calls leave the social relations of domestic work intact, which explains why women continue to carry the primary responsibility for reproduction. WFH wanted to bring into being a collective feminist subject with the capacity for making demands for a different world. What does this subject want? The abolition of feminised labour, and its attendant work relations.

In this chapter, I have investigated the textual and emotional practices of WFH. Through a focus on the manifesto form, as well as the adaption of the workers' inquiry, the WFH movement sought to establish a feminist subject constituted by feminised labour while also capable of refusing it. This is intimately tied both to the organisational form of autonomy and the emotional practices which refuse feminised forms of "niceness" and good feeling. The last chapter of this thesis will explore the potentials of such refusals today. Taking up the framework of gender abolition and queer modes of reproduction, I ask what forms of sociality we can develop to help us find new ways of being.

Chapter five: Towards a different (re)production

This last chapter offers some reflections on the contemporary state of gender, the family, and emotional reproduction, and how current modes of reproduction could be challenged and undone. Drawing on the WFH perspective, in particular its refusal of equality politics and its desire to abolish the nuclear family as a primary unit of gendered exploitation, I outline some directions for a future politics that would take us beyond the family. Here, I complement the WFH writings with contemporary queer Marxist and black feminist work. While I present demands and strategies that depart from those suggested by WFH, I still rely on the core tenets of the WFH perspective outlined in the introduction. The political demands presented in this chapter thus build on the principles of antiwork politics, critique of identity, inversion of power, and the abolition of exploitative relations of labour. While the WFH perspective is primarily a critique of the current state of things, and does not directly point towards a different future (Cleaver 2019: xiii), I think it can help us clear the ground for a different form of reproduction. The first part of the chapter traces the WFH critique of equality as a framework for feminism, before introducing the demands of family abolition and gender abolition as more productive avenues for a contemporary feminist politics. The second part continues on this theme, looking at what constructive perspectives we can find at the intersection of feminism, queer politics, and Marxism. Here, I am interested in modes of subjectivity and sociality that take us beyond dominant forms of emotional labour and reproduction.

Beyond equality

What political framework does a WFH perspective imply? What are the end goals of the

movement? In this section, I will argue that feminist politics needs to move away from a focus on "equality," towards a politics of abolition of gender and the family. The WFH members' critique of both unwaged and waged work led them to a critique of equality as the hegemonic mode of feminist engagement. WFH is thus a feminist perspective against equality. They recognise the limitations of equality discourse in a socio-economic system fundamentally based on restricted access to material and social resources and differentiating divisions of labour. This is not to say that the concept of equality can never be mobilised in a radical way. In the course of feminist history, the term has been used to give women access to previously masculine spheres and a degree of independence from men. However, many women today are exploited in both waged and unwaged forms of labour. Precisely because equality is a core term in the liberal political imagination, it can be both useful and limited. I want to suggest that the discourse of equality has taken us to a limit-point in feminist politics, and it must now be replaced with a move towards the abolition of feminised labour, the family, and gender.

The politics of equality has mainly resulted in women's increased access to waged work, and indeed the increased compulsion to participate in such labour. WFH writers do not condemn women seeking waged employment, and are sensitive to the need for financial self-determination. However, they are highly critical of the notion of employment as a road to liberation. In the previous chapters, I have argued that WFH stage a refusal of reproductive labour. However, it is important to emphasise that this does not imply embracing women's participation in traditionally masculine, "productive" work. Dalla Costa remarks that "[s]lavery to an assembly line is not a liberation from slavery to a kitchen sink" (PWSC 33). For WFH, "equality" with exploited male workers is not a very attractive political vision.[66] Unlike most mainstream feminisms of the time, which encouraged women

[66] In a similar vein, Adrienne Roberts suggests that increased equality the sphere of waged work has mainly been achieved through the stagnation or deterioration of men's working condition, rather than the improvement of women's wages and employment conditions (2017: 161-165).

to leave the home to get a career (Friedan 1963), the WFH members predicted that a majority of women would be performing less attractive, repetitive and low-waged forms of work outside the home. Coming from an antiwork perspective, the WFH theorists argue that more work is a way of increasing women's subordination (AR 34, PWSC 47). Furthermore, it leaves less time for resisting exploitation. While they argued that "[w]e must get out of the house; we must reject the home," (PWSC 39) such refusal must happen in order to join other women in struggle rather than becoming invested in a career. Federici emphasises that the refusal of housework is also a demand for more time for ourselves, as "what we need is more time, more money, not more work. And we need daycare centers, not just to be liberated for more work, but to be able to take a walk, talk to our friends, or go to a women's meeting" (RPZ 57).

As I discussed in chapter three, the reorganisation of gender relations in the neoliberal era has deepened the divisions between women who are able to (at least partially) live up to the ideals of masculine subjectivity, and those who are stuck with traditionally feminised labour. The politics of equality has allowed some (mostly white, bourgeois) women to gain more power, while obscuring the increasing inequality between women. In her 1984 essay "Putting feminism back on its feet," Federici criticises both liberal and socialist feminisms for espousing equal access to waged work as a path forward for feminism (RPZ 55). For liberal feminists, the main concern is sexist discrimination within the waged workplace, with little examination of how waged work itself is built on a system of unwaged work. For socialist feminists, the emphasis is on making sure that women could join men in performing productive work, and thus join the working-class struggle against exploitation. This is a long-running theme in socialist and Marxist writings on "the woman question," going back to Engels' 1884 book *The origin of the family, private property and the state* (2010: 105). The focus on women's entrance into

wage labour entailed a struggle for state services that would allow women to work outside their homes, most importantly child-care provision. Such services have historically played the role of supplementing the family as the sphere of reproductive work while allowing more women to become part of a low-waged proletariat (Toupin 2018: 3, Marie 2017: np).

Moreover, "equal opportunities" within the formal economy has not translated into a reorganisation of the division of labour in the household. As Ann Stewart writes, the model of a male breadwinner and a female homemaker has been superseded in the sphere of waged work, but assumptions relating to the provision of informal care have not necessarily changed (2013: 71). This means that the overarching responsibility for care still falls disproportionately on the shoulders of women. In Federici's words, as long as care work is women's responsibility, "any notion of equality is doomed to remain an illusion" (RPZ 62). The paradigm of equality within the women's movement has translated into a double burden for women, exacerbated by increased precarity in the sphere of production and the decimation of state services within the sphere of reproduction. Giovanna Dalla Costa suggests that the "feminine mystique" of the housewife and the "emancipated mystique" of the career woman who still cares for her husband and children are two sides of the same coin, both keeping women in a subordinate position within various labour relations (WL 93-94).

What Federici calls "the myth of capitalism as the great equalizer" (RPZ 67) cannot account for the contradictory organisation of capitalist reproduction, and the continuing stratification of the labour market. While equality feminisms have sought "the universalization of the male condition" (RPZ 61),[67] the WFH perspective allows us to see that such a political horizon is both undesirable and structurally impossible, given the continued reliance on unwaged and low-waged reproductive work. Neoliberal politics often

[67] It is interesting to note that WFH share this critique of equality with the other main strand of Italian feminism, represented by thinkers like Carla Lonzi (1991: 41).

utilises a gender-neutral language of equal access. But the invocations of “individual responsibility” and “community care” in fact depend on the reproduction of more or less normative family relationships (Glazer 1993, Cooper 2017). This, as we have seen in chapter three, is because liberal notions of individuality simultaneously disavow and depend on the existence of reproductive labour and emotional reproduction in particular.

Within the sphere of unwaged reproductive labour, equality politics tend to be limited and individualising. Because this aspect of life has been marked as private in capitalist economies, individual choice reigns as a hegemonic political discourse. Equality discourse in the domestic sphere has focused on getting men to do their fair share, rather than a rethinking of the domestic as such. James writes that the male-dominated left is unable to think beyond the current organisation of the domestic sphere. “The men, they say, must share the slavery of the home. So they must – until slavery is abolished. They can as little conceive of destroying the institution of the family as they can of the factory” (SRC 84). Here, the mainstream left’s emphasis on productivity is connected to its attachments to normative family values (Cooper 2017: 9-15, O’Brien forthcoming). The WFH authors are critical of the idea that men should help out at home, arguing that this does little to rearticulate the labour relations and relations of power that instituted the domestic in the first place. In that way, equality politics tend to accept the domestic sphere as a given reality, merely reshuffling some of the work within this sphere, rather than trying to break down the divisions that separate domestic and waged work.

As we have seen, Hochschild articulates a version of the equality argument, suggesting that the contradiction in contemporary reproductive conditions lies in the fact that women have moved into a new phase of reproductive work whereas men are lagging behind (1989a: 11). In Hochschild’s argument, this disjuncture, where men are seen as inhabiting a different and less modern temporality than women, can be solved by men

doing more chores in the home and by more family-friendly policies at work. However, this argument does not fully address the fact that women tend to retain the overarching responsibility for making sure that domestic work gets done, even when the tasks of domestic work are shared more or less equally. As we have seen, domestic labour cannot be reduced to a set of chores, but rather implies a relation of labour exploitation. Equality politics has been less able to address this relation, thus leaving the mental and emotional labour of the domestic sphere untouched. As Hochschild herself notes, these more invisible forms of labour remain even in apparently egalitarian relationships (Hochschild 1989a: 8, see also Carrington 1999: 219, Shane 2019: np). In *The managed heart*, Hochschild writes: "An equalitarian couple in a society that as a whole subordinates women cannot, at the basic level of emotional exchanges, be equal" (MH 85). Due to the link between the family form and the organisation of the waged economy, both intimate inequalities and broader hierarchies continue to be reproduced.

