'To do or not to do (gender)'

and changing the sex-typing of British Theatre

Concepts of doing, and undoing, gender have become increasingly prevalent within studies of sex-typed work. However these concepts, as currently figured and applied, contain a significant analytical lacuna: they tend not to register *changes* in the sex-typing of work. In this study we engage this research gap by addressing the changing sex-typing of British Theatre – specifically, the shift from female dominated amateur to male dominated professional theatre work. We draw upon, and develop, concepts of doing and undoing gender to understand changes in the sex typing of work. In so doing, we explain how spatially and temporally differentiated ways of doing 'male' and 'female', become implicated in how people make sense of, and enact, the changing spaces and times of 'amateur/female' 'professional/male' work. Our analysis of theatre work suggests that, despite recent criticisms of their wider significance, concepts of un/doing gender, are useful to understand broader changes in the sex-typing of work. Thus, it also appears possible to (un)change such sex-typings by undoing gender. However, our analysis suggests, such subversive acts remain ineffective, unless those involved in such gendered undoings engage with, rather than renounce, the gendered doings that help enact the changing sex-typing of work.

Introduction

Concepts of doing and undoing gender (Butler, 1990; 2004; Deutsch, 2007; West and Zimmerman, 1987; 2009) have become increasingly popular to understand the organization of work around binary sex categories (Charles, 2014; Ely and Meyerson, 2010; Kelan, 2008; 2010; Hall et al. 2007; Mavin and Grandy, 2013; McDonald, 2013; Pullen and Simpson, 2009; Pilgeram, 2007; Powell et al. 2009). Within this body of work 'doing gender' (Butler, 1990; West and Zimmerman, 1987) has helped explain how binary sex categories are reproduced within workplaces, precipitating jobs dominated by people recognizable by, or held accountable to, one sex category or another (Pilgeram, 2007; Powell et al. 2009). Contrastingly, 'undoing gender' draws attention to how binary sex categories, and associated hierarchies, become irrelevant (Deutsch, 2007) or are subverted (Butler, 2004) within and around workplaces (Kelan, 2010; Pullen and Knights, 2007), opening up potentials (Charles, 2014; McDonald, 2013), as well as paradoxes (Powell et al. 2009), in challenging sex-typed work. Despite their popularity, these two concepts thus contain an important, yet under-examined, analytical lacuna: if concepts of 'doing gender' are especially useful to understand the sex-typing of work, and 'undoing gender' to explain, even augment, its collapse, neither concept, as currently figured, readily addresses *changes* in the sex-typing of work. That is, how might a work activity, shift, over space and through time, from being associated with, or dominated by, people with bodies held accountable to (West and Zimmerman, 2009), or recognizable within (Butler, 1990; 2004), one binary sex category or another.

This lacuna is significant because historical shifts in the sex-typing of work are far from unusual: McDonald (2013), for instance, cites the examples of the shift from female/feminized bookkeeping and midwifery to the male/masculinized professions of accountancy and medicine. However changes in the sex-typing of work do not always equate to longer term, historical changes, but rather also encompass on-going shifts between

different places and times of work in the careers of individuals, notably between amateur and professional work. Such shifts are especially apparent within creative and cultural industries, such as fashion, film or fine art. For example, in the UK in 2012, women constituted 62% of students studying for degrees in creative arts subjects (Guardian, 2012a), but just 36% of professional employees (Skillset, 2012). Our purpose in this paper is to address how concepts of un/doing gender might be engaged, and developed, to understand such *changes* in the sex typing of work.

