In critical defence of 'emotional labour': Refuting Bolton's critique of Hochschild's concept

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Abstract

Sharon Bolton's comprehensive critique of Hochschild's concept of 'emotional labour' is flawed by her misinterpretation of its primary form as an aspect of labour power. Consequently, she erroneously argues that emotional labour is commodified only when transformed into commercial service work. However, emotion workers experience commodification of their labour power as wage-labour, irrespective of the nature of their product. Bolton also argues that Hochschild's notion of workers undergoing a 'transmutation of feelings' renders them 'crippled actors' in the grip of management control. Hochschild, however, theorises transmutation as a contradictory and unstable condition albeit in an under-developed form. While Bolton correctly argues for a theory of emotion work that captures the complexity and contradictory nature of the emotional workplace, it is not necessary to reject the emotional labour concept. Rather, it needs to be more fully theorised and integrated within Labour Process Analysis.

Introduction: A concept under pressure

Since the publication of Hochschild's (1983) seminal book, *The Managed Heart*, her 'emotional labour' thesis has spawned a burgeoning literature on organisational emotion, within which, it is the predominant conceptual tool for analysing employees' emotion work (Steinberg and Figart, 1999). Yet its interpretation and usage have been far from consistent within the context of a vigorous debate on the contours and applicability of the concept (Fineman, 1993; Bolton, 2005). In recent years, Sharon Bolton (2005) has sought to move the debate beyond Hochschild and leave behind the emotional labour concept by refuting its explanatory value and offering, instead, an alternative typology of workplace emotions. Consequently, what Bolton pejoratively calls the "emotional labour bandwagon" (2005, p.53) is beginning to lose

momentum, with her critique and typology increasingly taken up by others (see Lewis, 2005; O'Donohoe and Turley, 2005; Lynch, 2007; McClure and Murphy, 2007; Simpson, 2007).

Bolton is rare in arguing for the abandonment of the emotional labour concept. However, Hochschild is commonly accused of a tendency to dichotomise the distinction between emotion management in the 'private-self' sphere and commodified 'public-self' realm, thereby generating a one-dimensional view of emotional labour in the workplace, where it comes to belong more to the organisation than to the self (Wouters, 1989; McClure and Murphy, 2007). A related accusation is that Hochschild overestimates the degree of managerial ownership and control of workers' emotions (Theodosius, 2006; McClure and Murphy, 2007), thereby presenting front-line workers as emotionally 'crippled actors' (Bolton and Boyd, 2003; Lewis, 2005).

Central to Hochschild's thesis is her condemnation of the human cost of emotional labour through her pivotal application of Marx's alienation theory (Yuill, 2005; Brook, 2009). Critical reactions have frequently sought to blunt her analysis by rejecting as 'absolutist' her argument that the commodification of emotions alienates workers through what Hochschild calls a 'transmutation of feelings' (1983, p.19). These critics commonly argue that customer service interactions are double-edged in that they possess the potential to be subjectively satisfying as well as distressing for the worker (Wouters, 1989; Tolich, 1993; Korczynski, 2002). In essence, they reject the notion that the experience of having one's emotions commodified is intrinsically alienating.

Despite Fineman's prescient observation that Hochschild's thesis "clearly politicises our understanding of emotion at work" (2005, p.6), there have been few and only partial attempts at analysing and developing her core use of the Marxist concepts of wage-labour and alienation. Thus, writers within the Labour Process Analysis (LPA) tradition have tended to limit their critical engagement to highlighting Hochschild's stunted ability to capture the complexity and contradictory nature of the emotional labour process (Sturdy, 1998; Taylor, 1998). Ostensibly, Bolton's critical engagement is a notable exception from within the LPA tradition.

It is timely, therefore, to assess Bolton's critique of emotional labour and plea to 'move-on' to her alternative typology (Bolton and Boyd, 2003). In doing so, this article offers a critical defence of Hochschild's thesis by arguing that Bolton's critique rests on profound

misinterpretations of emotional labour's core use of Marxist concepts; most notably, 'wage-labour', 'means of production' and alienation theory. In doing so, she misinterprets and misapplies two principal tenets of LPA; namely, labour power as a special type of commodity, and the composition of the emotional means of production. Moreover, her claim that Hochschild's theorisation portrays emotion workers as 'crippled actors' is greatly overstated. Nevertheless, Bolton's critique is not without some justification, as Hochschild's thesis is over-simplistic in its dichotomising of private and public sphere emotions; inadequately captures the complex and contradictory nature of emotion work; and over-focuses on individual experiences at the cost of workplace social relations. However, rather than abandoning the emotional labour concept, it can be strengthened and developed within LPA so as to offer a more adequate explanation of the contradictory and unstable experience of emotion work, where dominance by management and workers' self-reification as commodities are never complete processes.

