

EPIISODE

6

Creative work and brands in contemporary culture

Recap: Branding

How do brands work?

- Coherent identity
- Set of associations/values
- Controlled innovation

Why are brands useful in the contemporary media industries?

- Crowded landscape
- Familiarity and distinction



shondaland

Exercise: Your Personal Brand

How to build your personal brand:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MaP7ofAHoc4>

In **fifteen words or less**: write down your personal brand according to tips offered in the video.

Who are you? What do you do? What value do you offer?

Example! Leora Hadas: Pop culture researcher and disseminator, passionate about how people connect with ideas.



The Self as a Brand

The logic of the market extends into new social spheres.

Within the creative industries, brands are a feature of a crowded landscape of weak ties

- Individualization
- Project-based work
- Prevalence of generic skills

BE
yourself
different
authentic
consistent
original
visible
memorable
exciting
responsible
available
everywhere
removable
reusable
patient
helpful



The Self as a Brand

- ∅ A public self
- ∅ “The pitch”
- ∅ Consistent across platforms
- ∅ Managed authenticity

LET'S GET OUR AGENCY TO
COOK UP A FLASHY AD CAMPAIGN
THAT CONVINCES CONSUMERS
WE'RE AUTHENTIC AND TRANSPARENT.

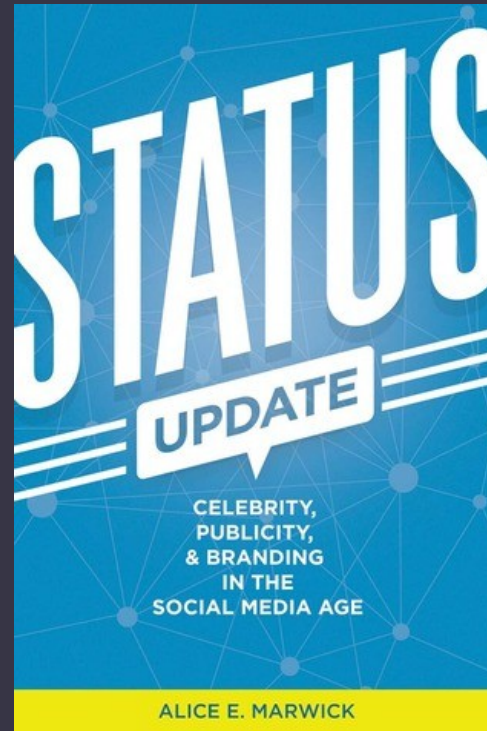
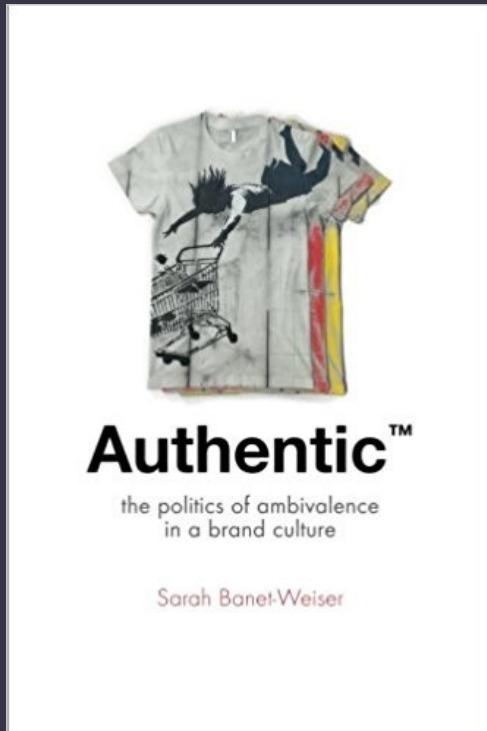


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Managed authenticity

- ∅ branded self as the “true” self
- ∅ Emotional engagement, affective relations
- ∅ Performed sharing

The Self as a Brand: Critiques



The Safe for Work self

- Being yourself as being a sellable commodity
- Commodified relationships

Self-promotion as labour

Every passion a brand?