Set against these imperatives, we develop our analysis here of changes in the sex-typing of work through a study British theatre. Within this domain, amateur work (e.g. educational study, training, community theatre) is dominated by female bodies, while male bodies dominate professional theatre work (Advance, 2015; *Guardian*, 2012b). British theatre offers an exemplary, though far from exceptional, case to examine how individuals do and undo gender norms as they make sense of, and enact, the realities of *changes* in the sex-typing of work. Our paper is organized into four main sections. First, we provide a brief introduction to concepts of 'doing' and 'undoing' gender, noting different ethnomethodological and poststructuralist currents, then we discuss the relationship between these approaches to the sex categories that feed into processes of sex-typing. Second, we examine how concepts of un/doing gender have been mobilized to addresses the sex-typing of work and/or the dominant presence of male/female bodies. Third, we introduce our empirical study of amateur and professional theatre work in order to appreciate how concepts of un/doing gender can help us understand changes in sex-typed work. Finally, we discuss the implications of our analysis for future studies of un/doing gender.

Un/doing gender and categorising sex

Before discussing how concepts of un/doing gender have influenced studies of sex-typed work, it is important to first clarify how the poststructuralism of Butler (1990; 2004), and the ethnomethodology of West and Zimmerman (1987; 2009) and Deutsch (2007), conceptualize doing and undoing gender. We then examine how each approach figures a particular relationship to the sex categories that constitute processes of sex-typing. In so doing we must acknowledge key ontological and epistemological differences between these two approaches but also significant overlaps in their analytical trajectories.

Butler's (1990) notion of gender as an immanent discursive 'doing', rather than socialized outcome or biological fact, is well-known. As Butler (1990) explains, 'gender is always a *doing*, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed' (p34; emphasis added). Rather, as she goes on to explain: 'There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its result' (Butler, 1990: 34). Failure to recognize yourself, and others, as a gendered subject, namely as a 'man' or a 'women', within such discursive interactions, can result in violent punishment (Butler, 1990; 2004). More recently, Butler (2004) offers the term 'undoing gender' to articulate how gender norms may be subverted. For Butler (2004) 'undoing gender' refers to possibilities to create novel subject positions that subvert existing gender norms enabling 'those who understand their gender and their desire to be nonnormative can live and thrive not only without the threat of violence from the outside but without the pervasive sense of their own unreality, which can lead to suicide or suicidal thoughts' (Butler, 2004: 219).

For our purposes here it is also crucial to understand how Butler (2004) connects the doing and undoing of gender to the sex categories that organize and disorganize the sex-typing of work. The difficulty with this task is that Butler (2004) actively equivocates on the ontological status of sex differences: 'sexual difference is neither fully given nor fully constructed but partially both' (p186). This ontological ambiguity can be explained with reference to Butler's (1990) earlier notion that 'gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which "sexed nature" or a "natural sex" is produced and established as "prediscursive," prior to culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts' (p10). That is, for Butler (1990; 2004) *doing gender* does not simply inscribe cultural meanings onto an already sexed body, rather to do gender *always* involves the construction of binary sex categories (and those of sexual desire) as a 'prediscursive' ground (Butler, 1990), intended to support the reality of gender norms. Specifically: 'the heterosexualization of desire requires and institutes the production of discrete and asymmetrical oppositions between "feminine" and "masculine", where these are understood as expressive attributes of "male" and "female"' (Butler, 1990: 24). The 'constructedness' of this sequence – which for Butler, following Foucault, sustains a certain biopolitics interested in regulating sexual desire around the 'economically useful and politically conservative sexuality' (Foucault, 1978: 36-36) of familial reproduction – must also be continually and often violently denied; hence the imposition of punishment on those that live outside of gender norms.

Set against this performative, or relational, ontology of gender/sex/sexual desire (Butler, 1990), Butler's (2004) concept of 'doing gender' can be further specified to encompass everyday acts where the pre-discursive grounding of gender is naturalized in binary sex categories and heterosexual desire is performed, repeated and naturalized. By contrast, undoing gender refers to quotidian acts, famously drag (Butler, 1990), where that pre-

discursive grounding to gender norms in sex or heterosexual desire is exposed as an immanently *constructed* performance, a performance among many alternatives. For Butler (2004), once denaturalized in this manner, new gender norms might be acknowledged that allow new possibilities for becoming human. Importantly, this process implies that we do not completely evade gender norms; rather we become aware of their multiplicity and translate and transform ourselves as we move between them. As Lloyd (2008) explains of Butler: 'It is this translation practice that produces the space within which a non-violent ethical encounter becomes possible' (p154). This is why for Butler, her performative ontology is the basis for a radical politics, concerned with asking: 'Have we ever known the "human"?' and 'Should we be wary of any final or definitive knowing?' (Butler, 2004: 222).

