

## **Putting passion to work: Passionate labour in the fashion blogosphere**

**Purpose:** This study explores passionate labour in the fashion blogosphere and addresses two research questions: How does passion animate passionate labour? How does the emotion of passions and the discipline of labour fuse within passionate labour?

**Methodology:** A three-year netnographic fieldwork of replikate fashion blogger-preneurs. Data are based on in-depth interviews, blogs, social media posts and informed by the relationships developed across these platforms.

**Findings:** Throughout our findings we unpack the ‘little passions’ that animate the passionate labour of blogger-preneurs. Passions include: passion for performing the royal lifestyle; the mobilisation of passion within strategic sociality and; transformation and self-renewal through blogging. Lastly, the cycle of passion illustrates how passions can be recycled into new passionate projects.

**Research Implications:** We offer insight on how passionate labour requires the negotiation and mobilisation of emotion alongside a calculated understanding of market logics.

**Practical Implications:** Our study raises implications for aspiring blogger-preneurs, luxury brand managers and organisations beyond the blogging context.

**Originality:** Our contribution lies in the cultural understanding of passion as a form of labour where passion has become a way of life. Our theorisation of passionate labour contributes to existing research in three ways. First, we identify social mimesis as a driver of passionate labour and its links to class distinction. Second, we offer insight on how passionate labour requires the negotiation and mobilisation of emotion alongside a calculated understanding of market logics. Third, we advance critical debate around exploitation and inequality within digital labour by demonstrating how passion is unequally distributed.

**Keywords:** passion, labour, blogger-preneur, fashion, netnography

## Introduction

An emerging body of work has conceptualised the innovative forms of digital labour facilitated by social media (Duffy and Hund, 2015; Duffy, 2016; Anderson, Hamilton and Tonner, 2016; Mardon, Molesworth and Grigore, 2018; Drenten, Guerrieri and Tyler, 2019; McFarlane and Samsoie, 2020). Our study focuses on the blogger-preneur (Duffy and Hund, 2015), a form of micro-entrepreneurship which empowers individuals to craft, reposition, blend and share online in novel ways (Jenkins, Ford and Green, 2013). The fashion blogosphere is a domain worthy of further study because of the inseparability of the fashion consumer and fashion producer (Laurell, 2016). Indeed, without any institutional mediation fashion bloggers can develop reputation capital comparable to traditional professionals by gaining a mass audience for their posts through the performance of taste leadership (McQuarrie, Miller and Phillips, 2013). Research has recognised that fashion bloggers are driven by their passion for fashion (Duffy and Hund, 2015; Dolbec and Fischer, 2015; Duffy, 2016). However, the role of passion is often accepted at face value without a clear understanding of its character and essential ingredients. In this paper, we theorise the sources of passion and how this passion animates forms of passionate labour in the fashion blogosphere.

Passionate labour is of research interest because it offers insight into the conditions of work in the new media environment. One of the few studies that directly explores passionate labour is Postigo (2009, p. 467) who conceptualises it as “the structural conditions of co-creative work, the subject positions of those doing free labor and the discourses and perspectives they make possible”. Postigo’s (2009) research centres on co-creation related to the willing contribution of free labour by volunteers. We extend conceptualisation of passionate labour by exploring the alternative subject position of the blogger-preneur who is in pursuit of self-transformation and seeking to capitalise on their labour. Belk, Ger and Askegaard (2003,

p. 333) suggest that passion is experienced as “an intense and usually highly positive emotional state”. Baudrillard (1998 [1970], p. 114) acknowledges passion as “a concrete relation to a total person or to some object taken as a person” and indicates that passion requires “total investment and assumes an intense symbolic value”. However, when passion becomes passionate labour it is much more than simply emotion and is combined with the effort and discipline of labour. We address the following research questions to structure our ideas: How does passion animate passionate labour? How does the emotion of passions and the discipline of labour fuse within passionate labour? We draw upon Cooren’s (2010) analysis of “little passions” to demonstrate that when passion becomes a form of labour, strategic thinking is infused with emotion to negotiate and make compatible the multiple forces that animate behaviour.

Our theorisation of passionate labour contributes to existing research in three ways. First, we identify social mimesis as a possible driver of passionate labour and its links to class distinction. Second, we offer insight on how passionate labour requires the negotiation of emotion alongside a disciplined and calculated understanding of market logics. Third, we advance critical debate around exploitation and inequality within digital labour by demonstrating how passion is unequally distributed.

Our paper is structured as follows. We begin with a theoretical review of the various forms of labour that have emerged within the digital context, before considering passionate labour within the fashion blogosphere. We then present the details of a 3-year netnographic fieldwork of bloggerpreneurs who blogged about Kate Middleton’s fashion choices. We proceed to present our findings around the themes of: performing the royal lifestyle, the mobilisation of passion within strategic sociality, transformation and self-renewal and, the cycle of passion. We end with the contributions and implications arising from the study.

## Mapping the terrain of digital labour

The broad scope of digital labour is recognised by Fuchs (2014, p. 4) who defines it as the “collective work force that is required for the existence, usage and application of digital media.” It encompasses all forms of waged and unwaged labour brought about by the Internet (Scholz, 2013). In this section, we review the various forms of labour evident within the digital context. Much of this literature is informed by earlier theorisations of labour identified within face-to-face service interactions. In order to track development in thinking, we begin with a brief overview of emotional and aesthetic labour before moving on to consider the ways in which the rise of digital and social media has shed new light on understandings of labour.

The theoretical conceptualisation of emotional labour originated from Hochschild’s (2012 [1983]) fundamental work on the nature of employee emotion management in the airline service sector. According to Hochschild (2012) emotional labour comprises of idiomatic bodily performances of ‘emotion work’ e.g. voice tone, facial expressions, gestures, appearance etc. and socially shared ‘feeling rules.’ Scholars have used emotional labour to understand emotion itself as well as to explore job role characteristics and how social relationships in the workplace shape emotion work (Wharton, 2009). Aesthetic labour emerged to address critiques of how Hochschild’s (2012) focus on emotion reproduced a mind/body dualism where the mind controls the exterior body (Entwistle and Wissinger, 2006). Aesthetic labour is a form of embodied work which necessitates that a worker has certain “capacities and attributes” (Warhurst, Nickson, Witz, and Cullen, 2000, p. 2) that echo the image and ideals of the organisation which pays them “indirectly or directly, for their own body’s looks and affect” (Mears, 2014, p. 1332). Aesthetic labour is often theorised using Bourdieu’s (1984) concept of embodied cultural capital and it has been used to explore how bodily indications or signals of

social class status manifest in fashion service jobs (e.g. Warhurst *et al.*, 2000; Petersson-McIntyre, 2014; Cutcher and Achtel, 2017).