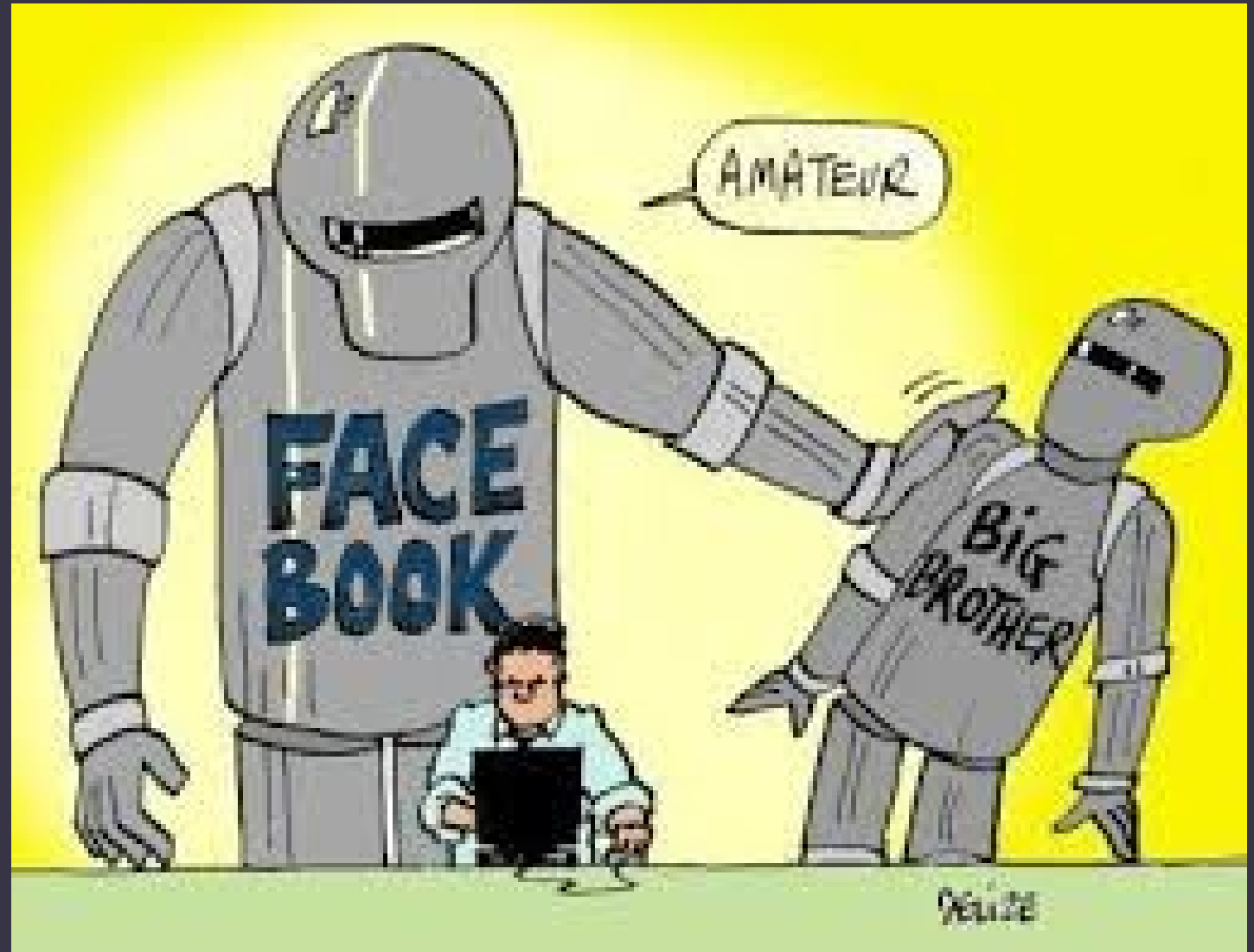
The Self as a Brand: Critiques

The Safe for Work self

Self-promotion as labour

- Second- and third-shift work
- Self-surveillance

Every passion a brand?





The Self as a Brand: Critiques

The Safe for Work self
Self-promotion as labour

Every passion a brand?

- A single passion?
- A marketable passion?
- A public passion?

