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New Vistas | Policy, Practice and Scholarship in Higher Education

Editor's Note

Volume 10 | Issue 2 | ***Women and Work***

In 1966, the New Left Review published an article about women and inequality titled 'Women: The Longest Revolution' by Juliette Mitchell. She wrote at a time when the Women's Liberation movement was in its early days. Here in Ealing, where the University of West London's St Mary's Campus is situated, the Women's Liberation local Ealing branch was launched in the 1960s (Kouimtsidis, 2021). Mitchell began the piece with this statement:

"The situation of women is different from that of any other social group. This is because they are not one of a number of isolable units, but half a totality: the human species. Women are essential and irreplaceable; they cannot therefore be exploited in the same way as other social groups can. They are fundamental to the human condition, yet in their economic, social and political roles, they are marginal. It is precisely this combination—fundamental and marginal at one and the same time—that has been fatal to them" (Mitchell 1966, 11).

Mitchell argued that understanding – and indeed overcoming - this situation required getting to grips with four structures that maintained women in this position: production, reproduction, sex and the socialisation of children. The theme of the current issue of *New Vistas* is women and work, and I have interpreted work as 'labour' and applied it in the most general sense to incorporate the four domains identified by Mitchell. Theorisations of labour have come a long way since the work of Mark and Engels, cited by Mitchell. "Emotional labor" was coined by the sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild in 1983 to reflect the work that predominantly female employees do. In 2001, Michelle Budig and Paula England coined the term "motherhood penalty" to denote the process whereby mothers generally earn less than other women and hold lower pensions on retirement.

Globally, inequalities between men and women at work remain stark. In 2023, women earned just 77 cents of each dollar earned by a man (World Bank Forum, 2024). The Global Gender Gap Report 2023 found that women often face substandard quality of working conditions; out of every five jobs created for women, four are within the informal economy (the ratio is two out of every three jobs for men). Informal work frequently carries a lack of legal protections, basic security and reasonable working conditions. The report notes that progress in raising women's working conditions in the last decades, has been slower than expected, and women continue to face greater barriers to entering the workforce than men. Inadquate care systems are one of most severe roadblocks (World Economic Forum, 2023).

Ann Oakley's article deals with the social status of women's work as housewives within the home. It documents the emergence of an educational and social movement in Europe and the USA from around 1880 using the scientific paradigm to elevate the status of housework: the 'household science movement'. Oakley addresses the consequences of the movement and the impact that it had both inside and outside the home. She argues that it had a lasting impact on the way that housework was done, and that new housework technologies "created professional opportunities for women on the fringes of the scientific / technical world." Oakley's article connects with the next, my own article on the representation of women in British television advertising from the 1950s to the 1970s. Scholarship on early television commercials has focused on the housewife, and "her" role in driving economic growth as the chief purchaser of new domestic goods in the post war British economic boom. Both articles connect with Oakley's earlier seminal research on housework (1974).

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Misson Statement

New Vistas **is published by the University of West London (UWL) and provides a forum to disseminate research, commentary, and scholarly work that engages with the complex agenda of higher education in its local, national and global context.**

Published for a broad (academic, international and professional) audience, the journal will feature research and scholarly analysis on higher education policy; current issues in higher education; higher education pedagogy; professional practice; the relation of higher education to work and the economy; and discipline-specific research.

We welcome thought-provoking scholarly contributions from external and internal authors, with the explicit intention to give a voice to early-career researchers and scholars.

Email:
newvistas@uwl.ac.uk
Twitter:
@newvistas_uwl
Web:
uwlpress.uwl.ac.uk/newvistas/issues/
Address:
University of West London
St. Mary's Road, Ealing
London W5 5RF

Editorial Team

Despite important advances, gender-based discrimination in the workplace persists and continues to hinder women's work opportunities and career progress

Helen Hester's article, although it deals nominally with current issues around the automation of work, engages with a much larger ongoing international issue about women's care work. Cantillon, Mackett and Stevano define 'care' as "all activities that enhance people's physical and emotional health and well-being, thus sustaining human life and the reproduction of the workforce and societies" (2023, 71). Categories of unpaid carework like mothering and housework make a major indirect contribution to the economy, although, formally categorised as 'non-market work', it is not included or counted in the national accounting systems of nation-states. Women undertake "without exception" more than three-quarters of unpaid care and make up two-thirds of the paid care workforce (Cantillon, Mackett and Stevano, 2023, 73).

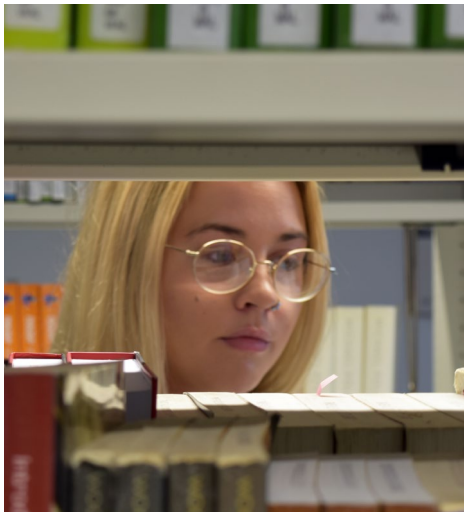
Angela Saward's report deals with the labour of pregnancy and childbirth. It also engages with broader issues about the medicalisation and pathologisation of women's labour in this sphere documented by Cahill (2001) and others. Like the articles on housework, it connects with earlier pioneering work on women's rights to self-autonomy. Our Bodies, Ourselves is a book about women's health and sexuality originally produced by the Boston Women's Health Book Collective, which was an important manuscript for the 1970s Women's Liberation Movement. First published in 1970, it contained information related to many aspects of women's health and sexuality, including sexual health.

The interview with **Lizie Gower** reminds us of the huge achievements made by women leaders in the formal publicly regulated political economy. Today, women not only lead major global companies such as Citigroup and General Motors, but they have become presidents of leading academic institutions such as Harvard, Columbia, Cornell, Oxford, Cambridge, and McGill, and are heads of state or government in 31 countries (UN Women 2023). However, despite these important advances, gender-based discrimination in the workplace persists and continues to hinder women's work opportunities and career progress. As the World Bank Forum 2023 report showed, women remain less likely than similarly qualified men to obtain jobs with higher social and monetary rewards and to gain access to positions of power.

The final piece in this collection is a report by **Amy Cowan** on the Community Programme Unit (CPU) established by the BBC in 1972. Through Open Door and other CPU initiatives, producers at the BBC were able to address issues of misrepresentation and under-representation by broadcasters, serving as "a conduit" for discussions between voluntary groups, campaign groups and broadcasters working in access, community or educational television (Henderson 2022). Amongst others, the CPU gave airtime to the Women's Institute, Chiswick Women's Aid, and Gingerbread (a one-parent family association) (Henderson 2022). The CPU was also a unit which enabled many women media workers to get started on their careers – people like Marilyn Wheatcroft, who went on to become the Head of Education at the BBC.

This diverse collection of articles takes a critical look at some aspects of those four domains highlighted by Mitchell in her 1966 article. Whilst short collections such as this cannot do justice to the full spectrum of change, there is no doubt that they confirm that women's liberation is, indeed, proving both globally and nationally to be the longest revolution. Historical research of the kind undertaken by Saward and Oakley, as well as contemporary questioning demonstrated by Hester, illustrate the twin investigation needed to understand how and why this is so.

Emily Caston
Professor of Screen Industries
Director of the Policy and Practice Research Institute of Screen and Music



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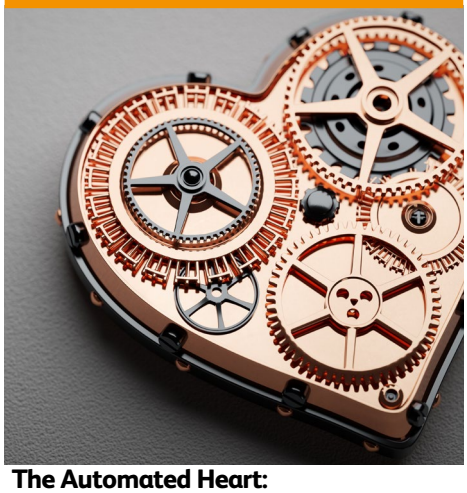

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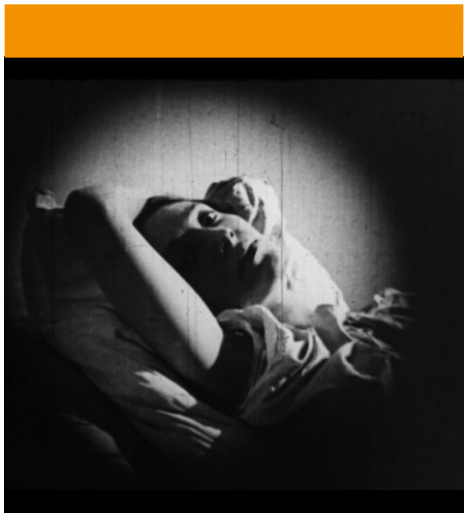

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Ann Oakley | University College London

Household science: a new occupation for women?

Abstract

An educational and social movement to raise the status of housework by emphasising its scientific nature developed in Europe, North America and other countries in the period from around 1880. This has mostly escaped the attention of scholars, who have failed to see how cleaning up homes and improving domestic nutrition could have an impact on public health. This article focuses chiefly on another aspect of the household science movement: its consequences for women's work both inside and outside homes. Notions of scientific efficiency and improved house design, together with attention to the poor working conditions of housewives had a lasting effect on the way housework was done. New housework technologies created professional opportunities for women on the fringes of the scientific/technical world.

Household labour is the most dominant form of work globally. In all countries and cultures, it is predominantly women's work. However, it has received very partial attention from scholars, who have focussed mostly on patterns and trends in the amount of workers' time it occupies; the gender division of labour; and the impact of technological innovation and change. A spectacularly ignored area is housework as a form of scientific activity: the extent to which the cleanliness of people and homes and the nutrition and body care provided in homes depends on knowledge derived from core scientific disciplines such as bacteriology, chemistry, physics, engineering and food science. Women as houseworkers have not generally been seen or studied as practitioners of science, and neither have those who have taught, researched or written about household science.

This article draws on material collected for my book, *The Science of Housework: The Home and Public Health, 1880-1940*, which looks at the forgotten history of an international movement led by women to emphasise the science in housework. The household science movement began in the UK and the US and spread to many countries, including Africa, India, Japan and New Zealand. The movement brought together various networks of reforming women, and it formed an important plank in campaigns for women's emancipation by arguing that efficient domesticity could only be supplied by highly educated women. A primary goal of the movement was to improve personal and public health by raising the subject of household science to an equal status with other sciences in educational institutions.

There were various ways in which the household science movement affected women's work both inside and outside homes. First, there was the role women played in advancing the cause of household science in schools, colleges and universities. They taught it, researched it, wrote books about it and engaged in creative collaborations with other scientists. Second, the movement opened new doors for women's professional work in science, technology and academia, sometimes in unexpected and not wholly positive ways. Third, and in alliance with the emerging industry of household technology, it led to a new version of women as 'Mrs Consumer'.

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Why so little work on the household science movement?

Why has the record of women's work in household science largely disappeared from history? Feminist scholars and activists have tended to view any education for girls and women in household science as simply a conspiracy to keep women in the home. In her *Wasting Girls' Time: The History and Politics of Home Economics*, the educationalist Dena Attar, for example, argues that home economics (one of the commonly used labels for the subject) has been educationally harmful as it is essentially a form of sexist indoctrination. A similar case is put by Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English in their pithily argued *For Her Own Good: 150 years of the Experts' Advice to Women*. However, *For Her Own Good* does admit that there was something refreshing about the unsentimentality of the household science movement. Campaigners took a pragmatic view of homes as places that could, and should, make people healthier. They insisted that, far from being a retreat from the dangers of the industrial world, the home itself is an industrial workplace with all the dangers and opportunities that implies.

Another blow to the scholarly analysis of housework as science was anthropologist Mary Douglas's highly influential book *Purity and Danger*, first published in 1966. In it Douglas argued that ideas about dirt and cleanliness are primarily ways of creating social order. Dirt is disorder. It exists in the eye of the beholder. Rather than being about the prevention of disease and the promotion of wellbeing, housework is basically made up of classificatory rituals that organise the social world. The tradition of scholarly work that Douglas's perspective continues to inspire is very far from the view espoused by the household science campaigners of the late 19th-and early 20th-century. When they used the term 'science' they were referring to science as a matter of *fact*: a rigorous, systematic endeavour that builds and organises knowledge in the form of testable explanations and predictions about both natural and social worlds. In her study of microbes, *The Gospel of Germs*, the historian Nancy Tomes invites us to detach from the *Purity and Danger* tradition and imagine another anthropologist looking back at the AIDS epidemic in a 100 years and labelling preventive measures such as condoms and bleach-disinfected needles as 'gestures of separation and classification'.[1]

The dismissal of home economics, household science, or whatever you choose to call it (and it was called different things in different places), as a device for oppressing women or a collection of classificatory rituals means that whole segments of associated histories have fallen by the academic wayside. In just one example, historian Sally Sheard examined the development of public baths and wash-houses in the UK between 1847 and 1915. She found a substantial literature on large-scale sanitary infrastructure reforms, but very little on the smaller-scale but critical matter of public baths and wash-houses. These played a key role in reducing many transmissible diseases including typhoid, which is spread by lice who flourish on dirty bodies, clothes and bedding.

Placid beginnings

The international household science movement is generally considered to have got off the ground in 1899 when eleven people met at the Lake Placid Country Club in the wilderness of the Adirondack Mountains in upstate New York for a conference on something they initially called 'home science or household economics'. The discussions that took place there and at the succeeding nine conferences effectively solidified a consensus among household science campaigners that the only way to make people take it seriously was to get the subject into the universities. Theirs was an ambitious programme of education, research and policy-making. It drew on the long history in many countries of educating schoolgirls (but hardly ever schoolboys) about housework. Some of the household science campaigners were feminists who saw that science and technology could breed greater efficiency in the home and give more freedom for women to lead lives outside it. Others regarded homemaking as women's essential mission. But even in this case there was a powerful argument for improving its scientific basis because (it was claimed) once women knew how to do it properly they would enjoy it more.

Typical of the early literature on household science was a book called *Women, Plumbers, and Doctors; or, Household Sanitation* published by the American writer Harriette M. Plunkett in 1885. The text was full of detail about the structure and management of domestic plumbing systems, frightening diagrams and complicated recipes for success. Plunkett's argument was that women needed fully to understand the mysteries of domestic plumbing, and that this would lead to less illness and premature death and much less need for doctors. Her book appeared at a critical historical moment when the old miasma theory of disease was giving way to new knowledge about germs. The science of bacteriology began to emerge in the 1870s with startling evidence that microscopic living particles, rather than noxious air, were the causes of illness. Thus a new breed of scientifically-minded housewives was necessary. Women gained a new occupation, that of microbe-hunter.

The discovery of microbes meant a greater need for a basic scientific knowledge in the running of homes. Since at the start of the 20th century the mainstream scientific/technical world was effectively closed to most women, here, in the name of household science, was a back door through which they might gain a small measure of gender equality

How to hunt microbes

Microbes had a powerful rhetorical image: they were real but invisibly hidden in dust and dirt. As products of real scientists working in real laboratories, they inspired parallel images of housewives as scientists working in the laboratory of the home. Indeed, the famous British domestic writer Mrs Beeton, back in 1861, had called the kitchen 'the great laboratory of the household' in her *The Book of Household Management*. At Simmons College for women in Boston, Sophronia Maria Elliott's *Household Bacteriology*, published in 1905, firmly instructed women to become laboratory technicians and apply the scientist's methods to an understanding of household dirt. These are just two examples of a mammoth literature written mostly by women household science educators. Many texts invited women to culture specimens of dust in Petri dishes (so-called 'dust gardens') just like real scientists, because only then would you literally perceive how dangerous dirt really was.

The discovery of microbes meant a greater need for a basic scientific knowledge in the running of homes. Since at the start of the 20th century the mainstream scientific/technical world was effectively closed to most women, here, in the name of household science, was a back door through which they might gain a small measure of gender equality. The history of King's College of Household Science (KCHSS) in London illustrates this journey particularly well. KCHSS began as an informal series of 'lectures for ladies' in West London in the early 1870s as a response to the demand among middle-class women for access to higher education. (The writer Virginia Woolf and her sister the artist Vanessa Bell were among those who benefitted from this enterprise.) Lectures for ladies matured into King's College for Women (KCW) before becoming KCHSS in 1928. Programmes of study in household science had begun in the early 1900s. The core group of campaigners who pushed this initiative forward included two pioneering sanitary educators, Margaret McKillop and Alice Ravenhill; the educationalist Lilian Faithfull; an economist called Mabel Atkinson (who incisively took Adam Smith to task for the misogynistic neglect of housework in his famous *Wealth of Nations*); and a local doctor who was impressed by maternal ignorance as a factor in infant mortality. The household science movement wasn't without its patronizing classist and sexist elements.

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By 1862, the case for home economics was obvious to household science's most famous advocate Ellen Richards, the first American woman to get a chemistry degree, the first woman student and member of staff at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and the first women member of the American Institute of Mining and Mineralogical Engineers, and the first woman (and the first person) to run a consumer products-testing laboratory

Most of the teachers and all the students of the KCW/KCHSS household science courses were women. As an indication of how scientific this endeavour was, Alice Ravenhill's lectures on hygiene went from 'The physical nature of man' through 'The relation of nutrition to health' and 'The preparation, preservation and protection of food', and lectures on the environment and health, physical exercise and school hygiene, to 'some public health problems' including infant mortality, housing, and the growth of public health legislation.[2] As the courses developed they became more and more complex. In 1909 the applied chemistry component, for instance, covered the constituents of the atmosphere; water analysis; foods, adulterants and preservatives; and the chemistry of cooking and of laundry work and other cleansing processes. The KCW enthusiasts were aiming at a full three-year university degree and a one-year postgraduate diploma. Publicity promoted these courses as relevant to municipal welfare workers such as Poor Law Guardians, District Councillors, or County Councillors, as well as to students intending to be factory inspectors or managers of institutions, and of course to all those who were interested in teaching the subject in schools and colleges.

The arrival of household science on the university curriculum - the three-year household science degree at KCW was finally approved in 1920 - was met with a mixed reception. Media headlines poked fun at it: 'The dignity of housework: Educated charwomen wanted'; 'Management of the house: the chemistry of the wash-tub'; 'Doctors of Housewifery'; and 'Model Wives'.[3] But the King's enterprise survived this derision to become, as a result of energetic and lucrative fund-raising, a thriving institution with its own architect-designed set of buildings and specialized scientific laboratories in Campden Hill, Kensington. It was a remarkable repository of knowledge and expertise. In 1953 KCHSS was renamed Queen Elizabeth College. By this time it had acquired an international reputation as a centre of excellence in nutritional science. In this it built on the work of KCHSS pioneers such as Margaret McKillop, who taught chemistry at KCW from 1898 to 1914. During the First World War, McKillop worked for the Ministry of Food, and she wrote a book on food values for which she was awarded an MBE in 1919. Her book was one of the first attempts to translate the findings of nutrition research into usable information for teachers, demonstrators, caterers, social workers and houseworkers who, as McKillop argued, were becoming increasingly aware that scientific methods and knowledge were needed in homes just as much as outside them. Other teachers and researchers based at King's achieved similar, forgotten distinctions, for instance in such fields as vitamins, the nutritional value of human milk, and the cause of the bone disease rickets.

The international scene

In the late 19th- and early 20th-century household science was making its name everywhere. Its form and rate of progress were naturally shaped by local cultural contexts. In the US, its trajectory had been heavily influenced by a piece of legislation passed in 1862 called The Morrill Land Grant Act. This offered land to state universities that would provide training for rural populations in practical gender-divided fields – agricultural and mechanical skills for men, home economics for women. By that date, the case for home economics was obvious to many, including household science's most famous advocate Ellen Richards, the first American woman to get a chemistry degree, the first woman student and member of staff at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the first women member of the American Institute of Mining and Mineralogical Engineers, and the first woman (and the first person) to run a consumer products-testing laboratory. Richards once observed that millions of dollars were spent in agricultural colleges studying the food of pigs, cows and horses, but none, until the arrival of home economics, was spent on studying the food of men (and women).