Ethnomethodological concepts of doing and undoing gender (Deutsch, 2007; West and Zimmerman, 1987; 2009) entail a different ontological and epistemological approach to Butler's poststructuralism. Significantly, 'doing' gender always involves a reflexive, and sexed subject, capable of negotiating the institutional gender norms through which they, as a subject identifiable with a particular sex category, are always at risk of being held to accountable (cf. Garfinkel, 1967; Zimmerman and West, 1987; 2009). The ethnomethodological concept of 'undoing gender' is an elaboration by Deutsch (2007) and others (for an overview see Kelan, 2010; Nentwich and Kelan, 2014), intended to draw attention to those instances where a member of one sex category holds themselves accountable to norms associated with the opposite sex category, denaturalizing those gender norms. Thus, if a gender norm contains the idea that women undertake domestic labour, a man who choose to undertake those duties himself is then held accountable to a 'feminine' gender norm and therefore renders not only that norm, but perhaps also underlying sex categories as less relevant (Deutsch, 2007).

West and Zimmerman (1987; 2009) and Deutsch (2007) also differ from Butler (1990; 2004) in their ontological distinction between the accomplishment of gender and sex categories. West and Zimmerman (1987) are clearest on this point when they write: 'Sex categorisation and the accomplishment of gender are not the same … Women can be seen as unfeminine, but that does not make them "unfemale"' (p134). As such, while sex category refers to the identificatory displays (e.g. dress, hair length, make-up) by which anatomical differences between men and women can be presumed, gender refers to the interaction and institutional ways we are held accountable on the basis of those differences (West and Zimmerman, 1987; 2009). Viewed in this way, 'doing gender' cannot simultaneously constitute how we recognize ourselves and others as men/women, although it can 'emerge from and bolster claims to membership in a sex category' (West and Zimmerman, 1987: 127). Similarly for Deutsch (2007), it is precisely the dissonance between membership of a sex category and the institutional and interactional gender norms that hold us accountable to that category that constitutes 'undoing gender'. Despite this separation of gender and sex (contra Butler), ethnomethodological approaches still permit interactional acts of un/doing gender to challenge binary sex categories. For example, if people are not held accountable as often, or with as much vigour, to differences based upon sex, whether in work (McDonald, 2013) or elsewhere, then over time, the identificatory displays that preserve binary sex categories (Garfinkel, 1967; West and Zimmerman, 1987) become less socially valuable and perhaps visible. Thus, just as with Butler (2004), an individual refusal to embody a gender norm that seeks to naturalize differences between men and women, raises more profound questions regarding the salience of binary sex categorisations (on this point see West and Zimmerman, 1987: 147; Deutsch, 2007: 117).

Despite important ontological and epistemological differences, poststructuralist and ethnomethodological approaches differentiate concepts of doing and undoing gender, and their relationship to sex categories, along similar lines. On the one hand, *doing gender* is associated with how everyday interactions evoke binary sex categories as a basis for rather constraining, and rigid, social organization. One of the other hand, *undoing gender* corresponds to social interactions that resist the 'grounding' of binary sex categories as a basis to organize society, potentially, at least, enabling change in normative gender orders (Risman, 2009). In the next section we will examine how concepts of un/doing gender have influenced studies of sex-typed work, before turning to a particular work context – British theatre – to consider the question of the relationship between un/doing gender and *changes* in the sex-typing and sex-domination of work.