Scholars have explored the ways in which emotion and aesthetic labour have been adapted for the digital era. Lazzarato's (1996) conceptualisation of immaterial labour provides a useful perspective on the macroeconomic forces which underpin the different forms of labour which now take place within digital spaces. Lazzarato (1996) largely positions immaterial labour as an intellectual labour that produces informational and cultural content. Hardt and Negri's (2000) seminal piece complements this intellectual focus by developing the idea of affective labour that individuals engage in to manage their emotional state during immaterial labour. An interesting example is Mardon *et al.*'s (2018) exploration of the forms of emotional labour employed by tribal entrepreneurs within YouTube beauty blogs as bloggers seek to balance tribal bonds and commercial opportunities. Unlike the established perspective of feeling rules determined by an organisation (Hochschild, 1983), Mardon *et al.* (2018) reveal how emotion culture emerges within the tribe itself so that tribe members and tribal entrepreneurs co-produce successful tribal entrepreneurship.

A significant feature of immaterial labour is its position at “the crossroads (or rather, it is the interface) of a new relationship between production and consumption” (Lazzarato 1996, p. 137). The expanding role of consumers as workers has sparked debate about the exploitation of consumer labour for corporate benefit. Cova and Dalli (2009) suggest the ‘working consumer’ as a helpful concept to describe the immaterial labour performed by consumers that tends to be exploited by market forces. The often-unpaid labour of consumers that involves online content creation for corporations is positioned as capitalism's domination, alienation and exploitation that “has negative impacts on the lives, bodies or minds of workers” (Fuchs, 2014, p. 4).

Perhaps the strongest critiques of digital labour emerge in relation to gender. In the cultural industries and specifically within the context of blogging, Hochschild's (2012) fundamental observation that emotion work is stereotypically feminine is advanced to capture the ways in which women's often low or unpaid digital labours require them to invest affective energy and time as they produce content that generates profit for online platforms (Duffy, 2015: 2016; Arcy, 2016; Duffy and Schwartz, 2018). Duffy (2016, p. 449) refers to these women as "emotional labourers for the social media age" and coins the term aspirational labour to recognise the invisible yet future orientated nature of their labour that is driven by the hope of economic and social rewards. Duffy (2016) is particularly critical of how the rhetoric of aspirational labour related to 'doing what they love' masks gender and class inequalities. The gendered nature of digital labour is also evident in Drenten *et al's.*, (2019, p. 45) study of the sexualised labour performed by female influencers on Instagram who navigate online bodily sexual performance for attention and financial gain. Alongside personal financial gain, Drenten *et al.* (2019) also note that the digital marketplace equally exploits female influencers' sexualized labour for its own gain.

Another form of immaterial labour associated with the practice of social networking is social labour. Social labour is "the means by which consumers add value to their identities and social relationships through producing and sharing cultural and affective content" (Anderson *et al.*, 2016, p. 384). Anderson *et al.* (2016) acknowledge that social labour shares commonalities with emotion and aesthetic labour, yet a distinguishing feature is how it is recompensed in the form of social value rather than economic payment. The sociocultural value of social labour in digital contexts is further explored by Biraghi, Dalli and Gambetti (2020, p. 16) who demonstrate the "virtuous, ethical, phatic, and communicative nature" of social labour. This perspective argues that cultural performativity within social media unleashes "connective energy" (p. 18).

It is implicit within this body of literature that passion is an integral ingredient for some of the immaterial forms of emotional and aesthetic labour identified in the organisational and services literature and, more recently, within the digital context. For example, Petersson-McIntyre (2014) demonstrate how aesthetic labour within fashion retail relies on ‘the commodification of passion’. Of interest is the way in which aesthetic labour is driven, not simply by management control, but by the workers themselves whose passion adds meaning to work that is structured and underpinned by neoliberalism. Passion is also a central emotion within the aspirational labour described by Duffy’s bloggers (2016), linked to the ideal of getting paid to do what you love. Similarly, within social labour passions manifest through cultural curations on social media that are centred on passionate projects (Biraghi *et al.*, 2020).

Yet, scholarship that theoretically centralises the role of passion within digital labour is more limited. The exception is Postigo (2009) who recognises that the concept of passionate labour provides a means to understand the conditions of co-creation within digital environments. Postigo (2009, p. 467) refers to passionate labour as “the structural conditions of cocreative work, the subject positions of those doing free labor and the discourses and perspectives they make possible.” Similar to the issues of exploitation discussed above, Postigo’s (2009) analysis of passionate labour acknowledges the tension between a discourse of passion driving online activity and the necessity of the discourse of labour to legitimate it. Postigo (2009, p. 467) recognises that passionate labour functions “under the ethos of social-network markets”, that can take different forms depending on the subject positions of those involved. Whilst Postigo (2009) focuses on co-creation involving the free labour of volunteers, we apply the concept of passionate labour to the subject position of the blogger-preneur. The role of passion is often accepted at face value without a clear understanding of its character so we build on existing work to unpack what it means to do what you love and better locate the passion in passionate labour. Given the digital democratisation of fashion (Duffy, 2017), we

have selected a group of bloggers within the fashion industry for the basis of our research. Before detailing our methods, the following section lays the theoretical groundwork for our conceptualisation by exploring how passionate labour manifests within the fashion blogosphere.

### **Passionate labour within the fashion blogosphere**

The work of Hirschman (1977) charts the rehabilitation of passion historically when he demonstrates how the view of passions shifted in the eighteenth century from one of them as destructive to the “essence of life and a creative force” (1977, p. 47). Passions are a “shared language” (Williamson, 1985, p. 13) that may be culturally and socially produced (Illouz, 2009). One arena where passion emerges as a culturally and socially produced creative force is the fashion blogosphere. It is well established that fashion bloggers exhibit passionate appreciation and enthusiasm (McQuarrie *et al.*, 2013; Dolbec and Fischer, 2015; Duffy, 2016). Our perspective is that passion is the basis for passionate labour. In viewing passion as a form of labour, we are guided by previous research on the professionalization of blogging. This research suggests that passions are structured in ways that blur the producer-consumer divide as bloggers adapt their online posts to create likeable content and attract a larger audience in ways which “twist the passion” from the blog topic towards online profile visibility (Kozinets, Patterson and Ashman, 2017). As a result, bloggers are no longer merely consumers but can be entrepreneurial (Gannon and Prothero, 2018) and emerge as brands in their own right (Erz and Christensen, 2018).