Hochschild's thesis in brief

Hochschild's conceptualisation rests on the distinction between emotion work and emotional labour. Emotion work is the process of managing and presenting emotions in the private sphere of our lives, such as amongst family and friends. Emotional labour, by contrast, is '... the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display' (1983, p.7) by service workers. In the 'public sphere' of emotional labour, front-line workers' feelings are commercialised as service through a 'transmutation'[1] of 'private sphere' feelings into a package of emotions consumed by customers as a commodified interaction. This process has the effect of alienating front-line workers from their emotional product as a consequence of management wresting formal ownership and control from workers of the form, timing, giving and withdrawal of emotional feelings, moods and their display so that they come "more to belong to the organization and less to the self" (Hochschild, 1983, p.198).

Two other aspects compound this alienating loss of ownership and control. First, there is an unequal relationship with the customer where the worker is formally subordinate to customers' wishes. This is in contrast to our private lives where we tend to experience a much greater level of assumed or near equality in our emotional interactions. Second, management impose codified 'feeling rules' on emotional labourers to ensure delivery of the required service quality. These rules dictate the form, content and appropriateness of workers' emotional displays to customers, thereby separating them from the design and control of the emotional labour process. Workers, therefore, are not only estranged from their emotional

product but also the process of its production.

Hochschild argues that organisational feeling rules increasingly go further than demanding behavioural compliance, what she calls 'surface acting'. This is because management strive for workers to internalise the feelings they are required to display. For management, not only does this enhance the quality of the emotional display but it also diminishes the likelihood of 'emotive dissonance' (Jansz and Timmers, 2002) caused by the strain of continuously bridging what is really felt with what has to be feigned over long periods. Hochschild argues that the response by many emotional labourers is to "try to pull the two closer together either by changing what we feel or by changing what we feign" (1983, p.90). This is what she calls 'deep acting', which is the result of a worker seeking a more comfortable space for her true self, free from the dangers of emotive dissonance, through the 'fusion' of her real and acted emotional labour. Despite fusion's apparent benefits, there is "a cost to be paid" (p.119), as it is a condition requiring a systemic suppression of the real self, thereby deepening the individual's subordination to her commodification and its alienation.

Bolton's critique

In faint praise of Hochschild

Bolton's critique of emotional labour, and her development of an alternative typology of workplace emotion, evolved through a series of articles (2000a; 2000b; 2001; 2003; and Bolton and Boyd, 2003), culminating in its detailed explication in *Emotion Management in the Workplace* (2005). Like Hochschild, Bolton adopts Goffman's understanding of daily-life as suffused with 'daily rules' of social interaction. This she seeks to ally with Labour Process Analysis (LPA) because the latter "accepts conflict as an inherent part of the employment relationship and recognises that management control regimes are unlikely ever to be completely successful in securing the full compliance of labour" (2005, p.8).

Bolton also acknowledges that *The Managed Heart* is "the greatest contribution to advance an understanding of emotion in organisations" (2005, p.48) as it contains "valuable insights into the contemporary workplace and capital's awareness of the value of employees' emotion management skills" (Bolton and Boyd, 2003, p.303). In particular, Bolton pays tribute to Hochschild's emphasis on how the management of emotion in the production of commodities often entails hard work "and that, in the same way as workers become alienated from their physical labour, they can also become alienated from their 'emotional labour'" (2005, p.9). In this way, the term 'emotional labour' "opens the emotional labour process to

critical scrutiny" (Bolton and Boyd, 2003, p.304). Bolton also acknowledges that Hochschild's contribution is more relevant than ever in highlighting the human cost of 'consumer capitalism's' corporatised "scaling-up of institutional and executive privilege over the ownership of [workers'] emotions" (Fineman and Sturdy, 1997, p.2, quoted in Bolton, 2005, p.47).

Despite the proliferation of corporate emotion work, Bolton is highly cautious of the term 'emotional labour', as it is not "benign" (2005, p.48). This is for two principal reasons. First, she objects to what she calls the "emotional labour bandwagon" (2005, p.53) where a multiplicity of studies of different occupations undertaking emotion work use the one blanket term, 'emotional 'labour', to describe a complex range of organisational phenomena. In particular, she questions its conceptual adequacy for capturing the complex emotion management of caring professionals. Second, 'emotional labour' implies, *in extremis,* that capitalism has successfully "appropriated all of our feelings so that there is no longer any room for sentiments, moods or reactions that have not been shaped and commodified via the 'commercialization of intimate life'" (Bolton, 2005, p.2). Accordingly, there are two principal implications for the emotional labour literature. First, there is a neglect of conflict and contradiction in response to employers' demands; and, second, an assumption of 'normative control' whereby "organisational actors' emotions are being captured and irretrievably damaged in the velvet cage of corporate culturism" (Bolton, 2005, p.2). The overall effect of such a narrative, she argues, is one-dimensional analyses of workplace emotion.