A politics of equality, moreover, does not fully address the hierarchical structure built into the very notion of gender. Equality, as a conceptual framework, operates within the paradigm of sexual difference. The term equality cannot help but invoke the notion of difference, since it implies equality between different parties, which supposedly pre-exist inequality and will continue to exist in the absence of oppression. However, sexual difference already contains a construction of hierarchy, making "gender equality" an oxymoron. Because it is built around an understanding of this equality as operating *within* the heterosexual couple, whose very relation is based on subordination, gender equality cannot be realised within its own terms. As James writes, "[u]ntil the roles themselves are destroyed, we can never escape the domination of men" (1971b: 194). Equality politics, then, especially in the sphere of the domestic, remains a type of heterosexual reformism. Patricia Cain argues that equality discourse continues to privilege masculinity as the

standard against which women's sameness or difference is measured (1990: 805). Similarly, the authors of *The xenofeminist manifesto* suggest that "the notion of what is 'gendered' sticks disproportionately to the feminine" (Laboria Cuboniks 2015: 6). This means that heterosexual masculinity, which is produced through difference from femininity, implicitly becomes the (impossible) standard for femininity. Femininity, then, is what needs to be erased in a politics of equality, as some women are encouraged to adopt the subject position of possessive individualism in order to enter the work force on the same terms as men. As we saw in chapter three, however, this leads to contradictory demands even for those relatively privileged women who are able to precariously inhabit possessive individualism. Because of the supposedly "independent" capitalist subjectivity's hidden reliance on its opposite, the dependent reproductive labourer, femininity cannot be fully erased. Equality politics thus end up with a punitive and contradictory situation, even for white and bourgeois women, in which the erasure of femininity is a precondition for their success in the public sphere, while they are simultaneously punished if they become too masculinised. Although gender equality has been realised in some limited and often formal senses, this has often served to reproduce gender relations in less apparent and visible ways.

However, this does not mean that a better feminist politics should consist in valuing femininity on its own terms. As the WFH writings point out, there are limits to merely counting and valorising feminised work. In her introduction to *The work of love*, Mariarosa Dalla Costa states that such counting might contribute to the "draining and dispersal of women's energies in the long run, and with respect to a goal of dubious value" (2008: 30). Later writings by James embrace the measurement of women's work (SRC 203) and as we have seen, Federici has moved to a position of valorising domestic work (RPZ 1). Similarly, Hochschild calls for sharing and valorisation of domestic and emotional labour

(2003b: 170). But it is difficult to understand how a moral valorisation of this work could come about. Under capitalism, valorisation is tied to value. Part of the reason that reproductive work, and particularly white, bourgeois motherhood, is morally glorified is that it lacks monetary rewards. As I have noted above, Oksala suggests that only the full commodification of currently unwaged work could lead to equality under capitalism, as women's unwaged obligations mark them as less valuable labour subjects and vice versa. However, Oksala also stresses that the intimacy of emotional labour and the work of pregnancy in particular makes it impossible to commodify those relations without drastically changing their meaning (2016: 300). According to this argument, then, it would be impossible to reach full equality while retaining the nuclear family form as the privileged reproductive arrangement.

Moreover, even if women's large-scale entry into the sphere of waged work had resulted in a genuine redistribution of labour in the home, this would not necessarily solve the issues around social reproduction. Reproductive work would still have punitive effects for those inside and outside of normative family arrangements. As Macdonald argues, increased paternal participation in child care is at most a partial solution, since it is based on the idea of nuclear family as an isolated unit with its own limited resources (2010: 5). Men's increased participation in domestic labour would thus not provide a solution to the constricted time and resources allocated for reproduction under capitalism. While state services could mitigate this issue to some extent, they tend to be patch-work and focused on facilitating parents' participation in waged work while raising children, thus not providing a solution to the many issues surrounding childcare. Furthermore, state services are often inaccessible to those who do not live up to certain conditions, and thus function to discipline families (Marie 2017, Roberts 1997b). The implication that the family should be the primary source of care does not address the uneven distribution of emotional labour for

those who are for various reasons excluded from the family. Nor does a politics that promotes equality within the domestic sphere account for the fact that the family is a privileged site of care because of its structural exclusions of those who are not participating in normative family arrangements. Rather than campaigning for men's increased participation in domestic work and state services to compensate when parental work is not enough, I contend that a WFH perspective leads us to strive for the abolition of the family, and its attendant relations of gender and labour. In "Theses on wages for housework," the authors state that revolution is the abolition of our wageless and waged enslavement to work (NYWFHC 33). A successful reproductive revolution, then, would have to intervene within the domestic sphere in order to undo the division between waged and unwaged labour.

Abolishing the family

Family abolition is not merely about breaking down existing forms of kinship and work relationships. Instead, what is needed is a positive abolition, capable of producing a viable alternative to the present; in other words, negation and affirmation together (Eden 2016: 240). Abolition, as I understand it, is therefore closely linked to the political strategy of refusal outlined above, in that the aim of the "negative" strategy is not merely destructive but rather provides the imaginary for something new. This is the case, I would argue, for all types of abolitionist projects. When thinking about the abolition of gender and the family, we can usefully draw on other abolitionist traditions, such as the project to abolish slavery and the current movement to abolish prisons. Liat Ben-Moshe, citing WEB Du Bois, argues that the abolition of slavery failed to end racial oppression because it was a merely negative reform, and suggests that prison abolition must have a positive programme (2013: 85). For Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, prison abolition is "[n]ot so much the

abolition of prisons but the abolition of a society that could have prisons" (2004: 114). This means that in order to fully undo the punitive and violent social logic of prisons, we must find other forms of care that can address the root causes of violence. Similarly, the abolition of family and gender must contend with the logics that continually reproduce gendered inequalities and hierarchical forms of kinship, as well as reproducing the *need* for families. We cannot abolish gender or the family simply by ignoring them. Rather, we must address and disrupt the underlying causes and contradictions of gendered reproduction.

Abolition means the destruction of the repetition of sameness. Sara Ahmed argues that heterosexuality, based on notions of gendered difference, is bound up with the desire to reproduce the same. The heterosexual bond "gets structured around the desire to 'reproduce well'. Good reproduction is often premised around a fantasy of 'making likeness'" (2004: 128). After all, what is the good life apart from the repetition of the same – those who already have access to comfort ensuring its continuation? In this way, abolition can be understood as the proliferation of difference, both in terms of the proliferation of a multitude of subject positions and in terms of a break from the present (Hester 2018: 31, 64). As such, it involves the conscious failure to reproduce as labour power, in terms of its subjective orientation towards docility and discipline. It also involves the failure to engage with the work ethic of heterosexuality.

The political framework of family abolition has been increasingly discussed over the past few years, although the path towards it remains unclear (Gleeson 2017a: np). However, it is not a new position. As Michelle O'Brien notes in her detailed account of the demand for family abolition, the perspective has a long history in the communist tradition, and can traced back to *The communist manifesto* (O'Brien forthcoming). For Marx and Engels, the call to abolish the family stems from a rejection of the bourgeois family form,

bound up with private property and men's claim to ownership over their wives (2018: 54). Here, then, it is important to stress that families are more than carriers of normative values. Throughout this thesis, I have argued that families are work relations, and in particular, a central site of emotional labour. Furthermore, they function to structure kinship and lines of inheritance, or lack thereof – forms of (dis)possession that are tied to the reproduction of classed and racial difference. Lewis writes that "'family' refers to 'blood' ideology and organized care scarcity: a kind of anti-queerness machine for shoring up race/class and producing binary-gendered workers" (2019b: np). Here, the family is tied up with the exclusion of queerness, the production of gender, and the continued reproduction of overlapping racial and classed dynamics. In a similar vein, Jules Joanne Gleeson and Katie Doyle Griffiths argue that the family is an economic unit, and therefore critiquing the patriarchal or heteronormative values of family relationships is insufficient. They write that "not many will accept their children losing social advantages which they possess. The absence of alternative institutions of obligation ensures that this is felt as a binding burden: beyond the family, there are merely individuals" (2015: np). The challenge of abolitionist projects is to think of how the work that families do can be restructured and diffused, rather than just abandoned, and how we can create other forms of bonds so that we can be more than "merely individuals." We cannot replace family units with detached individuals, as individuals, both adults and children, cannot meet many of their own needs. In Gleeson and Griffiths' words, "[a] purely negative effort to destroy the family would simply result in starving infants" (2015: np), and, I would add, many lonely and sick adults.