The fashion blogosphere often contains a mix of personal and commercial content (Pihl and Sandström, 2013) which demonstrates the inseparability of the fashion consumer and the fashion producer (Laurell, 2016). Indeed, fashion bloggers can develop reputation capital

comparable to traditional professionals so to suggest that they are ordinary consumers would perpetuate a myth of amateurism (Duffy, 2015). McQuarrie *et al.* (2013) investigate how fashion bloggers exploit their cultural capital for economic and social rewards. They reveal how consumers can gain a mass audience for their posts through the performance of taste leadership in what they refer to as the ‘megaphone effect’. This can transform individual consumers into institutional entrepreneurs whose blogging practices lead to new market logics within the fashion industry (Scaraboto and Fischer, 2013; Dolbec and Fischer, 2015). But such studies tend to be silent on the role that emotions play in the performance of taste leadership. This is especially so when we consider the role of marketplace sentiments within consumer culture, defined as “cultural patterns of feeling and emoting...cultural scripts for individual thought, feeling or action” (Gopaldas, 2014, p. 998). Gopaldas identifies the role of anger, disgust and guilt but says little on the role that passion may play in the formation of marketplace sentiments, despite the fact that passion is identified as a key resource by a number of his informants who speak of the ‘passion for making a difference’ and their ‘passion’ for the planet (p. 1002).

Petersson McIntyre (2014, p. 80) explains that “passions work as flows, coming from different directions” and are “forces that animate” people to behave in particular ways. The popularity of blogs is often explained through the theory of uses and gratifications (Ruggiero, 2000) which assumes that blogs fulfil inner motivations. For example, Sepp, Liljander and Gummerus (2011) identified a range of process, content, and social gratifications associated with blogging. However, a passionate labour perspective on blogging requires us to think more broadly as passions can originate from forces that are both internal and external to the individual (Petersson McIntyre, 2014).

To further understand passion as “forces that animate”, it is helpful to consider Cooren’s (2010) idea of ‘little passions’. As Cooren (2010, p. 63) explains, “From the

monolithic world of the singular passion, we progressively move to the plural world of passions (with an s), which irremediably comes with more sophisticated and complex forms of reasoning.” Cooren explains that behaviour in the context of a singular passion is akin to obsession, whilst the latter better recognises that multiple forces animate behaviour and need negotiation to make them compatible. The emotional element of passion is undeniable and has been well recognised in previous literature (Baudrillard, 1998; Belk *et al.*, 2003). However, Cooren’s analysis of little passions (also referred to as animations) highlights that passion demands assessment, evaluation and judgment. Whilst Belk *et al.* (2003) speak of the irrationality of desire, we draw on Cooren (2010) to suggest that making one’s behaviour accountable is just as important as emotion when passion becomes a form of labour.

The narrative that fashion bloggers achieve career success whilst sharing their passions masks the labour required in creating blog content (Duffy and Hund, 2015). Whilst the “Do What You Love (DWYL)” approach to labour may imply freedom from the “dark side of work,” Sandoval (2018) suggests that the DWYL mantra is a trap that opens the door for individual blame and responsibility in line with a neoliberal ideology. This perspective illustrates the importance of situating passion within its broader ideological field. This is particularly evident in Kozinets *et al.*’s (2017, p. 667) research on networks of desire whereby “energized passion” interacts with technologies, consumers and virtual and physical objects. These interacting components of the network are situated within wider social structures so that the network “disciplines thoughts and feelings in a way that can easily be seen as ideological.” In our study, we demonstrate how bloggers who focus their passions around the fashion choices of Kate Middleton are disciplined by the ideology of royalty. We now turn to the methodology to explain our approach to data collection and analysis.

## Methodology

Our theorisation of passionate labour emerged from a three-year netnographic fieldwork of blogger-preneurs who blogged about Kate Middleton's fashion choices. Kate Middleton, known by title as the Duchess of Cambridge and wife of Prince William, is a recognised fashion icon for her conservative yet feminine style choices. The instantaneous sell-outs of the items of fashion apparel worn by the Duchess of Cambridge generated in excess of £152 million for British fashion brands in 2015 (Brand Finance, 2017). A phenomenon known as the 'Kate effect' which has subsequently transferred to the Duchesses' three children. In this study, we are interested in a niche group of bloggers who use their passion for Kate's fashion to inspire their blogger-preneurship.

The in-depth interviews and virtual qualitative data we draw from are foregrounded in the netnographic research tradition outlined by Kozinets (2015). The fast evolving nature of technology and the participatory mediated landscape means that netnographic research captures phenomena of interest which have already materialised in form and are reflective of particular sociohistorical conditions (Kozinets, Scaraboto and Parmentier, 2018) which was the case in our study. From October 2013, the lead author participated in Kate related blogs across multiple online communication platforms including: fashion blogs, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Skype and Facebook/Twitter private message. Early observations and participation to identify items of clothing that Kate was featured wearing in the media involved commenting on posts about the style of outfits. These observations were recorded in fieldnotes and helped to establish community boundaries (Ferreira and Scaraboto, 2016). At this time there were only four fashion blogs (see Table 1) dedicated to Kate's fashion that had an official company registered domain. These blogs went beyond simply sharing images of the outfits that Kate was photographed wearing and seemed to engage in co-collaborative activities with their 1000+

followers to identify the brands and items that Kate wore. The lead author systematically analysed the images and words of each post paying particular attention to the language and visual aesthetics of bodily poses used to illustrate Kate's style. This typically involved analysing blog and social media posts and comments from multiple periods from blog inception to the 20 most recent posts and the up to 50 comments from followers attached to each blog and/or social media post (McQuarrie *et al.*, 2013; Pihl, 2013). The lead author also identified how bloggers replied to followers' comments and incorporated this into subsequent blog and social media posts. This analysis concentrated on the marketing strategy behind bloggers posts and followers' comments.