By 1892, 14 land-grant universities/colleges in the US were running degree-worthy courses called 'sanitary science', 'household administration', 'domestic science' or 'home economics'. These courses provided hundreds of jobs for women chemists, physicists, engineers, economists and so forth who found it hard to get jobs in male-run scientific departments. Eight years later, there were 30 college departments of domestic science. Although the subsidy provided to household science through the land-grant system helped to publicise the general case for it to be taken seriously in academic circles, it was the new private university in Chicago funded by the oil baron John D. Rockefeller that proved to be one of the most hospitable academic locations for science-based housework courses

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The sanitary scientist Marion Talbot, who trained with Ellen Richards at MIT, was recruited from her job teaching domestic science at Wellesley College for women to do the same at the new university of Chicago. Although missing from most histories of the Chicago sociology department (which is widely regarded as *the* origin of academic sociology), Talbot was one of the four people who staffed the sociology department when the university opened in October, 1892. Highly ambitious both for herself and for her subject, she asked the President of the University for a professorship to head a Department of Household Technology. She wanted a full complement of instructors, laboratory facilities, equipment, a practice house (for teaching practical household skills), a fellowship and scholarships, and possibly even a journal. What Talbot got was something rather less, but still worth having: she became Dean of Undergraduate Women, Assistant Professor in Sanitary Science and a few years later head of a Department of Household Administration. The courses it offered in physics, chemistry, physiology, bacteriology, political economy, and the study of society were intended to train both men and women for the rational and scientific administration of the home, including preparing them to teach the subject.

Similar goals drove education and supplied jobs for women in household science in countries as diverse as India, Japan and New Zealand. But almost everywhere there was resistance from male academics, who saw women household scientists as belonging in an 'academic kitchen' (if not actually a real campus kitchen where they could use their talents in the cost-saving measure of cooking for staff and students).

Selling Mrs Consumer

Those who taught household science and many of those who published books about it found it essential to tackle one main fallacy about housework: that it's an essentially *unproductive* activity. Housewives don't produce anything: their main function is to *consume* goods and services. This dogma, perpetrated for many years by male economists, hides the uncomfortable reality that women's unpaid labour in the home is about producing and servicing workers (men and children). It wasn't a conspiracy, but it was, from the viewpoint of capitalist economics, a serendipitous happening: new clerical and industrial jobs for women caused a steady decline in domestic servants, and the producers of domestic technologies – vacuum cleaners, electric irons, refrigerators, electric and gas ovens and so forth – were keen to step into the gap and redefine housewives as consumers.

The American efficiency expert Christine Frederick published her extremely popular contribution to the debate about the nature of household work, *Selling Mrs Consumer*, in 1929. The book explores the need for studies of consumers, analyses data on

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men and women's consumption habits, and eulogises on the theme of women as family decision-makers when it comes to household purchases of any kind. Frederick was an untiring tester of the new household appliances that were flooding the market. She worked closely with manufacturers, who paid her for her labours, and she even maintained that the interests of manufacturers and consumers are identical, something which other household scientists vehemently contested. The main rhetorical point in the conversion of 'Mrs Housewife' into 'Mrs Consumer' was that the struggle to be clean and healthy couldn't possibly be won without buying. And to buy into a state of proper modernity, one must live in a state of highly technologized domesticity. Advertisers and industry enthusiasts co-opted the labours of household scientists in laboratories and colleges and universities and turned their verifiable scientific facts into seductive, but often unverifiable, slogans. Their astute sales pitch played on the public anxiety about dirt and germs that had been enlarged, if not actually created, by the household science movement.

Mrs Consumer was given a lot more power than she actually had. How many housewives were really in a position to persuade their husbands to buy a new kitchen? The idealised commercialised image of women as financial decision-makers proved to be long-lived. One sign of this was the screening in Norwegian daytime cinemas during the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s, of a brand of popular 'housewife films'. These films were made by a consortium of marketing consultants and home economics experts in an unusual hybrid format which mixed advertising, entertainment and education. The aim was to display all the latest household technologies in such a manner that women were persuaded to persuade their husbands to buy them. The entertainment breaks inserted in the films were hosted by a comic male figure whose exaggerated domestic stupidity was designed to create a feeling of confident solidarity among the watching women – although precisely how it would help in the persuasion business that awaited them was less clear.

Christine Frederick's second most famous import from industry to the home was the notion of 'scientific management'. 'Taylorism', developed by the American mechanical engineer Frederick Taylor, aimed to increase productivity in factories by dividing shop-floor work into its component processes and studying the quickest way to get these done. Burdened with the care of a home and young children in the early 1900s, Christine Frederick saw the potential for transferring this approach to housework. Following Taylorist principles, she found she could save a third of the time her housework had previously taken. For example, merely by arranging kitchen tools more rationally, the time spent in peeling potatoes could be reduced from five to two minutes, and the washing of 50 dishes could be cut from 41 to 23 minutes. 'Efficiency' and 'scientific management' became important elements in household science programmes, and they spurred many more women to develop careers as domestic efficiency experts.

Making homes

The need to do housework efficiently drew attention to the material constraints that faced many women houseworkers in the early 20th century: confined in ill-designed, unhealthy homes with no running water, inside flush toilets, or piped gas and electricity, it was difficult to do anything efficiently.

The household science movement took on fundamental issues of house design. In France, the journalist and philosophy graduate Paulette Bernège launched a severe attack on the thoughtlessness of male architects in 1928 when she published a book called *Si les femmes faisaient les maisons* ('If Women Made Houses'). This was written in response to government plans to update France's housing stock. They claim to have consulted all experts, Bernége protested, but where are the real experts, French housewives? Among the many examples of waste Bernège invites architects to consider is that walking the 'vampiric' distance between her own kitchen and dining room over 40 years would take her from Paris to Lake Baikal in Siberia.[4] The last French edition of *Si les femmes faisaient les maisons* (it has never been translated into English) appeared in 1969 and Bernège's own career as a celebrant of scientific efficiency continued well into the 1950s.

In Germany in the 1920s the labours of a young German architect called Grete Lihotzky gave birth to something of lasting importance: the modern streamlined Western kitchen. Lihotzky was an admirer of Taylorism and Christine Frederick's writings. Working on an ambitious social housing project in Frankfurt aimed at working-class families, she designed a small space-saving kitchen, modelled on the restaurant car on trains and using the results of scientific research. For instance, Lihotzky's kitchen was fitted with units painted blue, because researchers had found that flies weren't fond of blue. It was crammed with ingenious devices, such as built-in food containers and a hinged draining board that could be angled to flow down into the sink or alternatively stowed away against the wall. Frankfurt kitchens were efficiently prefabricated and lifted into buildings with a crane, and some 10,000 were installed in housing developments in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

Sources of power

A survey by Elsie Edwards, a member of an organization called the Electrical Association for Women, for a conference on scientific management in 1935 found that in three-quarters of 5,000 working-class British households water for washing was still heated using a copper, a gas boiler, or pans and kettles on the kitchen stove. The period from the early 1920s until after the Second World War witnessed an intense battle for custom between the promoters of gas and electricity (with solid-fuel-promoters intervening from the sidelines) to gain the attention of the overburdened consuming housewife. This was another battle led by women. They formed three profile-raising organisations: the Electrical Association for Women (EAW) in 1924; the Women's Gas Council (WGC) in 1935;

ABOVE. The Frankfurt Kitchen's deep blue integrated storage; Minneapolis Institute of Art. Image via creative commons

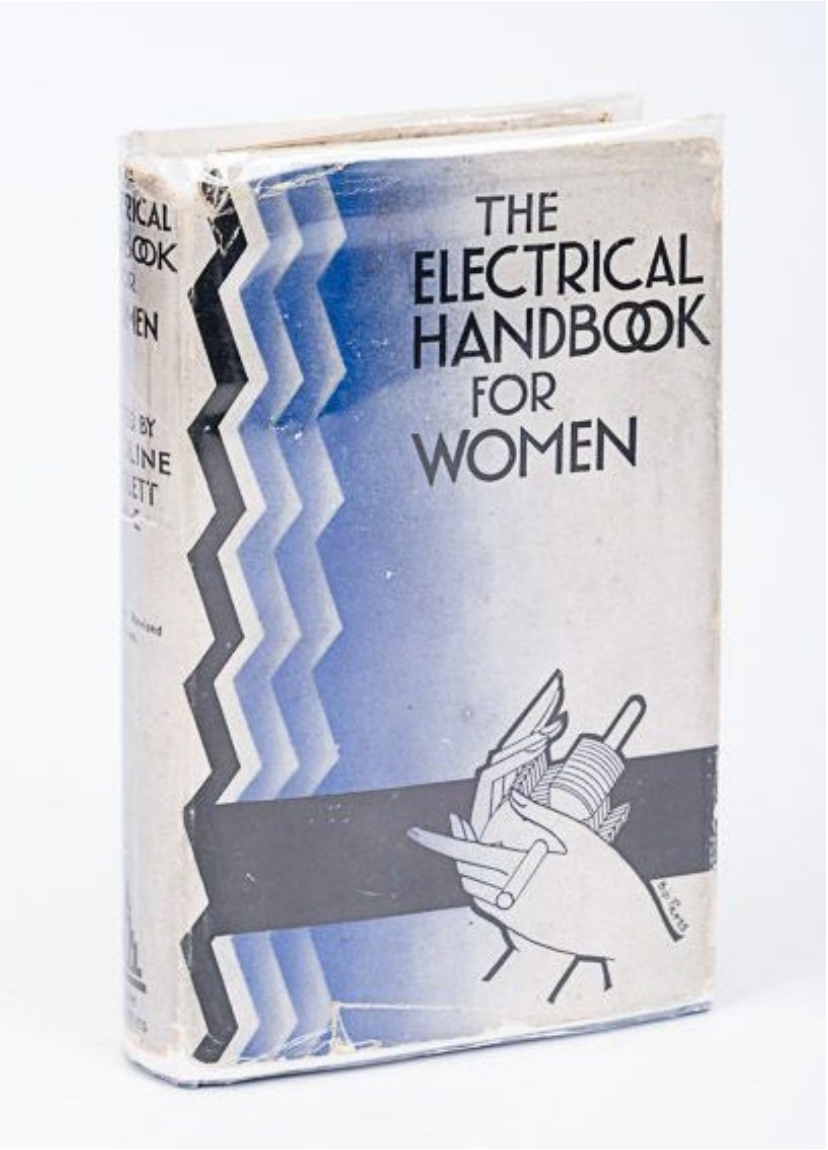
In Germany in the 1920s the labours of a young German architect called Grete Lihotzky gave birth to the modernstreamlined Western kitchen. Working on an ambitious social housing project in Frankfurt aimed at working-class families, she designed a small space-saving kitchen, modelled on the restaurant car on trains and using the results of scientific research

and the Women's Advisory Council on Solid Fuel (WACSF) in 1943. Of the three, the highest profile and most success belonged to the EAW. In her *Woman's Work is Never Done* Caroline Davidson plausibly contends that the EAW is 'the only example of women actually changing the conduct of housework through collective action' over a period of three centuries.[5]

Early advertisements for electricity depicted servants who wore black dresses, white pinafores and caps. Since servants themselves were rapidly disappearing from middle-class homes, the point rapidly became that electricity *itself* could be a servant. One writer on the subject, Maud Lancaster, advised that in this capacity electricity 'is always at hand; *always willing* to do its allotted task and to do it perfectly, *silently*, swiftly and without mess; never wants a day off; never answers back; is never laid up; never asks for a rise; in fact, it is often willing to work for less money; never gives notice and does not mind working overtime; it has no prejudices and is prepared to undertake any duties for which it is adapted; it costs nothing when not actually doing useful work.' [6] This gives us some idea of what middle-class housekeepers expected of their vanishing servants. And the sad truth was that servants at this time were a good deal cheaper than electricity.

The EAW was founded by two engineers, Caroline Haslett and Mabel Matthews. It placed much emphasis on science as guaranteeing women liberation from exhausting and old-fashioned methods of managing homes. The EAW, which survived until 1986, was set up to educate and train women in the uses of electric energy by providing electrical education classes for housewives, advice to government and industry, and training for domestic science teachers and demonstrators of electrical devices. It published a series of 'How it Works' leaflets and from 1931 offered an Electrical Housecraft Course which awarded either a certificate or a diploma. There was also a Home Worker's Certificate for housewives covering electricity generation and transmission; the home installation of meters, fuses, and switches; and how to cook, refrigerate, plan kitchens and all the rest of it so as to make the best use of electricity. The EAW produced a textbook, *The Electrical Handbook for Women*, which was widely used for several decades. It's a daunting mix of highly technical detail (what electricity is, how it's supplied and paid for, how to trace and repair electrical faults) and practical information about specific domestic appliances. Most strikingly, the text of the *Handbook* treats women as intelligent and capable of understanding matters that were commonly regarded as beyond them. By the late 1920s, the subject of Electrical Housecraft had been effortlessly absorbed into household science curricula. In London, both Chelsea and Battersea Polytechnics introduced specialist courses in electrical science in 1927, and KCHSS followed suit in 1928. In the US, the home economics department of Iowa State College was the pioneer of something called 'equipment education'; the College launched an undergraduate major in household equipment in 1929, and by the 1950s hundreds of BSc and MSc degrees in household equipment had been awarded, creating of course yet more jobs for women.

'What gas can do in capable hands' is the title of a chapter in Maud Cloudesley Brereton's persuasive volume *Cooking by Gas*. The book was published around 1930 by the British Commercial Gas Association (BCGA) with the scientific help of Margaret McKillop of KCHSS. Its red, black and beige cover shows a woman wearing bright lipstick and rouge stirring a saucepan with a gas cooker in the background. Brereton argued that gas cookers, gas water boilers and gas fires could improve housing and nutrition and save lives, in fact using gas would have a beneficial impact on 'all the issues of life'. Like Haslett for electricity, she pushed gas company managers to listen to women, and suggested they should consult with 'well-educated lady advisors' in adapting gas technology to the home. Brereton was the British gas industry's public relations specialist, the editor of the BCGA's journal and author of its promotional material: the gas counterpart of Caroline Haslett, in other words. Brereton was a member of the WES and the Royal Institute of Public Health and the first honorary female member of the Institution of Sanitary Engineers; she was decorated in 1907 by the French Government for her services to international public health. Yet none of these achievements apparently qualifies her (along with scores of other similarly achieving women who populate the history of the household science movement) to be remembered in most histories of the sanitary reform movement.



ABOVE. Haslett / Bip Pares – The Electrical Handbook for Women.

The effort to technologize housework had a major impact on women's own technological careers. New technical training opportunities for new occupations opened up in which women could safely develop their scientific capabilities away from the critical gaze of men. The fight for control of the domestic fuel empire spawned a new occupation: that of 'lady demonstrator', also colloquially (and tellingly) called 'lady demons'. The practice of deploying women to demonstrate, and thus hopefully sell, domestic technology began with sewing machines. In the early 1860s Isaac Singer in New York employed 'attractive young women' to operate sewing machines in the window of his shop. An entrepreneurial gas salesman called Edmund Richmond followed suit in the UK in the 1880s by hiring 'lady lecturers' to help his business. They gave demonstrations and lectures with lantern slides to illustrate the use of solid cast-iron gas cookers,and they called at gas customers' homes to give personalised advice. By the 1920s demonstrators were being hired by local energy companies to show how domestic machines were operated and to spread messages about the ease of preparing elaborate three-course meals, launder linens and clean carpets once you had the right source of power and the right device to help you.

The EAW's Diploma for Demonstrators and Saleswomen, launched in 1931, called for an examination, four years' experience in a showroom and a test demonstration in front of an audience. By the end of 1932 nearly 100 Diplomas had been awarded and the graduands had taken jobs in industry, in electrical showrooms and elsewhere; for example to demonstrate a new waffle iron in Harrods department store. The role of demonstrator was a career option offering women a gateway to a semi-technical position without the threat of being accused of taking a man's job. To the electrical industry, lady demonstrators may have been saleswomen, but the EAW saw them, and treated them, as novice engineers. 'Here is a promising profession for women, which, while not needing full technical training, may be said to be on the fringe of the Technical World,' proclaimed Caroline Haslett in a Report for the WES in 1919.[7] Hilda Dover, who attended one of the early Demonstrator courses, counselled that, 'Women who are thinking of taking up a career in Electrical Showrooms as Saleswoman must one and all possess a pleasing personality, for however great one's technical knowledge, practical or artistic bent, it is the customer's interest which is required first before advice can be given or a sale effected.' This was potently shown, Dover reported, by one Miss Gladys Burlton who demonstrated how a customer would respond (very differently) to a 'self-opiniated, highly technical salesman' on the one hand, and a 'charming sympathetic saleswoman' on the other.[8] But the lady demons had to be careful not to alert the anxieties of the men who worked in the gas and electrical industries; male inspectors and stove fitters were adamant that the lady demons shouldn't be allowed to carry tools or undertake repairs; their role should be decorative and definitely not technical.

Because the lady demons were viewed by male-dominated industry as low-status and marginal, not much of their history has been recorded. But some aspects of their legacy can be recovered today. The celebrated British television cooks Mary Berry, Fanny Cradock, Marguerite Pattern, and Zena Skinner all had jobs as demonstrators early in their careers. Mary Berry worked for Bath Electricity Board and she conducted home visits to educate women in the proper use of their new electric ovens by making endless Victoria sponges. Fanny Cradock worked for the Gas Council. Marguerite Pattern wanted to be an actress but couldn't afford the fees at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, so she took a job in Barnet with the North Metropolitan Electric Power Supply Company where her dramatic talents came in useful. In the 1940s, Zena Skinner got her demonstrator training at an establishment called the London School of Electrical Domestic Science and then worked for the Eastern Electricity Board at one of its Hertfordshire showrooms. The London School of Electrical Domestic Science was based in Knightsbridge and flourished in the early 1930s, although it appears not to have lasted very long. It advertised 'interesting, inexpensive courses' leading to a diploma for 'ambitious young ladies', who would thereby be destined to take up 'remunerative careers' as qualified demonstrators.[9]

Diploma-d or degree-d in household science and employed as demonstrators for the burgeoning household technology companies, the services of women demonstrators who could brag in technical language about what the gleaming new domestic equipment would achieve made a difference to them and to the communities among which they worked. For them it was a way of learning science that could lead to other careers in that field. Other women might have chosen to be professors of chemistry or physics or physiology at Harvard or Cambridge or anywhere really, but what they were offered, what was held out to them as within practicable reach, were academic appointments in some variant of the discipline that was household science. This was definitely better than nothing. It was how women inveigled their way (were seduced?) onto a path signposted 'to gender equality' - a destination that still remains shrouded in mist today.

Together with the community sociology practised by women in social settlements in Europe and North America, the campaign to make a serious educational subject out of housework is a historically underestimated force driving women's entrance into many areas of public life and to be heard as authoritative voices in policy-making

Conclusion

Isabelle Beecher Hooker (half-sister of the famous professional housewife Catharine Beecher), giving a speech in New Jersey in 1882 to a large crowd of suffragettes, urged them to master the plumbing systems in their houses as well as pursuing the vote. A staunch feminist herself, she saw no problem in combining the campaign for a more scientific attitude to housewifery with more conventional feminist causes, and, indeed, the household science movement did achieve many successes for women. Together with the community sociology practised by women in social settlements in Europe and North America, the campaign to make a serious educational subject out of housework is a historically underestimated force driving women's entrance into many areas of public life and to be heard as authoritative voices in policy-making.

And, most importantly, the household science movement had an undisputed effect on health. In countries such as the UK and the US, mortality rates began a steady decline once the domestic science movement had gained some hold, and this was *before* most medical interventions (except for smallpox vaccination) could have had any notable effect. Infant and child mortality rates, highly sensitive to environmental conditions, experienced the steepest fall. These large declines in mortality rates between about 1890 and 1920 are strong circumstantial evidence that the new domestic science education did actually change household behaviour. Public health reforms improved the infrastructure of the material environment but did nothing necessarily to alter attitudes and behaviour. The list of diseases whose transmission is mitigated by domestic and personal hygiene is a long one: chicken pox, diphtheria, gastroenteritis, measles, meningitis, polio, rubella, scabies, typhoid and viral hepatitis are just some of them. Households that adopted the new sanitary science messages about boiling water and milk, avoiding faecal contamination, and providing safer and more nutritious meals, would have increased their members' survival chances.

The household science movement effectively transferred to the general public knowledge about everyday life generated by scientists in their laboratories and offices. It challenged the public/private divide and shone the spotlight on the shoddy working conditions of women at home. It revealed the falsity and damage of prescriptive ideologies about women as irrational and unscientific and expanded the scope of their public work. For a time, in other words, housework was taken seriously.

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About the author

Ann Oakley Professor of Sociology and Social Policy Social Research Institute University College London

Ann Oakley has worked in social science research and teaching for almost 60 years, mainly at the Universities of Oxford and London. She founded both the Social Science Research Unit and the Evidence for Policy and Practice (EPPI) Centre, now part of UCL. She has authored or edited more than 40 books and has a long list of other publications specialising in the areas of gender, reproduction, health care, women's work, and methodology.