With O'Brien, I contend that the demand for family abolition must be articulated according to the specific form the family has taken in different historical phases. Whereas for Marx and Engels, "the family" indicated the emerging hegemony of bourgeois family values, the WFH writings target the 20th century male breadwinner model of a working-

class family. This family model was won through extensive working-class struggle and therefore family abolitionists had to position themselves against the grain of the mainstream workers' movement (O'Brien forthcoming). As Firestone contends, the failures of previous revolutions are "*traceable to the failure of [their] attempts to eliminate the family and sexual repression*" (2015: 190, emphasis in original). As I have outlined in chapters two and three, shifting models of (re)production have further unravelled the already limited access to the kinds of protection and emotional security that the mid-century white nuclear family model offered. Today, a heightened dependence on commodified reproductive services indicates that the family has become increasingly precarious – something that parts of the left consider a worrying sign of neoliberalism's impact on communities (Cooper 2019: 9-15). Hochschild's later writings, for example, articulate a socialist position that defends an expanded notion of "the family," now including single parents and homosexual couples raising children (2003b: 171). According to this logic, the family is under threat and we thus need to find solutions that would shore up family life. With Lewis and Sarah Brouillette, however, I argue that the family has not been destroyed enough (Lewis 2019a: 119, Brouillette 2017: np).

What can account for the persistence of nuclear family models after the end of the family wage and the breadwinner model? I argue that the failure to construct a viable alternative to the family is the reason it remains a hegemonic form, even as it has become more precarious and flexible than it was under Fordism. The nuclear family appears increasingly unstable, as indicated by higher divorce numbers and seemingly more expansive norms surrounding family arrangements. Yet no new model has taken its place, and access to care and resources often remains tied to membership in a family. People are thus made to keep imagining familial relations as the source of "the good life," despite their inadequacy in terms of meeting the emotional and physical needs of most people.

The social relations that could support non-hierarchical, reciprocal, and non-proprietarian modes of kinship cannot be fully realised under capitalism. Therefore, the movement to abolish the family must be concomitant with the abolition of capital, as well as other structures of dominance such as race and heterosexuality. The family as we know it is intimately tied up with these structures through naturalised notions of genetics and blood lines. It is also entangled with capitalist property relations through practices of inheritance and the privatisation of kinship, and the imaginary of family as a form of ownership of other people. Family abolition must thus be the abolition of naturalised, proprietarian forms of kinship and labour (Lewis 2019a: 116)

In undoing the privatisation of family, we must also attack the privatisation of feeling. As I have argued throughout this thesis, the family under capitalism functions as a nexus of privatised emotional bonds. In chapter four, I argued that emotional labour must be refused for a feminist movement to be able to mobilise emotion in an emancipatory fashion. This refusal means doing emotion differently, and rethinking what David Eng calls the feeling of kinship (2010). I am not arguing against emotional care for other people. Rather I want to articulate a politics in which we struggle against emotional labour as we know it – that is, as tied up with forms of sociality that continually recreate privatised social bonds and hierarchically constituted subjectivities. Abolishing the family and gender thus involves the ungendering of emotion. It also involves moving away from “niceness” as the dominant good feeling, and sometimes accepting, even cultivating, bad feeling. Niceness has a tendency to obscure social hierarchy, exploitation, and antagonisms. It is arguably a dominant family value of the bourgeoisie. In Hochschild’s terms, niceness has a propensity to travel upwards in the social hierarchy, accumulating at the top and associating those at the bottom with bad feeling and emotional stigma (2003b: 85). In order to abolish emotional labour and bourgeois family values, niceness has to be disprivileged as a

socially desirable feeling. This would mean that we all have to live with some emotional discomfort, rather than allowing comfort to adhere to the most privileged. It would mean refusing “the good life” as we know it.

It is important to remember the compensatory function of emotional labour – it is often the work that makes up for unsatisfactory conditions, and creates niceness where, for most people, there is none. As such, the movement to abolish emotional labour can only happen in conjunction with the struggle for conditions that do not deplete us emotionally. Emotional reproduction, then, cannot be resisted on its own but needs to be put in the context of the conditions that give rise to it – conditions which I have highlighted throughout this thesis. The abolition of emotional labour is in turn a necessary condition for abolishing the gendered and racialised subjectivities to which it gives rise. In refusing the normative good life, then, we are struggling for something else. This something would be better for a majority of people, since it would resist the punitive and harmful effects of “the good life” on those aspiring to it as well as those who are excluded from it. “Will that association be a family?” James asks, and continues: “It can only be so different from what humanity has known before that we may find a new name for it” (1971b: 196).

It is important to note that in seeking to abolish “the family” and “gender,” the target of this perspective is nuclear families and white, binary heterogender. These social forms are hegemonic, yet they impact various subjects in different ways. The present, while dominated by hegemonic forms of reproduction, is not a coherent totality but contains elements that can be mobilised for a different future. Black feminists, including Wilmette Brown (1976a), Angela Davis (1981), Hazel Carby (1982), Hortense Spillers (1987), and bell hooks (1990), have long argued that black kinship has a different political meaning than white nuclear families, and is less dependent on female subordination. However, hooks suggests that black families have become increasingly invested in white, bourgeois

family ideals, in ways that undo the radical potential of black kinship (1990: 47). Similarly, several scholars have pointed to the normative ideals that structure many gay and lesbian couples and families (Carrington 1999, Warner 1999, Duggan 2002, Montegary 2018). We thus cannot take for granted the anti-normative or subversive character of marginalised subjects' reproductive lives. As we have seen, Fortunati suggested in the early 1980s that gay and lesbian couples might find it difficult to escape the grasp of heterosexual models of family (AR 34). Hence, the lives of some subjects within marginalised groups might be at least partially and precariously integrated into the logic of family values, in a way that may in fact strengthen such values by making them appear more tolerant and flexible. We should, however, pay attention to how many arrangements existing in the present are already marked as deviant or "queered" (Cohen 1997: 458). These traditionally devalued and "deviant" kinship structures, I argue, can contain at least the inspiration for a radical practice on the terrain of reproduction.

Gender abolition

In abolishing the family and feminised forms of labour, the feminist movement should also strive to abolish gender. As we have seen, this involves a project of denaturalising gender, and moving towards a form of subjectivity where assigned gender is increasingly felt as an "external constraint" (Gonzalez and Neton 2013: 90). However, merely negative efforts to abolish gender, without addressing its economic structure in the family, are highly limited. For instance, Alyson Escalante's gender abolitionist essay "Gender nihilism" (2016) consciously refuses to articulate a position that could be turned into a political practice. In simply rejecting existing categories, the text stages a negative refusal of gender. This, however, only amounts to the relinquishing of important conceptual tools for feminist theorising and activism. Rather than moving through identity by using it as an organising

tool, the text prematurely decrees the end of gender.

By contrast, Gonzalez' influential text "Communization and the abolition of gender" links abolition to the movement of communism. Here, communism as "the real movement which abolishes the present state of things" (Marx and Engels 1998: 57) also involves the abolition of gender as one of the central antagonisms that structure the present (Gonzalez 2012: 220). However, Gonzalez reads gender abolition primarily in the context of capitalist population control, and therefore in relation to pregnancy (2012: 224). From Gonzalez' account, it is difficult to answer how gender will be abolished, other than through the invention of extra-uterine biological reproduction. But gender abolition cannot be reduced to the undoing of pregnancy, as gender cannot be reduced to the difference of the pregnant body. As we have seen, it includes the construction of certain subjects as caring and intersubjective, whereas others are marked as essentially independent of social constraints and needs.

Both Escalante's nihilism and Gonzalez' account of biological reproduction fail to articulate a sufficiently expansive notion of gender, which links it to a range of social relations. For Firestone, the abolition of gender could only come through the radical restructuring of households and models of kinship, which is arguably more important for her than technological interventions into pregnancy (2015: 202-216).[68] With her, we can try to think about the necessary conditions for the remaking of gender through the material conditions of reproduction. If femininity is a work function (RPZ 8), the abolition of gender is necessarily part and parcel of a feminist antiwork and antifamily position. The abolition of gender is thus tightly intertwined with family abolition. As James suggests in her essay "The American family," the radical rethinking of reproductive work and gender arrangements would lead to the end of the family as we know it. She writes that "[i]t is not only the division of labor between men and women which must be altered but the nature of

[68] See Gotby (2018a) for an account of Firestone's writings on love and sexuality.

that labor itself" (1971b: 197). This, she suggests, would spell "the end of bourgeois society and of the bourgeois family with it" (1971b: 195).

Going beyond radically changing the conditions and relations of labour that currently structure reproduction, gender abolition would involve undoing all the restrictions of gender identity, and stripping bodily markers of their social significance (Hester 2018: 29-30). This means following black, indigenous, trans, and intersex feminists, who have long struggled against the physical and psychic imposition of binary, white heterogender. Reading trans femininity not as an affirmation of womanhood but its partial destruction, Gleeson situates trans feminism as a movement against womanhood. The inclusion of trans women in the naturalised category of womanhood threatens the logic of that category. She writes: "If co-existence cannot be achieved, abolition is inevitable" (2017b: np). A trans feminist project of abolition should thus be understood as more than either a merely nihilist or negative undoing of gender, or a simple affirmation of pre-existing models of gendered subjectivity. Rather, it stages a more complicated project of gender abolition in which binary gendered subjectivity is undermined through the denaturalising choice of a gendered life other than that which is socially imposed. This does not imply that all trans people are committed to abolishing gender, but rather that trans feminist perspectives are essential for an abolitionist project that refuses to take biological sex as the underlying truth of gender. Gonzalez and Neton argue that as sex and gender are two sides of the same coin, they can only be abolished together (2013: 80).