#### Insert Table I

The nature of the lead author's online interactions and the three year longitudinal time frame established trust (Ruth and Otnes, 2006) and researcher recognition within the niche community of Kate bloggers. These pre-established relationships and social media findings formed the basis of Skype video interviews with bloggers (6) and core followers (2) who assisted in their entrepreneurial pursuits. Interviews varied in length from 60 to 160 minutes and followed McCracken's (1988) in-depth conversational approach to access the 'lifeworld' of these bloggers. This power neutral technique enabled the conversation to flow freely and sensitive to novel and unforeseen phenomena as well as that which is left unsaid to emerge (Kvale, 1996) such as visual and social cues including body language and voice intonation which were noted and later assisted in the coding and analysis of passion in the interview transcripts. A topic guide with questions around motivations for blogging, emotions invoked by this and the inspiration behind pockets of entrepreneurial activity was developed. Moreover, the lead author had the added depth of being able to clarify further questions in ongoing discussions in private messaging chat functions. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identities of participants who requested this (Logan, 2015; Kozinets, 2015).

All data was analysed following the three step iterative hermeneutic circling approach outlined by Thompson (1997). With each reading of the interview transcripts and virtual data, ideas were developed until a coherent account was reached (Arnold and Fischer, 1994). The dynamic interrelationships between the core themes formed the basis of theory development (Spiggle, 1994) around passion and labour. The first order coding involved engaging in line by line open coding to identify emic codes within the transcripts and virtual data focusing on blogger practices. From this initial coding, all authors engaged in the discussion and analysis of the emotional sentiments including ‘purpose’, ‘love’, ‘social’ that started to emerge from the data. Second-order coding concentrated on the experiences of the bloggers themselves, the entrepreneurial activities that they engaged in and, the creativity and time involved in creating blog posts. At this stage the second and third authors began to verify the data and the emerging theoretical mapping of the findings suggesting better data examples to illustrate each code. In the final stage of coding, all three authors mapped the patterns that started to emerge from the data until no further ideas were unaccounted for. These patterns are reflective of the ‘little passions’ (Cooren, 2010) that animate the passionate labour we identify in our findings.

### **Locating the ‘little passions’ in passionate labour**

‘Replikate’ has become part of contemporary mainstream media culture. According to Maclean (2015), the term refers to ‘a piece of clothing that is clearly inspired by something worn by the Duchess of Cambridge’. We see this replication as a form of Girard’s (1977) social mimesis, that is grounded in mimetic desire and stemming from the social recognition attached to the consumption of particular objects. Objects are consumed to emulate others to be and feel like them (Belk *et al.*, 2003). On the surface, the passionate labour of our blogger-preneurs is animated by a love for fashion, however, simplifying blogger-preneur activities as being

animated by only a love for fashion would omit the way in which passionate labour combines the emotion of passion with the discipline of labour.

Our blogger-preneurs recognise the aesthetic value of fashion (Lonergan, Patterson and Lichrou, 2018) and devote time and energy to strategically integrate their passion for fashion into their blogs and social media. This passionate labour navigates the ideology of royalty projected by the British Royal Family that is constructed in the media. Crucially, as Balmer (2011, p. 533) has identified, members of the Royal Family engage in certain “regal” actions and behaviours, our blogger-preneurs recognise and utilise those that they believe represent “what is appropriate” for acquiring royal status. Our blogger-preneurs have varying degrees of success in terms of the capitalisation of their labour. Some have been able to generate the equivalent of a full-time income through click-through banner advertisements, affiliate sales, luxury brand collaborations and even creating and selling their own Kate inspired merchandise. They achieve this by publicly aligning themselves with influential members of the media in real-time, who cover and photograph the public engagements that Kate attends, to drive traffic to their blogs. However, others are less successful and as a result, their blogger-preneur activities are relatively short-lived.

Throughout our findings we unpack the ‘little passions’ (Cooren, 2010) that animate the passionate labour of blogger-preneurs in the replikate fashion blogosphere. Passions include: passion for performing the royal lifestyle; the mobilisation of passion within strategic sociality and; transformation and self-renewal through blogging. Lastly, the cycle of passion illustrates how these passions can be recycled into new passionate projects.

### *Performing the royal lifestyle*

Passion for recreating aspects of the royal lifestyle animates the passionate labours of blogger-preneurs. Simmel (1957) wrote the “real seat of fashion is found among the upper classes” (1957, p. 547). In our context, female self-fashioning practice is a tool for social

distinction (Bourdieu, 1984) and class performance (Simmel, 1957) as blogger-preneurs use their passion for mimicking Kate to produce blogs:

“I’m not crazy, crazy obsessed with Kate. I just love the lifestyle that she embodies. And I think that obviously other people love it and can really relate from it, and really gain from it.... I sometimes think that some of our articles aren’t so much about what Kate the Duchess of Cambridge, Kate Middleton this Catherine woman would do, so much as what a Duchess, a Princess, a well-mannered, well-spoken woman would do.”

[Claire]

Claire’s blog positions Kate Middleton as a “life mentor” that followers turn to for inspiration. Claire highlights a significant point; blogger-preneurs are not obsessed with Kate but the ideas that she represents in terms of fashion, class and femininity. Blogger-preneurs relate to Kate differently from other celebrities and believe that she did not actively seek fame, achieving celebrity through her marriage to Prince William. As Chantelle suggested, the media “*made her into one [celebrity] because people want to know her so they’ll buy magazines about her*”. Here the recurring media coverage characterising Kate Middleton as an aspirational royal figure becomes part of the network of desire (Kozinets *et al.*, 2017) within which our blogger-preneurs function. In particular, the mythic portrayal of the “attainability of the fairy-tale ending” (Otnes and Maclaran, 2015, p. 33) drives blogger-preneurs’ passion to know more about the private aspects of Kate’s life and, live that experience themselves.

A central element of the labour of blogging within this context is blog posts that educate how to ‘replikate’ Kate’s fashion:

Taylor: “OMG! My dream has come true! I LOVED the silver and diamond fern brooch that Kate wore a few times during the recent Royal Tour [...] I already came to terms with the fact that it was a one-of-a-kind design and I would never be able to

wear it myself. But now I can (and I will)! Because the Royal Collection Trust Shop is now offering an exact replica of the brooch (only this one is made of white gold-plated metal and Swarovski crystals, obviously) for only 65 GBP! \*drool\* You can buy it here: [deleted hyperlink]” [Blog post]

Brianne: I love the ‘Jinan’ Navy [Ted Baker] trench! My first RepliKate!:) (outfit she wore on her Canada/US trip) [Facebook post]

Kate Middleton’s ‘Preppy’ modern Sloane<sup>1</sup> style becomes a tool for distinguishing and performing the royal look. As taste leaders within the shelter of the British Royal Family, blogger-preneurs actively seek to achieve this look and identify the processes behind it e.g. locating original and imitation items. In doing so, they leverage their following to negotiate affiliate sales and receive commissions on click-throughs and purchases. Far removed from the overtly sexualised labour that has featured in prior research (Drenten *et al.*, 2019), replikation finds are structured around an appropriate, modest way of dressing to bring the ‘Preppy’ modern Sloane style typically representative of white, upper-middle class women within reach for the average woman. Someone who can, according to blogger-preneurs, afford these items and, by wearing them, access a piece of the royal lifestyle. Blogger-preneurs purposefully evoke their passion for the attainability of the royal lifestyle and practice enthusiasm and positivity (“OMG” “drool” “love”) in their emotional labour to manage digital sentiments with thoughtful precision.