Un/doing gender and sex-typing work

Un/doing gender studies of work have developed empirical analyses across various experiences of sex-typed and/or sex-dominated work, including; men in male-typed/dominated jobs (Charles, 2014; Ely and Simpson, 2010; Hall et al. 2007; Kelan, 2008; McDonald, 2013), women in male-typed/dominated jobs (Charles, 2014; Kelan, 2008; 2010; McDonald, 2013; Powell et al. 2009; Pilgeram, 2007), men in female-typed/dominated jobs (Hall et al. 2007; Pullen and Simpson, 2009), and women in female-typed/dominated jobs (Mavin and Grandy, 2013). Despite these diverse empirical foci, the relationship between un/doing gender and sex-typing and sex-domination in the workplace remains notable underdeveloped (Nentwich and Kelan, 2014). Nonetheless, three nascent, overlapping, positions can be discerned.

First, studies draw attention to how gender is *done* so as to naturalize the typing of certain forms of work towards binary sex categories, especially despite the presence of minorities of men or women in female/male dominated jobs. Powell et al. (2009), for instance, discuss how male and female engineering students reproduce the norm that engineering requires male bodies. Specifically, women are shown adopting a feminine stereotype of women needing extra help and support while men expect them to ask for such help; these women felt unable to reject this support or risk being viewed as 'defective women' (Powell et al. 2009: 423) by their male colleagues. The difficulty therein is that, 'women engineers who perform in highly feminine ways [i.e. by asking for extra help than their male colleagues] are likely to be considered incompetent and competent women engineers are seen as unfeminine; thereby instilling a norm where only male masculinity is likely to be accepted in the current situation' (Powell et al. 2009: 425). Despite being held accountable to masculine norms by doing engineering, these women do not undo gender in the way set out by Deutsch (2007) or Butler (2004) as sex categories and hierarchies are affirmed rather than displaced. That this is the case is because the male engineers largely continue to do gender for the women; in other words they uphold its relevance in the workplace: they do not accept the view that the competence of women doing engineering challenges gender norms (Butler, 2004; Deutsch, 2007) but rather it simply challenges the femininity of those engineers. In other words, these women are undone by gender but gender is not undone (Butler, 2004). We can usefully compare this finding with Williams (1992) seminal study of men in female-dominated jobs (e.g. primary school teaching, nursing): when the masculinity of men is questioned by other men and women, this in turn legitimizes their push for a 'more masculine', often higher status jobs, within their profession. While the outcomes for men and women as minorities in sex-typed work differ, the sex-typing of work is sustained as men remain dissuaded from entering

female-dominated jobs on the basis of their accountability (West and Zimmerman, 1987) or recognisability (Butler, 1990; 2004) within binary gender norms.

Secondly, un/doing gender studies associate both the dominance of male and female sex bodies in a job with underlying institutional arrangements (e.g. diversity policies, laws, customs, traditions etc.). As Charles (2014) explains this position is partly derived from studies, such as Powell et al. (2009), wherein 'the normative gender order is re-established even though ways of un/doing gender change' (p370). For Charles (2014), the doing of gender is constructed as an effect of institutional practices and arrangements (see also Pilgeram, 2007; Powell et al. 2009). This position recognizes that 'organizational change requires more than a change in the doing of gender' (Charles, 2014: 370). Accordingly, undoing gender becomes an effect, rather than cause, of the effective de-institutionalization of the legitimacy to organize work around binary sex categories, as encouraged, for example, by the introduction of effective diversity policies (Charles, 2014).

Thirdly, undoing gender is associated with a dismantling of the gender norms, and attendant sex categories, that are used to legitimize and organize, the sex-typing of work, fostering occupations dominated by men or women. For example, McDonald (2013) explores how women and men *both* do work tasks culturally coded as masculine *and* feminine within female typed/dominated nursing. McDonald (2013) thus challenges gender norms that seek to naturalize symmetry between the 'essences' of certain sexed bodies, work tasks and occupations (cf. Deutsch, 2007). McDonald (2013) concludes his study: 'Examining further how men and women do and undo gender in these contexts can therefore help move us towards a better understanding of how to reduce the association of these occupations with

either women or men and prevent individuals from being stigmatized in organizational contexts on the basis of gender' (p577).