In chapter three, I discussed how gender identities are never fully coherent and stable. In Hochschild's terms, people's gender strategies contain contradictions and instabilities. However, such contradictions can in many cases be incorporated into binary constructions of gender. Contemporary models of gender in particular seem to allow for a degree of flexibility. A gender abolitionist project must thus seek to highlight and heighten

the contradictions of gender, pointing to its inherent instability. In such a way, gender can hopefully be experienced less as an “inner truth” of the subject, internalised in part through the performance of emotional labour. Rather, it could come to be experienced as a management technique and an external imposition. This, as I have argued throughout this thesis, is the first step towards moving beyond gender.

Furthermore, the abolition of gender is impossible without the abolition of heterosexuality, and sexual identities more broadly. This might entail giving up some of the pleasures that people currently experience as part of their internalised, heterosexual gender performance. Queer thought and practice, however, gesture towards the possibility of other pleasures, currently made unthinkable by the imposition of sexual identity as an inner truth. For James, the gay movement opens the way for an individuality free of sexual identity (1971a: 13). James describes gay politics, and the lesbian movement in particular, as being on the forefront of the struggle against current gender relations. Here, we can draw a parallel to Floyd’s queer Marxism, in which both heterosexuality and homosexuality are described as reified social categories. For Floyd, like James, we must move through these identity categories in order to go beyond them (2009: 224). However, James links this to a feminist project in which the abolition of sexual identity is tied to a refusal of normative reproductive relationships. Queer and trans feminism, as I will explore in greater detail in the next section, are thus essential for the positive abolition of gender through the invention of new gendered and sexualised ways of being.

In this section, I have started to unpack what a politics of abolition would mean. It involves the undoing of privileged forms of subjectivity and reproduction, which have real and violent effects on all of us, especially those who fail to live up to these forms, or refuse to aspire to them. However, such excluded forms of reproduction can tell us something about alternative forms of life, and how to build a different future. This requires not only the

rejection of binary norms and nuclear family structures, but radical intervention into the lived forms of reproduction in which people engage. Gender and family abolitionism involves pursuing "a n *active* formulation of anti-familial politics" (Gleeson and Griffiths 2015: np, emphasis in original). This cannot be a politics that merely aims to expand the privileges of the family to include less normative family constellations, as such privileges are the result of the exclusions on which the family form depends. The remainder of this chapter will be concerned with mapping out some of the potentials and limitations of a queer politics of abolition.

Queering emotional reproduction

In this section, I explore modes of sociality that move away from individualism, privacy, and property. Starting from the position that our current organisation of social life cannot adequately meet the needs and desires of most people, I will gesture towards alternative modes of being. I will not more than sketch these possibilities, both for lack of space and because I want to heed Weeks' warning against knowing "too much too soon" – that is, having a ready-made blueprint for future sociality (2011: 213). As Firestone remarks, however, we might still need to make "dangerously utopian" gestures towards the future, in order to counter "the peculiar failure of imagination concerning alternatives to the family" (2015: 203). While the material in this section gestures towards some directions for further research, we should also note that a materialist standpoint demands that we work out these possibilities in practice rather than just conceptually. Such work is often fraught, as we struggle against material restrictions and to unlearn habitual emotional responses, but it is a crucial aspect of moving towards a more liveable world.

In this section I use the concept of queering to highlight how currently "deviant" practices of reproduction can be mobilised to undo some of the institutionalised modes of

reproduction that structure the present. Here, then, queerness refers to a mode of political engagement rather than merely addressing people of certain sexual and gendered identifications (Fraser and Lamble 2015: 64). Queering is on the side of a different future because heterosexuality is so tightly imbricated with social and material forms of property – that is, with the preservation of sameness. This section, while focusing on modes of sociality, will explore the connections between the emotional and the material, as new forms of sociality will require the innovative reorganisation of material resources. I am interested in material practices that "can create and sustain alternative values, needs, and desires" (Weeks 1998: 145). These are modes of queer world-making, in which counter-hegemonic practices of sociality can be formed.

I am not suggesting that such practices are the only or even most important form of politics. Alternative practices of care cannot prefigure the new forms of gendered and sexual relations that we might want to see under a different mode of production (Drucker 2015: 321, O'Brien forthcoming). The existence of material constraints on these alternative practices suggests that alternative forms of sociality are structurally limited. This means that we need to engage in efforts to break down the boundaries of production and reproduction, and struggle across currently divided spheres. Rather than prefiguring a different world or offering a ready-made alternative to the existing mode of production, non-normative forms of reproduction offer sites from which to struggle. These attempts at queer world-making, always limited in their scope, can illustrate "that this world is not enough" (Muñoz 2009: 1). Like outlawed emotions, then, experiments in alternative forms of reproduction can provide epistemological tools for an anticapitalist politics, while also providing some of the material and emotional support required for such politics. A politics based on queer reproduction will constantly come upon constraints, where capitalist forms of work, property, and sociality block alternative modes of being. But these limits are in

themselves important – by identifying them, we can find ways to struggle against them. Queer reproduction is thus an expansive project that seems to remake not just the domestic sphere but the world as we know it.

We can use outlawed needs and feelings to orientate our radical politics (Jaggar 1992: 131, Hennessy 2013: 228). As these needs and emotions point to a world that is more just and less exploitative, they form an expansive horizon for radical politics. Our unmet needs can shape our desire for a different world. I want to give emotion and desire a central place in radical politics, and look at how our struggles are bound together through emotional practices. Larne Abse Gogarty and Hannah Proctor, in their essay “Communist feelings” (2019), argue for the exploration of the emotional worlds of radical politics. Political struggles, they suggest, can involve feelings of both disillusion and comradely love. We thus need to be attentive to how emotional relations are built and sustained in left movements. Such attention to emotional investments are necessary for left movements to sustain themselves – it is essential that we create spaces where the immediate experiences of “ecstasy and warmth” can co-exist with political ideas and long-term goals (Automnia 2015: np).

This concern for feelings and needs can also raise questions of scale. How do we go beyond the worlds of queer and left-wing political cultures, to realise a reorganisation of reproduction for everyone? Such a project implies the abolition of waged work, which currently dominates and devalues reproduction, and limits our emotional horizons. It also puts into question the activity of the welfare state, whose politics of reproduction often involve a normative vision of gendered and sexual relations (Dalla Costa 2015: 94, Cooper 2017). It would mean a politics that goes beyond patch-work welfare reforms that merely complement unwaged reproductive work in the family. Instead, large-scale innovations in housing, city planning, education, elder care, and health (including mental health) are

needed in order to generalise less oppressive and exploitative forms of reproduction. These interventions, moreover, would need to resist implicit assumptions of the family as the central site of reproductive work. We need to abandon the notion that the family is necessary or desirable as the centre of reproduction and the social world of needs. Instead, such interventions could help us overcome the "organized care scarcity" that Lewis sees as essential in upholding family values (2019b: np). As Barrett and McIntosh suggest, family abolitionism might be less a project of replacing the family with a new hegemonic social model, and more one of making family unnecessary for people's survival, by constituting non-familial means of satisfying needs (2015: 149).

Currently, child care and elder care are often organised along normative understandings of social property and propriety. A queer framework recognises how these forms of care are regulated through welfare politics and structures of family law. A queer critique of reproduction thus implies a critique of the state, and offers ways of going beyond heteronormative forms of kinship. Over the past decades, a wealth of research surrounding queer kinship has focused on the relation to children. Gay and lesbian people have gone from being considered non-reproductive to being increasingly integrated in legalised forms of reproduction.[69] However, as Laura Heston shows, queer familial innovations outside legal and culturally normative boundaries show that gay and lesbian people raising children are not waiting for the state's permission to queer their families, and that queer parenting often exceeds legitimised forms of legal and biological parenthood. She discusses multiple and non-legalised parenting forms, where children are raised by people who are not necessarily recognisable as parents, either in the sense of being "blood relations" or according to legal models of custody rights (2013: 261, 263). Here, queer parenting resists the zero-sum game of emotional exclusivity that structures

[69] See for instance Weston (1991), Ryan-Flood (2005), Gabb (2017), Austin and Capper (2018: 456), and Montegary (2018).

normative kinship forms. Queer models of parenting thus refuse the exclusive, proprietarian logic of heterosexual families, where there can be only one person primarily responsible for the emotional care of children. However, parenting practices which exist in heterosexual families, such as adoption, surrogacy, and reliance on nannies, already implicitly question the logic whereby a child can only have one mother (Grayson 1998: 542, Park 2006: 218, Eng 2010: 94, Macdonald 2010: 13, Lewis 2019a). A queer critique of reproductive labour, then, points to the necessarily unstable aspects of the institution of heterosexual reproduction. It explores all the potentials for a different form of reproduction, and dependencies on the reproductive labour of various subjects, which have had to be excluded and made invisible in order for the nuclear family form to become intelligible. A radical queer movement can utilise those gaps for a politics of multiple and currently unintelligible forms of reproduction.