Keywords

Women's work; housework; science; reform; feminism

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Emily Caston | University of West London, UK

‘I like just to be me’: Women’s Work and Cadbury’s Flake television advertising

Abstract

Academic scholarship on the representation of women in British screen advertising from 1955 onwards has focused on issues related to the housewife, domestic labour and gender stereotypes. Taking Cadbury's advertising for its chocolate bar Flake as a case study, this article asks whether the hypersexualisation attributed to the late twentieth century television commercials was inherent in the brand's first television campaign of the 1950s. It finds that it was not, and the sexualisation of the 'Flake girl' arose both from the development in the late 1960s of a cluster of production companies and directors in London emulating American film styles, and from the merger of Cadbury with Schweppes in 1969. The article examines representations of women's work in the early chocolate television commercials of both the Quaker companies Rowntree and Cadbury, and finds that, contrary to popular assumption, they offered representations of female identity and value aligned to the early advocates of women's rights, economic independence, and freedom from domestic labour.

For Generation X, Cadbury's Flake is synonymous with the erotically charged television commercials of the 1980s and '90s. In this article, I argue that those hypersexualised adverts have little in common with the first Flake television commercials broadcast on British televisions between 1959 and 1969, an overlooked but highly significant collection of commercials which offer a corrective to contemporary assumptions about the representations of women and work on television in the post war period. I argue that the first Flake commercials produced by Cadbury 1959-1969 presented British audiences with an important, but as yet, under-recognised identity for women independent of domestic labour. This was in part because Cadbury's advertising in the immediate post war period was still driven by Quaker ethics, influenced by women's rights, and was versed in late nineteenth century rural idyllic visual advertising culture. After Cadbury merged with Schweppes in 1969, that advertising, which had been rooted in a marketing strategy that had evolved within a staunch framework of stakeholder Quaker capitalism (Cadbury 2010), was displaced by what Collier (2018) terms shareholder capitalism. This transition and the factors driving this change are important for our understanding of the representation of women in television advertising in the late twentieth century as a whole.

Scholarship on post-war advertising has been dominated by an analysis of women's domestic labour and the role of the housewife. Nixon tell us not only that 'the housewife' "emerged within British TV advertising as a recognizably English-British social type" (2013, 7), but that, "the housewife was post-war advertising's key consumer target, being associated with some of the most heavily advertised goods" (2013, 189). Illustrating his point, Nixon draws on the early laundry detergent testimonials for OMO and Persil, in particular Persil's 'Mum' campaign 1958-1960 which suggested love and social status would compensate for the extra work women were taking on. He also cites the 'slice of life' Katie campaign for OXO which, like 'Mum' was devised within the US originating agency J Walter Thompson (JWT). There now exists an emergent literature highlighting the myriad other ways in which women's work and women's identity was represented in advertising in the 1950s and '60s (such as Tinkler's research on cigarette advertising, 2001). But as Beaumont says, "[t}he iconic image of the 'ideal 1950s housewife' has proved hard to excise from the historical record and the public imagination" (Beaumont 2018, 147). The pre-eminence of the housewife in the early British television advertising was reinforced in the four-part documentary series *Washes Whiter* (BBC, 1990).

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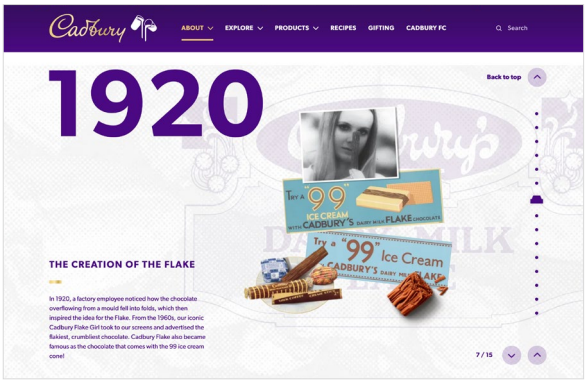

This article proposes that by dint of its emergence from within Cadbury's Quaker idealisation of nature and humanity, the Cadbury's Flake commercials of the 1950s and 1960s provide valuable evidence of ways in which women were invited to become active consumers, but that this shifted from the 1970s onwards as a result of the decrease in women's employment in advertising and the merger of Cadbury in 1969 with Schweppes. The commercials have received little or no attention in existing scholarship: academic attention has focused solely on the later hypersexualised spots of the '80s and '90s. Yet these commercials provide evidence of the ways in which women were being offered identities outside of paid work and independent of housework to engage in consumption. Whilst this is not radical by today's standard, it is not a perspective on post war advertising often read in the literature and is part of an emergent body of scholarship focusing on women's "leisure time" in cultural studies and the role of social class in twenty-century advertising. It comes alongside evidence, not only that advertisers in this period were targeting working class women through depictions of paid employment outside the home, but increasing evidence of middle-class women being depicted in paid work in the public sphere in the commercials of Rowntree, Birdseye, Surf and Horlicks. The picture becomes more complex when a new generation of film advertising directors emerged in the 1970s.

This article is based on research undertaken for my forthcoming book in the British Film Institute's (BFI) *Screen Stories* series partially funded by a British Academy small grant (2020-2022). The Cadbury screen archives were analysed on the History of Advertising Trust (HAT) database which is publicly available online. Additional archival material was accessed on site at the HAT archives in Norwich, the archives of the trade magazine *Campaign*, and both the British Film Institute (BFI)'s Commercial Break collection and Yorkshire Film Archive Kit Kat Archives which are free to access online. I have drawn extensively on primary research into the marketing work of Cadbury and Rowntree by Hindson (2023), Fitzgerald (2005), Dellheim (1987), French (2017), Cadbury (2011).

The Cadbury Flake Girl and Women's Work

Within popular culture, the Cadbury 'Flake girl' is often epitomised in the hypersexualised commercials 'Hotel' (1987, Kinsman) and 'Bath' (1991, Lewin) created by a then young art director named Kate Stanners and her creative partner Tim Hearn at the advertising agency GGT (Gold Greenlees Trott). Today, Stanners is one of the most influential and acclaimed women in British advertising, serving both as Chairman and Global Chief Creative Officer of Saatchi and Saatchi and the Director of the History of Advertising Trust Board. 'Bath' was voted 'all time sexiest advert' in a 2008 poll according to Stevens and Ostberg (2020, 398) who argue that the spot draws a parallel between secret female food consumption and 'sexual surrender' with an erotic and suggestive narrative (2020, 398). The 80s and 90s erotically suggestive Flake girl commercials are frequently said to have been originated by Kate's father, creative director and copywriter Bob Stanners, along with his art director, Norman Icke, at Leo Burnett (the agency that held the Cadbury Flake account from 1969 until it was moved to GGT in 1987) (*Campaign* 1999). The spot showing the girl artist in a poppy field is the earliest Kate recalls her father had written and features the score and lyrics of Ronnie Bond. 'Gypsy Caravan' (1981) and 'Grotto' (1984), both directed by Barry Myers through Spots Film Services, were also created by Stanners and Icke with the Ronnie Bond music. So embedded in popular culture was the Flake girl that both her revival by Publicis prior to her retirement by Fallon were covered by *The Guardian* newspaper as items of national news (2007, 2010).

The commercials on which this article focuses, however, preceded these. They were created between 1959 and 1969 by the London Press Exchange (LPE) for Cadbury before it was taken over by Chicago agency Leo Burnetts in 1969; LPE was, then alongside JWT, one of London's primary research-based agencies. Cadbury was a prime mover in television, airing its first commercial on the opening night of ITV in the London area on September 22nd, 1955, with a spot promoting its Drinking Chocolate (Bradley 2011, 3). At that time Cadbury's advertising focused mainly on its 'moulded' chocolate products such as Dairy Milk. But Cadbury quickly realised that television advertising was better suited to the 'countlines' products targeted for single-person consumption such as those produced by its competitor, Rowntree, for the Kit Kat bar. By 1959, Bradly tells us, "Television was already accounting for 64% of all chocolate advertising" (2011, 3).

Cadbury identified its Flake bar, first developed in 1920, as a prime contender to compete against Rowntree's countlines on ITV. Cadbury quickly corrected some 'deficiencies' in order to strength its allure. In 1959, they dropped the reference to 'Dairy Milk' previously used in the Flake marketing and replaced the bar's see-through packaging with a bright yellow wrapper (Bradley 2011, 3). At least one of their early 1960s spots explained the technical elements rendering it 'anti-social' and best consumed alone in private: the bar's intense flakiness rendered it too messy to be eaten in public or shared. 'Lightness' (30 secs) was a single instructional commercial centred around an animated exposition of the 'rotation flotation' technique using animation. The strapline, 'For a lightness of taste that the others can't give you' was delivered by a voice-over (VO).

Each of the 1960s thirty-second black and white spots 'Garden', 'Riverside' and 'Meadow' opens with a shot of a woman walking outdoors whilst her projected VO says 'Sometimes, I just like to get away from everybody. I like just to be me.'

The Flake girl was launched with the strapline 'All by yourself, all to yourself'.[1] HAT holds two thirty-second spots dated to 1961, donated by the BBC from the researched collection assembled for their 1990 *Washes Whiter* series. In 'Blinds' and 'Curtains,' the strapline 'All by yourself, all to yourself' is used to end a live-action narrative showing a solo woman taking a private moment indoors away from the demands made by others in both the domestic and public sphere. The male VO describes the bar as 'sixpence worth of heaven,' before repeating the strapline 'All by yourself, all to yourself.' The most striking issue of these representations is that the women are engaged in *no task whatsoever* other than enjoying the Flake. They are serving no-one. They present an identity for women independent of paid work, domestic labour, and relationships. The new Flake campaign was, says Bradley, "an immediate success" (2011, 3).

The importance of the female voice is evident in the second group of spots held by HAT, also dated to the 1960s. LPE and Cadbury decide to locate the action *in a rural setting*. Each of the thirty-second black and white spots 'Garden', 'Riverside' and 'Meadow' opens with a shot of a woman walking outdoors whilst her projected VO says 'Sometimes, I just like to get away from everybody. I like just to be me.' The woman repeats the words 'heaven' and 'heavenly' several times to describe the texture of the chocolate. The phrase 'I like just to be me' is suggestive of either of an existential stance in which the women does not play a 'role' on the patriarchal stage of life or that she wants to 'get away from work', i.e. engage neither in housework, being a wife, mothering, or paid employment. Echoes of Virginia Wolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) are felt. Much advertising in this era was dominated by male voice-over artists issuing instructions to women. The Flake spots are slightly more complex and ambitious in film craft terms, containing several edits, and subtle non-diegetic music.

A slightly later set of spots extend both the rural and outdoors settings and female voice by removing the male voice-over completely. 'Riverbank' (1962), 'Country Lane' (1965), 'Swan' (1960s), 'Ruins' (1967), 'Countryhouse' (1960s), 'Donkey' (1960s), and 'Lighthouse' (1960s) each depict a young woman alone enjoying a peaceful moment in the countryside. Stylistically they are quite distinctive for the era because they contain no edits, music, and no pack shot. They are single-shot films, with a sparse soundtrack constructed solely from diegetic sound effects (such as the donkey's hooves). Not only is the VO female, but absolutely minimal, interrupting the visuals only in the last few seconds with the words 'Flake, Cadbury's Flake … Cadbury's Flake: sixpence worth of heaven.' Unlike the later hypersexualised spots, the ads contain no close-up of the flake being eaten but hold confidently on a very wide shot of the woman in her rural setting, seemingly completely unaware of the camera (and unaware of the male gaze). The thirty-second spots finish with the superimposed text: 'Cadbury's flake 6d'.

These spots are redolent of the health-focused marketing strategy that had been in place at Cadbury since the late nineteenth century. In her analysis of the Bournville factory, Hindson reminds us that, "[the social reform energies that had directed Quaker businesses towards cocoa as an alternative to alcohol continued to reverberate in the advertising strategies that sustained Cadbury's diversified, expanded operation". From Cadbury's Drinking Chocolate onwards, the firm's cocoa products were advertised as containing "health-giving properties." "The fresh air that surrounded the firm's [Bourneville] factory became a symbolic, invisible ingredient" in Cadbury's advertising (Hindson, n.p.). Cadbury's earliest marketing was built on images of nature. In 1905, William Adlington Cadbury (1867– 1957) had commissioned Art Nouveau artist, designer, and poet George Auriol (1863– 1938) to produce the first Cadbury's logo, an image that depicted a stylised cocoa tree in bloom. From 1911, Auriol's stylised tree became a central image in Cadbury's expanding visual advertising culture vernacular of open fields, resplendent skies and English countryside creatures. The spots are also typical of a larger trend conceptualised as the 'commodified authentic' by Elizabeth Outka (2009): nostalgic images of an idyllic, pre-industrial past that had 'swept across Britain' in turn-of-the-century consumer culture and advertising. Chance describes this "commodified nostalgia" as "a contradiction of authenticity in a modern setting of mass production" (Chance 2019, 2).

These adverts articulate a paradigm of women's social status rooted in Cadbury's Quaker work practices. By the mid 'fifties, the Cadbury's Bourneville factory had established a framework strongly supportive of women's rights. Cadbury's Quaker employment practices recognised women not only as paid workers outside the domestic sphere, but as creative and artistic personalities within the theatrical leisure environment created at the Bournville factory for the firm's workers and families. Hindson tell us that "[a]ctive support for women's rights was prominent at Bournville, and first wave feminism was to continue to be a key area of activity at the firm after the vote was won" (Hindson, n.p.) During the 1920s, for example, Cadbury's promoted their Bournville cocoa line in *The Women Teacher*, the National Union of Women Teachers' (NUWT) magazine with the line: 'If you have the strain of evening studies a cup of delicious Bournville Cocoa comforts the nerves and often prevents fatigue' (4 November 1927, 1 quoted in Hindson n.p.). The NUWT campaigned for professional esteem, equal pay, pensions, and career opportunities in senior leadership roles for women.

In his analysis of the impact of Quaker beliefs on the running of Cadbury, Dellheim tells us that women were supported as leaders within the Cadbury family. Dorothy Cadbury, who became one of the Managing Directors of Cadbury in 1919, was one of the few female directors of a major British firm. Having begun her paid career at Bournville as an ordinary pieceworker, Dorothy was committed to promoting the position of women in industry (Dellheim 1987, 23). Under her leadership, Cadbury operated separate lines of command for men and women in order to increase women's opportunities for advancement. Earlier, Cadbury's business and management policy at Bourneville had been influenced by Fabian member Edward Cadbury's research on women's labour undertaken in collaboration with M. Cecile Matheson. Published as *Women's Work and Wages: A Phase of Life in an Industrial City* (1906) was based on interviews with some six thousand women in paid employment from social work to management, and recommended unionization and minimum wage legislation to protect women's employment rights. Whilst some documented parities between feminism and the nineteenth century Quaker movement have been questioned (see O'Donnell, 2014), particularly around the clash between the individualism of 'rights' discourses and the collective conformity of Quaker culture, there remains considerable evidence that women benefitted from many aspects of the culture in Bourneville created and maintained by the Cadbury family in the first half of the twentieth century.

The concept of the leisure 'break' in Quaker firm Rowntree's marketing for Kit Kat also articulates women's identity independent of work. Rowntree, like Cadbury, was an early adopter of television advertising. When TV advertising began in 1955 Rowntree was ready with a £50,000 budget, increasing to £650,000 by 1957, half of its total advertising budget (Chrystal 2012, 135/6). In their first, 1955, television advert, housewifery is clearly presented as work. A woman, having finished doing the washing up in her kitchen, turns to the camera and says, "That's half the morning's work done! This is where 'Mum' takes a few minutes off to enjoy herself." She leans down to open a concealed drawer beneath the kitchen table: "Now for my secret treasure … my private hoard of Kit Kat." The spot forms part of a 1955-1959 black and white 35mm collection of Kit Kat commercials held in the Yorkshire Film Archive, available online in a 14 minute 36 second reel. Initially launched in 1935 as Rowntree's Chocolate Crisp, and renamed Kit Kat Chocolate Crisp in 1937, the product was re-branded after World War II as just Kit Kat. The 'break' concept utilised in 1955 spot, had first been used by Rowntree in 1937, but it was not until 1957 that it would be used in the strapline "Have a break. Have a Kit Kat" after it had been written by JWT's Donald Gilles (*Creative Review*). "In 1960 Rowntree's were spending £2.8 million on advertising, just behind their rivals Cadbury and Mars – and seventh in the advertising league table" (Chrystal 2012, 135/6). According to Crystal, KitKat contributed about 20% of all Rowntree's revenue" (2012 135/136).

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Rowntree used women's paid employment to launch this new strapline in its 1957 campaign. Four of the five 15 second spots held in Yorkshire Film Archive present paid women workers: 'Afternoon Break' (30 secs), in which two female typists pause for a cup of tea and Kit Kat in the office; 'Office Break' in which a sole female worker has a Kit Kat break in her office, 'Driver and Clippy' in which two bus conductors / ticket collectors, one of whom is a woman, enter a café to order tea and Kit Kats for their break. In 'Factory Break', a woman tea lady serves tea and Kit Kats to two male workers. In the next group of six 1958 spots, all black and white and 15 secs, which again were likely produced together, Rowntree targets children, teenagers, women and main largely in leisure activities such as ice skating and playing table tennis with the same tagline 'Time for a break, time for a Kit Kat', although one, called 'Char Ladies' shows office cleaners in their late 20s with vacuum cleaners. Another, called 'Shop Assistant', shows two thirtysomething women working in a woman's dress and shoe shop take a break. These adverts are significant because they are clear evidence that the Kit Kat was marketed to working women. Despite Britain's Marriage Bar which was not abolished until 1946 (1972 for the Foreign Office), the rates of married women in paid employment continued to rise from 44% in 1951 to 50% in 1957, 53% by 1959 (Beaumont, 2018, 159).

Quaker Capitalism and the Representation of Women

What caused such a shift from Cadbury's health-focused adverts of the 1960s and the eroticised films of the 1970s - 2010? A number of crucial changes occurred within Cadbury. First, the decision was made to float Cadbury on the stock exchange in 1962. This converted the previously family-owned firm into a publicly limited company traded on the stock exchange. From this point on, decisions would be made in the interests of shareholders who probably had no connection with the employees of the company or the founding family's Quaker ethics. Previously, the company had been family run. Launched in 1824 by John Cadbury, the firm was run initially by his sons George and Richard from 1879 to 1899, then by George Jnr, during which time it became a private, limited liability company (Dellheim 1987, 21); from 1922 it was run by Barrow Cadbury, from 1932 by Edward Cadbury, and from 1944 by Laurence Cadbury. Until the late 1960s, the Cadbury family remained very influential in company policy, having established early on the primary of marketing to their core activities in the 1920s. It was easier for a firm to control its own advertising when it was a family-owned firm of the kind that Cadbury had been in the first half of the century.

Deborah Cadbury describes the way in which the firm was run prior to being floated on the stock exchange as 'Quaker Capitalism,' a system of production in which profits were spent on the welfare and wellbeing of its stakeholders – the employees, the local community and its loyal consumers. The Cadbury family used commercial television not only to market its products, but to advocate for its specific form of ethical capitalism. Cadbury specifically targeted television for this 'prestige advertising.' When commercial television was launched in the Midlands a few months after London, Cadbury had the first spot: Paul Cadbury used it to introduce a cut-down version of the company's own film, *The Bournville Story*. Later that year, the company "commissioned a series of 13 one-minute films, each describing in a travelogue style the harvesting of an ingredient used at Bournville. The series premiered on August 31st, 1957, when the entire interval of "Sunday Night at the London Palladium" was booked for Adrian Cadbury, a grandson of George and future chairman of the company, to be interviewed about the venture." (Bradly 2011, 3). But after the merger, Deborah Cadbury writes that, "[t]he shareholders in Cadbury Schweppes … were increasingly made up of investors who had no direct personal links to the business and its values, and whose priorities were purely to monetise profit. The Quaker voice no longer held sway in the boardroom." (2011, 281). This opened the company to "unprincipled advertising and promotion".

The second change was brought by Adrian Cadbury as Chair of Cadbury when he took over in 1965 after his father, Laurence, stepped down. Adrian Cadbury had made it clear to his family prior to being offered the role of Chair that Quaker business ethics would not be the primary guiding principle of the business were he to assume the role of Chair (*Desert Island Discs* 1995). Once appointed, Adrian Cadbury moved very quickly to a merger with Schweppes in 1969. The new company, Cadbury Schweppes, built a confectionary and soft drink international conglomerate with its acquisitions of Canada Dry (1986), Trebor (1989), Bassett's (1989), Dr Pepper and Seven Up (1995) and Snapple (2000). The shift in Cadbury's management was perhaps a long time coming: Adrian Cadbury had studied secular economics at King's College Cambridge under Maynard Keynes and was determined to bring classical economics theories about the growth of firms to expand the business. Previously, Quakers had not attended university due to the conflict with religious vows, but Adrian Cadbury's father had already broken this tradition. Laurence Cadbury attended Eton and King's College Cambridge, where he studied economics, and later became a director of the Bank of England. The merger with Schweppes had been controversial due to the Quaker prohibition on alcohol.