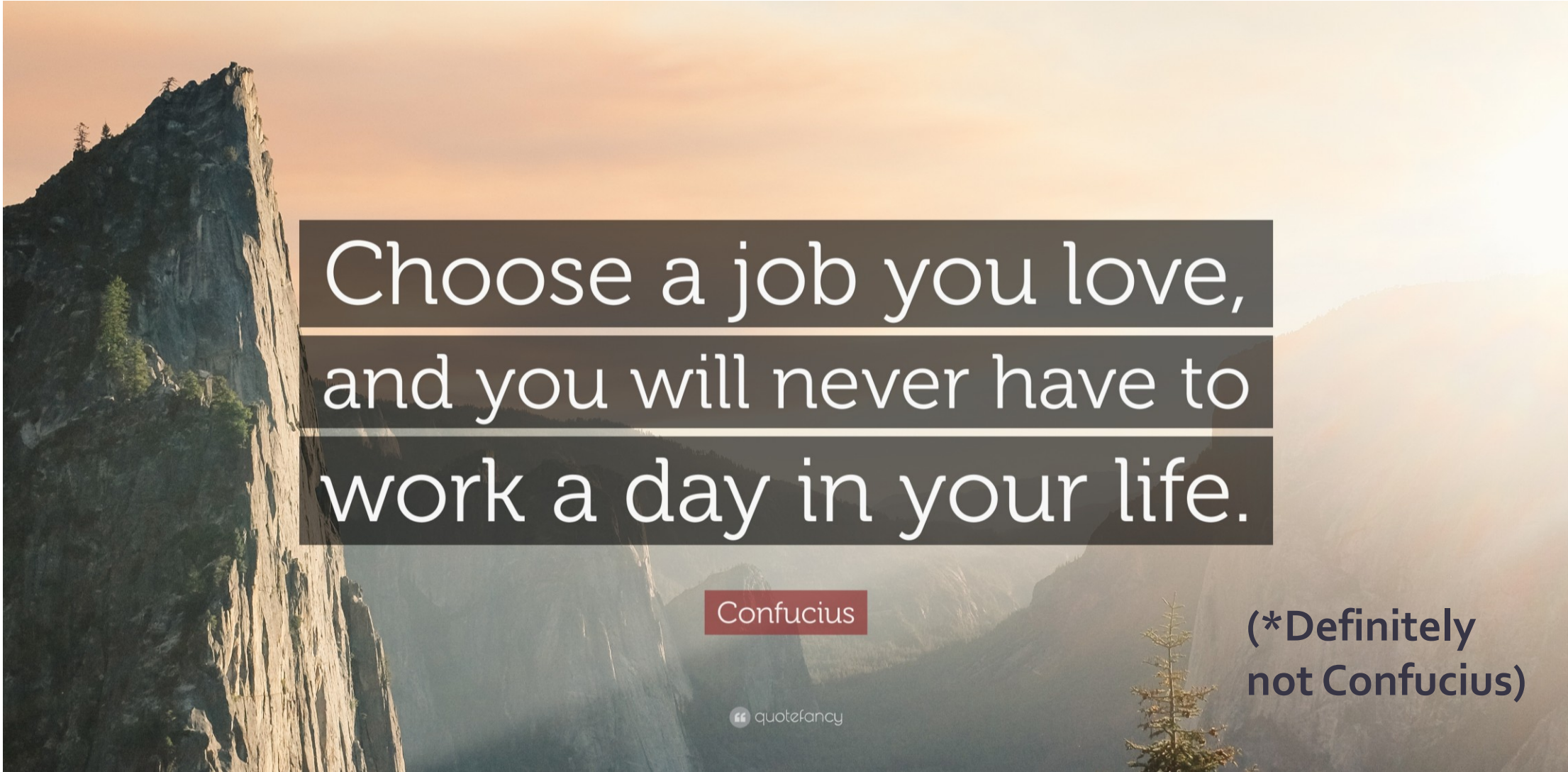
Exercise: Your Personal Brand, Reprise

Now go back to your fifteen words...

What cultural ideas or discourses do they emerge from?

What characteristics do they fit or not fit with?

What issues or problems do they reflect?



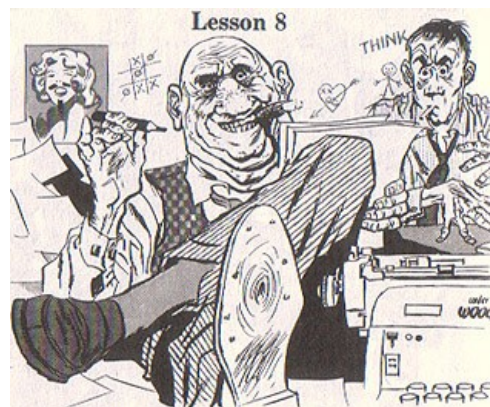
Choose a job you love,
and you will never have to
work a day in your life.

Confucius

(*Definitely
not Confucius)



I write my heart
on paper.

