

Emotional Labour: provenance, politics and practice



Ian Sam Dargan 2007

Professor Jenna Ward (Dean of Coventry Business School) will be delivering a workshop seminar on emotional labour in Room G03 in Henley Business School (10:00-13:00) on Friday October 13th as part of Dr Simon Willems interdepartmental fellowship research project.

Jenna's research focuses on exploring emotionality within organisations, organising and managing. Prioritising marginalised voices, Jenna employs and develops innovative arts-based research methods that complement her ethnographically informed research designs to observe and probe beyond the surface of both organisations and individual experiences of work and organisations. Areas of interest include: emotional labour, dirty work, emotional dirty work, visual and arts-based methods, creative industries, health care, death work and the management and organisation of voluntary work and volunteers. Research has included working with organisations such as the Department of Health, the National Trust, the City of London, NHS, Samaritans and, most recently, England Netball.

Title:

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Abstract:

Publication of *The Managed Heart* (1983) stimulated a 'tremendous amount of research' (Wharton, 2009:147) exploring the ways in which we manage our emotions and feelings in various contexts. The accessibility, timeliness and acute resonance of the issues raised within the text inspired a generation of scholars, myself included, across a breadth of disciplines, not least those engaged with the study of organisations and management. However, Hochschild's work is often used as a springboard for departure rather than a wellspring for sustenance, which is cited rather than draws upon or attends to the original text (Kruml & Geddes, 2000). The resulting 'bandwagon' phenomenon (Bolton, 2005) or 'semantic morass' (McClure & Murphy, 2008: 105), whilst rapidly developing the sub-field of work-based studies of emotion and in many ways enriching our knowledge of emotions at work, also produced conflicting and contending perspectives, as well as both popular and neglected areas of study (McClure & Murphy, 2008; Callahan & McCollum, 2002). Today, you would be hard-pressed to find an academic of management studies who did not think themselves familiar with the concepts of emotional labour, emotion management and emotion work. Everyone, it seems, has heard of *The Managed Heart*, even if they have not read it. The proliferation of secondary interpretations of the core concepts introduced in *The Managed Heart*, however, often obscures Hochschild's original construction of the terms and, for me, perhaps more importantly the heritage from which these ideas were borne. Emotional labour is not a vacuous construct bereft of a conceptual, ontological and theoretical legacy. Instead it is the culmination of over a decade of 'figuring out' (Hochschild in Kimmel, 2015) and the cornerstone of, what has become known as a Hochschildian Sociology. This seminar will attempt to take you on a whistlestop tour of the provenance, politics and practice of emotional labour.

Tea & coffee and light refreshments will be available at 9:30 (lunch is included)

Dr Simon Willems is a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow based between Reading School of Art and Henley Business School.