The shift is also caused by the emergence of a new generation of television advertising directors. The sale to Schweppes occurred the same year that the London Press Exchange was purchased by Chicago-owned advertising agency Leo Burnett and the London industry consolidated into a number of new, specialist screen advertising production companies. The Flake commercials that emerged after 1969 were the creation of this fledgling cluster of production companies. Foremost was a generation of male directors either concurrently directing feature films or with ambitions to direct them in Hollywood such as Alan Parker and Dick Lester (Caston, 2023). North American cinematographic styles were particularly popular amongst these directors (Petri 2018, 214-5). The film styles of Nic Roeg and John Cassavetes became fashionable; these were styles in which internal dramatic states with whip pans, stark cuts, wide shots, and POVs dominated; all were techniques used in the '70s Flake spots. This new generation of new male directors aspired to the status of "auteurs," hailed mainly from Britain's art schools, and displaced the public-school elite of male directors who had largely dominated industrial and corporate filmmaking until then.

Nowhere is this stylist change in Flake filmmaking more evidence than in Ridley Scott's 1971 commercial for Flake titled 'Ski.' Scott had launched his production company, Ridley Scott Associates, in Soho, London in 1968 with his brother, Tony. 'Ski' is one of the first group of colour commercials made for Flake which used the new Ronnie Bond score with the lyrics "Only the crumbliest, flakiest milk chocolate …". Scott instituted the male voice-over which Flake had previously dropped and introduced a set-repertoire of highly suggestive close-up shots of female anatomy: erotic close-ups on the woman's mouth as she bit into the Flake (I counted four extreme close-ups in the thirty-second spot), and a number of other erotic close-ups notably a close-up of the woman-skier's bottom and a close-up shot of her crotch through her legs from the front. The other two spots in the group using Ronnie Bond's new score are 'Transported – Punting' (1960S, B&W) and 'Transported – Punting' (1970s, Colour). Gone is the woman as a subject of the commercial, articulated through her own female voice. She has been replaced by a sexualised object viewed through the male gaze with her desires spoken by a male voice.

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Cadbury was seemingly aware of the risks of its gender-specific marketing by the early 1980s, and eager to explore alternatives. Premising chocolate sales on a target market to a single gender, at a time when society was questioning the very concept of gender, proved profoundly damaging to the brand

The Ronnie Bond commercials developed the premise of the earlier spots. That premise was that by eating the Flake, a woman could be transported to a stunning place of nature such as a waterfall. The tagline of this was 'A Heaven All of Your Own' denoting the internal dramatic state triggered by the Flake. The black and white thirty second spots are called 'Transported – Lake' (1960s), 'Transported – Waterfall' (1967), 'Transported Waterfall' (1967) and 'Transported – Castle' (1968) In these spots, as the women bites the flake, dramatic music cuts in and the film cuts to shots of the dramatic exterior – and then on a wide shot reveals that as a result of biting into the Flake, she has been magically transported to that exterior. However, in these late '60s spots, the VO is still female. The music is dramatic, and there are many more edits than the early sixties' campaign, following a standardised dramatic structure absent from the earlier spots. The Flake Girl continued as the mainstay of Cadbury's advertising at Leo Burnett, then GGT, TBWA, Publicis and Saatchi and Saatchi, with some of her most memorable spots aired in the 1990s.

Alison Payne's research suggests that the restructuring of creative departments and the creative supply chain that followed the launch of television advertising in 1955 had very negative effects on women's employment in advertising – effects which took about ten years to manifest in the types of scripts written. Clampin's research suggests that WWII advertising presented a much more varied representation of both men and women's work and social roles (2014, 184-8). My own research on British advertising shows that it was in this period that the proportion of privately schooled, and university educated men staffing advertising agencies declined, and working-class state educated men from British art schools increased. Payne found that the proportion of women copywriters declined from nearly a quarter of all writers in 1957 to less than a fifth by 1968, and the proportion of artists declined from 14% to less than 10%." (2018, 86). Rather than just being part of a trend affecting most British industries, Payne believes this was specifically due to the emergence of television advertising, the adoption of creative partnerships which mitigated against women because it was believed that same-sex partnerships were best, and the rise of egotistical difficult-to-manage male tv-directors such as Schlesinger, Alan Parker and Ridley Scott. Sean Nixon analyses these dynamics in Part 3 of his book 'Advertising Cultures', looking specifically at tropes of masculinity in creative work and in creative partnerships (2003).

The corporate turbulence that shook Cadbury's Quaker business ethics in the 1960s, struck again in the 2000s, when it was announced in 2010 that Cadbury's was to be purchased by Kraft Foods. The takeover was taking place whilst Saatchi & Saatchi was already in the process of commissioning a new Cadbury's Flake commercial *without the Flake Girl*. Kate Stanners and her creative partner Paul Silburn had invited the acclaimed film director Jonathan Glazer to create an entirely new campaign for Flake. The strapline was to be 'succumb to the crumb'. Glazer had shot two features Sexy Beast 2000, and Birth 2024 at this point, as well as award winning music videos and commercials such as Jamiroquai's 'Virtual Insanity' (1996) and Guinness 'Surfer' (1999) Based around the theme of temptation, the ad saw a woman tempted by a devil-like character: the narrative is driven by the woman's agency and sexual desire, constructing her as the protagonist of the story. Glazer's managing director, Lizie Gower, reports that the agency travelled with them to Italy to shoot the commercial, where they enthused over the directing and performance, "They said it's great it's fantastic and were laughing at the most provocative and dramatic bits, the girls doing their very provocative movements, and then the hand over the male parts. We got back and they saw it and went 'wow'!" (Gower, 2024)

But the spot's portrayal of female sexual agency proved too much for Cadbury's new owners. Gowers continues, "this was the time that Kraft's was taking over Cadbury's. Saatchi's Creative Director had to show it to the American Kraft guys. He called me afterwards and said, 'Oh my god, they went mental, they hated it and said it cannot be shown'." Kate Stanners concurs, "Cadbury's were being sold to Mondelez. It was seen as too risky and therefore never aired" (Stanners 2024). Gowers' was instructed not to release the advert, and booked transmission slots were cancelled. There were protests by past and present workers at Cadbury's Bournville site, who feared that this would inflict the final death blow to the Quaker vision that had driven not only the Bournville Town, but also the Bourneville Factory (Morris 2010). The sale went through. Cadbury's "ended up doing a safer spot with our sister agency Fallon by creative directors Richard and Andy" reports Stanners (2024). In 2012, Kraft was renamed Mondelaz.

All of this rather suggests that Cadbury's was rather out of its depth with representations of gender and sexuality in the early twenty-first century once it moved out of the health-focused, dignified spots of its early Quaker visual culture. The rapid shifts arising from social media, activists, politicians, and consumers rendered her representation difficult to control. An Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) reported study from 1983 suggests that in the early '80s Cadbury had Leo Burnett trial an alternative advertising campaign not based on the Flake girl (IPA, 1983), and which did not target women. Cadbury was seemingly aware of the risks of its gender-specific marketing by this point, and eager to explore alternatives. Premising chocolate sales on a target market to a single gender, at a time when society was questioning the very concept of gender, proved profoundly damaging to the brand.

Women's Work in British Television Advertising 1955 – 1969

What are the implications of this discussion? As the Curator for Advertising and Publicity Films Steve Foxon at the BFI writes, "whilst [w]omen have all-too-often been patronised and objectified by a male dominated advertising industry", we need a re-assessment of the representation of women's work and identity in television advertising because

> *"screen-advertising also tells (and sells) a more positive story of social progress for women, with increasing social and economic independence … [the] "Bournvita: Other Women's Lives" (1952-54) mini-documentary portraits of real British working women, using their real names (and addresses!), made for Cadbury's, saw busy mothers and wives juggling long busy days of labour with intimate home lives, capped off with a therapeutic cuppa before bed. This collection is distinctive because it has received less attention than the "Oxo Family—Life with Katie" or Persil "Slice of Life" commercials explored by Nixon (2016). (Foxon, 2023, 94).*

The significance of the Cadbury's Flake commercials broadcast on ITV between 1959 and 1969 is that they support Foxon's concern that large collections of Britain's television commercials have been overlooked in the zest to identify The Housewife as the predominant representation of women at work in the post War era. Early Flake advertising shows us that women's identities outside work were being represented in ways presentient of twenty-first century screen advertising. It tells us, moreover, that advertisers had either identified among middle class women a reluctance for their identities to be reduced to that of a permanently available on-call housewife at home (All by yourself, all for yourself, / I Want Just to Be Me), or were part of a creation of that position. The Flake commercials contribute to the picture of women's leisure time one which historians such as Claire Langhammer (2000) have already begun to document. The Rowntree 'crunchie bar' was marketed in the fifties as an active sports bar that could help women skaters and their female professional coaches maintain their energy because it was "91.3% glucose and sugar."

Evidence elsewhere that the middle class housewife was dissatisfied with the portraits offered of the housewife and housewifery comes from the trade publication Commercial Television News which carried a piece by Irene Hazel in 1956 criticising the absurd soap powder commercials based on 'whiter than white' in which women were lectured by men who had no experience of working with soap powder. Hazel argued that she would rather purchase Surf because the expert featured in the Surf adverts was a properly qualified housewife known as 'Mrs Bradshaw'. 'Surf' was a brand which appears to have been targeted not at middle class women, but at working class women (HAT contains a series of 12 spots featuring Mrs Bradshaw, some 60 and others 30 seconds). The agency was Lintas. For landlady Mrs Bradshaw, housework was a paid job, reimbursed by rent from her tenants. Theatre director Joan Littlewood made it absolutely clear who held authority in the house, that housework was not always joyous, and that women quite often preferred not to do it in her two spots for 'go to work on an egg' campaign from 1964 (60 and 90 secs, BFI) when mum 'Sheila' decided that she didn't want to get up and make breakfast, leaving her husband to make the breakfast instead. Gable (1980, 116) tells us that in the first ten years of television advertising, the presenters of the testimonials and ad mags were just as likely to be women as men - despite a suggestion in much of the post war documentation on advertising to the contrary.

© Image: unsplash.com / Francisco Andreotti

Rowntree's Kit Kat was far from the only company representing women's paid employment outside the home. Despite the marriage bar, the wide range of representations of women's work in early television tells us that many mothers held paid employment outside the home. Birdseye Fish Fingers, in particular, were targeted at working women who did not have time to cook complex meals from scratch. Rather than a male expert, 'Birds Eye also interviewed a housewife about the merits of fish fingers when they first launched the product in 57/8. In one of the early Birdseye spots, the reporter interviewing the housewife is a woman. In another, a young mum fetching her children from school explains that she buys fish fingers because her paid job outside the home limits her time. One Hotpoint commercial form the end of the fifties – and in twenty-five years of Independent Television one of the most amazing sixty seconds' worth there has been – used a new angle for its 'no tangle action', USP (unique selling point), and had a presentation from a laboratory that handled radioactive material. The woman presenter, wearing an obligatory white coat, introduced viewers to another of Hotpoint's tests to prove that 'Hotpoint washes cleaner because it cannot tangle clothes'. (Gable 1980, 116). In 1962, Beecham ran a Horlicks commercial that showed two women taking part in a motor car rally – one driving, one navigating. They win the race, and the last shot is of the driver holding aloft the trophy" (Gable 1980,116). Gable concludes that,

> *'Whatever faults the first ten years of television commercials may have had, they were not only more truly reflective of women but also of womanpower. Independent Television started just ten years after the end of a war which placed great value on the female contribution." (1980, 116)*

In conclusion, there is no doubt that some of the television commercials shown between 1955 and 1970 represented women as housewives, but not to the exclusion of representing women as paid workers or as active leisure-time consumers whose identities were not based on the prescribed role of 'the housewife'. The representation of women's work was far from homogenous. It was skewed by social class targeting as well as age specific marketing and contained important examples of the creation of 'leisure time' and 'non-work' based identities. The relationship between the business ethos of corporations such as Cadbury and the impact on its advertising of public flotation, mergers and acquisitions is an important future area for research. The HAT archives and BFI National Archive both hold significant collections worthy of further research in order to build a more complete picture of the complex representation of women's work on early British commercial television.

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Footnotes

1 / Unless otherwise stated, the Cadbury's Flake spots 1959 to 1969 are free to view at HAT, were shot in black and white, and lack metadata identifying the director. Although Bradley (2011, 3) and *The Guardian* (2007) tell us that she was launched in 1959, the Cadbury website states that the Flake Girl was not launched until the 1960s.

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About the author

Emily Caston Professor of Screen Industries, University of West London
Emily Caston is Professor of Screen Industries and director of PRISM at the University of West London. Previously a board member Film London (2008-2015), Emily has produced over 100 music videos and commercials, and was previously Executive Producer of Black Dog Films for Ridley Scott Associates. She is a member of BAFTA and contributes regularly to the Sky Arts television Series *Video Killed the Radio Star*. Her books include Celluloid Saviours: Angels and Reform Politics in Hollywood Film (2009) and *British Music Videos* 1966 – 2016: Genre, Authenticity and Art (2020), as well as forthcoming books on the history of screen advertising for the BFI's Screen Stories series, and the history of independent screen production in Soho for Routledge. In 2018 she curated the Thunderbird collection "Power to the People: 200 Landmark British Music Videos" (2018).

Helen Heste | University of West London, UK

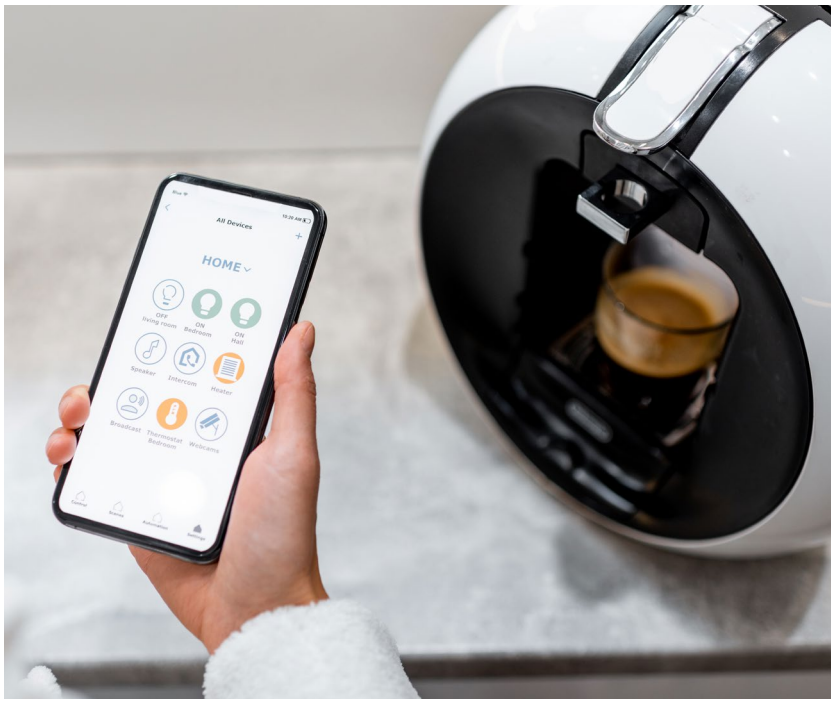
The Automated Heart: Digital Domesticity and Emotional Labour Saving

Abstract

This article considers the relevance of domestic labour saving devices to emotional labour. Starting with an account of the ways in which household technologies failed to relieve the burdens of domestic drudgery in the twentieth century, it proceeds to consider the labour saving potential of the 'smart home', as well as the gendered ideologies it represents.

By looking at social robots designed for use in the smart home, we see that, while manual housework is beyond the scope of today's smart technologies, emotional labour is not. Thinking about the different forms that domestic automation can take allows us to recognise that there are qualitative as well as quantitative factors to consider when it comes to critically assessing domestic labour saving ambitions.

The article concludes by exploring continuities with paid care work, and by developing a tri-partite approach to reproductive labour as high touch, high tech, and high talk.



This article approaches the theme of this special issue not via wage labour – 'work' in the sense in which it is still most immediately understood – but via the technopolitics of unwaged domestic labour, particularly looking at the networked smart home and its associated devices. I start from the assumption that the home is not just a space of leisure, intimacy, and recuperation, but also a workplace (both waged and unwaged). This was brought home particularly clearly during periods of lockdown, when many homes became spaces not only of remote working but also of *hyper-proximate* working – spaces of life-sustaining care. Under pandemic conditions, the domestic residence became a concentrated hub for a wide variety of caring tasks which are usually, at least partially, provided elsewhere – either by the public sector (education, adult day care, medical care, etc.) or by the market (early years childcare, domestic cleaning, hot food preparation, and so on). Households were expected to pick up the slack as other options – which were frequently inaccessible, unevenly distributed, or barely functional even *before* the pandemic – were rapidly taken off the table.

In the context of changing conditions of home-based working – and of the wide-spread generalization of a crisis usually felt most acutely by the poorest in our societies – the insufficiencies of the home-as-a-workplace achieved a greater degree of cultural visibility. It's become painfully apparent just how unsatisfactory the home is as a place of work and how much domestic labourers might have to gain from reorganizing the activities that take place within it. This new visibility may better enable us to recognize where and how spatial arrangements and working practices inform the value we attribute to household labour, and just how rarely collective efforts have been made to alleviate domestic drudgery.

In what follows, then, I will concentrate primarily on unwaged, intrafamilial housework and care work, and point to the technological conditions under which this work is pursued. Drawing on research from my recent book (Hester and Srnicek 2023), I will consider how domestic technology gave up its 'labour saving' ambitions, and how horizons of household automation have come to be limited to visions of the data-harvesting smart home. Digging into one particular case study – drawn from the world of consumer-facing social robotics – I will argue that the changes ushered in by these developments have so far done very little to reduce unrewarding household work, and that ultimately, a wider reaching set of cultural and political shifts will be required if we aspire to a world in which domestic technologies can harbour real emancipatory potential.

Focusing on the topic of women and work via the unwaged domestic labour of the home is important, given that welfare states are increasingly reliant upon the family to provide basic care services, and that capitalists have proven themselves to be comparatively uninterested in developing solutions to the issues generated by the home as a workplace. Furthermore, recent calculations suggest that wealthy countries spend upwards of 45 per cent of their total labour time on work of this kind – that is, on unpaid work done in the home that remains largely invisible to the statistical agencies of the state (Hester and Srnicek 2023, 8). Rather than viewing this labour as a special case, however – one definitively bracketed off from other forms of 'women's work' – I want to stress the continuities between similar kinds of activities performed under different conditions. This work is inexorably tethered to other forms of cooking, cleaning, and caring that take place in the public sphere, whether they be remunerated or unremunerated, in the waged workplace or in the wider community.

These different contexts for the delivery of care inform each other and are shaped by an interconnected nexus of factors (from gender ideology to the structure of neoliberal welfare regimes); understanding this is helpful, given that it might better enable us to enhance solidarity between people playing different roles in the delivery of care. It is with this in mind that I turn my gaze toward paid care giving as I approach the conclusion of this article. What can a profession such as nursing teach us about the application of technology in the provision of 'good care' in the household? How can we move away from the unfulfilled promises of commercial labour saving devices, and think more expansively and imaginatively about living, loving and working with technologies in an era of digital domesticity? It is here that I will advance a distinction between three kinds of care work – high touch, high tech, and high talk – as I seek to consider what labour saving innovations could look like if they were put at the service of people rather than profit.

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So, as new technologies enabled home-makers to complete specific tasks more quickly, the standards to which these tasks were supposed to be performed rose dramatically, along with the sheer number of chores and activities that qualified as part of the daily house work

At Home with Technology

So-called 'domestic labour saving devices' do not historically have a great track record when it comes to actually saving domestic labour. As Angela Davis notes, "The structural separation of the public economy of capitalism and the private economy of the home has been continually reinforced by the obstinate primitiveness of household labour. Despite the proliferation of gadgets for the home, domestic work has remained qualitatively unaffected by the technological advances brought on by industrial capitalism. Housework still consumes thousands of hours of the average housewife's year" (1983, 223). This has been confirmed by feminists such as Judy Wajcman (2015) and Ruth Schwartz Cowan (1989), whose work has taught us that, one reason why time spent on housework did not go down after the rise of domestic appliances in the twentieth century, was that – as these appliances became more common – *expectations* also began to escalate.

Cleaning was supposed to be deeper and to happen more frequently, home-cooked food was expected to be more complex and time-consuming, clothes were expected to be thoroughly laundered and pressed, and so on. As Wajcman puts it, "appliances may be being used to increase output rather than to reduce the time spent on housework" (2015, 119). So, as new technologies enabled home-makers to complete specific tasks more quickly, the standards to which these tasks were supposed to be performed rose dramatically, along with the sheer number of chores and activities that qualified as part of the daily house work.

Domestic technologies did not really maximize their labour saving potential as the twentieth century progressed, either. There has been little in the way of meaningful innovation in recent decades. For nearly every household task, the technologies in place by mid-century remained virtually the same until the first decade of the new millennium – with the only exception being the microwave. As Robert Gordon notes, while a housewife from the 1870s would find a house in the 1950s virtually unrecognisable, a housewife from the 1950s would find the home of today largely unchanged (2016, 524–25). Technologies such as refrigerators, dishwashers, vacuum cleaners, and ovens have all been tinkered with in various ways, but little that is usefully new has been added to them. In the wealthier nations, the world of kitchen appliances has seen the introduction of a series of gadgets, gizmos and gimmicks – the bread maker, the spiralizer, the ice cream maker and so on – but none of these has represented significant *labour-saving* potential.