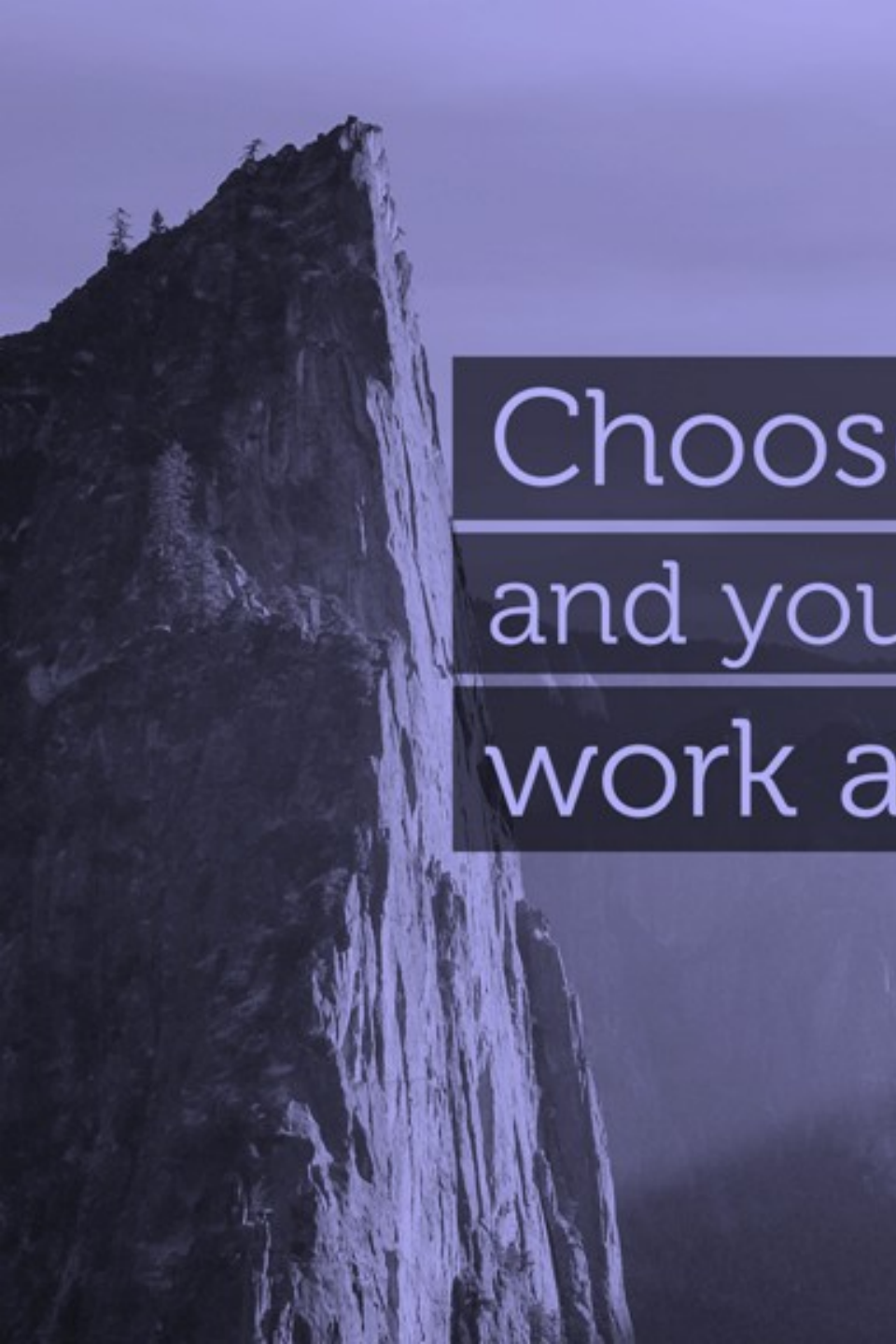


See the jolly client.
He sponsors a TV dramatic show.
He never finished the 6th Grade.
He can hardly speak English.
He can hardly write his name.
Yet, he re-writes TV scripts.
Re-write, re-write, re-write.
Why do you re-write TV scripts, jolly client?
"Because I do not like sad endings;
Because I only like happy endings."
Someday, a TV writer will shoot the jolly client.
Right in his jolly gut.
What a happy ending THAT will be!