One-dimensional emotional labour
Bolton argues that Hochschild's thesis suffers from two central weaknesses. First, it "overemphasises the divide between the public and private performances of emotion management, and tends to use the terms 'public' and 'commercial' interchangeably, creating an oversimplified dichotomy" (2005, p.60). Thus, for Hochschild there are no distinctions between emotion work used in the production of a commercial service, and emotion work arising from "professional norms of conduct, or emotion work during normal social interaction in the workplace" (2005, p.60). This lack of distinction is because Hochschild assumes that within organisational boundaries a worker's 'private' emotional life is appropriated by the organisation through the transmutation of their private feelings into a package of commodified emotions consumed by the customer as service interaction. By doing so, Hochschild reduces workers' options to offering either cynical performances, in the form of 'surface acting', in which case they are alienated from their 'true self', or 'deep acting' in an

effort to conjure sincere performances, thereby altering their 'true-selves'. Consequently, Bolton labels Hochschild's thesis as "ultimately 'absolutist' in its implementation" (2005, p.48), as it mistakes "aspiration for outcome in assuming that capital's attempts to appropriate 'emotion work' will be so successful that our feelings are 'transmutated'" (2005, p.62).

Second, Bolton claims that Hochschild mistakenly equates a physical labour process with an emotional labour process, whereby emotional labourers are also alienated from the product of their labour by virtue of their separation from its ownership, and control of the labour process. 'Transmutated feelings', therefore, become commodified objects, which exist externally to their producers. For Bolton, this is a fallacious analogy because "unlike the factory worker, they own the means of production and, therefore, the capacity to present a 'sincere' or 'cynical' performance lies within the emotional labourer" (2005, p.61). This is because Hochschild fails to recognise that the 'indeterminacy of labour power' is "further exacerbated within the contested terrain of the emotional labour process" (2005, p.62).

Taken together, Bolton argues, these two principal weaknesses generate a "deterministic feel... that undervalues the vitality and independence of outlook that participants bring to organisations and neglects their ability to carve out spaces for resistance and misbehaviour" (2005, p.62). For her, Hochschild's emotional labourers are "crippled actors" (2005, p.48) as the transmutation of their feelings implies they cannot exert an active and counter-controlling force in relationships with management and customers (Callaghan and Thompson, 2002).

While Hochschild (1983) bases her conceptualisation on the commercial work of flight attendants and debt collectors, Bolton's critique derives principally from her extensive studies of the non-commercial, National Health Service (UK), nursing labour process (2000a; 2000b; 2001; 2003). However, Bolton and Boyd (2003) also go head-to-head, empirically, with Hochschild by studying the conceptual adequacy of her thesis amongst UK airline cabin crew. Here they found that cabin crew rather than employing 'deep acting', "remain very aware that they are dealing with demanding, sometimes 'obnoxious', customers and that they are offering an 'empty performance'" where they "act out their role obligations without ever 'buying-in' to the norms set by the company" (p.301). Furthermore, whatever the anger, exhaustion and frustration experienced by the cabin crew, it does not represent an 'invasion of the self' but the contradictory, oppositional and dynamic nature of the emotional labour process.

Bolton makes great play of Hochschild's claim that emotional labour is little suited to the study of workers outside of commercial services (2005). Moreover, she points to Hochschild's view that public sector professionals have autonomy about how, when and for whom they perform emotion work, implying that "emotional labour would appear conceptually inadequate for the understanding of work in the public sector services" (Bolton, 2005, p.49). This is because emotional labour offers "little room for emotion management performances within the organisation which are not appropriated for commercial use; when an employee may offer their emotion management as a 'gift' to a colleague or client for instance" (Bolton, 2005, p.48). Consequently, Bolton applies a strictly commercial definition to what constitutes emotional labour, and highlights Hochschild's supportive quip that it is 'emotion management with a profit motive slipped under it' (2005, p.51)

This stress on Hochschild's concept being applicable only to commercial emotional management allows Bolton to argue "that only a small proportion of feeling rules and associated motivations come under the 'sway of large organisations' and are governed by a corporation's profit motive" (2005, p.100). This enables her to put forward an alternative typology that relegates the analytic primacy of emotional labour to but one of four, equally significant, forms of workplace emotion management; 'pecuniary' alongside 'prescriptive', 'presentational' and 'philanthropic'.

Each emotion management form is distinct by virtue of their different sources. 'Pecuniary' and 'prescriptive' feeling rules derive from commercial and professional/organisational demands respectively, producing instrumental performances driven by financial and status-oriented motivation that tend to be empty of feeling. By contrast, 'presentational' emotion management (the assertion of the "basic socialised self" [Bolton and Boyd, 2003, p.297]) and the 'philanthropic' form (the free giving of 'emotion gifts' to service recipients and co-workers) occur 'outside' of corporate, organisational or professional feeling rules in situations when they are inapplicable, or significantly relaxed. Workers continually seek out these 'unmanaged spaces' as opportunities to absent themselves from their prescribed roles and express their 'authentic selves' through presentational and/or philanthropic emotion management while still fulfilling their work obligations. These 'unmanaged spaces' enable workers to experience 'moments of truth' (Bolton, 2005, p.102), although they are not necessarily spatially or temporally discrete, and may even be integrated into the "moment-by-

moment conduct of work" (2005, p.102), such as a nurse who genuinely cares for a patient while presenting personal detachment.