This situation may now be shifting, however, as we witness an apparent flurry of activity around domestic devices in the twenty-first century. One of the biggest ongoing trends involves 'smart' technologies – technologies which employ computers to add new features to traditional appliances. Such devices are giving rise to the so-called 'smart home', a constellation of such technologies networked together within individual households. Surely this will result in a meaningful diminution of drudgery, at last? Of course, much of what makes up the smart home isn't new. Even in the 1980s, many of the individual technologies already existed. What's novel is this "idea of integrating them. The smart home, then, serves a managerial function in relation to the various smart devices it contains, offering an overarching vision of every movement and environmental fluctuation, combined with digital- and voice-control systems to enable the use and remote coordination of these elements" (Hester and Srnicek 2023, 41).

So far, smart home mania has been almost entirely a platform-driven project. Consumers have hardly been crying out for things like voice-operated fairy lights or remote-control kettles. These things are not an answer to most people's everyday domestic woes. Rather, it's companies like Amazon who have pushed developments in this direction. They have fought hard to embed their smart assistants in homes, whether through loss-making prices, major advertising efforts, or agreements with home builders. Indeed, the "drive to make all household tasks 'smart' is less a response to need than a reflection of the economic and technical capacity for collecting data and producing computer chips […] we could see this period as an experimental stage where companies throw innumerable smart devices at the wall in the hopes that some of them stick" (Hester and Srnicek 2023, 45). This is, in part, the result of a drive for data dominance, as well as an attempt to find ways of locking users into particular platforms. The battle between Google and Amazon for smart home supremacy is ultimately

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a battle for control of the interface through which users will interact with their domestic spaces and their various devices – and all the data and insight that position might provide. The rise of the smart home cannot be separated from this desire for market infiltration and ever more data.

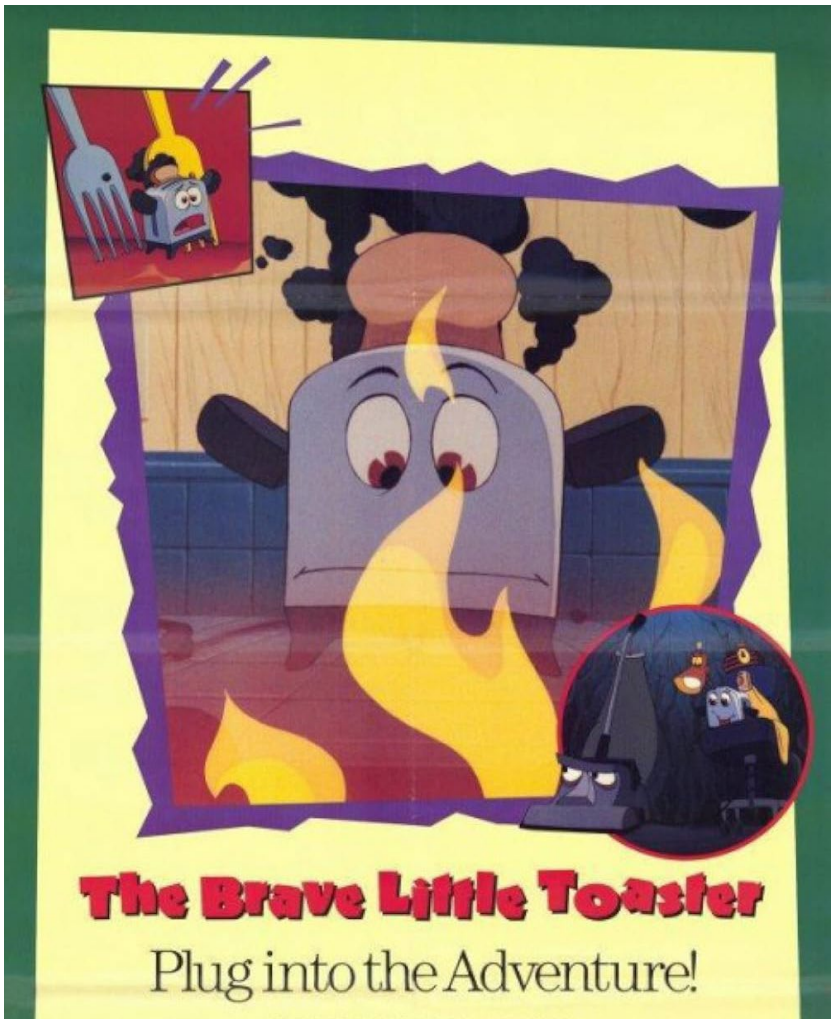
What is notably missing from this platform-driven vision of the hyper-connected dwelling, of course, is *housework* – or any intention of reducing it. Developments in smart devices are not typically oriented toward labour saving. In fact, not only does the smart home (as it is emerging today) continually fail to reduce – or even show much interest in reducing – domestic drudgery, but it can also be seen to *generate* new kinds of labour. It demands continual maintenance – updating software, getting devices to sync, finding workarounds and solutions when things malfunction, attending to notifications, and so on. Think of the inefficiency and unreliability of the home printer; now imagine that every appliance in your home (from your toothbrush to your coffee pot) has the same level of functionality. This is the experience of digital domesticity and high-tech housework.

Furthermore, the smart home has been marketed in ways that seem to entrench (rather than disrupt) the gender division of labour as it pertains to unwaged domestic work. As Sarah Kember and Joanna Zylinska note, "some rather predictable gender patterns are embedded in the majority of technofuturist visions" (2012, 106). They point to Microsoft's promotional campaign for its 2011 Home of the Future, for example – a campaign featuring a woman who shares a home with her husband and kids, whose smart mirror offers fashion advice and whose interactive countertops suggest recipes and remind her to take her pills! Here, imaginings of domestic technologies rigorously support, cater to, and help to generate current gender conventions; they performatively produce 'the woman' as a subject through the processes by which they pick up and feed back into existing ideologies. Such "future-oriented visions are normative and strangely regressive, relocating women (back) into nuclear heterosexual families and into the home" (Kember and Zylinska 2012, 107).

Labours of Love: Care, Companionship and Social Robots

There is one specific form of technology, suitable for embedding within the smart home, that makes for an illuminating case study here – social robots. What contribution, if any, do these devices make to the performance of unwaged intrafamilial domestic labour? The global personal robotics market reached $21.5 billion in 2019, with one market intelligence firm suggesting that we can expect this to reach $51.5 billion by 2030 (P&S Intelligence 2020). Personal robots have a range of uses – security and physical assistance, for example – but the category predicted to witness the fastest growth over the next ten years is companion robots (robots designed to keep the user company, or to evoke a sense of companionship). These technologies have long been heralded for their potential outside the private home, including within institutional care settings, but there has been a marked resurgence of interest in them over the course of the 2020s – in part because the pandemic "provided the ultimate use case for them" (Samuel 2020). Things like the therapeutic robot seal PARO have been viewed as tools to reduce loneliness during lockdowns, with one article for *Wired* noting that "in a time when social distancing is exacerbating isolation, devices like [PARO] can be a psychological salve" (Knibbs, 2020).

But technologists' ambitions for social robots are not limited to hospitals and care homes; increasingly, we're seeing them imagined as everyday consumer goods for integration into the smart home. Amazon announced its new Astro domestic robot in 2021, for example – a combination of a Ring doorbell and an Alexa digital assistant on wheels, topped off with a cute little touchscreen face. According to its promotional materials, Astro will follow you around the house, talking to you and bringing you beer, while also offering certain security benefits. Companion robots are particularly interesting for our purposes because, despite being smart devices increasingly marketed for household use, they are quite unlike domestic labour saving devices in the conventional sense of the term. Rather than automating housework, and despite often being marketed as having administrative or organisational uses, they are primarily intended to provide interaction and social engagement.



This is neatly encapsulated by the nod to The Jetsons *– a vision of the year 2062 in which domestic and working life have been totally transformed by automation, but in which gender roles and the nuclear family have somehow escaped entirely unscathed*

A further example will make this clear. In 2014, a crowd funding initiative was launched for a device billed as the "world's first family robot". In the accompanying promotional video, a narrator guides the prospective consumer through a series of images of their world (or a fantasy version of it): "This is your house; this is your car; this is your toothbrush. These are your things. But" – the camera focuses on a framed portrait of a multi-generational, white-passing family – "these are the things that matter. And somewhere in between, is this guy." We are thus introduced to Jibo – a squat little robot, with a white plastic body and a rounded, tilting head. 'He' is undoubtedly visually appealing, weaponizing cuteness (a form of affect closely associated with companion robots) in order to cultivate a reaction from viewers. As one tech journalist puts it, "he looks like a character invented by Pixar, or something out of *The Brave Little Toaster*" (Van Camp 2019).

The advert continues, showing Jibo supporting family members in various domestic situations. He acts as photographer at a teen's birthday party, for example, thereby allowing Mom to be part of the picture instead of hidden behind the camera. He accompanies Grandma baking in the kitchen, reminding her that somebody is coming by later to take her grocery shopping, and he reads a little girl the story of the three little pigs (complete with interactive huffing and puffing). Jibo allows an adult son to remotely attend thanksgiving dinner, and is later shown ordering said son a take away after a long day at work. He also acts as "a great wingman", we're told, as he reads out messages from a prospective date. We then see a brief montage of shots of famously helpful and/or personable robots from popular culture – R2D2 from *Star Wars*, Johnny 5 from *Short Circuit*, Rosie from the 1960s Hanna-Barbera cartoon *The Jetsons* – as the narrator sells us on the imminent arrival of a high-tech future: "We've dreamt of him for years, and now he's finally here – and he's not just an aluminium shell. Nor is he just a three axis motor system. He's not even just a connected device. He's one of the family." The video concludes with the little girl affectionately caressing Jibo's disc-like (inter)face, and wishing him goodnight as he blinks a heart in her direction.

As adorably well-designed as this robot might be, Jibo and his promotional accompaniments nevertheless demonstrate something of the regressive social dynamics embedded within many commercial visions of supposedly forward-looking domestic technologies. Whilst he is supposed to take on the role of domestic helper, household administrator, and companion, we are repeatedly presented with women (and more specifically, *mothers*) undertaking the primary roles in reproductive labour – organizing birthday parties, kneading dough, taking grandma grocery shopping, preparing a big meal for thanksgiving dinner. The men in the ad, meanwhile, are either totally silent and seemingly untroubled by the demands of domestic labour (as in the father figure, who doesn't have a single line of dialogue), or young, single career men who use Jibo as a kind of combined personal butler, substitute parent, and advanced Tindr hook up facilitator. It is almost as if the video is expressly designed to reassure viewers that, whilst emerging technologies are capable of transforming our everyday lives, this will not and cannot extend to established family hierarchies and gender dynamics. This is neatly encapsulated by the nod to *The Jetsons* – a vision of the year 2062 in which domestic and working life have been totally transformed by automation, but in which gender roles and the nuclear family have somehow escaped entirely unscathed.

Of course, many visions of the smart home are produced by tech companies with a particular investment in the forms of domestic consumerism to which the nuclear family and the atomized smart home lend themselves. As such, the homes of the future continue to be imagined as privatized dwellings requiring the unending purchase, maintenance, and replacement of consumer electronics. In the end, though, our particular case study didn't get very far in terms of market infiltration. This was in part because the Jibo seen in the promotional video is *not* the Jibo that actually made its way into a select number of homes. Despite having some smart home functionality, the robot that shipped in 2017 (at a cool $900 apiece) was limited in what it could accomplish. Jibo lacked the ability to order food, play voicemail messages, or receive emails; he couldn't read a bedtime story, record a video or audio clip, support personal calendars, or accomplish several of the other tasks advertised during crowdfunding.

More than this, though, the Jibo project as a whole turned out to be a failure. Delays in production meant that Jibo was outpaced by other smart home developments, and in 2019, notice was given that its "servers would be going dark, taking much of the device's functionality with it" (Carman 2019). As Ashley Carmen notes, "In the time it took Jibo to ship, Amazon and Google launched their smart assistants and speakers; Apple

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doubled down on Siri; Samsung launched Bixby; and the home smart speaker market exploded. Jibo was going to change the world, but the big tech companies got there first" (2019). So, why should we be interested in a dead technology? What, if anything, can it tell us about women and work, or about digital domesticity and unwaged care?

A partial answer to these questions is suggested by the sheer strength of feeling associated with both Jibo and his demise. This is evident in public reaction to news of his support pages going offline and his remote servers shutting down. There was a vigorous campaign to save Jibo, efforts to reverse engineer the appliance so that he could keep running, and numerous heartfelt posts across social media. According to a 2019 YouTube video by the tech review Michael Fisher, all of this is evidence that Jibo succeeded in his "most fascinating, most improbable mission"; for although he may "ultimately have been defeated by the Amazon Echoes and Google Homes of the world, he was meant to do something more – become a part of the family". Jibo, in other words, succeeded precisely as a companion robot; he managed to make at least part of his user base experience a sense of profound emotional connection (and subsequently, a profound sense of loss when the remote servers that supported his functionality shut down).

On Automation and Autonomy

While he never offered much in terms of alleviating the burdens of household drudgery or domestic management, Jibo can nevertheless be seen as effectively taking on some crucial activities of social reproduction in his role as a companion robot – namely, those involving interaction, play, care, and intimacy. This is the realm of *emotional labour*, in other words. This is a concept developed by Arlie Russell Hochschild in her hugely influential book *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* to refer to work that involves "a publicly observable facial and bodily display" that is intended to produce "the proper state of mind in others" (1983, 7).

In Hochschild's original formulation, emotional labour is specifically associated with paying jobs. For the purposes of this article, however, I will be following Alva Gotby in using the term in a more encompassing manner, to mean "interactive work that produces emotional effects in [a] person" (2023, 3). While such a definition avowedly points to "a broader process than the one usually described in sociological studies of emotional labour" (2023, xiv), it has the distinct advantage of reminding us that our 'private lives' do not sit magically outside of capitalist economic structures. The emotional elements of unwaged care practices extend to sustaining people's "ability and willingness to continue to engage in capitalist productive labour, often despite the continual emotional strain produced by this work" (Gotby 2023, xiii). As such, emotional labour can be said to play an important role in sustaining both existing economic systems and the people within them.

This broader approach to emotional labour – which Gotby sometimes refers to as "emotional reproduction" (2023, x) – also has the benefit of troubling any perception of a hard and fast dividing line between emotional services offered for a wage and those performed for free. This is not to deny that there are key distinctions involved – caring for a customer is different from caring for a partner, parent, or child, of course – but in the context of the current discussion, assuming a firm division risks obscuring continuities between various forms of activity. It suggests that the work of caring performed within the family is *fundamentally* different from work done in the waged workplace, when this distinction may in fact be less a matter of essence and more a matter of degree. In terms of its physical and emotional elements, for example, the labour undertaken by a nanny in caring for a baby is substantially similar to that performed by a family member; it is the *context* and the social relations at play which sets these situations apart.

For all their differences, though, Hochschild and Gotby *both* view emotional labour as a human pursuit (and as a process that affects all parties involved). What, then, does it mean to bring robots into this sphere? How do labour saving devices apply to this kind of work? Clearly the activities that companion robots perform (or attempt to perform) are of a very different character to those that we associate with manual housework. Indeed, one could argue that the tasks they undertake represent that portion of social reproduction which often feels *least* like work. Emotional labour is no doubt an effortful (and highly gendered) activity, frequently performed for the benefit of capital under conditions not of one's own choosing; it is important to take it seriously. Nevertheless, we must also recognise it as a source of revolutionary hope, given that it may contain the seeds of a different way of relating. The activities of emotional labour are thus those which, to my mind, lend themselves particularly readily to emancipatory re-imagining; they might comfortably "become non-work if they are disconnected from the conditions that compel us to perform them" (Gotby 2023, xx).

Aspects of emotional labour come very close to something like *quality time*, then – to the realm of autonomous and freely chosen activity. It is here that devices such as Jibo are designed to intervene. But this state of affairs is not limited to novel tech developments, and is to some extent in keeping with the wider dynamics of domestic labour saving devices. As Leopoldina Fortunati puts it, "To be able to prepare the food and clean the house, the job of looking after the children has been relegated to the TV set or the computer […]. It is as if entertaining children by speaking to them and playing with them has been considered less urgent than getting the dinner ready or cleaning the windows" (2007, 141). Whilst that work which is most "similar to material labor still tends to resist the process of machinization, it is the less tangible part (thinking, learning, communicating, amusing, educating, and so on) that has been machinized" (Forunati 2007, 141). Thinking, learning, communicating, amusing, educating – these are the things that labour saving technologies have been supposed to free us *for*, not *from*.

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A strange inversion has taken place, then – one exemplified by social robotics, but also evident in better established domestic media technologies. As the mother of an eighteen month old, a four year old, and a five year old, I have no interest in disparaging these technologies – I am more than aware of how helpful the TV, games console and tablet can be. But perhaps my relationship with, say, children's television would be different if I wasn't relying on it to keep my babies occupied whilst I complete paid work or perform routine domestic tasks (sorting the washing, cleaning the high chair, emptying the nappy bin, and so on). If wage labour and intrafamilial reproductive labour didn't occupy so much of my time, energy, and headspace – and if I wasn't parenting three infant children without the day to day assistance of a support network beyond my co-parent – my experience and usage of these technologies would be decidedly different. As it is, however, we have to reckon with the fact that instead of automating drudgery, we've inadvertently automated quality time. Ultimately, better domestic technologies should not be judged solely on *how much* labour they save, but also on what *kinds* of labour they are supposedly saving us from.

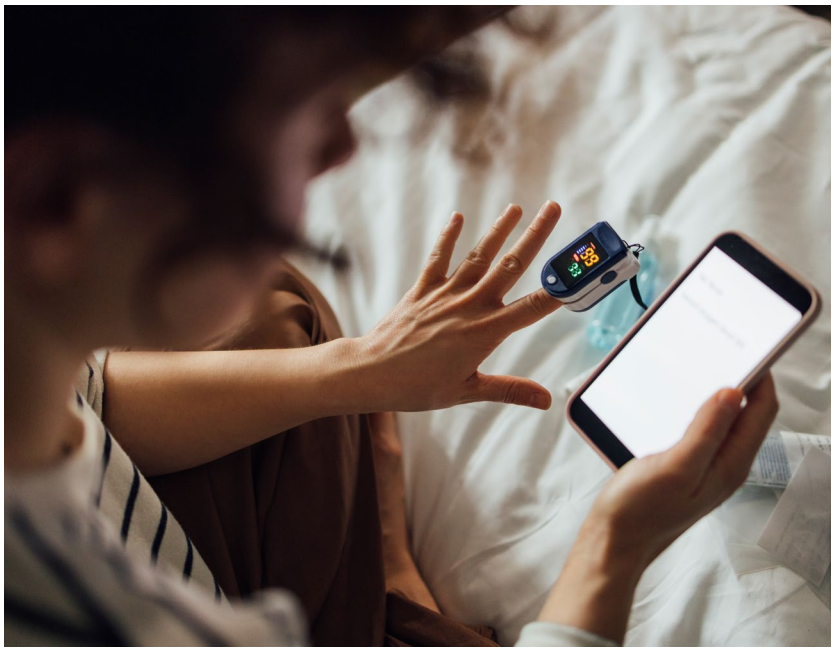
So, we've seen that there has been little in the way of *desirable* labour saving innovation in recent decades. From the gizmos of the contemporary over-equipped kitchen, to the connected gadgets of the smart home, to companion robots programmed to perform[1] emotional labour and fulfil social needs, the devices being developed for the wealthiest people in the wealthiest nations have not been designed with the goal of eliminating drudgery in mind. But whilst domestic technology should not be mistaken for a panacea, it shouldn't be assumed to be a poison either. It is beholden upon us to reclaim the future of domesticity from restrictive visions of the kind I have been considering so far, and to foster collective projects via which we might find more egalitarian ways of managing and mitigating the burdens of unpaid household work.

Conclusion: The 'Three Ts' of Care

On the basis of our discussion above, we can distinguish at least three categories of reproductive labour: high touch, high tech, and high talk. The first two are already well-established in the literature (Naisbitt 2001), particularly when it comes to paid work. 'High touch' refers to tasks characterised by physical proximity, tactile interaction and manual handling – things like washing, lifting, and dressing, which have historically been performed by female and non-native workers. 'High tech', meanwhile, refers to tasks requiring digital skills and involving the creation, maintenance or use of automated systems such as remote monitoring technologies. A perceived division between these categories informs many contemporary debates about the automatability of remunerated care jobs,[2] as well as fuelling mounting concerns about polarization in the sector when it comes to pay, conditions, and prospects. But, as our discussion so far has illustrated, this distinction also has increasing relevance to unwaged work in the home. Much domestic labour still depends on elbow grease and a human (woman's) touch, but an increasing portion also takes the form of 'digital housework'.