While queer parenthood is increasingly familiar, queer elder care has been less explored. However, I argue that elder care should be central to rethinking models of reproduction. Ageing, illness, disability, and death imply a loss of autonomy, and therefore challenge ideals of liberal subjecthood and possessive individualism. As such, ageing is conspicuously absent from much political discourse. There is a sense in which the elderly have to be removed and made invisible in order for ideals of the productive subject, and the family as the reproduction of life, to become sustainable. Moreover, the valuation of capitalist production serves to devalue the lives of the elderly (Hochschild 1973: x, RPZ 116). Old age is therefore made socially invisible, a tendency that is replicated both in theory and left-wing political movements (RPZ 120). The material organisation of reproduction also facilitates this invisibility of the elderly. Federici writes about how gentrification threatens the forms of working-class community and solidarity that have provided a social and material safety net for elderly people, outside the nuclear family

(RPZ 115). Hochschild's first book, *The unexpected community* (1973), explores how such solidarity can be recreated. The old people she studied were mostly widows, who were inventing new forms of sociality after their nuclear family life had ended. Together, the elderly women negotiated sickness and death, but also communal activity and friendship. The project of queering elder care can look to such practices for inspiration for how to go beyond our currently privatised models of sociality and reproduction.

Here, it is important to note the ways in which the politics of child care and elder care fit together, through a more generalised logic of heterosexual temporality and genealogy. As Kath Weston points out, the fear of ageing and dying alone may be a motivating factor behind the decision to have children (1991: 26). Family is one of the few structures that encourage intergenerational solidarity, thus offering some support in an increasingly age-stratified society (Hochschild 1973: 21). Participating in the logic of property, normative family based on generational reproduction therefore functions as a form of insurance against one's future exclusion from reproductive relationships. Capitalist society creates distinct domains for both children and the elderly, separating them from those participating in waged work (PWSC 22, 38). A heteronormative model of life under capitalism assumes distinct stages of life, such as childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle age, and old age. These correspond to separate phases of waged work and reproductive labour, and various life events, including marriage and childbirth. Queer theorists such as Muñoz are sensitive to the normalising aspects of this form of temporality (2009: 22). Thus, I am critical of the model suggested by Gleeson and Griffiths in their essay "Kinderkommunismus" (2015), in which family abolition proceeds through the institution of crèches that segregate infants and young people from not only their parents but also other generations and extra-familial bonds. A queer and communist politics of reproduction, I argue, must strive for generational integration and the undoing of separate

institutions for different age groups.

This political project might proceed from the needs of elderly queer people, who are often isolated from kin and face higher levels of economic precarity (Drucker 2015: 358). The goal should be to make elder care and intergenerational solidarity generally accessible, thus counteracting the privatisation of care within kinship structures as well as the abusive and exploitative relations of care within many private and state facilities. Moving away from a model where having children becomes an investment in one's own future access to care is essential for allowing for other forms of reproduction, which are less based on property and obligation. Jane Ward argues that seeing children as an investment in the future prevents pleasurable parent-child relations in the present, and obstruct more comradely and non-exclusive forms of child care (2013: 232, 233). We thus need to work against forms of child care as the emotional reproduction of class relations that I outlined in chapter two. Rather than focusing on child care and elder care as separate issues, I suggest we need to explore how notions and practices of familial descent foreclose alternative forms of care, which are less age-segregated and less based on notions of property.

Moving beyond the family

In this project, we can draw inspiration from the African American tradition of multiple forms of parenting. As Patricia Hill Collins suggests, these models are not exclusively about the care of one's own children, but a form of guardianship of the community as a whole. Othermothering, the practice of being an extra parent of someone else's child, can become community othermothering, a form of political leadership centred on questions of care. These practices, she writes, can be invoked as symbols of power, as black traditions of mothering are central in the reproduction of resistance (1994: 67, 70). Community

othermothers, Stanlie James suggests, see that problems that many people suffer from can only be solved through collective action (1993: 47). These multiple and overlapping practices of mothering thus adhere to a less proprietarian model, and are geared towards forms of collective political action. Following Alexis Pauline Gumbs, we might distinguish between motherhood as a status of ownership and mothering as a practice (2016: 22). Gumbs draws on Hortense Spillers' writings, which point to the legacy of slavery in practices of black mothering, where the child was not seen as owned by the mother (1987: 73). While these practices stem from histories of extreme oppression and exploitation, they also point to a tradition of resistance and a mode of being that departs from normative logics of care. Rather than relying on exclusive models of kinship, which tend to place the burden of care on one person, they are capable of integrating different people with various needs into caring relationships. They are also capable of undoing the individualising logic of care, which is particularly pronounced under neoliberal regimes. Othermothering thus counteracts the idea that a lack of care or "delinquent youths" are the result of individual failure. Instead, it articulates black mothering itself as a resistance to patriarchal and racist modes of governance. Here, we can think of Brown's argument that black women's supposed failure to raise disciplined workers is a form of resistance (1976b: 5)

As Gumbs suggests, black mothering is often pathologised and criminalised (2010: 196). Her concerns resemble those of BWFWFH, which centred on access to welfare for black women and resistance to racist practices of sterilisation (NYWFC 54). Racialisation involves the marking of certain groups as worthless, which facilitates their exploitation as surplus populations (Hong 2012: 92). In order to expand our understandings of racialised and working-class resistance, we also need to explore the so-called lumpen proletariat as a political subject (Boggs 1963: 50). O'Brien argues that while Marx and Engels rejected the lumpen proletariat in favour of the industrial proletariat, the working class of their time

"was not a unified, homogenous proletarian mass disciplined by factory life, but a cacophony of crime and social chaos" – more suggestive of "Fourier's queer communism than Engels' gravitation to a natural monogamy" (forthcoming). Criminalised modes of survival can be read as a form of resistance to property and propriety. As such, informal economies also create the context for non-familial modes of solidarity. As I argued in chapter four, learning from these practices of solidarity involves unlearning habitual emotional responses which tend to discount marginalised subjects as political actors. Resistance to our reproduction as labour power thus also implies resistance to the production and demarcation of surplus populations, including the refusal of the criminalisation and pathologisation of non-normative forms of reproduction. We can look at these forms as models from which we can learn, even though they are shaped and limited by histories of extreme exploitation and violence.

This applies especially to queer forms of racialised reproduction. While we should be careful not to romanticise such arrangements, which may also contain exploitative labour relations (Raha 2018: 114-115), they can serve as sources of inspiration from which we can draw selectively. As Chandan Reddy argues, the queer, racialised forms of kinship portrayed in Jennie Livingston's film *Paris is burning* founded their cohesion on the damage produced by heteronormative modes of familial reproduction. Coontz argues that black families have historically been less likely to institutionalise orphans and the elderly, as these people were cared for within extended kinship networks (1988: 315). However, many queer people are excluded even from more expansive forms of kinship. We can understand such exclusions in terms of hooks' notion of the normativising of black families under the influence of white bourgeois subjectivity (1990: 47), and Gumbs' description of the heteronormativising influences of some black nationalist and pro-natalist discourse (2010: 214). As I argued above, currently marginalised people are not immune to

normalising and exclusive modes of kinship, but can themselves become participants of the exclusions of normative family values. Again, negative queer histories and emotions of trauma and exclusion can be productive for alternative models of solidarity and care.

While the arrangements portrayed in *Paris is burning* participate in the language of houses and family, Reddy suggests, they do not succumb to the logic of sexuality as privacy, which tends to further isolate queer subjects (1998: 373). The collective queer life of metropolitian cities, such as New York's ball scene explored in *Paris is burning*, has historically revolved around criminalised or grey-market forms of reproduction. These forms of survival are not necessarily mediated through the gendered practices of the state, the wage, or the family (O'Brien forthcoming). Here, I want to introduce the criminal queer as a figure for political thought. Similar to the figure of the housewife in WFH writings, and the elderly people in Hochschild's first book, the criminal queer is devalued as a result of exclusion from formal wage economies. Moreover, this figure struggles from a position of exclusion from normative familial structures. If the figure of the proletarian, in Marx's characterisation, only owns to his capacity to labour, the criminal queer owns even less. Throughout this thesis, I have pointed to the conditions that underlie the traditional proletarian's capacity to labour – conditions from which the criminal queer is excluded. This produces a life world often marked by mental and physical illness, imprisonment, and death. But it also allows us to glimpse traces of a different form of sociality and solidarity, as communities are created to protect their members from various forms of violence. This particular form of lumpen proletariat, we might speculate, may be politically important as it simultaneously fulfils and exceeds the demands of capital (Ferguson 2004: 15, Raha 2018: 119).