Bolton stresses that her typology does not imply a worker may perform only one type of emotion management at any one time, as this would reproduce the private-public spheres dichotomy in Hochschild's thesis. Moreover, even when workers are performing 'pecuniary' or 'prescriptive' emotion management their feelings are not 'transmuted', for they are "knowledgeable agents" (2005, p.103) capable of "mixing and managing all forms of emotion management according to 'rules' other than those solely controlled by the organisation" (2005, p.103). Consequently, Bolton rejects emotional labour as a sterile concept, even when narrowly applied to commercial service work, in favour of her alternative typological formulation.

A flawed critique

Conflating commodification and commercialisation

Bolton's logic for rejecting emotional labour rests on her assertion that the commodification of workers' emotions occurs only when commercialised for profit. This is crucial for her critique because it allows the conceptual space to argue that within both commercial and not-for-profit workplaces those emotion management performances not directly appropriated for commercial work remain uncommodified and, therefore, do not fall under the purview of the 'emotional labour' concept. Moreover, given that the direct commercialisation of service in most workplaces comprises a relatively narrow range of activities (in a call centre, it is a telephone conversation) Bolton is able to propose that all service organisations possess substantial space free from the emotion commodification process. However, as will be seen, her reasoning mistakenly conflates the commodification of workers' emotions with their direct commercialisation at the point of service production.

While Bolton makes much of *The Managed Heart's* statement that emotional labour is little suited outside of commercial contexts, Hochschild is ambiguous, if not contradictory, on this definitional point (Brook, 2009). For example, she also states that the all-important distinction between emotion management and emotional labour is whether there is "exploitation of the bottom by the top"[2] (1983, p.12), implying a broader applicability than a discrete profit-driven service encounter, and one that derives from the nature of the employment relationship. This broader applicability is evident in Hochschild's oft-quoted definition of emotional labour, resting on Marx's wage-labour concept, where she states; it "is sold for a wage and therefore

has *exchange value*. I use the synonymous terms *emotion work* or *emotion management* to refer to those same acts done in a private context where they have *use value*" (1983, p.7 [Hochschild's emphases]). Significantly, she adopts Marx's theorisation of wage-labour as the commodification, through purchase by an employer, of a worker's labour power (Marx, 1976, p.270). Accordingly, Hochschild argues that as "deep gestures of exchange enter the market sector and are bought and sold as an aspect of labour power, feelings are commoditized" (1979, p.659) , in the same way, she infers, as workers' physical and mental labour power.

In applying Marx's concept of wage-labour, Hochschild makes the crucial distinction between labour and labour power. Thus, the worker sells their labour power (as the yet-to-be realised capacity to work) rather than their completed labour in the form of a product. For Marx, this distinction is to indicate that a worker's physical and mental (and by implication emotional) capabilities exist in an ongoing, uncertain relationship to their employer (Thompson, 1983/89). This is because labour power is unlike all other commodities owing to employers being unable to control completely its final form or cost as a consequence of their inability to detach it physically, mentally or emotionally from the individual worker. This indeterminacy of labour power (Smith, 2006) provides a structural barrier to complete managerial control by generating an antagonistic relationship at the point of production, irrespective of whether a worker's labour is physical, mental or emotional. For what ensues is a continual haggling, in varying degrees, over the price, content and duration of labour power as the "worker brazenly accompanies his labor power right into the workplace and stands protectively by it" arguing "about the terms of its sale" (Rees, 1998, p.221). Consequently, while all workers' labour power is a commodity, it does not entail a debilitating, 'crippling' commodification of their physical, mental or emotional labour as Bolton appears to assume.

Hochschild also recognises that emotional labour is not solely the preserve of front-line service workers. As an aspect of labour power, it is utilised in varying degrees by all workers in multiple areas of a service organisation, not just during customer interaction. Indeed, she argues that it is present in all types of organisation:

> 'All in all, we can think of emotion as a covert resource, like money, or knowledge, or physical labor, which companies need to get the job done. Real-time emotions are a large part of what managers manage and emotional labor is no small part of what trainers train, and supervisors supervise. It is a big part of white-collar 'work'. This is true for manufacturing firms... but it is far more true in the rapidly expanding service sector – in department stores, airports, hotels,

leisure worlds, hospitals, welfare offices and schools.' (Hochschild, 1993, p.xii)

Hence, Hochschild (2003) welcomes the application of emotional labour to industries and areas of work beyond commercial front-line services. By contrast, Bolton dismisses this broader applicability as 'the emotional labour bandwagon' (2005, p.53).