What, then, of this third type of activity? What is 'high talk' care, and how does it fit in to our analysis? One thing that the high tech/ high touch divide fails to take into account is emotional labour. Much recent discussion regarding professionalized health and social work has pointed to the neglect of this form of care. A 2013 survey of registered nurses, for example, found that 86% had left one or more care activity undone due to lack of time on their last shift. Most frequently incomplete were "comforting or talking with patients" and "educating patients" – high talk tasks with a crucial role in actually making people feel better, which are also associated with emotional labour as a skilled and potentially rewarding element of care work (Ball et al. 2014).

Across the care giving spectrum, we find high talk work being swallowed up by other commitments. And of course, this creates the need that PARO and Jibo seek to meet. It is understandable, given contemporary political and economic conditions, that many people feel anxious about the automation of care. Even if these technologies work as they are supposed to (and in their defence, they *do* often seem to be well-received by users), they still lend themselves to nightmarish visions of cold and loveless techno-futures. With the Health and Social Care sector subject to targets and productivity pressures, and with unwaged carers of various kinds feeling the squeeze in the absence of adequate state



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The capacity of technology to lessen the burdens of things like day-to-day administration and the careful management of sensitive data seems to represent an opportunity for the right kind of labour saving – one in which automation could free up time for people to exist in other kinds of emotional relations

support, the fear is that encroaching technologization will spell isolation and dehumanization for those in need of support – that, in the absence of an attentiveness to emotional labour, care will become ever-more uncaring.

This is certainly one possible future. However, I believe that a more emancipatory approach to care could also develop from thinking about how emerging technologies inform high touch, high tech, and high touch care. One positive outcome of automation would be to recentralise high talk activities, wherever appropriate, within practices and understandings of care work – to target drudgery and enable connection. Writing about social care, Samantha Howe and Karol Florek remark that robots have the potential to "alleviate the more onerous tasks for human caregivers, allowing them to focus on the more complex and emotionally demanding, if also rewarding, aspects of eldercare. After all, their labour is often highly physically strenuous – direct care workers are among the occupational groups most prone to musculoskeletal disorders. Physical-assistance robots, designed to perform tasks such as lifting, hoisting, carrying, bathing and dressing, could ease burdens while freeing up carers to be attentive in non-physical ways" (2024). The right kinds of technologies would make it increasingly possible to eliminate those kinds of high touch tasks that are not only risky, demanding or boring for workers, but which also force people into uncomfortable and potentially unwanted positions of physical intimacy.

Furthermore, such technologies could be used to enable different ways of managing and organising care. Indeed, from my point of view, one of the most hopeful visions of the automation of reproductive work is not a flashy companion robot performing high tech, high talk labour, but a rather more quotidian techno-material assemblage – the influential nurse-led Buurtzorg model from the Netherlands. This model spans both waged and unwaged work; the home, the community, and the healthcare setting. It sees self-managed teams of nurses cooperating with individuals and wider support networks (including relatives, friends, and neighbours) to help people age well in their communities. Without the kinds of job role specification demanded by efficiency- and productivity-led approaches, it carves out time for the building of ongoing, holistic and multifaceted caring relationships. Nurses have the expertise and training to deliver high tech care (dealing with telemedical systems and so on), but are also on hand for high touch support (dressing wounds, washing hair) and high talk interactions (having a cup of tea and a chat).

The Buurtzorg model is resolutely *not* a labour saving techno-fix; it demands different types of (more autonomous) working arrangements and encourages the formation of alternative kinds of social relationships. Crucially, by operating at a scale between the home and the hospital, it also involves thinking beyond the domestic dwelling and the atomised household, thereby better weaving care into the fabric of people's complicated everyday lives. But it is still, to my mind, a crucial positive example when thinking about technologies of care, because it relies on the kind of technical infrastructures that allow nurses to remain connected while mobile in the community – things like specialist software for recording and analysing client data, and devices that operate securely and reliably while on the go, for example.

The capacity of technology to lessen the burdens of things like day-to-day administration and the careful management of sensitive data seems to represent an opportunity for the *right kind* of labour saving – one in which automation could free up time for people to exist in other kinds of emotional relations. Specifically, it might enable the kind of comforting, talking, and educating that paid care givers have found nearly impossible to deliver to a satisfactory standard in recent years, and that even unpaid caregivers have found themselves struggling to provide in ways they might like. Clearly there are issues to be addressed in terms of the arrangement of caregiving as it currently stands (both within and beyond the household). In large part, these stem from the social relations that have come to define care under capitalism – not least, time pressure and work intensification leading to the depletion of care givers and the neglect of care recipients.

We can acknowledge the need to fundamentally restructure these relationships without overlooking the fact that some elements of this work could feasibly be mitigated via the judicious application of technology. It strikes me as important to rethink the technical, as well as the social, organisation of this work in order that we can collectively steer and steward unrealised labour saving potentials into being, and to ensure that innovation is put at the service of people not profit. High talk activities have been squeezed out of care work; technologies, as one element in a sustained political struggle, might enable us to put them back at the heart of care. Let's reclaim our quality time.

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Notes

1 / I use this word advisedly, given that the idea of performing suggests both accomplishment and mimicry; one's sense of whether or not social robots can "really" undertake emotional labour will depend on one's view on the necessity of emotional reciprocity.

2 / Many sources view paid care work as a growth area capable of offsetting potential job losses resulting from automation, particularly in light of impending demographic changes. PwC, for example, suggest that a relatively low proportion of health and social work jobs in the UK are at risk of automation (Berriman 2017, 38). Not everyone agrees, however. A study by Deloitte argues that care is far more automatable than we typically imagine, and ranks Health and Social Care in the top three sectors when it comes to existing jobs at high risk of automation (2016, 3).

About the author

Helen Hester Professor of Gender, Technology, and Cultural Politics, University of West London
Hester is Professor of Gender, Technology and Cultural Politics at the University of West London. She is the author of *Post-Work: What It Is, Why it Matters, and How We Get There* (with Will Stronge, Bloomsbury, 2024), *After Work: A History of the Home and the Fight for Free Time* (with Nick Srnicek, Verso, 2023), *Xenofeminism* (Polity, 2018) and *Beyond Explicit: Pornography and the Displacement of Sex* (SUNY Press, 2014).

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Emily Caston | University of West London
Angela Saward | Wellcome Trust

Angela Saward: Women's Labour and the Wellcome Collection

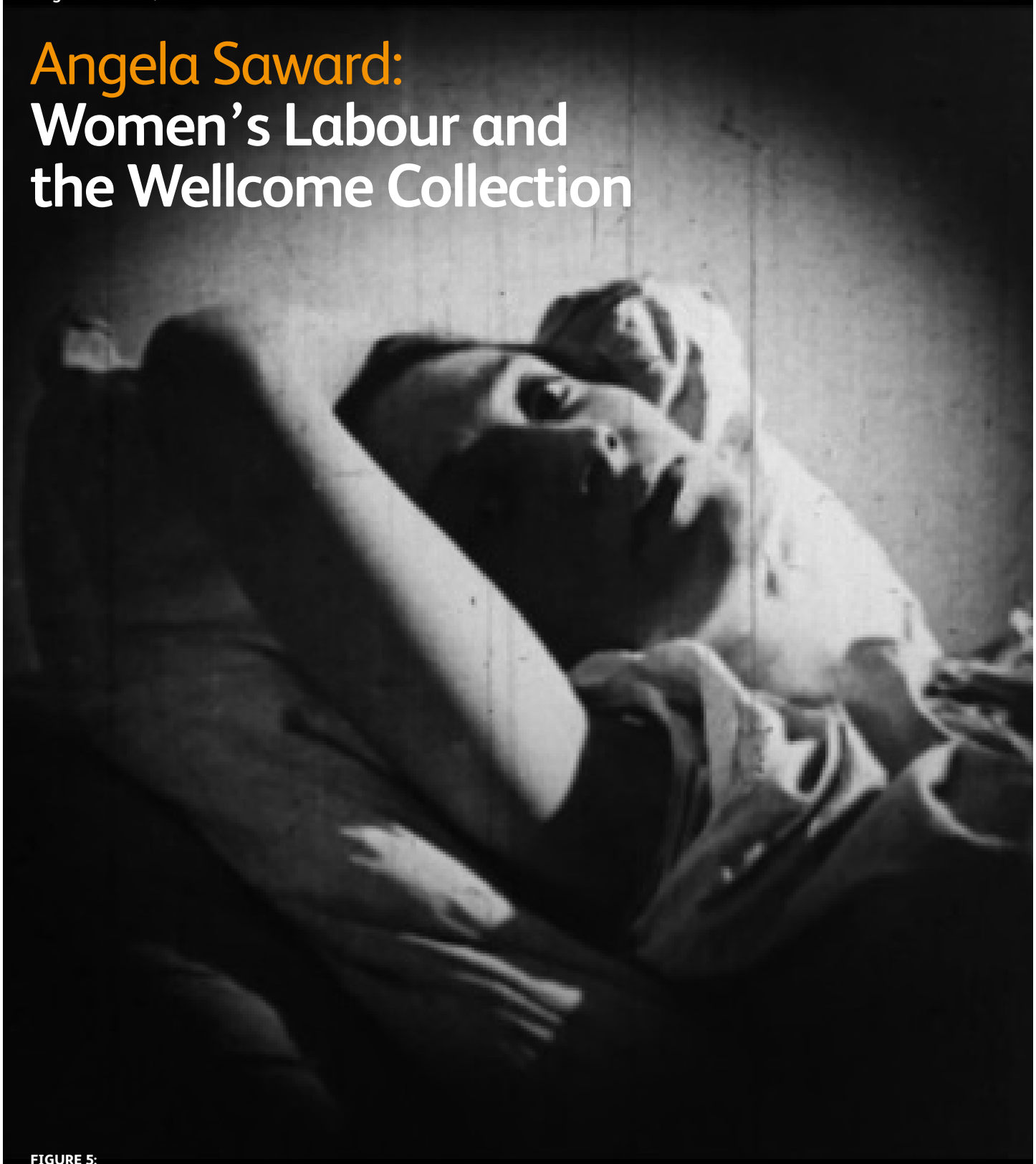

FIGURE 5:
The Mechanism of the Brain, Vsevolod Pudovkin, 1925.
Wellcome Collection (see p34)

Abstract

Angela Saward and the Wellcome Collection were leading partners in the AHRC funded 'Hidden Screen Industries' network led by Professor Emily Caston at UWL. In this report, based on an interview that Caston conducted with her earlier this year, Saward identifies the significance of Wellcome's collection of materials for a comprehensive understanding of the history of women and labour.

Angela Saward and the Wellcome Collection were leading partners in the AHRC funded 'Hidden Screen Industries' network led by Professor Emily Caston at UWL. In this report, based on an interview that Caston conducted with her earlier this year, Saward identifies the significance of Wellcome's collection of materials for a comprehensive understanding of the history of women and labour.

Wellcome Collections holds a dizzying amount of materials related to women's labour in childbirth. The quantity of items is vast across the various material types, geographies, and chronologies.

One of the stand-out items is a manuscript the provenance of which seems to indicate that it was presented to Queen Elizabeth I about Monstrous Births (Figure 1). It's beautiful and is illustrated with fantastical depictions of, for instance, people born with skin like tree bark. The politics of why something like this would have been presented to the Virgin Queen is interesting. It's digitised and available online.

I have colleagues who are experts on the early modern period who can talk more about the items from our 16th and 17th century collections. There's a lot of scholarship around individual items. Anatomists were trying to visualise what the baby looked like in the womb (see, for example, Figure 2 p33). Before it was possible to see into the womb, doctors visualised that the uterus was quite spacious, babies could almost stand upright!

The early materials are problematic because some are based on post-mortems, leading to questions about whose body is represented and would not be permissible today (Figure 3 p33).

Midwifery has historically been a women-centred practice across all the geographies and materials. An image from the late eighteenth century of a man-midwife shows a person split in two. One side of it is male, the other side of it is female (Figure 4 p34). It is indicative of how men were entering this space, albeit with some ridicule.

However, from the mid nineteenth century, midwifery becomes appropriated by the more scientific male orientated medical profession. It's the early Victorian period when scientific research and medical instruments become a male domain. Charles Dickens dialled into the idea of a midwife being a Mrs Gamp [a nurse in the novel Martin Chuzzlewit by Charles Dickens, first published as a serial in 1843-44], an old woman a crone: dirty and an alcoholic. So, there is a sort of projection of the idea that women aren't serving women properly until men come along with their medical bag of tricks. There is a bit of pushback about this questioning why men want to be obstetricians, but then the women are very disempowered at this time, so it doesn't go anywhere.

FIGURE 1. Manuscript, c. 1559. Boaistuau, Pierre (1517-1566). Wellcome Collection

Women's ownership and their ability to own the narrative around the labour of pregnancy and childbirth doesn't really surface until the 1960s when the natural birth of movement arises. In the Victorian period, women's status as midwives isn't professionalised, it's paid, but it's paid in cash, like an informal economy, a backstreet underground economy. If you went to a male doctor, however, you'd get sent an invoice or a bill because his care was professionalised.

Thinking about the film collection specially, the earliest film of female anatomy we have is from 1916 (Abdominal Hysterectomy for Pyosalpinx). It shows a hysterectomy in close-up. The procedure, pyosalpinx relates to the fallopian tube being blocked by pus; the female patient is present yet disembodied. This is just a fragment of a longer film.

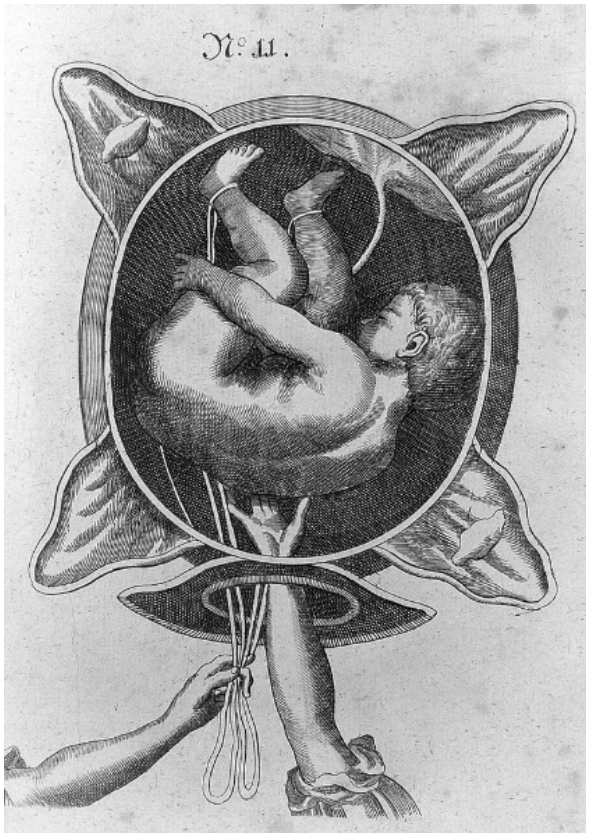

FIGURE 2. Siegmund, Justine Dittrich, 1648-1705. Wellcome Collection

The Mechanism of the Brain (1925) is the earliest film depicting childbirth we hold (Figure 5 p34). It's a Russian film, directed by famous director Vsevolod Pudovkin on the Nobel Laureate, Ivan Pavlov's, research in Russia. This is a black and white, silent feature length film (93 minutes), that explores the role the brain and nervous system play in behaviour. In doing so it also attempts to show the difference between conditioned and unconditioned responses in animals and humans. One sequence shows in a very beautiful way a woman in pain and agony surrounded by an aura. That is reputed to be the first time a woman has been shown giving birth on film. You don't actually see her giving birth, but you do see the baby being presented to her afterwards.

The earliest film showing actual childbirth we have is from 1926 (Figure 6 p35). It's a medical film and it was in circulation for quite a long time as part of the Kodak Medical Film Catalogue. It presents a 'normal' birth in a continental clinic. It was shot in Berlin. It shows the different stages of labour. There are five reels and we're missing just one of the reels (on the delivery of the after birth). It's a very detailed film. You see the baby born and crying when it's presented and it's probably the first time a newborn baby was filmed in that kind of detail. But the mother is not part of the story. All we see of her is her legs open. It's all about the baby. There are female staff in attendance, but we do not see the mother.

In the 1940s, the films on reproductive health centre more around the risk to women of sexual diseases. There's a film called The People at Number 19 (1949), a drama about how a woman has contracted a venereal disease - syphilis - and has to confess to her fiancé. It turns out it was as a result of her indiscretion not his, she has to have the treatment before they get married and start a family.

FIGURE 3. Dissection of the pregnant uterus, showing the foetus at nine months. Copperplate engraving by R. Strange after I.V. Rymsdyk, 1774, reprinted 1851. Wellcome Collection

There are also films about parental decision-making, with an emphasis on immunisation. There's a number of diseases that were deadly at that time and public health immunisation programmes for diphtheria, polio and measles were rolled out. The science of parenting started to build after the second World War (we have the archives of John Bowlby, Donald Winnicott, Margaret Lowenfeld and Melanie Klein to name a few). People were concerned about the consequences of children being apart from their parents and then parents had their support networks disrupted as a result of war. A group of films made by Margaret Thompson who was an Australian who was working in the UK most of her career illustrate this. She made films in the late 1940s, such as Your Children's Ears (1945) and Your Children's Sleep (1947) and the importance of play.

Thompson also made a series of films about anaesthesia which was a new treatment that would completely transform women's experience of childbirth. Thompson made a series of films for ICI under the tutelage of Ivan Magill, a British expert on anaesthesia. They weren't allowed to use real patients or

FIGURE 4. A "man-midwife" (male obstetrician) represented by a figure divided in half, one half representing a man and the other a woman. Coloured etching by I. Cruikshank, 1793. Wellcome Collection.

FIGURE 5. The Mechanism of the Brain, Vsevolod Pudovkin, 1925. Wellcome Collection

Anaesthesia had a big impact on women's labour because it became part of the medicalisation of birth and labour. It intersects also with the emergence of the NHS which meant that women could have hospital births

staff, so they used the production crew instead, filming the production crew under anaesthetic. To establish deep anaesthesia, you had to monitor eye movement, understand breathing and other physiological signs to understand whether the anaesthetic was working. The films are quite eye opening, as the so-called patients appear to be dealt with roughly!

Anaesthesia had a big impact on women's labour because it became part of the medicalisation of birth and labour. It intersects also with the emergence of the NHS which meant that women could have hospital births. There's a period of around 20 years when things really change exponentially for women's experience of childbirth with the NHS.

The films we hold about childbirth made before the NHS show that hospital birth was only what happened if you were very rich or if it was an emergency. Films from the 1930s show what happened before it became normal to have childbirth in hospital.

One film from 1932 (Figure 7 p36) shows a midwife getting on her bicycle and going to a tenement block where all the children are sitting outside on the front steps, going inside the block to help the mother and call for help. Only in an emergency would the mother have been transferred from her home to the hospital. Apart from labour itself, post-partum one of the factors for mother and infant mortality came from puerperal fever.

In the early years of the NHS, the films we hold aren't aimed at women. They are made for clinicians and obstetricians. Alongside anaesthetics, there was another product developed for obstetricians to use on women in childbirth. The pharmaceutical business, Wellcome Foundation, from which Wellcome Collection begun from Sir Henry Wellcome's bequest, was involved in the production of ergometrine (originally as a treatment for migraine). Ergometrine was a derivative of a fungus called ergot which when it appeared naturally on wheat was known, historically, to cause madness. There's a film about it in the collection Ergot : the Story of a Parasitic Fungus, 1958). Ergot once synthesised was used to precipitate the last stage of labour in women, the afterbirth. This became part of the medicalisation of birth.

From this period, we also have related material which speaks to gynaecological health by individual doctors. Sir Archibald McIndoe, a specialist in plastic surgery in the Second World War and cousin of a very famous surgeon, Sir Harold Gillies renown for reconstructive plastic surgery during the First World War were both initially involved with the reconstruction of facial features after servicemen experienced burns to the face in particular. McIndoe had a ward informally dubbed 'The Guinea Pig Club' during the Second World War in which he treated their war wounds as well as rehabilitation to cope with their injuries. In collections held at the Imperial War Museum you can see how they developed the skin graft in order to for these men who had been injured in the War some kind of normality.

Post-war, this research led to further surgical developments. Wellcome Collection has a film showing McIndoe performing one of the earliest successful operations for vaginal replacement (The treatment of Congenital Absence of the Vagina, 1938 or 1941). These were operations on women, in which he is doing vaginal reconstruction surgery, but later form the basis of surgical practice for people who want to transition. The films were made to support

From the 1960s, patient autonomy evolved. Wellcome has the archives of the Natural Childbirth Trust (NCT). Now it's become a parenting charity, but in the 1960s it was a pro-natural childbirth organisation. One film shows case studies of the different ways women can give birth at the hospital or at home

FIGURE 6. Management of a Normal Birth in a Continental Clinic. Part 3, Stage of Explusion. Wellcome Collection

clinical research and possibly for peer-to-peer training purposes. They were not widely distributed because they reflected the research specialism of a particular clinician so their use would have been controlled narrowly by that clinician.