In sum, while some un/doing gender studies of sex-typed work have not engaged with the *process* of sex-typing/domination (Ely and Meyerson, 2010; Kelan, 2008; Hall et al. 2007; Mavin and Grandy, 2013), or simply noted its existence (e.g. Pullen and Simpson, 2009), where it has been explicitly discussed (Charles, 2014; Kelan, 2010; Pilgeram, 2007; McDonald, 2013; Powell et al. 2009), the sex-typing of work, and reciprocal domination of work by men/women, is said to be mostly associated with, and indeed supported by, what Butler (2004) and Deutsch (2007) would term the *doing*, rather than *undoing* of gender. What is less readily discussed is a specific analytical lacuna in these various analyses: if un/doing gender can, to a certain extent, help account for the perpetuation of sex-typed and sex-dominated work, while undoing gender *may* also account for its dismantling along with associated binary sex categories, then neither concept adequately registers, let alone explains, *changes* in the sex-typing of work that occur *within* the constraints of binary sex categories.

This analytical lacuna is significant, empirically, politically and theoretically. Empirically, in many domains the sex-typing and/or sex-domination of work is far from stable or changes only over the course of decades, especially when we consider transitions from amateur to professional work. Even if structural and institutional factors are partly responsible for such shifts (as some indicate – Charles, 2014; West and Zimmerman, 2009), these do not address how individuals make sense of, and perhaps help enact, such abrupt spatial and temporal changes in sex-typings, and/or male or female domination. More politically, as more women move into 'non-traditional' occupations, not least engineering (Powell et al. 2009) and agriculture (Pilgeram, 2007), we should seek to understand all the different discriminatory

mechanisms, including *changes* to the sex-typing of work (rather than just rigid horizontal and vertical sex segregations), through which complex discriminatory patterns are sustained. Theoretically, analysis in response to these changes dovetails with repeated calls to develop stronger conceptual linkages between un/doing gender and sex categorisations (Nentwich and Kelan, 2014; Messerschmitt, 2009; West and Zimmerman, 2009). Specifically, such *changes* in sex-typed work challenge concepts of doing gender to address how *shifts*, not just stabilities, in accountability (West and Zimmerman, 1987) or recognisability (Butler, 1990; 2004) to sex categories are at least partly enacted through everyday interactions. Whereas for concepts of undoing gender, such changes in sex-typed work prompt us to understand how binary sex categories might endure through substantive changes in work-orientated gender norms.

Research design

Our analysis of un/doing gender and changes in the sex-typing of work is now developed through data gathered across an empirical study of the gendering of British theatre. This work domain is germane to elaborate our theoretical argument because it demonstrates significant, and abrupt, changes in the sex-typing of work from amateur to professional production as evidenced by substantial shifts in the domination of male and female bodies. Changes in the sex-typing of theatre work can be summarized with reference to industry statistics. Specifically, almost 70% of those choosing theatre training in further and higher education are female (Guardian, 2012a; HESA, 2013), 68% of theatre audiences are female (Guardian, 2012c), while amateur and community theatre is similarly female dominated (Kerbel, 2012). And yet, on the other hand, this volume of women interested in theatre is persistently excluded from almost all aspects of professional work: men dominate the artistic direction

(64%), board management (67%), performance (62%), and technical production (67%) of the largest subsidized British theatres, and have won 90% of the industry's Olivier awards (Guardian, 2012b). Similarly, research conducted for this study reveals that over 90% of UK theatre critics and 73% of UK university professors of theatre/drama are male. Theatre thus contrasts within other sex-typed work domains, such as agriculture (Pilgeram, 2007), engineering (Powell et al. 2009) or nursing (McDonald, 2013), where there is much more continuity in the sexed bodies that dominate from amateur to professional work; hence it is becomes difficult to detect any relationship between the everyday gendered interactions that constitute un/doing gender and *changes* in the sex-typing of work.