This wider application is possible because of Hochschild's foundational use of Marx's wage-labour concept, which implies that the pre-condition for the production of 'emotional labour' is fulfilled at the point workers' labour power converts into wage-labour (Thompson, 1983/89; Hyman, 2006), in the same way as for physical and mental labour. This stands in contrast to Bolton's argument that emotional commodification is generated only at the later stage of its valorisation as a commercial service encounter. Therefore, Hochschild's definition of emotional labour, as 'sold for a wage', enables its application to all forms and degrees of waged emotion work, including those engaged in non-commercial work such as caring professionals. In short, she defines emotional labour by its commodification as labour power rather than by its commercialisation as a service product.

The consequences for Bolton's critique of understanding emotion work as commodified labour power are profound. Thus, irrespective of workers' witting intentions during the execution of emotional labour, their performance and display, whether it is *pecuniary, prescriptive, presentational* or *philanthropic*, is bought and paid for labour-time and capacity, and therefore primarily a commodified product; albeit of a contested, open-ended variety. Hence, Bolton's argument that workers' emotional gifts to customers, clients or patients, such as empathy and compassion, remain 'authentic', uncommodified acts by virtue of being outside of management control is erroneous. This is evidenced by the simple fact that employers understand that the final service product, whether planned, enhanced or sabotaged, is their 'property'; a view shared by its recipients, as those unhappy with their service experience will invariably seek redress from managers rather than the front-line culprits. Indeed, emotional labour deemed 'successful' need not be 'authentic', as many employers do not expect emotional 'sincerity' but rather settle, pragmatically, for workers' consent to comply with display rules as the optimal performance (see Ogbonna and Harris [2002] on the hospitality industry). In this way, the 'empty performances' Bolton and Boyd (2003) noted amongst cabin crew are also commodified service acts, even if the workers emotions underpinning them are grudging or blasé in response to being unable or unwilling to generate genuine feelings. It is for this reason that Hochschild theorises emotional labour's

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commodification as also comprising empty 'surface acting', rather than limiting it to the more sincere 'deeply acted' performances.

In summary, Bolton's premise for arguing that 'emotional labour' is little suited for analysis outside of commercial service work is untenable, as it is applicable to all forms of waged-labour involving a degree of emotion work. Consequently, a contradictory, unstable and incomplete commodification process captures the full range of workers' emotional inputs to their labour. Moreover, Hochschild's theory possesses a unifying, conceptual purchase on all forms, degrees and circumstances of waged emotion work by virtue of its foundational theorisation as labour power.

Emotion work exceptionalism

Hochschild, like Marx, understands labour-power to be "the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in a human being" (Marx, 1976, p.270) but goes further by also delineating emotional labour. She demonstrates this notion of an integrated unity of individual faculties when explaining that:

> 'The flight attendant does physical labor when she pushes heavy meal carts through the aisles, and she does mental work when she prepares for and actually organizes emergency landings and evacuations. But in the course of doing this physical and mental labor she is doing something more, something I define as 'emotional labor''. (1983, p.7)

In arguing this, Hochschild recognises that whether workers are primarily employed as an emotional, physical or mental labourer, each performs a mix, in varying degrees, of all three labour forms. By contrast, Bolton detaches emotion work by claiming that Hochschild mistakenly equates a physical labour process with an emotional labour process because emotion workers, unlike factory workers, own the means of production through their capacity to determine their emotional sincerity (2005). This is possible, she claims, because the indeterminacy of labour power is so exacerbated within the emotional labour process, as to negate any effective managerial ownership and control of emotion work (2005). Thus, for Bolton, emotion workers enjoy a qualitatively different form of autonomy in the workplace to that of physical labourers. Her rationale appears to be that because Hochschild theorises emotional labour as an integral dimension to a unified concept of labour power, it is condemned to what she assumes to be the same degree of suffocating, alienating managerial

control endured by physical labour. However, this pillar to Bolton's critique is flawed in two principal respects.

First, although Bolton (2005) argues for the analytic primacy of LPA's acceptance of inherent conflict in all forms of employment relationship, and the incompleteness of managerial control, her concern to discard emotional labour compels her to go further by claiming a form of supra-autonomy for emotion work. This is in opposition to the LPA tradition, which, like Hochschild, accepts emotional labour as an integral and inseparable dimension of labour power, alongside physical and mental labour. Thus, LPA subsumes it within a generic theorisation of the social relations of production as antagonistic and contradictory (see Taylor and Bain, 2003a, 2003b; Mulholland, 2004; Brook, 2009), comprising "a complex interplay of compliance, consent and resistance" (Taylor, 1998, p.100). This is accompanied by the recognition that emotional labour, like physical and mental labour, experiences shifting boundaries at the 'frontier of control' (e.g. Filby, 1992; Taylor and Bain, 2003a) where management control can be 'partial, incoherent and often contradictory' (Taylor, 1998, p.100). In short, while workers cede formal ownership of all aspects of their labour power, they do not forego its complete control, as Bolton and Boyd's (2003) own cabin crew findings testify. It also follows that Bolton is incorrect to argue that workers retain ownership and control over the emotional means of production, unlike its physical and mental counterparts. For once labour power is commodified, albeit within a contested context, workers no more retain ownership or predominant control over the form, timing and use of their smile, than they do the dexterity of their hands or the mental-moves required in their job.