From the 1960s, patient autonomy evolved. Wellcome has the archives of the Natural Childbirth Trust (NCT). Now it's become a parenting charity, but in the 1960s it was a pro-natural childbirth organisation. We have one film from the 1970s called Birthday: The Triumph of Labour (1979) (Figure 8 p37). It shows case studies of the different ways women can give birth at the hospital or at home. Other films support breastfeeding over bottle feeding.

Sheila Kitzinger was involved in the production and appears in the film. We also hold her archives. You see all the mothers-to-be lying down, practising the different kinds of breathing in preparation for labour. The film starts with (presumably) licensed footage from Margaret Mead's anthropological studies, possibly in the Pacific, which suggests that Indigenous women find birthing easier. It is a dangerous assertation to make because there is now a long, documented, history about the health service not taking Black women's pain seriously, but at the time that view was not held. The film has screening notes accompanying it and because the NCT had its own library of films, I think the film would have been used by the NCT practitioners to teach each other these techniques, although screenings could have been hosted if a film projector was readily available, which might not have been the case if antenatal gatherings took place in people's homes.

When I first started working with the Collection, there was very little film about women's health. This is possibly because my predecessor was a man, and the collection was not organised holistically on health but around medical research. There is something very 'ordinary' about childbirth, which is slightly problematic, and as a result there isn't the kind of volume of material you'd expect. That's possibly also because more of the visual material is held in other media such as slides (or books). Slides were most likely used for instructional teaching in nursing rather than film.

Subsequent acquisitions since I joined mean that we have many important films such as one about Kathleen Vaughan's work, a women doctor who qualified in 1900. There were very few female doctors then, and it was very, very difficult to get accepted to train as a doctor if you were a woman. She ended up in India working as Superintendent at a hospital in Kashmir in the 1920s. Vaughan discovered that the Caste system in India meant that some women had lots of health problems arising from the way that society had framed them. For example, wealthier women weren't given access to fresh air, exercise and possibly high protein or limited food. They ended up with underdeveloped bone structure. There was a particular malformation of the pelvis called osteomalacia from which they suffered. The outcomes in childbirth for the mother and child are really quite poor if the mother had osteomalacia and required a lot of intervention. Vaughan's observations of poorer women who were working outside and throughout their pregnancy was that they had better developed bone structures, access to a wider variety of foods, and, as a result, better outcomes in childbirth.

Vaughan brought that research back to Britain, and, in the 1930s, she made one of the first antenatal exercise films that we have in the collection (Childbirth as an Athletic Feat, 1939). She believed that a pregnant woman 'must regard herself as an athlete in need of training for her special job'. Top obstetricians considered her advice 'constructive hygiene at its best'. It's extraordinary because she extrapolated from what she had seen in India to create a programme of exercises for women in Britain. Her star pupil in the film is a ballet dancer. It was shot in 1939, on the top floor of a hospital, the windows are taped up (in preparation for War). It was available to be shown in health centres. The film also looks at the way that women being together can bring them mental strength and how socialising

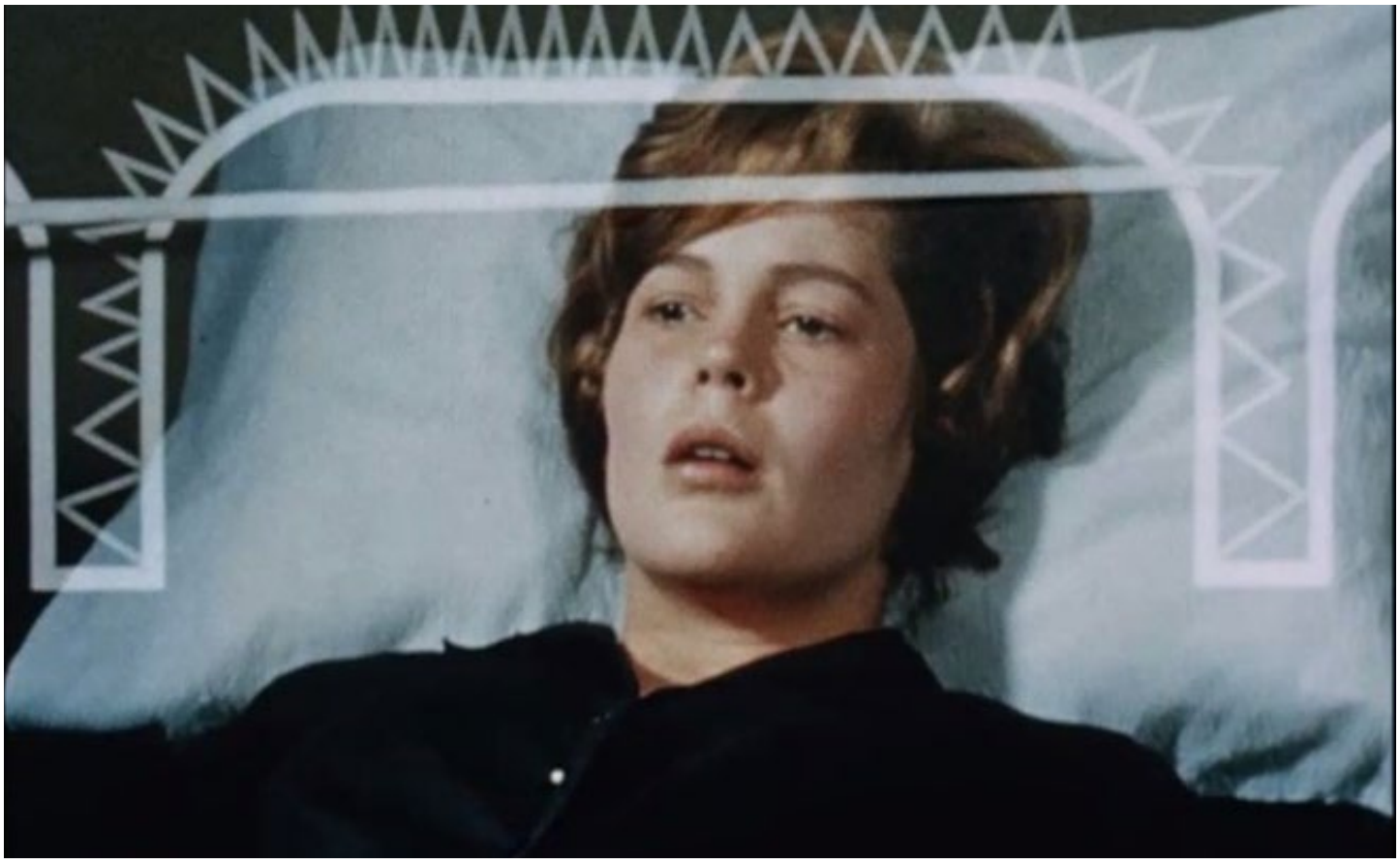

FIGURE 7. Maternity: a film of Queen Charlotte's Hospital, 1932. Wellcome Collection

with their babies could help post-birth. Her work predated the NCT work, and she published books right up to the 1950s with Faber and Faber.

The medicalisation of women's labour was questioned by Grantly Dick Read, whose archives we hold and one of the founding members of the NCT. He first published on the subject in 1933 entitled, Natural Labour. He had seen how medicalised birth had become, although he was not a qualified obstetrician and lobbied for women to be a conscious participant rather than a drugged patient. In his visits to America, he heard accounts from women who were being put under a general anaesthetic, neither in control of their labour or aware of it, and then only presented with the baby afterwards. We have a film about how distant fathers-to-be were in the labour ward at this time, showing the father in the corridor in a gown and mask, being presented with the child, whilst the mothers were either sleeping in the ward or sitting around smoking (Hospital Maternity Care: Family Centered, 1964). Dick Read was in America and in interviewing women, he concluded that the less autonomy and control women had over their own labour, the greater the post-birth trauma they suffered. He championed the idea of natural childbirth in the UK, but it was an idea which sat uncomfortably with the way most hospitals were approaching labour at the time which was still as a medicalised practice within which women had no control.

Another voice which spoke for mothers-to-be is Scope. We have a rich collection from the charity, formed in the 1950s and previously called the Spastics Society for people born with cerebral palsy. Initially the organisation was a parent-activist's society. The word 'spastic' is the opposite of 'elastic', it means 'tight', and is a term no longer used to describe people with cerebral palsy. The films show how to diagnose abilities in children from birth. Understanding what's "normal" goes back to Pavlov and those early films demonstrating reflexes. For example, Wellcome has a film of a baby born without a forebrain, The Mid-Brain Infant (1925/1960). That kind of material is not in the mainstream but become part of a number of textbook case studies. Scope commissioned films of "normal" and "abnormal" children on the basis that early diagnosis was key, although later their films addressed fundraising, access to education and then work. As well as the films and archives, Wellcome has digitised a run of their magazine called Disability Now.

Scope convened a conference in 1978 which they recorded announcing that this would be the year of 'prevention.' Their membership comprised of people who had children born after difficult births who had not received sufficient oxygen, leading to a range of neurological and physical disabilities. Even in the 1970s, access to good quality healthcare for pregnant women was not a given. James Loring, the Chair, mentions that there would be action for improvement in ante-natal and maternity services at the time of government cuts. Other speakers talk about the welfare of pregnant women and the outcomes of pregnancy after considering a number of risk factors particularly in early pregnancy. The topics covered include the beneficial impact of pregnant women taking folic acid and then the use of the drug thalidomide during pregnancy (which had caused a scandal and nearly a miscarriage of justice if it wasn't for parent activism – we also hold the archives of the Thalidomide Society and Thalidomide Trust, followed by the risk from rubella (German measles). In the '60s and '70s, women were not routinely called up for antenatal screening once they had a confirmed pregnancy. The discovery of risk factors such as pre-eclampsia often came late.

FIGURE 8. The Triumph of Childbirth, National Childbirth Trust, no date. Wellcome Trust

Treatment for pre-eclampsia as outlined in the film Toxaemia in Pregnancy (1958) boils down to outmoded advice such as drinking two pints of milk a day, and perhaps more sensibly 'fathercraft'!

Antenatal screening involved, right up to the 1970s, women being X-rayed when they were pregnant. An epidemiologist Alice Stewart discovered the risks via a long-term study, although her research was not widely accepted as she had clashed with Richard Doll about the risks of low dosage radiation which he did not agree with. Doll was instrumental in identifying the link between smoking and health and therefore had considerable professional clout, by becoming part of the medical orthodoxy. After his death, it was discovered that he'd been supported by British Industries involved in the nuclear industry. Not only did she prove a link between childhood leukaemia and maternal x-rays in pregnancy, but she also ended up at Hanford in America as an expert witness giving evidence about the types of cancers caused in the vicinity of the plutonium plant established as part of the Manhattan Project, built to provide plutonium for the atomic bomb which destroyed Nagasaki in 1945. Wellcome holds both Stewart's archives as well as Doll's – surprisingly (and not without criticism) Wellcome was involved in funding an authorised biography of Doll in 2009.

Eugenics is now considered a discredited field in science: Wellcome holds (and has digitised) the Eugenics Society archives (now known as the Galton Trust) as part of a bigger narrative of how researchers have cracked 'the code of life' (leading to the discovery of the human genome for instance). Within the collection there is a film from 1937, which after sensitivity checks, we decided not to put online as we have identifying paper archives about the family deemed to have 'unfavourable' heredity. The film, Heredity and Man (1937) can however be viewed on the BFI's Player. More recently, the scientific thinking behind eugenics was critiqued in a powerful new film God Mode (2023) by the filmmaking artist partnership, Genetic Automata (Larry Achiampong and David Blandy). This was screened at Wellcome together with collections' materials.

About the authors

Angela Saward Research Development Specialist
Wellcome Collection

Emily Caston
Emily is Professor of Screen Industries and Director of the Policy and Practice Research Institute of Screen and Music at UWL (PRISM).

Keywords

Childbirth

Further information

To find out more about Kathleen Vaughan:
The birth of ante-natal classes (Wellcome Collection)

To find out more about Alice Stewart:
We are the survivors of slow-motion epidemics (Wellcome Collection)

YouTube Playlist Watch the Films
A YouTube Playlist has been created and most of the films mentioned can be watched with **here**

How to Cite

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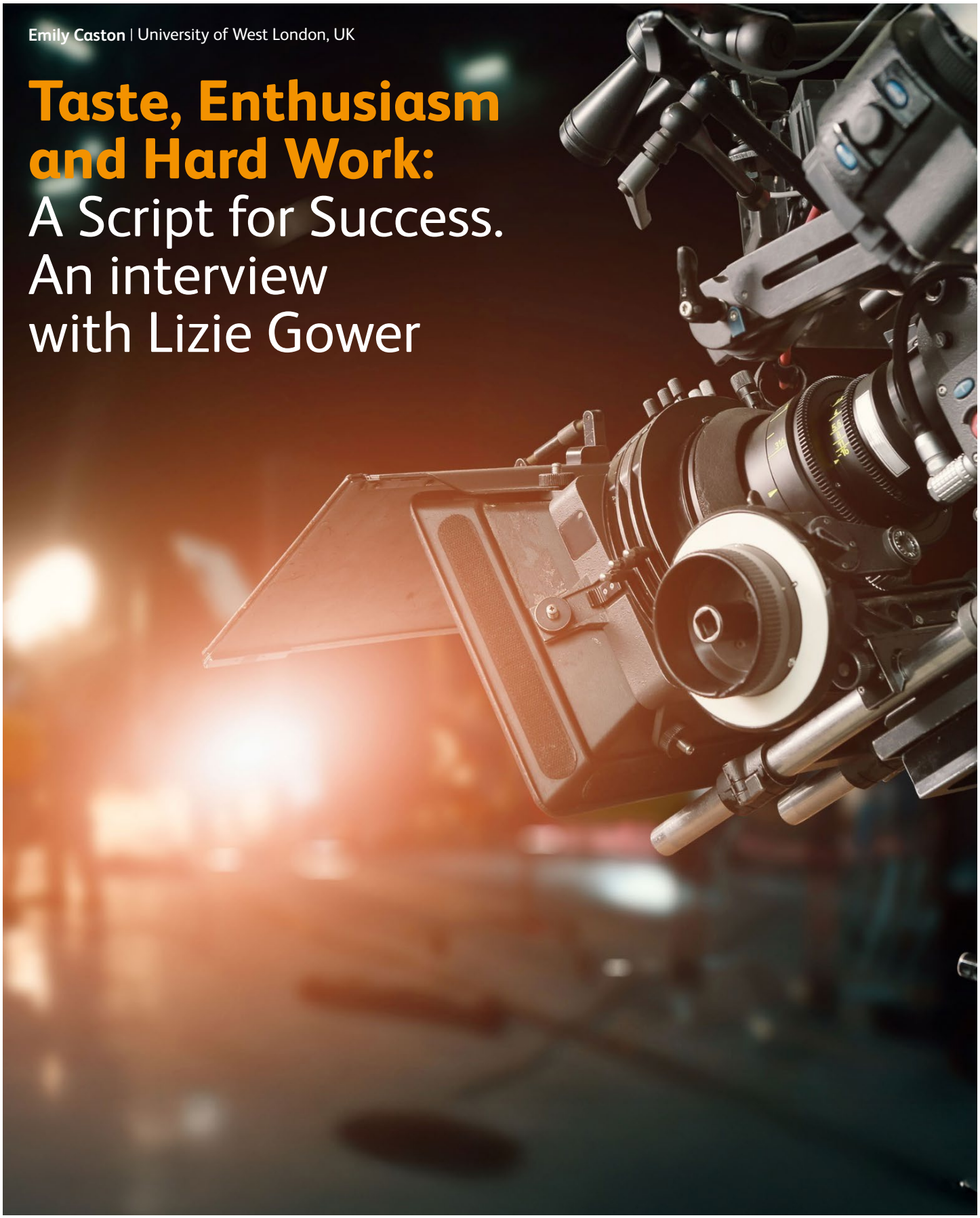
Emily Caston | University of West London, UK

Taste, Enthusiasm and Hard Work: A Script for Success. An interview with Lizie Gower



Images are used with permisssion.

Abstract

Lizie Gower is widely regarded as having identified, nurtured and financed some of the UK's top filmmaking talent. In 1985, she pioneered a new business model for producing screen advertising with her award-winning film company, Academy. That model has since been emulated by companies across the globe. Academy remains an acclaimed industry leader. The company is home to Jonathan Glazer whose film, Zone of Interest *(2023), won Best International Feature Film and Best Sound at the 2024 Academy Awards. A Jury member of BAFTA, Chairman of the British Advertising Arrows awards since 2009, and member of the executive committee of the Advertising Producers' Association, Lizie Gower is regarded as one of the most influential game-changers of British screen advertising.*

ABOVE. Lizie Gower, Foundre Academy Films

For her forthcoming book on London's media production industries, Emily Caston interviewed Lizie about the key strategies and decisions in her 42-year career.

EC: Lizie, why did you launch Academy in 1985?
LG: Well, it all began in 1977 when, after breaking both my legs in turn (!) after three years in drama school, I took a job as a receptionist in an advertising production company called Messenger Page for a yearly salary of £3,200 (because I couldn't take my job at the theatre company with legs in a plaster cast).

I didn't know much about the world of television advertising, and it was all quite new to me: I'd been to boarding school where there wasn't a television, and in the school-holidays would return to my family who lived on military bases in Europe without a television, so I hadn't grown up watching commercials. Advertising seemed so exciting, and I quickly loved those 30 second films.

After a year of being a receptionist, I moved to Cotswold Management to become a junior PA [production assistant], and then had a further few promotions to PA and PM [production manager]. At the age of 28, I joined a company called The Shooting Lodge as a junior producer; however, this was short lived as the partners of the company decided to go their separate ways and dissolved the company, leaving me without a job.

It was 1984 and I decided, rather on a whim, to open my own small production company with an editor from Rushes called Richard Simpson who was wanting to turn his skills to directing. Patrick Hayes at Studio Lambert kindly offered me a desk in his office to help get the company going and keep the initial overheads low. It wasn't expensive then to open a company: I had a desk, a phone and a production assistant. Thankfully, I got two jobs confirmed in the first month of business. Our very first commercial was for Anglian double glazing, so we were soon able to move to our own offices in St Anne's Court in Soho [London].

EC: How did you want your new company to differ from the standard model?
LG: In those days, production companies had a director as sole- or part-owner - Alan Parker Films and Ridley Scott Associates, for instance. That's why, when I first opened the company, it was with director-partner Richard Simpson, and I called the company Simpson Gower. Increasingly, however, I felt conflicting responsibilities because, as a producer, I felt obliged to favour the selling of my director-partner rather than the other non-owner directors I represented. As I signed more directors to the company, they all wanted to have their name over the door - even though they weren't owners - and the company began to sound like a bunch of solicitors.

When, after a year of trading, Richard Simpson decided that directing wasn't for him and left the business, I felt fortunate that I could now change the premise of the company. I re-named the company Academy, putting an end to the tradition of the names of the directors above the door, and I became the first sole owner of a production company as a woman producer.

From the start, I tried to keep to a policy of internal recruitment and promotion. When a person first arrived, they could choose between starting as a runner or a receptionist. Then they would be my PA [production assistant] for one year (I reckon that could have to be the hardest job of all). If they survived that, they were on their way up the promotion ladder, to junior PA, PA, PM, producer, and executive producer. It never made sense to me to train up staff and then lose them to other companies. I had to move companies when I was training because many other companies did not promote internally. But we very rarely hired people outside the company at a level higher than runner or receptionist. I believe If you've done every job within the company, you make a better manager because you know what it's like sitting on reception, you know what it's like being the last person on a shoot as a runner, and you've done all the jobs on the way.

This policy creates immense loyalty. Many of Academy's producers have worked their entire careers within the company. We were a family. In fact, Simon Cooper who took over the company (with Medb Riordan) when I retired, had joined Academy fresh from university.

EC: Do you think it was harder because you were a woman?
LG: No, I don't. I wish I could say I did because it would be a better story to tell that I'd had to fight to get accepted, but I didn't. It was slightly a boys' club, but only in the sense that the production company heads back then were mostly guys. The companies competing with me were Brookes Fulford, Park Village, Spots, Ridley Scott Associates - they were the big players. But I never felt compromised as a producer or defined by being a woman. I didn't feel uncomfortable, or that they were unwelcoming.

I think only once in my whole career did it happen; when I was a junior assistant, I asked a producer if he would teach me how to budget and his response disappointingly was, "I wouldn't worry your pretty head about it, you're just going to get married to someone in the army and arrange flowers." I said, "Well I might do, but I might not, and even if I do get married, I might still want to carry on working in film." It was a sweet day years later when he phoned me to ask if I could give him any freelance work at Academy.