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<sup>1</sup> Sloane Ranger, a stereotype associated with the country lifestyle of the upper and upper-middle classes around the Sloane Square area of London (York and Stewart-Liberty, 2007). ‘Ranger’, as in ‘Lone Ranger’, referred to the Hermès or Liberty silk scarfs worn by the Sloane women who participated in equine activities. According to Mount (2012), thanks to Kate Middleton, “Sloane characteristics are so deeply ingrained that you can be a Sloane anywhere. A brand once defined by a single London address – Sloane Square – is magically equipped to migrate across the globe”.

Previous research has established that the servicescapes of luxury brands provides a class model that educates consumers on elite class behaviour (Dion and Borraz, 2017). We demonstrate how the blogosphere is another forum that works to shape status through the education of followers. Passionate labourers instruct and deliver advice on how to perform the royal lifestyle through posts and images. Some blogger-preneurs extend this further in their embodiment (Bourdieu, 1984) of the replikate style (Figure 1):

Insert Figure 1

Fashion choices mirror Kate's style and postures - Brianne has her hands on her hips and her left knee tucked in front of the right and Nathalie has her hands clasped. These women have educated themselves on how to technically pose the body by imitating what they perceive to be a successful series of bodily actions. This is a form of 'prestigious imitation' (Mauss, 1973) as the body "is not only socially constituted through education, but it is also 'assembled by and for social *authority*'" (Lash and Urry, 2002, p. 45). In this case, social authority is performed by an individual who reigns over them as a Duchess in a sovereign capacity. Brianne gifts instructional visual collages where she provides an itemisation of where to find replikate items and the total cost of the outfit versus the estimated cost of Kate's total look with click through hyperlinks to purchase while, Natalie's image gifts how Kate's look can be recreated to suit different body shapes. Blogger-preneurs set and perform bodily signals that permit or prevent entry into the royal replikate blogosphere. The digitisation of these instructional images produces a form of digital aesthetic labour and social exchange which seeks to imitate the ideology of femininity projected by media coverage of Kate. Blogger-preneurs enhance the media's naturalisation of middle-class dispositions and help mask the aristocratic lifestyle privileges of the British Royal Family by contributing to the ideology that they are 'like the rest of us'. For as Henry and Caldwell suggest ideologies "serve to normalize socio-economic hierarchies by [...] providing explanations that mask the underlying structural forces." (2018,

p. 155). Here passionate labour utilises cultural capital for economic effect. Blogging as a marketplace performance is revealed as embedded in socioeconomic valuations, status games and class stratification (Üstüner and Thompson, 2012). Choices and tastes reveal the labour necessary for the establishment of authority and status especially when passion “calibrates bodily affects” (Wissinger 2007, p. 251) through an appeal to sociality.

### *Mobilising strategic sociality*

Passion energises a strategic form of sociality which is the foundation for the co-production of passionate labour. Bloggers recognise the strategic importance of connecting with their followers:

“It’s my personal mission to respond to every Tweet because people want to know and they care, they want to hear either what we are thinking or what we know. And I think that those connections are important [...] We have taken on a tone on our website that has a personality. So especially on Twitter we try and be funny and cheeky and voice our opinions back.” [Claire]

Claire’s dedication to responding to her followers by providing information on Kate’s fashion or sharing opinions on particular styles demonstrates how blogger-preneurs establish public opinion on fashion tastes. Their engagement is a form of what Lazzarato (1996) has termed ‘immaterial labour’ because they autonomously create and reproduce a new mode of communication by engaging in aesthetic reflexivity in their production of posts. This is evident in Claire’s tone and language in her communications with followers, a considered choice to reflect her blog identity.

This strategic sociality results in a shared passionate dialogue (Williamson, 1985) which produces a collective sensibility to fashion. The aesthetic style of communication enables blogger-preneurs to assert taste leadership and distinction through the mobilisation of passion both individually and collectively. The social nature of passion emerges in emotional

exchanges between bloggerpreneurs and followers where affective energy nurtures and sustains digitally networked connections:

Taylor: So, yeah, I thought it would be fun to collect all my replikates into one big picture...

Erin: Omg I love this photo! ;) I don't think I have seen you wear the polka dot Topshop dress or the Hobbs Wessex dress! Hah- now I feel like taking a photo of all of mine! (did you have the Great Planes Cezanne dress? I thought u had it but I don't see it there...)

Taylor: @Erin I sold the Cezanne dress again, it didn't suit me. There are actually still missing quite a few items. Both my Aquatalia, my SW boots, Longchamp bag, Cath Kidston bag, Temperley Odele coat replikate, Darwin coat replikate, my Zara cape... It just didn't fit anymore :\$

Claire: Love your stuff!!

Denitsa: Oh!!! How fabulous!!!!!! looove it!! And yes, must see u in polka dotted dress!!! Please!! [Facebook post]

Through the production of what Gannon and Prothero (2018) term 'shared repertoires', the dialogue develops around an excitement for identifying and discussing Taylor's wardrobe contents. Taylor's reference to selling "*the Cezanne dress again*" demonstrates another form of blogger capitalisation. For some bloggers, luxury brand finds which are no longer produced yet remain in high demand, are sold to the highest bidder in Shop my closet e-bay auctions. Followers demonstrate an awareness of the contents of the blogger's closet and ask about the items not on display. Follower interactions clearly demonstrate that they embrace the blogger's expression of style and their flattery and support that co-produce the blog content are reminiscent of Mardon *et al.*'s (2018) other-praising emotions which are themselves a form of

emotional labour. Here passion is not only structured by a cultural practice and a social media platform (Kozinets et al., 2017) but also by a distinct interest and look aimed at specific audiences which operates at a societal, structural level through the ideology of royalty and the markers of this look. Status, authority and power relies upon an emotional terrain and exchange. As sociologists of human emotions have detailed: “The more that individuals and collective actors hold power, prestige, and other resources or gain these resources, the more likely they are to experience such positive emotions as satisfaction, happiness, well-being and confidence and the more like they are to give off positive emotion to others.” (Turner and Stets, 2006, p. 40). In our context this is evident in the ways in which blog followers echo and reinforce the positive emotions of bloggers through such dialogues.