One example of this practice was Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR), a group of trans, queer, and gender non-conforming people of colour, founded in 1970 by

Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson. Simultaneously an activist group and a collective based on reproductive labour, STAR provided housing, food, emotional support, prisoner solidarity, and advocacy for the black and latinx trans community (STAR 2013, Shepherd 2008). For young trans people of colour who had been turned away by their families, Rivera and Johnson offered a place to sleep in the STAR house. It also extended some forms of care to the local community, including food and child care. STAR relied on criminalised means of reproduction – paying the rent with money from sex work and feeding its members through shoplifting (Raha 2018: 135-137). Here, we can note a link between what Hennessy calls outlaw needs, and acts which are actually criminalised. The desire for a different world is intimately tied to an economy of criminalised practices to satisfy need.

These practices prefigured the system of "houses" portrayed in *Paris is burning.* Weeks suggests that the houses constitute a form of self-valorisation, a selective practice of immanent resistance that allows us to constitute new collective subjectivities (1998: 145-150). More so than the ball scene houses, STAR understood themselves as engaging in a revolutionary practice, explicitly politicising their needs and desires. They also intervened in, and supported, diverse political movements, such as the gay liberation movement, feminism, and antiracist movements (STAR 2013: 13). In their practice of reproduction, they used many of the tools advocated by WFH, such as shoplifting or "proletarian shopping" (Toupin 2018: 207, SRC 77). In the WFH literature, such practice emerges as a form of sabotage on the site of consumption, asserting the collective power of the proletariat to intervene in reproduction despite the threat of state violence. In their political practice, WFH supported collective housing for those who had been harmed by nuclear families (Toupin 2018: 177). As we have seen, they also constructed sex work as a form of women's self-determination within the constricting possibilities of feminised

labour, although they did not articulate this explicitly in terms of trans politics. In a later essay, however, Federici names queer, trans and intersex movements as part of the contemporary horizon of struggles against reproduction and the gender division of labour, suggesting that

> these phenomena point not only to a breakdown of disciplinary mechanisms but to a profound desire for a remolding of our humanity in ways different from, in fact the opposite to, those that centuries of capitalist industrial discipline have tried to impose on us. (2018b: 195)

With Reddy, we can think about how STAR and the ball scene do not mimic white, heteronormative notions of home, but rather provide an unstable and flexible definition of the house, shifting from “family” to “street gang” (1998: 371). While these arrangements are limited by various material constraints, and do not constitute ideal forms, they still provide practical examples for how to struggle for better, less exclusionary reproductive arrangements. Through engaging in criminalised economies, they also exist at least partially outside gendered distinctions between production and reproduction, and public and private spheres.

Projects such as STAR present challenges for how to sustain and generalise alternative forms of reproduction. The STAR house was a relatively short-lived experiment, and the untimely deaths of its founders show the need for a continued struggle for the survival of trans women of colour. Yet it can map out some directions for activism on the site of reproduction. Such activism, as Berlant and Warner show, is frequently dismissed as being merely engaged with “lifestyle.” By contrast, they refer to it as a queer public culture or a world-making project,

> where “world,” like “public,” differs from community or group because it necessarily includes

> more people than can be identified, more spaces than can be mapped beyond a few reference points, modes of feeling that can be learned rather than experienced as a birthright. (1998: 558)

They cricitise Fraser's model of politics, presented in her book *Justice interruptus* (1997: 17-19), which posits gay and lesbian movements as struggles for recognition, and thus as the opposite of class-based demands for redistribution. Berlant and Warner assert that to understand the queer politics of world-making "only as self-expression or as a demand for recognition would be to misrecognize the fundamentally unequal material conditions whereby the institutions of social reproduction are coupled to the forms of hetero culture" (1998: 561). I argue that these projects of world-making are a necessary aspect of radical politics, which strive to uncouple social reproduction from both heterosexuality and capitalist institutions. Their limitations can in themselves be instructive for new directions for struggle. For example, difficulty in scaling up these projects due to lack of suitable housing can lead us to struggle for the production of affordable or free homes that do not assume a normative family model or individualising modes of property ownership. As we have seen, WFH argued that free and decent housing is an important aspect of reconfiguring reproduction, which can help us expand the horizon of reproductive needs. WFH struggles also addressed the working conditions of reproductive labour in terms of free access to adequate public spaces, transport, and city planning, thus extending beyond the private sphere towards a project of world-making (Pompei 1972: 4, Toupin 2018: 211).

When considering the direction of an emancipatory politics of reproduction, it is worth asking what demands would facilitate non-normative forms of reproduction, and ensure the survival and wellbeing of those currently most marginalised. In this way, queer politics and theory can become less concerned with antinormativity as a goal in itself,[70] and more

[70] The stakes of such a focus on antinormativity are discussed in a 2015 special issue of *Differences*, edited by Robyn Wiegman and Elizabeth A. Wilson.

concerned with overcoming the material constraints that currently bar a different future. This might be a daunting task, as there are presently a multitude of structures that limit more emancipatory forms of reproduction. Yet it is necessary to keep searching for the limits that currently curtail a liberatory reproductive politics, and struggle to surpass those limits. This also means that there is no one site that can be privileged in struggling for a better future – reproductive struggles must be waged in a number of different sites, and call for a politics of coalition between variously marginalised and exploited groups. Such coalitions would need to start from James' principle of unity on the basis of the needs of the most precarious and oppressed groups, rather than on false universality on the basis of the perceived interest of the majority. Such politics, as James suggests, would strengthen the working class by giving increased power and visibility to its most vulnerable members, combining struggles against oppression with those against exploitation and economic precarity (SRC 63, 81). This, I argue, is a necessary part of undoing the subjective and emotional hierarchies that currently structure left politics, as well as society more broadly.

We can see, then, that material conditions of work are very tightly imbricated with subjective structures of emotional reproduction. O'Brien describes her family-abolitionist vision as

> communes of a couple hundred people who pool reproductive labor and share in child-rearing, include some attention to sexual pleasure and fulfillment, and work to meet everyone's interpersonal and development needs without barring chosen affective, romantic or parental bonds between individuals. (forthcoming)

Here, the housing unit serves as the material condition for affective needs and desires. It combines needs for various types of care with the desire for sexual and emotional

satisfaction. We can see how this type of project would both represent and require a large-scale challenge to the current organisation of reproduction, reorganising housing, work, care, and sociality. Contemporary feminist politics can thus learn from the visions of the history of materialist feminist intervention in collective reproduction explored in Dolores Hayden's 1981 book *The grand domestic revolution*.[71] While many of these projects were severely limited in various ways, they share the belief that the domestic is not a static unit, but that it can and must be changed in order for society to change.

New horizons of feeling

It is important, then, to think about the material conditions for new forms of sociality. In his investigation of the current politics of friendship, Alan Sears notes that the current organisation of waged work, together with increased pressures on families to provide unwaged care work, leaves little time for pleasurable interactions with friends. Furthermore, the relatively low level of commodification of friendship compared to romantic or familial attachments means that it is currently increasingly marginalised in our lives (2006: 36-37). Focusing on such constraints might enable a radical politics of friendship to emerge, which is a distinct political project from Hochschild's focus on facilitating family relationships. In her later work, Hochschild posits a zero-sum game between the public culture of work and the intimacy of family, where the more work in the public realm is valued, the more private life is devalued. She thus calls for a renewed emotional investment in family life (1997: 198, 249). However, a politics which seeks to remodel sociality beyond the boundaries of private and public, and beyond the spheres of waged work and family life, might do well in exploring the queer potentials of a politics of friendship. Friendship, and other non-kinship forms of sociality, are neither on the side of

[71] See also Hester and Srnicek (forthcoming) for an exploration of the material conditions of reproduction.

the family nor on the side of waged work. This queer history predates the emergence of stable lesbian and gay identities, emerging in 19th century cultures of romantic friendship in which same-sex intimacy could flourish (Drucker 2015: 72). As Weston points out in her study of "chosen family," queer people have often created intimate networks where there is little symbolic differentiation between erotic and non-erotic ties, or friends and family. As it crosses lines of households, chosen family is also a means of undoing boundaries between the public and private (1991: 205-206).