The data we discuss here stems from an ongoing study of the gendering of British theatre. Set against the above empirical, political and theoretical imperatives, one of the sub-themes of this study was to understand how individuals within amateur and professional British theatre make sense of the shifting domination of male and female bodies across this work domain; the results of this strand of analysis are discussed here. Our interest in the amateur-professional work nexus led us to two methodological choices. First, our study includes current students of theatre, both in higher education and drama schools, mostly through focus groups, alongside theatre professionals. Second, we deliberately asked theatre professionals, via semi-structured biographical interviews, to reflect upon their transitions from training to work. In so doing we specifically sought to understand how men and women studying and working in theatre make sense of, and, as per Butler (1990; 2004), help enact, differences in the sexed bodies between study and work. Although our data is qualitative, industry-wide surveys of the numbers of men and women in theatre (e.g. Gardiner, 1998; Guardian, 2012b; 2012c; Long, 1998; ONS, 2015) offered useful cues[1] within interviews and focus groups to

prompt participants to make sense of the sexed vicissitudes associated with doing theatre work.

In keeping with recent un/doing gender studies (Charles, 2014; McDonald, 2013), our study has adopted a qualitative interpretive approach where participants are asked to reflect upon how they make sense of their experiences. Initially we planned to conduct interviews with all participants as with previous studies of sex-typed work (McDonald, 2013; Pullen and Simpson, 2009). Interviews are well-suited to this task – they enable individuals to 'do and undo gender as they account for and make sense of their gendered performances in interview contexts, just as they do and undo gender in routine social interaction' (McDonald, 2013: 568). However, while thus far all professionals and drama school students have been interviewed individually, university students felt they would be better able to develop and examine each other's views about gender in a less threatening peer group environment (cf. Ainsworth et al. 2014). Focus groups were therefore offered to this group and also present us with an opportunity to glimpse more complex interactional dynamics that comprise how gender norms are done and undone (Butler, 2004; Deutsch, 2007). Participants in our study were mostly recruited through the professional contacts of the second author of this paper who is a drama academic. These students self-selected on the basis of a call for participants. Professional participants were recruited partly through professional and personal contacts, as well as direct approaches to theatre organizations and a small advertisement in an industry magazine. When recruiting for participates we did not specify that we were looking to speak to men or women. However, the acknowledged 'marking' of women as gendered (Connell, 2005) did seemingly influence the self-selection of our sample: all of the group (self) identified as female except for 2 male practitioners and 3 male students. In total our analysis draws from interviews with 24 participants: 11 theatre practitioners, 2 drama students from

two specialist drama schools, and a further 11 university drama students who were involved in two focus groups at two higher education institutions. Our research did not set out to compare the different ways men and women make sense of the changing sex-typing of theatre work, or indeed do and undo gender (as in Macdonald, 2013), but simply to understand how paradoxical changes in sex-typed work are legitimized and enacted by people working in theatre. As such, the relative lack of male participants in our study was not considered especially problematic in exploring this broad, and relatively unexamined, research question. Moreover, as our analysis tentatively indicates, further research, may reveal important similarities (McDonald, 2013), as well as differences, in how men and women make sense of sex-typed work.

The names of people, and most plays and organizations, used within this study are all fictional. Regarding the theatre professionals involved, we did not set out to recruit individuals with a particular professional role. This decision was taken because we were interested in theatre's overall patterning of sexing and gendering, rather than the specific experiences of those such as 'creatives' (e.g. Advance, 2015). As a result, the theatre professionals involved in the research span a wide range of managerial, creative and technical roles. During the recruitment of participants, we did state that we were interested in how individuals explained the paradoxical gendering of British theatre from study to work. Our more purposive approach thus differs from more inductive grounded-theory studies of sex-typed work (e.g. Powell et al. 2009; Simpson, 2004), however it may enable more focussed problematisations of existing theories (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2013).