Through the creation of a “collective subjectivity” and “sociality” (Hardt, 1999, p. 96), these women develop a “community of style” (Pihl, 2013) that they regard as a safe online space. Blog settings and/or closed Facebook groups are managed in ways that enable these women to express their opinions and share images of themselves without fear of ridicule or denigration from outsiders: *“I’m very protective of my site. I’m working so hard to groom in a way that women feel comfortable to share their own photos of themselves, to know that the comments are going to be supportive and there are not going to be any negative comments.”*. Brianne’s use of the word “groom” is telling. Thus a safe and supportive community of style does not emerge by accident but rather involves active management to eradicate negative comments.

The relationships that blogger-preneurs forge with their followers demonstrates that passionate labour also constitutes elements of social labour. Digital sharing practices are driven by a commitment to monitor social media posts to maintain social activity and visibility (Anderson et al., 2016). Such affiliations and forms of belonging mask the forms of symbolic power enacted through the social, for as Bourdieu (1992, p. 106) suggested “agents possess

power in proportion to their symbolic capital.” Here symbolic power and ‘playing the game’ reveals itself through its affects and passion and emotion management become strategic and calculative. This is not simply for ‘catharsis’ or emotional release (Sepp *et al.*, 2011) or to enthuse others, but also, to maintain status and the marketplace performance of authority. Blogging is thus understood as a socioeconomic practice that reworks culture and the social spaces of digital interaction and enthusiasm for its own gain.

### *Transformation and self-renewal*

Our findings suggest that passion invigorates strategic personal transformation and self-renewal. Bloggerpreneurs are driven by personal life challenges which they harness to purposefully create blog posts:

“I decided as my new year’s resolution that, I had moved home to my parent’s home to take a break from Los Angeles and I was kind of like in this lull where I felt like... I wasn’t like doing my hair and I wasn’t using makeup as much... I decided how can I be forced into getting dressed and prepped every day? And, I said, ‘Alright new year’s resolution I’m going to start the blog and Facebook. I’m going to post a photo, a brand new photo every day of myself in a different outfit.’” [Brienne]

Brienne creates blog material to fulfil her longing for aesthetic self-transformation to overcome economic and labour market challenges that resulted in her returning to live in the family home. Through her blog, Brienne successfully manages her own emotions to overcome her ‘lull’. In this way, passion fulfils an internal aspiration for self-transformation and admiration (Belk *et al.*, 2003) as bloggerpreneurs actively seek a more personally fulfilling vocation. Akin to aspirational labour (Duffy, 2016), this explains their willingness to accept the time commitment required for blogging and their efforts to upskill:

“...It takes time. I usually use the weekend to prepare a blog post”. [Chantelle]

“...during the [royal] tour I had to get up in the middle of the night because it was a 9 hour time difference...when I’m looking for replikates it usually takes several hours to find the replikates and then, you know, Photoshop them together and put them in a blog post.” [Taylor]

Chantelle and Taylor explain that posts are often created and edited outside of the traditional working week during unsociable hours. Our blogger-preurs are motivated by what Ashman, Patterson and Brown (2018, p. 479) have identified as “the creativity dispositif” (which draws on the work of Foucault). Their passionate labour is driven by an internalised neoliberal ideology that future success as “independent creatives” necessitates “continuous striving” to self-acquire blogging skills that enable them to stand out in the hyper competitive field of fashion blogging. While this could be viewed as exploitation (Cova and Dalli, 2009; Fuchs, 2014), for those that are successful, this offers the opportunity to move on from full-time employment to fully focus on the blog as the main source of income. For example, Sarah confirms her commitment to seek a balance between her personal and professional life and sold her online retail business to pursue the Kate blog as a full-time career:

“I had to work it in more with my schedule. I basically worked almost two jobs... I would have to find time to do it [fashion blogging] when I wasn’t, you know, working at the online store that my husband and I owned. There were a lot of 18 and 20-hour days because when your phone rings and it’s a customer you need to deal with them. We were very fortunate that it was a very popular business and we recently sold it. So now I’m just being able to step back a little bit and kind of take a deep breath and not feel quite so, I don’t know, absolutely crushed!” [Sarah]

With more flexibility, Sarah can devote attention to sourcing and creating new fashion pieces. Bloggers who transition to full-time successfully integrate their fashion finds into posts which

use images and hyperlinks to combine the aesthetic and stylistic modes of communication seen in professional fashion magazines (Engholm and Hansen-Hansen, 2014). Income generation comes from: affiliate sales through click-through banner advertisements, hyperlinks to purchase items, brand collaborations where fees are negotiated for featuring brands in detailed posts and optimising posts with highly searchable terminology. In this way, bloggers' upskill by legitimising and professionalising blog content with the aim of blogging for exposure. Through 'entrepreneurial brand devotion' (Duffy, 2016), this labour involves aligning their own self-brand with the fashion brands Kate is featured wearing in the media. They do this by interacting with journalists, photographers and other press members; blogging about events in real-time; competitions, give-aways and auctions:

"it's a battle with other blogs to get the photos out before anyone else because that's free advertising for your blog..." [Brienne Facebook PM]

"we'll Tweet them and say: "Callum can you get a picture of x, y, z today?" And, they will. We'll feature that in our blog and social posts." [Chantelle PM Twitter]

"How exciting! Claire was interviewed for USA Today! Read the online version here: [deleted hyperlink] [Claire Facebook post]

Claire's excitement at being featured and recognised as the replikate taste-maker in an international, daily American publication demonstrates how passion can be evoked to invigorate personal transformation and social admiration. Fashion does not appear on "real news pages" because it is often regarded as "frivolous and fun" and requires legitimation by individuals (e.g. designers, journalists, editors) in institutions who have the power and authority to make aesthetic judgments (Kawamura, 2005, p. 79). These women follow and blog about the public events that Kate attends in real-time to be recognised and featured in the main media channels by those in possession of this power and authority. Moreover, as Chantelle

acknowledges, bloggers leverage their relationships with members of the media to drive traffic to their blog and thus generate capital through affiliate sales. These labours demonstrate that it is not only corporate fashion brands that capitalise on the passions of female bloggerpreneurs (Duffy, 2016) but also the wider media system who profit from the use of their ‘invisible’ fashion inspired blog and social media content. Crucially, bloggerpreneurs navigate tastes that are already situated within British Royal Family taste structures. By interacting with members of the media and using the images and social media content they produce, bloggerpreneurs contribute to the construction of the ideology of royalty.