Recap: cultural narratives of creative work

- ❖ **Individual:** The authentic artwork is the product of a singular genius
- ❖ **Independent:** Free of interference by outsiders
- ❖ **Not motivated by profit** but by the desire for self-expression
- ❖ **Extraordinary:** The purview of unique individuals working under unique conditions

This has real implications for the legal and social dimensions of cultural labour



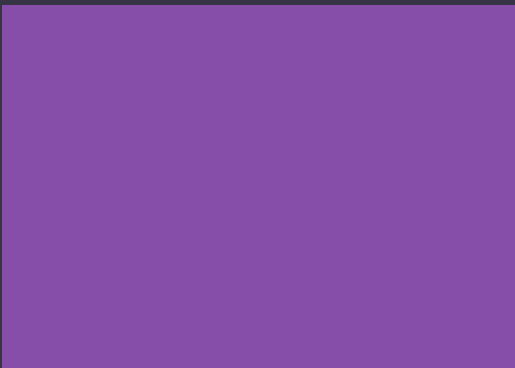
Choose
and you
work a

Self-exploitation

- Creative work is done for personal satisfaction, not compensation (love is pure, money is dirty!)
- True passion is all-consuming and means you need nothing else in your life (family, friends, etc.)
- If you are not successful, clearly you are just insufficiently passionate (or haven't found your 'true' passion)
- So be grateful for more work (and less pay)!

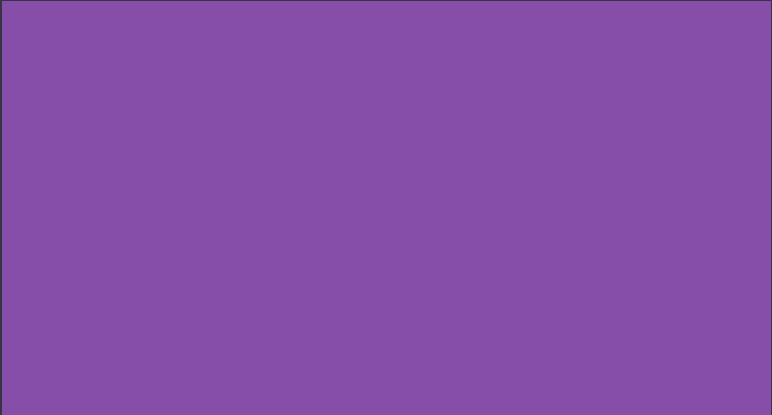
A mode of (mostly) uncompensated, independent work that is propelled by the much-venerated ideal of getting paid to do what you love. As both a practice and a worker ideology, aspirational labor shifts [content] creators' focus from the present to the future, dangling the prospect of a career where labor and leisure coexist. Aspirational laborers expect that they will one day be compensated for their productivity—be it through material rewards or social capital. But in the meantime, they remain suspended in the consumption and promotion of branded commodities.

Brooke Erin Duffey, (2017), (Not) Getting Paid to Do What You Love: Gender, Social Media, and Aspirational Work



“We are all producers”: the work of social media celebrity

Narrative of entrepreneurship, opportunity, doing what you love, work as play

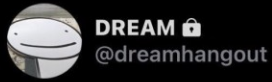


But reality of intense competition, concentration, and unpaid labour.

The work of social media celebrity

- Social media celebrities are not separate from traditional industries:
- Rely on advertisers for funding.
- Bound by financial, industrial, technological, and regulatory frameworks.
- Beholden to multiple stakeholders: advertisers, platforms, talent agencies.
- Branded and constructed: part of a market system.





DREAM
@dreamhangout

I genuinely love and care about you guys, and that's the best way that I can describe it. you are like a whole bunch of kittens and I LOVE YOU. Not every creator will feel the same as me, and that's fine, but I'm being genuine every time I say it. I love you and care about you. ❤️

8:43 PM · 12/28/20 · Twitter for iPhone

2 Quote Tweets 11.2K Likes

Just because you're a celebrity that has no idea of my existence doesn't mean we weren't meant for each other.



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someecards.com

How To Achieve Emotional Branding

To Connect With People Instead Of Selling To Them

LEARN MORE

MADAY MARTINEZ

The work of social media celebrity

- ∅ Emotional labour
 - ∅ “Always-on”
- ∅ Parasocial relationships
 - ∅ Managed disclosure
- ∅ Audience as consumers
 - ∅ Monetizing your community

Thank you!
Děkuju!



LEORA.HADAS@NOTTINGHAM.AC.UK

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