Bolton, nevertheless, is correct to highlight the exacerbated indeterminacy of emotional labour, as demonstrated by the partial and fragile success of the ubiquitous attempts by much HRM-type management to win the emotional commitment of employees to organisational goals through 'customer orientation' and more generic 'culture management' strategies (Peccei and Rosenthal, 2000; Brook and Pioch, 2006). However, Bolton's apparent assumption that the exacerbated indeterminacy of emotional labour is confined to the 'emotional labour process' is mistaken. This is because management often strive to construct emotional commitment amongst all employees, not just front-line service workers. Thus, an array of workers, in a myriad of organisations, are subject to attempts to secure and capture their 'sincere' emotional expressions of commitment to organisational goals and customers (Legge, 2005), whilst routinely undertaking mixes of physical, mental and emotional labour. This daily reality strengthens Hochschild's argument that the exercise of emotional labour is common

within all organisations where management increasingly choose to deploy it as a resource for enhancing production and service quality. Her argument is possible because she applies a unified concept of labour power, which understands that each worker possesses an aggregate capacity for physical, mental and emotional labour, enabling management to design jobs that incorporate all three aspects, as with her example of the work of a flight attendant. Consequently, Bolton's pointed emphasis on a discrete 'emotional labour process' is arguably over-simplistic, which potentially decouples the emotional aspect of labour power from the routine reality of most workers' experience of combining all three aspects.

So why does Bolton detach emotion work from LPA's unified understanding of labour power? One explanation could be the result of her conflation of commercialisation with commodification. In order to sustain her argument that emotion management is subject to the commodification process only when valorised as a commercial interaction, she has to develop a theoretical device for maintaining that workers' emotions remain 'uncommodified' in all other realms of workplace activity, and throughout the entirety of the non-commercial service production process. However, her twin arguments that workers retain ownership of the emotional means of production, and the exacerbated indeterminacy of the emotional labour process are incompatible. The former asserts a 'zero-sum' understanding of ownership and control of emotion management, forever remaining in the insuperable possession of the worker (unlike their physical and mental labour). Yet recognition of emotion work's exacerbated labour indeterminacy belies an assumption that the difference between emotional, physical and mental labour is one of degree. In other words, the terrain on which management and workers contest control of labour power tends to be more favourable for the latter within the emotional labour process. However, this contradicts Bolton's central argument that management's efforts at securing ownership and control of workers' emotions are ultimately futile.

Second, Bolton's assertion that workers own the emotional means of production is also fallacious as it assumes they solely comprise workers' discrete capacity for sincere emotional performance. This again is a misinterpretation of a primary concept within LPA. For the means of production comprise a combination of the forces of production (labour power, technical capacity and fixed capital) and social relations (design and organisation of work) of production (Marx, 1990) where "the human and technical aspects of the labour process interpenetrate" (Thompson, 1983/8, p.39). Thus, Bolton presents an immensely over-privileged role for the emotion worker in assuming the composition of the means of service production

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is entirely human and, by implication, that they possess ultimate ownership and control of the emotional labour process. All service production, whether in shops, airlines, call centres, hospitals or schools, depend upon a myriad of other fixed capital, technical and support work inputs in addition to the emotional performance (principally, buildings, technical equipment, 'back-office' support and codified 'feeling rules'). Moreover, politico-economic forces such as market competition, labour market conditions, new technologies and public services' marketisation also exercise considerable influence on the structure, design and standards of service labour processes (Ellis and Taylor, 2006). As such, a worker's emotional labour power is but one, if central, element of the means of production.

Overall, Bolton premises her critique on two profound misinterpretations: First, on the commodified content of emotional labour power, and second, on the composition of the means of service production. Despite her expressed enthusiasm to integrate the analytic framework of LPA, she places herself at odds with two of it principal tenets. By contrast, Hochschild's theorisation of emotional labour as an aspect of labour power makes it broadly compatible with LPA's conceptualisation of the service labour process.

Hochschild's crippled actors?
What then of Bolton's dismissal of Hochschild's portrayal of organizational life as devoid of social agency, where the successful 'transmutation of feelings' implies that management so successfully appropriates workers' feelings that they become 'crippled actors', unable to exert an active and counter-controlling force in relationships with management or customers. For anyone who has read *The Managed Heart* this is a bizarre claim, as large sections provide detailed discussion and evidence of employees' solidarity, misbehaviour and resistance. This is because Hochschild theorises transmutation of feelings as an unstable condition, borne of conceptualising emotional labour as an aspect of labour power, which, like physical and mental labour, is subject to the central, inherent antagonism within the wage-labour relationship.