Some bloggerpreneurs diversify their entrepreneurial activities beyond the blog to generate capital. Our bloggerpreneurs identify gaps surrounding the accessibility of items of clothing and accessories. Taylor has her own Etsy<sup>2</sup> store where she sells items of apparel, created by her own personal tailor, that mimic the out of reach expensive couture labels worn by Kate:

Martina: I see you have a replikate of the Paulina dress, which I thought I saw on your Etsy store and now can’t find. Is there one?

Helga: Is the Paulina dress something you can source? [Facebook Post]

Taylor demonstrates market sensitivity by responding to the interest from her followers. She acts as an important intermediary that enables others with inadequate cultural capital to gain access to Kate’s elite couture look. Brianne’s Etsy store takes this a step further as she uses her own artistic design skills to create Kate inspired print images which are embossed onto items such as canvas bags. Bloggerpreneurs identify gaps in the fashion market and from this engage in entrepreneurial ventures that best serve their followers. In this way, followers can “participate in the fantasy through the mimicry of the [fashion] consumption styles of more

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<sup>2</sup> Etsy is a global marketplace where people create, sell and purchase one-of-a-kind goods.

expert intermediaries” (Loneragan *et al.*, 2018, p. 2069) and through effective displays of what Heller (1984) terms evocative imitation.

### **The cycle of passion**

Emotions are crucial to the practice of blogging, yet emotions change as passions are realised in the labour of blogging. Passion is recycled and channelled into new passionate projects as blogger-preneurs wish to continue the fulfilment and sense of purpose that they derive from blogging. Once blogger-preneurs achieve professional, taste-maker status within the replikate blogosphere and are recognised as media contributors, they then prioritise and allocate their time and labour to other passionate projects:

“The website [blog] takes more energy, a lot more energy and I haven’t actually posted since February... I did have an Etsy store and I did make clothes for people but it just became too crazy so I just closed it. It’s still there and we’re dabbling with the idea of doing my sketches through Etsy but I’m really more focused on that being a fundraiser for my campaign.” [Brienne]

Brienne moved on from the Kate blog and selling clothing, shifting her focus from profit making to charitable donation. She developed sketches of Kate’s signature styles accompanied with a costing plan with the sales profit contributing to a charity project. Other blogger-preneurs remain in the royal blogosphere and recycle their labour to prioritise blog content that they believe will capture the attention of followers. For example, Claire has teamed up with two other Kate bloggers to create a new blog which features bloggers and their children adorned in the same outfits as Kate’s children. This is also dedicated to covering various aspects of motherhood. Sarah started another blog to capture Megan’s fashion and Chantelle now

concentrates on blogging about members of the royal family from a historical perspective. Belk *et al.*'s (2003, p. 340) cycle of desire captures how consumer desire is “a process during which emotions change”. Consumer desire is recycled because of a “satisfaction and the wish to repeat this satisfaction” (*ibid.*). Similarly, the cycle of passion and passionate labour is recycled and channelled into fulfilling activities and labours which enable these women to pursue other passionate projects situated within the ideology of royalty. This recycling of labour demonstrates Cooren's (2010) little passions in action: the bloggers manage and market their passions to ensure they maximise capitalisation on their labour by assessing and evaluating what content will most appeal within the broader cultural context. While the content itself changes, the processes of passionate labour remain the same: the labour of becoming enthused by one's passions and enthusiasms.

## **Discussion**

### *Theoretical contributions*

Our contribution lies in the cultural understanding of passion as a form of labour where passion has become a way of life. We build on Postigo's (2009) understanding of passionate labour as a useful concept to understand co-creative work by exploring how passionate labour can also manifest in the conditions of work within blogging. In exploring passionate labour within the fashion blogosphere, this study offers contributions in three areas. First, we identify social mimesis as a possible driver of passionate labour and its links to class distinction. Second, we offer insight on how passionate labour requires the negotiation of emotion alongside a disciplined and calculated understanding of market logics. Third, we advance critical debate around exploitation and inequality within digital labour by demonstrating how passion is unequally distributed. We elaborate below.

Our analysis reveals how passionate labour brings together elements of emotional (Hochschild, 2012), aesthetic (Warhurst *et al.*, 2000) and social (Anderson *et al.*, 2016) labour that is consistent with the extant literature. The uniqueness of our study is found in the way in which the social logic of mimesis (Girard, 1977) is central in guiding labour. This is important because although previous research has revealed that mimetic desire is initiated by emulating the consumption of others (Belk *et al.*, 2003), the integration of mimesis into the labour context has been beyond the scope of existing theorisation. With replikating as an overarching theme, we see emotional labour in the bloggers' expressions of enthusiasm that accompany social media posts, aesthetic labour in the posting of images that conform to the aesthetic standards of a royal lifestyle, and, social labour in the mobilisation of passion within strategic sociality. Together, these forms of labour merge in the creation of blogs that materialise relations with Kate Middleton, and translate her fashion into a form that can be consumable by others.

This recognition of the social and cultural nature of passion is situated within the broader ideological field of the institutional British monarchy (Balmer, 2011; Otnes and Maclaran, 2015). Passion is not only structured by a cultural practice and a social media platform (Kozinets *et al.*, 2017) but also by a distinct interest and look aimed at specific audiences which operates at a societal, structural level through the ideology of royalty. Bloggerpreneurs navigate tastes that are already situated within British Royal Family taste structures and this is evidenced in their negotiation of the royal fashion rules and regalia that dictate and govern their performance of replikate and the royal lifestyle. Through the creation of what Dion and Borraz (2017) term a class model, bloggerpreneurs educate consumers in the 'right' fashion and lifestyle choices. The democratisation of the labour of blogging itself becomes a vehicle for maintaining class distinction as upper-middle class fashion belief systems are imitated and reproduced through the myth of their seeming accessibility to the average woman. The blogs therefore function to shape followers' class subjectivities, or in

Dion and Borraz's (2017, p. 68) words, they make followers "behave as class subjects who have a specific understanding of their position in the social hierarchy". Blogging becomes a well-rehearsed social performance driven by status games and class distinctions which work toward the achievement of authority and symbolic power in the digital realm.