It is in this context of public intimacy and queer world-making that we should be wary of the mainstream LGBT movement's recent turn to the politics of love. Rather than politicising emotion, the now commonplace slogan "love is love" serves to privatise queer erotic bonds in the name of romance. As I have argued elsewhere (Gotby 2018b), such focus tends to erase the specificity of queer life in favour of a political argument based on the purported emotional similarity of queer and heterosexual lives. While this political focus has undoubtedly brought material benefits to many gay and lesbian couples, it is part of a more generalised attack on the possibilities of queer world-making. Such privatisation of feeling is part and parcel of the privatisation of care under neoliberal regimes (Cooper 2017: 174). A queer politics, I argue, should not concern itself with expanding discourses of romantic love. Instead, we need to counter the organisation of life that makes romance and familial ties the precondition for access to emotional and material forms of care and resources.[72] A contemporary queer politics needs to attack the construction of exclusive familial bonds through law. Such politics would centre on friendship as a more open form of relationality, which could potentially traverse generational boundaries, as well as allowing for more expansive constructions of intimacy. A focus on friendship could also tell us something about how to remodel caring relationships in more comradely ways, in which

[72] Cooper's account of ACT UP underscores how their activism sought to detach access to care from privatised models of family responsibility and employment (2017: 211).

care is not based on bonds defined according to legal or biological standards (Lewis 2019a: 22).[73]

Queer Marxist feminist Rosemary Hennessy has suggested that the concept of love should be reclaimed as the name for "an affect-culture of collaboration and passionate reason that accompanies the conversion of living labor into organized resistance" (2013: 206). Her project is close to those of Kollontai (1980: 285, 289) and Firestone (2015: 205), who argue for the generalisation of feelings currently reserved for romantic intimacy. Making use of a Spinozist notion of affirmative affect, Hennessy re-articulates love as a collective political practice.[74] Weeks, drawing on a Nietzschean tradition of affirmation, articulates a politics built on forms of laughter, where ironic and joyful laughter can articulate a politics against *ressentiment*, which she understands in terms of the reduction of capacity for action (1998: 137-143). I appreciate Weeks and Hennessy's emphasis on affective cultures linked to collective resistance. However, I have argued for a politics where "negative" feelings are not necessarily understood as capacity-reducing. Rather, in a politics against normative patterns of emotional labour, I argue that it is necessary to reclaim some of the "bad" feelings that emotional labour most often serves to manage and outlaw. Contrary to a Spinozist logic, I contend that good feeling is sometimes what reduces our capacity for action. The reclamation of outlaw feelings increases the width of our affective capacity, and makes radical use of those feelings that are deemed bad or harmful. This also implies the degendering of feeling, where currently gender-coded emotions become accessible to all people. I am also concerned that the emotion of love is too overburdened with meanings of romantic and familial intimacy and exclusivity, in a way that makes it difficult to reclaim for a more collective project. As I argued in chapter two, love is especially closely associated with demands for privatised arrangements of care and

[73] See also Gotby (2019) for an account of criminalisation, reproduction, and comradeship.
[74] For a critique of Spinozist conceptions of love, see Wilkinson (2017).

emotional labour.

A political project of refusing emotional labour must strive to make sociality less like work by freeing it from current constraints. Emotion becomes labour through its privatisation and individualisation. Gendered work is not something that we can simply step outside of. Rather, it is dependent on material constraints and structures of production. Yet such labour could also entail playing or experimenting with different forms of sociality, without denying that these experiments depend on labour.[75] As the writings of WDL show, reproductive labour is not automatically free when performed in the context of queer relationships, yet it does not necessarily carry with it the reproduction of the same coercive structures and forms of devaluation of the labouring subject. Rather, it can be geared towards producing outlawed pleasure and power. As Hall puts it, "[o]ur ability to live without men, our ability to express ourselves and our feelings for each other are in turn a source of power" (1975: 4). Power and freedom are thus not individualised but rather understood within the context of relations of shared labour and care, as well as a commitment to a politics of reproducing against capital's normativising tendencies.

Interventions into alternative forms of reproduction and gendered being, then, do not automatically allow us to step outside the sphere of work, but might position that work differently within dominant and coercive structures. Queerness, historically lacking ties to the privatised sphere of the family as well as the normative gender formations produced through waged work, might offer some tools for inventing a different form of emotional reproduction – one which can undo some of the boundaries that currently restrict emotional experience. Queerness also offers tools for politicising intimacy, which no longer appears as naturally given. Here, we can draw on a long history of working-class sociality

[75] Here, we can think of Meg Wesling's concept of queer value, which uses the distinction between labour and play to argue that "drag (as playful work) paradoxically reveals not just the social construction of gender but its status as labor, as the coercive or compulsory efforts that produce the gendered body which capital needs for its productive system" (2011: 111).

outside the family (O'Brien forthcoming). Coontz argues that in the early 20th century, "the idea that the family and the sexual division of labour were presocial and sacrosanct imparted a new sense of both privacy and universality to family life and gender roles" (1988: 332). Queerness can produce a form of subjectivity that is not understood as pre-social but rather emerges as a political subjectivity. Sociality and emotional bonds then come to have an immediately political and collective character, which can be mobilised for various projects of solidarity and coalition-building. Here, there is no strict boundary between the political and the pleasure of intimate connections. In fact, queerness as a form of political subjectivity can draw on the experience of public forms of feeling, and acquired capacities for emotional labour, in order to undo the distinction posited by capitalist constructions of public and private. By using modes of work and play, emotional labour can be turned against the coercive management of feeling, instead using our acquired skilfulness of emotion to experiment with new forms of sociality.

This requires that we try to undo the practices of individualism that structure much of our daily lives, including much activist work. As I have argued, emotional labour is essential for creating individualised modes of subjectivity, which also require that such labour remains invisible. However, as Lewis writes, "[w]e are the makers of one another. And we could learn collectively to act like it" (2019a: 19-20). Similarly, Cynthia Dewi Oka argues that we need to become "encumbered with and responsible for each other" (2016: 57). Such ways of relating to other people would require the undoing of the invisible dependency of individualism on various forms of reproductive labour. Challenging current forms of emotional labour could threaten individualism, and conversely, the refusal of affective individualism would lessen the need for emotional labour. Instead, we could move towards the forms of non-sovereign relationality that Berlant gestures towards. For Berlant, this will involve "unlearning the expectations of sovereignty as self-possession, a

mechanism for control and evidence of freedom" (2016: 408). Experimentation into new forms of being together, then, would have to search for new forms of freedom, through collective subjectivity. When we no longer posit individualism as a precondition of freedom, we can recognise that it is produced through coercive forms of labour.

Here, it is useful to return to Weeks' reformulation of feminist standpoints, as collective forms of subjectivity constituted by labour, selectively using the histories and practices available to them (1998: 136). Rather than affirming or valorising feminised work or emotional labour *tout court*, then, we can use historical practices and modes of being as a way to simultaneously denaturalise and mobilise particular capacities. In this section, I have briefly sketched some modes of alternative sociality that exist in the present, and which provide directions for new forms of sociality through challenging the boundaries that currently limit such practices. We can also selectively draw from historical examples of different modes of being. Coontz outlines working-class life in the US in the late 19th and early 20th century, in which the boundaries between private and public were not drawn as rigidly as in later versions of working-class sociality (1988: 295). Marginalised and surplus populations, who never had access to the forms of institutional security that came to dominate working-class sociality in the Fordist era, continue to carry this legacy today, despite, or rather because of, significant hardship. There is a link between these forms of sociality and the project of reclaiming social wealth, the means of production, and access to space. As Federici and Hochschild show in their considerations of elder care, forms of solidarity and care depend on appropriate spatial and material conditions. Conversely, the politics of reclaiming material wealth cannot do without a focus on the emotional dimensions of ownership and belonging, and how these must be changed in the process of creating more liveable futures. Radical politics cannot do without an emphasis on emotional reproduction and social forms, and we must assume that our current forms of

sociality will be transformed within the process of transforming society.

This chapter has moved beyond the writings of WFH and Hochschild, while retaining their focus on emotion, subjectivity, and antagonism. Working towards a radical politics of reproduction in the 21st century, I have explored the demands for family abolition and gender abolition. Moreover, I have outlined alternative modes of sociality that move beyond the privatised relations of family and labour. These demands and experiments, I argue, are in line with the core tenets of the WFH perspective, as sketched in the introduction to this thesis. In this way, a WFH perspective on emotional reproduction can lead us to imagine and practice new and liberatory forms of living.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have presented a theory of emotional reproduction, in which emotional labour forms an integral part of social reproduction more broadly. Rather than seeing emotional labour as a phenomenon emerging with the post-Fordist economic system, I have traced a longer history and a broader concept of emotional reproduction, as a part of both waged and unwaged forms of reproductive labour. The commodification of emotional labour has made such labour more visible, but it did not create it. I have argued that emotion forms a key part of reproductive work, and that emotional labour is often necessary to tie together disparate acts into more coherent forms of care, which can subsist over time. In this way, emotional labour indicates that reproductive work is not only necessary for those who are very young, very old, sick or disabled, but that all of us rely on other people to fulfil our needs. As emotional labour is tied up with the work of producing gender hierarchies, it also becomes exploitable, and some people's emotional needs are regarded as more important than those of others.

Emotional reproduction is a term that names the ways in which emotion participates in the continual remaking of this world. This remaking is currently tied to unequal forms of labour and reward, but could potentially be turned into a project of making the world differently. The world as we know it is marked by disparities in which some people experience a lack of emotional comfort, leading to perennial loneliness and poor mental health. Other people experience an excess of emotional comfort, as they are shielded from experiencing other people's discomfort and emotional depletion. In *The second shift*, Hochschild diagnoses a culture in which the standard of emotional need is drastically reduced (1989a: 242). While I do not agree with her solution, which is premised on the continued existence of nuclear families, I sympathise with her suggestion that the current

organisation of labour is ultimately detrimental to the emotional wellbeing of most people. Like reproduction more broadly, emotional reproduction is seriously constrained by capitalist imperatives to produce value, as well as structures of racism, sexism, and homophobia. Emotional reproduction is currently based on the exploited labour of some people within families, as well as the lack of attention to the emotional needs of those who are excluded from family bonds. Improving the emotional lives of the majority may thus depend on the radical restructuring of emotional reproduction.