Thus, the daily struggle over the terms of sale of workers emotional labour is very evident in *The Managed Heart*. For example, Hochschild explains that in response to management seeking labour intensification many workers undermine such efforts in order to protect the perceived value of their labour power:

'The company exhorts them to smile more, and 'more sincerely', at an increasing number of passengers. The workers respond to the speed-up with a slowdown: they smile less broadly, with a quick release and no sparkle in the eyes, thus dimming the company's message to the people. It is a war of smiles.' (1983, p.127)

She further explains that as management's 'speed-up' bites, it can result in workers' solidarity, in the form of trade unionism, giving expression to 'accumulated resentment and discontent' (1983, p.126), generated by the inherent conflict over the terms and conditions of management's feeling rules. Indeed, she finds evidence of a burgeoning class-consciousness, without naming it as such, when she explores the reactions to those that respond positively to management's work intensification where they 'become the "rate-busters" who are resented by other workers' (1983, p.130). Thus, Hochschild acknowledges that as management attempt to tighten control in order to intensify work, its efforts are commonly resisted and often only partially successful:

'As one veteran put it: "The more the company sees the battle, the tougher they get with the regulations. They define them more precisely. They come up with more categories and more definitions. And more emotionalizing. And, then in time, we reject them even more."' (1983, p.130)

It is incorrect, therefore, for Bolton to dismiss Hochschild's portrayal of service organisations as lifeless, flat and bereft of employees' independent activity outside of management control. Hochschild's account of resistance demonstrates she understands that workers are reflexive and possess the agency to begin to challenge their exploitation and subordination by utilising unmanaged spaces. Nevertheless, Bolton is correct to highlight that the notion of a successful transmutation of feelings risks appearing to consign workers to a disabling, fetishised state. This is principally a consequence of Hochschild not applying the logic of her primary theorisation of emotional labour power as an alienating and antagonistic relationship to the day-to-day experience of individual workers. Consequently, she is vulnerable to the charge that the successful transmutation of feelings is a normative experience where misbehaviour and resistance emerge only in the event of its failure. This vulnerability is the result of her failure to conceptualise workers' consciousness as routinely contradictory, yet dynamic, where their capacity to act independently of management control is constrained and variable but still a daily reality. If Hochschild did this, she could then offer an explicit conceptualisation of how workers' retain and exercise sufficient control over their emotional labour as to alleviate their

day-to-day working lives or even press a counter-controlling force in relationships with management and service recipients (Brook, 2009).

Just such a conceptualisation is evident in LPA studies of service work. In betting shops, Filby (1992) documents how women workers exploit their sexualised emotional labour to develop a counter-culture of sexual humour to ridicule male managers and unpleasant 'punters'. In call centres, Mulholland found that "sales sabotage, working to rule, work avoidance, absenteeism and high turnover" are routine expressions of the inherently antagonistic employment relationship (2004, p.720). While Taylor and Bain's (2003b) call-centre research highlights how workplace activists, to subvert anti-union, managerial authority, use a culture of humour. Thus, Taylor (1998, p.99) is correct to argue that workers experience an "incomplete transmutation" and "that as a resource for the creation of surplus value, the emotional labour of service employees is a 'double-edged sword' (Filby, 1992)."

In capturing the complexity and contradictory experience of wage-labour, LPA overcomes Hochschild's dichotomising of the private-self and commodified public-self (Bolton, 2005; McClure and Murphy, 2007; Wouters, 1989) through a dialectical understanding of the experience of emotional labour. By contrast, Hochschild's portrayal of the emotional labour workplace is one where indifference and conscious resistance in response to managerial attempts at labour intensification and job degradation can appear to be an extra-ordinary event, where the successful transmutation of workers feelings assumes the status quo. Hence, Bolton is able to accuse 'transmutation' of being a theory of normative managerial control, where capital's appropriation of emotions is complete (2005, p.2). However, Bolton overplays her argument as 'transmutation' also incorporates Hochschild's application of Marx's alienation theory. Thus, transmutation does not just address the success ('absolutism') of managerial control, as Bolton assumes, but also its human cost as alienation, which, for Hochschild, contains the seeds of its contradiction. As alienation is borne of the inherently antagonistic wage-labour relationship, which generates contestation over workers' systemic separation from the design, control and ownership of their emotional labour, it is never a complete process. Consequently, workers' mark the experience of alienation by their continual search for the means to ameliorate, and even resist, its effects, which, in turn, corrodes their self-reification (transmutation) as commodities (Lukacs, 1974; Rees, 1998) and with it, the possibility of 'absolute' management control. Thus, because, Hochschild's theorises the 'transmutation of feelings' as an alienating, yet contradictory, condition, it is an unstable state,

where the worker questions if "her smile and the emotional labor that keeps it sincere are really hers. " (1983, p.133)