Our analysis highlights the multidimensional nature of passion within passionate labour. The Do What You Love mantra depicts a labour narrative whereby it's possible to earn a living by pursuing one's passion (Duffy, 2016). This narrative reflects Cooren's (2010) suggestion that passion becomes more prevalent when it appears to be driven by just one source. In focusing on a context where several 'little passions' are evident, our findings reveal a more nuanced picture and offer insight on how passionate labour requires the negotiation and mobilisation of emotion alongside a disciplined and calculated understanding of market logics. This acknowledgement of the strategic nature of passionate labour also informs the cycle of passion. As we have revealed, blogger-preneurs will recycle passionate labour to an alternative context if this offers the promise of market success. While Duffy and Hund (2015) also recognise that aspirational labour can be entrepreneurially calculated, this is dependent on the internal aspirations of blogger-preneurs. We foreground both internal aspirations and the wider external cultural and social dimension of passions. For Cooren (2010, p. 61), little passions make one's conduct "accountable, reportable, responsive, and [...] responsible to others." This stands in contrast to the popular notion of passion as being all-consuming (Baudrillard, 1998; Belk *et al.*, 2003). These qualities required in passionate labour mean that the heat of passion is diffused (Cooren, 2010). Emotion by no means disappears, but as Illouz affirms, emotion "can be defined as the 'energy-laden' side of action, where that energy is understood to simultaneously implicate cognitions, affect, evaluation, motivation and the body" (2009, pp. 382-383). Passion and displays of emotionality provide purpose and commitment, a sense of belonging and even empowerment. It has become as Arvidsson (2010, p. 308) details a "mode

of production, systematically promoted and put to work”. Putting passion to work we argue takes us to the forms of power essential to the practices of branding and marketing.

We have foregrounded passion as a marketplace sentiment (Gopaldas, 2014) that can be understood as a ‘structure of feeling’ (Williams 1977) that serves to energise and animate bloggers. Some of the passionate labourers in our study become what Scaraboto and Fischer (2013) would term ‘institutional entrepreneurs’ due to the way in which they establish themselves as media authorities and in doing so, capitalise on their labour by generating the equivalent of a full-time income through click-through banner advertisements, affiliate sales, luxury brand collaborations and developing online retail offerings. Yet, as Ashman *et al.* (2018, p. 481) reveal, this structure of feeling can also manifest in “quiet desperation” and “self-doubt.” Importantly, our turn to status, authority and privilege has revealed that passion is unequally distributed. This may explain why only a few blogger-preneurs can successfully transition from consumer to institutional entrepreneur. For others, cultivating the passion in passionate labour never goes beyond exploitation, which we find particularly notable in the infiltration of labour into one’s personal time or sense of well-being. Passion operates as a structure of power. Passionate labourers are seduced into serving the interests of the broader system and achieve success through work that, initially, involves labouring during personal time.

### *Practical implications*

Our research has implications for blogger-preneurs, luxury brands and organisations beyond the blogging context. Aspiring blogger-preneurs must recognise that passion is an elusive force that only a minority can strategically mobilise to discipline their passionate labour. To increase the chances of success, blogger-preneurs should seek to professionalise and legitimise blog content, for example, through strategic communication with the media and adhering to the endorsement guidelines required by regulatory bodies, such as the Advertising

Standards Agency (UK). Bloggerpreneurs should also continually assess and evaluate which content will most appeal within existing ideological structures so that they are able to recycle passions to remain contemporary. Passion brings a sense of purpose and inner belief thus another option for bloggerpreneurs is to portray an account of mobilising passion to overcome personal life challenges to make themselves more authentic and relatable.

Our findings revealed that bloggerpreneurs can play an important role in educating followers on class behaviour and the accessibility of fashion items. This includes offering instruction on how to access luxury brands at discount prices. This raises implications for luxury brands that want to protect their exclusivity. Previous research suggests that luxury marketing and retail managers can use material and social cues to “manage exclusion” and ensure “that only the “right people” enter the store” (Dion and Borraz, 2017, p. 81). The online environment overcomes access barriers and widens accessibility of luxury brands. To avoid tarnishing brand desirability, luxury brand managers should consider collaborating with bloggers. Luxury brand managers can train bloggers to educate their followers on how to use and wear fashion items in ways that best reflect brand values. This form of passionate labour could equally be applied to other luxury market sectors.

In recognition that passionate labour can be enacted from different subject positions, our implications have relevance beyond the blogging context e.g. employees and volunteers in the non-profit sector, influencers, academics, creatives. For organisations seeking to capitalise on passionate labour, market status and power can be established via strategic, co-creative affective management of both in-person and/or digital interactions. Affective energy must be nurtured in exchanges which demonstrate the importance of employees and/or followers’ opinions by taking seriously their ideas. Managed together passions can become a recipe for animating passionate labour but success will depend on the organisation’s ability to implement

these. Given the risks for employee well-being, care and concern must be levelled within firms and institutions.

### **Limitations and future research directions**

Like any qualitative study, the findings in our paper are inevitably tied to Kate fashion bloggers. Our study has relevance to the gender and class inequalities made salient in blogging. Future research could build on this perspective by considering blogging with reference to racial and class inequalities. Within the British Royal Family context, there has been extensive media commentary on Meghan Markle's racial identity and a tendency to unfavourably, and sometimes hostilely, compare Meghan with Kate (e.g., McGill, 2021). Studies may consider how blogging is implicated in these racialised and class discourses of femininity.

Future research might consider how passionate labour operates beyond the blogging context. A comparative study could explore to what extent passionate labour continues to be unequally distributed across multiple market sectors (e.g. public sector, third sector, engineering, science etc.) both digital and in-person. Studies might explore to what extent individuals have made use of the COVID-19 pandemic to harness their passions and upskill. Amidst the 'Great Resignation' to what extent have individuals been successful in generating an income by mobilising their passions? We have considered an existing taste structure, the British Royal Family. Studies could consider how other structures of power, where work conditions extend beyond the working week into personal and digital life spheres, become a critical ingredient for ambition, success and failure among passionate labourers. This could take multiple forms – the capitalist marketplace or the neoliberal ethos of academia. How are the 'little passions' we identify managed strategically to animate passionate labour within these

alternative structures of power? And, do other ‘little passions’, beyond those identified, intersect to animate passionate labour?

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