Questions discussed in both the focus groups and interviews encompassed: educational and career choices; awareness of the changing sex-typing of theatre study and work; explanations

given by others and yourself for this sex-typing, the perceptions from peers, friends and family of educational and careers choices; and the significance of gender in theatre study and/or work. Interviews were conducted by both authors of this paper, while focus groups were led only by the first author of this paper who was not in a position of authority in relation to the students involved. Within both interviews and focus groups the same schedule of questions, and industry gender statistics, was used as a prompt for discussion.

Audio from the interviews and focus groups was digitally recorded, transcribed and analysed thematically using Nvivo (version 10). The two data sources were analysed using a common approach and an initial set of thematic codes. Several of these codes corresponded to common patterns in the responses to the questions asked within the interviews and focus groups. For example, a number of participants in interviews and focus groups made sense of the paradoxical sex-typing of British theatre in terms of the contrast between the historical predominance of male roles, and the naturalized femininity of theatre work. Other thematic codes emerged during the discussions within the focus groups and interviews – for example a separate set of codes was created to identify in the transcripts evidence of episodes of direct discrimination in theatre work and study. Other themes were coded within the analysis, as possible avenues for future research, but fall outside the remit of this paper. For example we also coded for speculations on how to address gender inequalities across the creative industries, comparisons with other sectors (e.g. sport), and HR responses to harassment. Broadly speaking, our analysis concerned the identification of patterns in how all respondents, male and female, made sense of the sex-typing of theatre work, and then changes in that sex-typing. Once we had completed the initial coding we analysed the data further by producing a series of notes relating observed patterns in how our data corresponded with, or problematized, how previous studies had conceptualized linkages

between sex-typed work and theories of un/doing gender. It was within this secondary stage of analysis that it became increasingly evident the extent to which acts, which we could read, whether via Butler (1990; 2004), Deutsch (2007), or West and Zimmerman (1987), as un/doing gender, frequently accompanied how our participants made sense of changes in the sex-typing of theatre work. The discussion below is thus structured to elaborate how notions of doing, and then undoing, gender can be deployed to understand how our participants made sense of, and enacted, the *changing* sex-typing and sex-domination of theatre work.

Doing gender and changing theatre

To understand how changes in sex-typing occurred through the doing of gender we must first explain how gender is done to make sense of one pole of sex-typed theatre, specifically female-dominated, amateur theatre. This process was exemplified in one focus group conducted with university drama students. Towards the start of the focus group, after the students were shown statistical data, they sought to make sense of the domination of people with recognizably female bodies within amateur work. Isabelle, a university drama student, identified her reasons for the lack of men:

> I think it stems from when you are a kid though, and you are a little girl and you prance about dancing and singing. I think that is more stereotypically female, you will strive to do that. You watch films like *High School Musical* and you want to be like them.

Isabelle here asks the rest of the focus group to recognize themselves or others in her 'little girl' that is 'dancing and singing' (who in turn then recognizes herself as female in a film). In

so doing, Isabelle naturalizes congruence between doing 'woman', recognizable by certain behaviours (dancing and singing), alongside theatre work recognizable in terms of the same behaviours. If this binary discourse is then accepted by the group, then the alterity within this discourse, those 'Other' bodies and (work) behaviours, must then be expressed in terms of the essences of opposite male bodies (Butler, 1990). Indeed, none of the group challenged Isabelle, despite their undoubted experience of how both theatre and childhood always involves more than singing and dancing, and instead continued to work within her binary discourse and its logic of causal symmetry between doing 'woman' and doing 'theatre'. Only seconds later, Mike, responds: 'It [theatre] seems to run against the grain of what it is to be a man'. Pippa then elaborates from Isabelle's account to develop her own essentialization of the symmetrical 'realities' of the female sex category and theatre:

If you look at playgrounds, you will have boys on the field playing football, or playing rugby or doing whatever boys do. Whereas girls will be there with their dollies and their prams, I'll be the mum and you be the baby and we'll do this, and pretend this and pretend that. Girls play together, they interact with each other, whereas boys tend to interact around each other. They don't tend to interact together, they will play with a football, they will play with trains or cars or toys. When I was doing my A Levels we did a lot on *Blood Brothers*. We did this whole two week thing where the two boys were playing together in the park and my teacher was telling us that she did a thing on it, and she analysed the way children play and they don't look at each other. Boys don't look at each other when they play. They look at the floor or they look at their hands. Whereas girls are like what are you doing, really curious and react differently.