Importantly, emotional labour shows how reproduction is intimately connected to modes of subjectivity, as emotional labourers work on the subjectivities of others as well as their own. I have argued that the hegemonic form of subjectivity in capitalism, possessive or affective individualism, simultaneously disavows and depends upon a feminised subjectivity of care. In that way, both femininity and masculinity are work functions. A radical politics of emotional labour is one which seeks to undo these gendered forms of subjectivity. This calls for the abolition of the nuclear family as a primary site of heterosexualised emotional reproduction, which excludes the queer and racialised modes of reproduction that function as the constitutive outside of the normative family form. While familial and romantic ideals of love serve to reproduce some people and some types of life, they simultaneously make others vulnerable to violence and neglect, as well as exclusion from access to reproductive resources such as housing and health care. I closed the last chapter with a consideration of counter-hegemonic forms of queer sociality, which can help us think and practice new ways of being together and reproducing each other.

Throughout this thesis, I have emphasised that those who appear to be the independent subjects of the labour contract, selling their capacities on the free market, are in fact dependent on others for the maintenance of their ability to labour. Historically, inhabiting this form of subjectivity has been the privilege of white men, whereas children,

housewives, slaves and other colonial subjects have been excluded from the ability to sell their own labour power. Today, women in European and North American countries are almost as active participants in the formal labour force as men, either from a desire to leave the domestic sphere or by the whip of economic need. Through equality feminisms and the neoliberal reconstitution of (re)production, some women have been granted an (always precarious and partial) access to the subjective formation of possessive/affective individualism. This does not mean that gender has been abolished, or that the need for housework within the family has been replaced by market-provided services. It has entailed a partial and fragmentary reshuffling of some of the work that WFH associated with the role of the housewife. However, it is still the case that those who appear as independent subjects (white men and increasingly some white, bourgeois women) most often have their needs quietly met by others, who are produced as less free subjects through their association with the devalued labour of reproduction.

The point of this thesis, then, is not to deny the need for emotional reproduction, or call for its complete rejection. It is not a call to abandon forms of labour associated with femininity, or to grant women access to “masculine” types of subjectivity. Such refusal would be both impossible and undesirable. Rather, refusal here refers to a mode of resistance that goes beyond the binary construction of gendered subjectivity, seeking to repurpose outlawed emotions, needs, and desires in order to find new ways of being. Such refusal might utilise potentials existing in the present, including aspects of traditionally feminine subjectivity, but in ways that do not support the reproduction of the present.

This relies on the denaturalisation of femininity – regarding it as an acquired capacity rather than something inherent in particular subjects. In this way, we can also begin to consider emotion not as a merely spontaneous state but as a type of skilful work. The concept of emotional labour helps us rethink both emotion, often regarded as passive, and

labour, which tends to be constructed as conscious activity. In this thesis, I have shown that emotion is not merely passive, but neither must something be fully conscious or active for it to be usefully considered as labour. To labour is to do *something*, but that something might not always be recognisable as activity. Emotional labour is difficult to think about, especially since the better it is done, the more it appears as non-work, both for the labourer and for the recipient of emotional care. Some of the discomfort with the term emotional labour, and its popularity inside and outside of academic discourse, probably stem from this seeming conceptual mismatch. The concept's impropriety makes it both expansive and confusing, placing all sorts of phenomena under its banner. But this expansiveness is part of the nature of emotional labour, and it is important to theorise it despite its elusiveness. Otherwise we leave emotion unexamined, falling back on more common-sense notions of emotion as natural, intimate, non-social, and spontaneous.

In its seeming passivity, emotional labour is similar to other feminised forms of work. As I noted in chapter three, it is ironic that the labour associated with femininity is often rendered passive, and femininity is associated with receptivity, as women do much of the work of reproducing people. Recently, Lewis has theorised gestation as work, thus challenging the notion that work must include conscious, mental activity, as well as the notion that pregnancy is a passive, natural capacity of the body. Quoting Maggie Nelson's description of the work of birth, Lewis states: "You don't do labor. Labor does you" (2019a: 125). Here, the notion of the individual subject's autonomy is radically subverted in a way that we might usefully embrace. The assertion that labour does you fits well with the WFH perspective on femininity as a work function, and the body as a labouring machine. Employing the term work to describe these processes is a way of creating a gap between what we are and what we could be. If labour does you, but "you are not that work" (RPZ 16), then who we could be is a radically open question. As noted in the introduction,

Federici states that “[w]e want to call work what is work so that eventually we might rediscover what is love and create our sexuality, which we have never known” (RPZ 20). Similarly, Federici and Cox write: “Who is to say who we are? All we can know now is who we are not” (2012: 34). Marxist feminism is an essential tool for saying that we could be more than our labour.

This move to abolish work, and therefore current forms of subjectivity, might entail questioning our sense of pleasure in our work and our gendered being. I have argued that while gendered performance and emotional labour can be pleasurable, this does not entail that they are not exploitative. The pleasures that people derive from heterosexuality and love, in particular, need to be questioned in this context, both because they are built on the exploitation of feminised subjects and because of the exclusions and limitations such pleasurable reproduction creates. The point, then, is not so much about what types of work that people do or do not enjoy, but rather about what kinds of subjects work turns us into. As I noted in chapter two, certain types of labour might entail that labourers have a high degree of subjective investment in them, so that labour becomes part of “what it means to keep on living and to look forward to being in the world” (Berlant 2006: 21). Such investments, however, also delimit what we could be, and the types of pleasure that are available to us. The kind of gender/work abolition that I propose takes subjective investments and pleasures into account, but also asks what we could be if we were not forced to make that kind of subjective investment in exploitative structures.

We can thus consider how labour is simultaneously productive and repressive. It delineates subjective possibilities according to a division of labour, through which subjects come into being. Skilled performance of certain work constitutes subjectivities but also excludes the possibilities of other subjects, who are not determined by normative modes of labour. As I have argued, the creation of a labouring subject is not a mere reduction of

human capacities, but rather constituting and channeling capacities in a particular direction. This, however, serves to impoverish our ability to feel and act in ways that are not supported by the dominant organisation of labour. The abolition of gender involves the unlearning of some of our acquired capacities for emotion so that other capacities can be developed. As I noted in chapter five, such un- or relearning is part and parcel of political interventions into the organisations of social and material life. The potential for such development, however, should not be located in notions of an eternal human nature. Rather, just as lesbian identity appeared alongside the imposition of heterosexual love, potentials for resistance can emerge as by-products of the organisation of labour. Resistance arises from other forms of needs and pleasures, which are not satisfied with the world as it is. Labour creates the immanent possibilities of its own refusal. From these possibilities, a queer reproduction can emerge, based on the practices, needs and pleasures of those currently most marginalised by hegemonic notions of the good life.

In this thesis, I have argued that a useful reading of WFH is one that emphasises the perspective's potential to constitute an autonomous, anticapitalist feminist subject on the basis of the experiences of performing reproductive and emotional labour. Like so many other radical movements, WFH as an activist network dissipated after a few years due to a combination of internal conflicts and political repression (Rousseau 2016: 228). The last decade has seen a renewed interest in WFH as a political perspective, and this has brought with it a renewed interest in the question of the wage. I maintain that the usefulness of the demand for a wage cannot be determined theoretically, but rather (now as in the 1970s) is effective as a demand to the extent that it produces the "strength and confidence" (PWSC 53 n16) necessary to constitute a collective feminist subject. The construction of political demands and movements, then, cannot happen solely through disembodied intellectual labour, but must include the production of emotional and

collective counter-hegemonic subjectivities.

The aim of such a movement should be to make certain activities, which we today must describe as work, into non-work. I have argued that the term “work” should be understood as a shifting, unstable political category which is best characterised through the link between certain activities and the imperative to satisfy one’s needs and those of other people. Viewed in this way, there is nothing that inherently makes an activity work or non-work, and what we regard as work is open to contestation and struggle. In this thesis, I have argued that intimate activities such as sex and emotional expressions of love can become work through their coercive connection to the sphere of capitalist reproduction. This also means that they could become non-work if liberated from the forms of constraint that characterise such reproduction. Such liberation would not take love and sex as given, transhistorical things, but rather drastically change them so that they might not be recognisable as the same phenomena. As I argued in the last chapter, queer and otherwise marginalised communities are showing the way towards more playful and liberatory potentials for emotion and desire. This might involve the re-imagination and utilisation of supposedly bad feelings along the way.

The WFH perspective implies using the concept of work in such a way as to loosen work’s power over our lives and capacities. In recognising that there is nothing inevitable in the current organisation of work, and our current capabilities, we can move towards exploring other modes of being as well as confronting the organisation of the world that has turned certain activities into labour. Labour is something we do to meet our needs and those of others, not something that expresses our “authentic selves.” If work as a concept indicates a non-voluntary aspect to activities usually taken to be natural expressions of gendered personality, it is also something that can be resisted, rethought, and abolished, as our needs and desires could be met differently.

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