While Hochschild's portrayal of the emotional labour workplace is one where consent, indifference and resistance by workers are ever-present, it is under-developed and lacks a dialectical understanding of the dynamic contradictions that mark both workers' consciousness and the service labour process[3]. She compounds this through her conceptual foregrounding of the individualised human cost of emotional labour via surface acting, deep acting and the transmutation of feelings. This tendency to analytic individualisation unduly overshadows her richer portrayal of service organisations as contested, collective terrains. Hence, she underemphasises the basis, form and significance of unmanaged space outside and within the labour process occupied by autonomous individual and collective activity. In doing so, she largely omits an explicit analysis of 'routine' collective and individual beliefs and behaviours comprising the day-to-day 'communities of coping' (Korczynski, 2002), which are the pre-cursors to the trade unionism and open resistance so vividly documented in *The Managed Heart*. In short, Hochschild fails to anchor, sufficiently, her analysis in the wider context of workplace social relations. Yet a lack of emphasis is not the same as a theoretical closure, as argued by Bolton in her condemnation of Hochschild as 'ultimately absolutist and by accusing her of depicting service organisations as devoid of autonomous social actors.

Conclusion: Emotional labour or emotion management typology?

Bolton accurately identifies key weaknesses with Hochschild's concept, in particular its limited ability to capture the contradictory complexity of daily organisational life, where workers' transmutation of feelings are always incomplete. However, the substance of her critique is flawed, as she fails to understand the implications of Hochschild explicitly theorising emotional labour as an aspect of labour power, which is marked by an inherent tendency of workers to contest the terms and conditions of their deployment. This is irrespective of the nature and form of emotion work. Thus, Bolton's core theoretical device, the argument that emotions are only subject to the commodification process at the point of commercial valorisation, is erroneous. She compounds this by asserting that workers' own the emotional 'means of production', which she bases on a profound misinterpretation of what comprises the means of production. Equally, Bolton proposes a spurious detachment of emotion work from LPA's integrated understanding of labour power as comprising all three aspects of labour. She also wrongly accuses Hochschild's theorisation of being bereft of social actors, despite extensive evidence to the contrary in *The Managed Heart*, even if it does

underemphasise the complexity and extent of workers' agency. Instead, it is possible to remedy Hochschild's key weaknesses through a more thorough integration with LPA. However, for Bolton, no such remedy exists, and it is necessary to move-on from emotional labour and replace it with her emotion management typology.

To Bolton's credit, her typology provides a useful mapping of emotion sources in the workplace, and by emphasising the juggling and synthesising (2005) role of workers, captures, in part, the complexity of organisational life. However, because it effectively divorces emotion work from the daily struggle over the terms of labour power's commodification, it implies a much more benign and de-politicised workplace than in Hochschild's portrayal. Gone is Hochschild's emphasis on the exploitative and alienating nature of emotional labour, with its human cost to the individual. Instead, Bolton's workplace is much freer of management control, because only a small proportion of prescribed workplace feeling rules are specifically commercial. Here workers can express their individual authenticity through countless 'moments of truth' in a myriad of 'unmanaged spaces' by virtue of being wholly uncommodified; and therefore enjoying immunity to the debilitating alienation inherent in physical labour processes. While Bolton is correct to stress organisational life as pitted with unmanaged spaces, which workers readily occupy with their own agency 'from below', it is not an experience shorn of their partial commodification as labour power, nor the day-to-day predominance of managerial control. Rather, it is a contradictory experience where workers are able to utilise the indeterminacy of the labour process to alleviate and/or oppose their day-to-day alienating existence at the frontier of control. Thus, while Bolton commences her critique of Hochschild by calling for the utilisation of LPA's understanding of the inherent conflict in the employment relationship, her own re-theorisation minimises this structural antagonism by detaching emotion workers from the damaging, alienation of labour power commodification that, for her, is endemic to the physical but not emotional labour process.

Irrespective of Hochschild's ambiguities and limitations in conceptualising agency, and ultimately resistance, it is her theorisation of emotional labour, not Bolton's typology of emotion management, which more readily lends itself to theoretical integration with LPA. This is because Hochschild explicitly grounds emotional labour in Marx's theories of wage-labour and alienation, thereby stressing its exploitative nature and human cost. It is these essential premises that Bolton rejects through her flawed critique and typology.

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Notes

[1] Hochschild deliberately chooses a 'grand word' (1983, p.19) to express the grievous nature of the process not to imply permanent 'mutation'.

[2] Hochschild does not offer a theorisation of exploitation of emotional labour.

[3] One route for developing a dialectical understanding of emotions in the workplace is the work of early Soviet psychologists, principally Vygotsky, Volosinov and Bachtin. Their integration within contemporary Marxist analysis of social movements is already underway (e.g. Barker, 2001)