I never found agencies or film crew to be difficult because I was a woman. I was very surprised that there was a distinct lack of woman as creative directors in the advertising agencies. Barbara Noakes was the first, I think, and, even now, women creative directors only account for 12 or 13% of all creative directors in London. In the '80s and '90s, women copywriters and art directors were rare and those that did exist often drew the short straw and were given the archetypal female briefs that the male creatives didn't want to work on. Thankfully that is changing now so maybe the next generation will reflect a better gender split.

EC: Today, many people feel nervous about starting a company. Did you?
LG: I really didn't think very hard about it. It didn't seem a big deal. I didn't know what was involved and my business skills were sketchy at best: I was ignorant about how to calculate VAT or what a trial balance sheet was. I'd been to drama school not business school. What I thought I did have was *taste*, *enthusiasm* and a hunger to *work hard*.

I learned the financial basics on the job with a patient accountant as my guide. To start with I did all the bookkeeping, and I did everything myself. I worked seven days a week. It was hard but rewarding seeing the company grow. It never felt particularly brave. I just got on with it. No-one ever said, "Oh god, that's so courageous especially because you are a woman" so I just took it for granted that was my job. It wasn't until I started winning awards that people began to give the company, and in turn myself, recognition. The turning point for the company came in the early '90s with a director called Geoff Posner. I was constantly looking for new

directors - especially directors who came from a varied background. Geoff was a television director and he had made a very funny TV programme called *Norbert Smith* [Hat Trick, C4, 1989] with Harry Enfield. I thought his work not only made me laugh but had a strong visual style. HCCL [Howell, Henry, Chaldicott, Lury & Partners] were doing a series of commercials on Mercury telephones. I put Geoff forward, and he got them. The commercials were all heavily stylised and shot in black and white. They were original and funny and won loads of awards at the Arrows. And when you've won an award, you're on the radar and it's easier to win another award because people take you more seriously. That's why I took awards seriously too.

EC: Did you have any guiding strategic principles?
LG: I had two mantras at Academy: develop talent, and win awards.

After our win at the Arrows with the HCCL spots, it really became my mission not to make money, but to get the creative recognition that I felt that would bring the company longevity by winning awards. After 39 years, Academy has more awards than any other production company in the world. I always thought that if we kept on winning awards, the directors and the company would stay relevant and in return have more creative respect.

Developing talent was my other mission. That was our currency. I was always looking out for new talent. It was much easier to develop talent in the '90s because ad agencies often needed to make small projects with a tiny budget especially for a new client. If it was a great script and I thought it could win an award or go on a directors showreel, we would do it, no matter what budget they had - twenty grand, ten grand or no grand, whatever. The work was more important than the money.

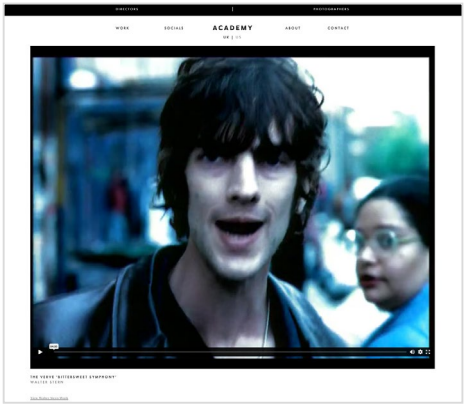
We also developed 'film ditties' for the directors. These were original films which Academy paid for: sixty second or two-minute short films which would appeal to ad agencies and, in turn, would sell the directors that had made them. Other production companies were doing this but by getting test scripts from ad agencies or writing their own test scripts, from which to make fake ads. The problem with a fake ad is that it never felt genuine, and, more importantly, it didn't give creative freedom to develop a piece for the director. It naturally had the constraints that all ads have.

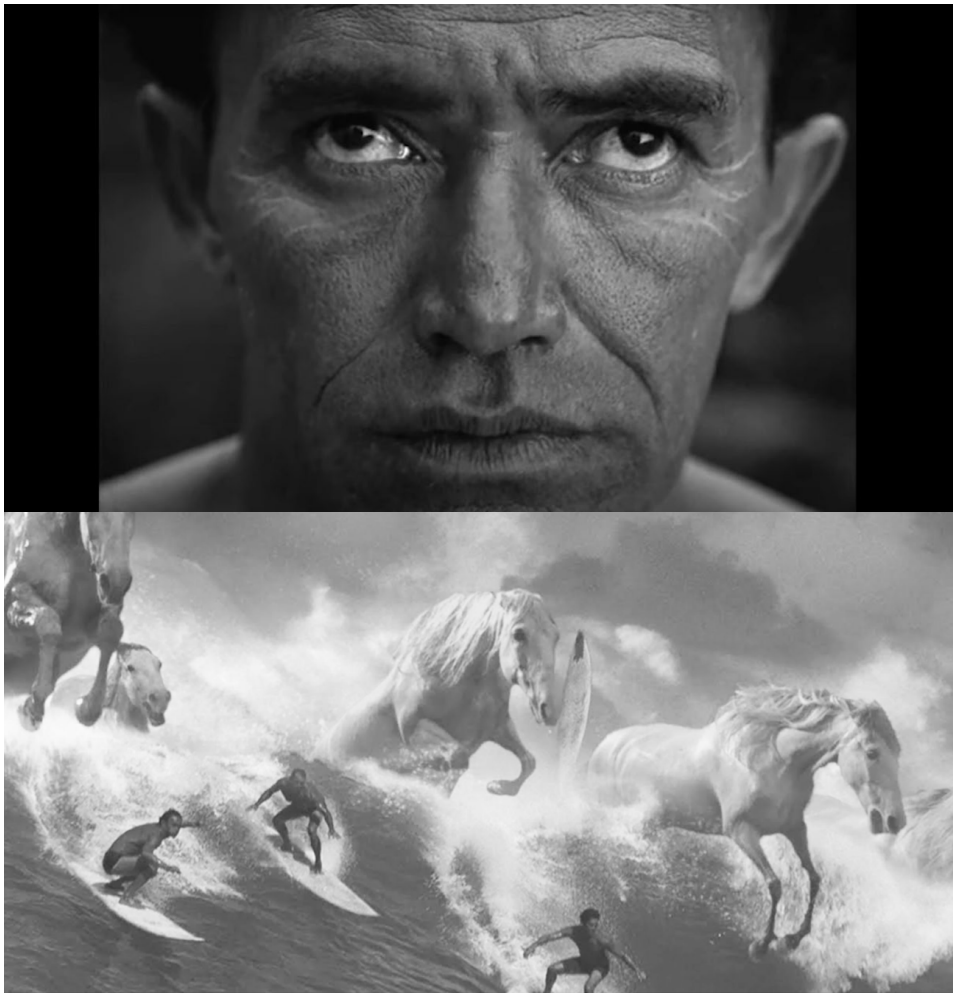
WATCH

Academy Films
Watch and explore Academy's work
academyfilms.com/portfolio

Article Taste, Enthusiasm and Hard Work: A Script for Success. An interview with Lizie Gower
Author Emily Caston

It was a year in the making, designing cameras that would work on the surfboard, waiting for the right month to get the biggest waves and the CGI on the horses. With that iconic black and white photography, it's a flawless piece of work that still stands the test of time





ABOVE. Stills from Guiness' 1999 iconic 'Surfer' ad.
LEFT. The Verve's 'Bitter Sweet Symphony'

That's how Jonathan Glazer got started, with two film ditties. When Academy signed him in 1993, he had some rugby idents from South Africa on his showreel, but we wanted more work to show his talent to the agencies. So, Academy paid for him to make two ditties: a film called *Mad* (1994) and another film called *Pool* (1994). The ad agencies went crazy over his films because they were so original and compelling to watch. Most of our directors made these short little films to kick start their careers too.

Academy was one of the first production companies to start a dedicated music video division which was rather like a training school within which our directors could do almost whatever they wanted. Walter Stern's video for The Verve's 'Bitter Sweet Symphony' [1997] and Jon's videos for Radiohead's 'Street Spirit' [1995] and Jamiroquai's 'Virtual Insanity' [1996] were made by us. The record companies were able to give directors much more creative freedom than ad agencies and that enabled the directors to develop and further their experience. The directors were able to experiment with different film crew, camera equipment, post-production effects and so on. The work could be original and unharnessed, and agency creative directors responded well to seeing the videos.

EC: In 1999, Academy produced Glazer's 'Surfer' ad for Guinness, widely regarded as one of the best commercial ever made. Tell me a bit about that?

LG: Well, talk about a game changer … I remember being at Chiat Day in USA with the film literally hot off the press and with no one having seen it: the creative director to whom I showed it watched it three times in quick succession because he was so blown away by it, and then summoned his entire department to look at what he called "the best commercial ever made." It's hard to think of the commercial in its original form now, because all the parts that Jon added to it like the white horses, the original combination of Leftfield's 'Phat Planet' and Moby Dick on the audio track, and the even longer wait! The sound design for Guinness 'Surfer' was done by Johnny Burn who won an Academy Award earlier this year for Sound Design on Jon's *Zone of Interest* [2023]. It was a year in the making, designing cameras that would work on the surfboard, waiting for the right month to get the biggest waves and the CGI on the horses. With that iconic black and white photography, it's a flawless piece of work that still stands the test of time.

CGI was breaking new ground around this time. It was hard to get your brain around the capabilities of what could be achieved a whole new rafter of ads were made: imagine getting a boy and a girl to run through a wall like they did in Jon's Levi's ad ['Odyssey', 2002]. We created CGI that was so stunning, it just opened people's imaginations. Advertising seemed to be leading the world of CGI.

EC: You produced Glazer's second feature film, Birth?
LG: Yes, alongside Nick Morris who was also a producer at Academy. We were the production company on *Birth* (2004) and were able to fund and develop the script with Jon who co-wrote it with Jean Claude Carriere and then we put the budget together. When Nicole Kidman became attached, the phone started to ring with studios wanting to make it, so it was a relatively painless and a quick turnaround for a feature which subsequently I discovered was anything but the norm.

It a different world making a feature film that lasts for 120 minutes than a commercial for 30 seconds: it was like going from a marathon to a sprint. It was an experience that I am so very grateful to have had, but not one that I would want to do again.

EC: Academy signed and developed one of Britain's leading women directors, Kim Gehrig. Why do you think women directors were so badly underrepresented in earlier decades?
LG: Women were underrepresented not just in directing but in every creative area apart from the traditional female jobs in production. We had women crew in make-up, wardrobe, art department and continuity but not in the camera department, which was very much a male domain in which it was extremely rare to see women coming up through the ranks. Women just weren't putting themselves forward to direct. I would often ask female crew and ad agency creatives, "What do you think about directing, would you consider it?" But if the hunger and confidence wasn't forthcoming, it was hard to encourage.

We started talking to Kim Gehrig about being a director when she was still at Mother, the advertising agency. Kim was so obviously talented, and she did have the hunger and confidence. After a short time of straddling both the jobs of a creative and a director, she made the move to full time directing at Academy and the rest is history. Kim is one of the most accomplished directors in the world.

EC: Was it easier for women to become producers than directors?
LG: I've often felt that the role of a producer is unsung in the production of advertising. That's not true in films, where the role of a producer is recognised and valued. In advertising, it's the producer who spots the director's work in the first place, grows and nurtures them, and hopefully helps them on the creative side. It's the producer who makes it work financially and puts the whole shoot together. It's often been said that organisational skills are essential for a producer, but they are by no means the only skills needed to be a successful one. The financial and creative parts of a producer's job are just as important.

Personally, I felt I had much more longevity as a producer than a director. I went into the business when I was 21 and I've had a career spanning over 40 years. I could never have had that length of career if I'd have been a director. Most advertising directors are in demand for a shorter period of time. It's quite an ageist business. Clients and agencies don't think, "Oh, that director has got so much experience, they've been directing commercials for thirty years now, let's hire them."' On the contrary, they are more likely to think, "Let's find someone new." Directors' careers tend to take off, accelerate quite quickly to the top, level out for a while, and then slowly die back again. Directors try to find work from other territories to refresh the showreel, but it's a vicious circle and they can't get work because the showreel is dated. However, a producer can keep going on and on, switching from one production to another with different directors because their age and experience is considered relevant and is valued.

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EC: You once said that 13 directors was the optimum roster size. Do you still feel that?
LG: Actually, I don't. The landscape changed. Directors are heavily pigeonholed now, so a production company needs to have a director to put forward for every type of script. A comedy director and a visual director is often a clear division, but there are so many more subcategories within those areas. We were often asked for directors that did cars, or food, or beauty, or sport or tabletop, so we needed to have all those bases covered. In the 1990s, the industry was very much less pigeonholed for directors. I would rather just have the big pigeonhole of very good directors, but that's not how it is in the main.

It's interesting to note that I don't think the profit ratio became any bigger when we doubled or tripled in size. Just the stress levels! Agencies also like to work with different directors, so it was good for us to have a varied roster. Creatives might only get to do a handful of commercials a year so they in turn want to work with different directors. I like to think that I was always available for all the directors to talk with about their projects and any problems that they might be facing on a script. Sometimes, although those problems seemed small, they could have a significant impact on the commercial. It was important for me to find the time to be able to listen and respond to them alongside doing my everyday job of running a company and producing television commercials.

EC: How has the role of production companies changed since you founded Academy?
LG: Today, production companies have to spend so much time and money on the pitch document. Producing a treatment with so much detail and thought about technical solutions and creative visuals can be all-consuming. Especially if a director's ratio is winning one in four pitches, production companies need to be working on multiple treatments at the same time. In the 90s, though, there was no such thing as a treatment: you would have a meeting with the agency Head of TV in the agency, a meeting in which sometimes the creatives would be present, and sometimes, surprisingly, they weren't! The budgets were way less detailed and the pitch process much less structured.

EC: What Academy commercials are you most proud of, that serve as landmarks?
LG: There are so many but if pushed my personal favourite is Jon's 'Skating Priests' for Stella Artois [Lowe, 120 secs, 2005]. It's a visual masterpiece coupled with brilliant story telling. It makes me smile every time I see it …

Each of our directors had a commercial that pinpointed the uplift in their career: a piece of film that put them on the road to success; it might not be the most awarded piece of work they'd ever done, but it was a game changer. I do have great affection for those spots.

Peter Cattaeno, for instance, who joined Academy fresh from having directed *The Full Monty* [1997], did a spot for Audi called 'Golf Club' [BBH, 60 secs, 1999]. He changed much of the original agency script, adding lines that were improvised in the casting sessions. It was very on point and funny. The lines "El capitano" and "It's all in the buttocks" still make me chuckle.

Frédéric Planchon did a seamless piece of work for Miller Light 'Downhill' [Mother, 60 secs, 2005]. It looked like a loop of film in which you couldn't see the beginning or the end of the film. After this spot we were never short of top scripts coming in for him. 'Time Theft' for Vodaphone [BBH, 100 secs, 2007] followed swiftly.

Si and Ad changed the field of dating commercials alongside their own careers with their charming ad 'Piano' for Match.com [Mother, 60 secs, 2010]. I can look at it now and it's still so moving, like a little indie film within a commercial 60 seconds.

Kim Gehrig's 'Kitchen Parties' spot for IKEA [Mother, 60 secs, 2010], and Seb Edwards Hovis 'Farmers Lad' (JWT, 90 secs, 2012] are also commercials that established their directors' careers. I have great affection for all these.

EC: Awards have been incredibly important in your career. In 2009 you changed the name of the British Television Advertising Awards. Why?
LG: When I became Chairman of the awards in 2009, I thought that it needed a bit of an update, which included renaming them the Arrows to reflect that much of the work was not made for, or indeed shown on, television. Categories included things like the "Ambient Awards", "Instore Awards" and "Cinema." Also, ads were being watched on different platforms, from phones to laptops and in store. So, I suggested we change the name from the British Television Advertising Awards to just simply the Arrows in order to reflect the iconic prize of the arrow mounted on a wooden board.

The Arrows are special because they are British, whereas the D&ADs and Cannes are international. The one thing that's very different in London to the USA is that in London, the production companies were all supportive of each other, and we became friends. The Arrows were part of that. You always knew most of the winners at the Arrows awards event, and you'd be able to congratulate them in person and say how pleased you were for them, and you'd genuinely mean it. It was everyone's most popular award. We were in one big club together.

About the author

Emily Caston
Emily is Professor of Screen Industries and Director of the Policy and Practice Research Institute of Screen and Music at UWL (PRISM).

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Amy Cowan | University of West London, UK

Festival of (Me)dia Conference Report

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Abstract

The Festival of (Me)dia was a weekend long event (April 13th – 14th 2024) that took place as part of the larger 'DIY TV: The History and Influence of the BBC's Community Programmes Unit' project which was made possible with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This is a report by UWL PhD student Amy Cowan.

The Festival of (Me)dia was a weekend long event (April 13th – 14th 2024) that took place as part of the larger 'DIY TV: The History and Influence of the BBC's Community Programmes Unit' project which was made possible with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The aim of the project is to preserve and disseminate the history of the Community Programmes Unit (CPU). From its formation in 1972, the CPU handed over creative and editorial control to non-professional participants, in order to extend the range of voices and issues being presented by the BBC. The Festival of (Me)dia provided a space for members of the CPU to talk about what it was like to be involved in the Unit as it developed over the 30 year period it was operational.

The first of the two days focused mainly on the birth of the CPU and how it developed into Open Space. The weekend was introduced by Dr Jo Henderson, one of the leaders of the project, who delivered an early keynote summarising the goals of the festival which centred around preserving the legacy of the CPU and engaging with some of its key aims. This followed on from an increase in interest in the CPU brought about by an exhibition at the London gallery Raven Row, entitled 'People Make Television.' The focus then moved onto the development of the CPU and to the questions of why and how it took on the form that it did, through a lecture delivered by Tony Laryea, a producer and director for the BBC.

Mike Bolland, a producer for the BBC, then provided an overview of the work that the Unit did in its early days, as part of his discussion of Open Door which was a show that allowed members of the public to talk about their own issues without being edited by the BBC. Included alongside the story of his experiences were various clips from the CPU that showed footage broadcast on the BBC. One of these was a Grapevine video showing the development of community information and advice regarding sexual health for young people who would otherwise not have access to this information. The importance of the work of the CPU was demonstrated clearly through this early talk.

In 1972, the CPU handed over creative and editorial control to non-professional participants, in order to extend the range of voices and issues being presented by the BBC. The Festival of (Me)dia provided a space for members of the CPU to talk about what it was like to be involved in the Unit

Sue Davidson, an executive producer, then led a talk about Open Space, which was a development from Open Door, and the evolution of access strands and how this challenged the usual way in which TV shows were produced. The day closed with a brief Q&A with Tony Laryea which mainly centred around some of the "difficult programmes" he had to produced during his time working with the CPU. This included a discussion on how the selection process worked for Open Space and how this meant that often producer's personal beliefs conflicted with the groups that they were working with.

Jeremy Gibson's talk on Video Diaries and the issues that the unit faced welcomed the second day of the conference. Video diaries were made by members of the public filming aspects of their own lives with a handheld camera. Many examples of Video Diaries, which Jeremy Gibson produced, were played including one which featured diarist Kevin Allen's road trip to see the 1990 World Cup in Italy. He documented first hand his experiences at a time when English football fans were known or their hooliganism and as a result were facing a difficult time travelling through Italy. Another featured the diarist Willa Carroll who was talking about the emotional problems she experienced as a result of the physical abuse she suffered in her childhood with her sister. A talk led by Tony Steyger, a producer and director, then looked at Teenage Diaries which, similarly to Video Diaries, gave people (in this case, specifically young people) the opportunity to make videos about their lives and experiences. Jeremy Gibson and Tony Steyger then led a quick Q and A that was elaborated upon their discussions in the morning.

Tony Steyger then continued the discussion with a talk on the idea behind Video Nation which included a discussion of some of the difficulties the unit experienced. Video Nation was a project which aimed to give marginalised communities an opportunity to express their opinions on matters that were important to them. One of the issues described in the talk was how the unit also worked with right-wing groups that the members of the unit did not identify with politically. An example video was shown of one of the programmes that they made which conveyed the opinions of people in West London who were campaigning against immigration. Continuing the talk on Video Nation, Mandy Rose, a producer, delivered the day two's keynote lecture in which she discussed specific aspects of Video Nation, talking about what it was like to work with different groups of people about things which mattered to them.

The conference was brought to a close with an engaging Q&A which ended up focusing on the importance of diversity within the editing process of news shows specifically, which is still an issue today, 50 years after the birth of the CPU. The values which the CPU promoted back in the 1970s still need to be actively strived for today.

About the author

Amy Cowan PhD student , University of West London
UWL PhD student in Marxist Feminism and Poststructuralist Politics (Supervisor Professor Helen Hester). Administrator, DIY TV: The History and Influence of the BBC's Community Programmes Unit, funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund.

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