Here Pippa draws a sharp binary distinction between 'girls' as social and 'boys' as a-social, almost autistic, beings. As with Isabelle and Mike, in so doing she invites the rest of the group to recognize themselves and each other through the assumed naturalness of binary sex categories. While these binary sex categorisation are clearly inaccurate, in that most children imitate and imagine all manner of social experiences, their uncontested recognition in our focus group does suggest their seductive *plausibility* as a narrative to recursively make sense of the realities of sex categories and theatre (cf. Mills, 2005). By evoking binary sex categories to make sense of the gendering of work, Isabelle, Mike and Pippa clearly cannot be said to be undoing gender. Moreover, the specific doings of gender evident here seem to align more closely with those discussed by Butler (1990; 2004), rather than West and Zimmerman (2009). Specifically, Isabelle, Mike and Pippa are not merely holding people accountable for doing theatre or not on the basis of accepted pre-existing sex categories (as per West and Zimmerman, 1987), rather they are also directly evoking, elaborating and naturalizing binary sex categories as they seek to make sense of, and enact, 'realities' of theatre. In other words, their discursive work essentializes a certain symmetry between two bicameral realities: men/women and theatre/non-theatre. Both sets of realities are bifurcated around certain bodily behaviours (singing, dancing, dressing-up etc.): to do theatre is to do woman, and to do woman is to do theatre. By 'grounding' (Butler, 1990) their experiences of doing theatre within these naturalized sex categories these students render industry statistics that depict the female domination of amateur theatre study as intelligible, explainable and uncontestable.

What is lacking from our analysis thus far is an understanding of how these doings of gender, where causal symmetry is claimed between sex/gender/theatre, are then employed to help make sense of, and enact, *change* from the sex-typing of theatre (i.e. from female to male).

Returning to the same focus group, Mike offers a useful starting point to this line of analysis when he attempts to overcome the dissonance between his recognition of himself as a man and his presence in what he himself seemingly views as work that is naturally female. Significantly, at one point during the focus group Mike cites a number of pieces of drama as evidence for how the reality of 'men' can also be done within theatre:

> It is like when people say oh acting is for girls, and it is like how many films have you watched, how many television series have you watched, have you watched The Sopranos? Do you think *The Sopranos* is gay? Do you think *Breaking Bad* is gay? Who are these actors that you idolise like Liam Neeson, and yet he went to university and did drama, and you watch a Daniel Day Lewis film and think he is the most incredible actor in the world and he gets Oscars, and he went to the Bristol Old Vic, so do you think that these people are gay?

Just as Butler (1990; 2004) suggests, Mike here 'grounds' the naturalness of binary sex categories through heterosexual desire. By locating the presence of heterosexual desire alongside dramatized images of individuals recognized as men (gangsters, drug dealers), Mike teases out a distinction between the work tasks undertaken to do theatre (singing and dancing, making-up), which can be authentically female, and the (professional) products of that work, within which he directly invites himself and others to recognize him, and others, as authentically male. Here again the 'reality' of a binary sex category is elaborated upon to construct a reality of theatre, but this reality is different to the one we have discussed thus far: it claims to distinguish an authentic maleness around professional theatrical (specifically, dramatic) products not bodily behaviours (singing, dancing, making-up). Here we can start to

see how individuals can do gender so as to enact the realities of binary sex categories in order to comprehend, and indeed, enact the *changing*, or multiple, realities of theatre work.

The distinction draw by Mike between the multiple (gendered) realities of theatre was not unique. Jackie, a professional playwright, similarly explains how the content of professional theatre is congruent with images of male bodies:

> … so much of this stuff is about history, and because men have made so many of the huge decisions throughout history. When you write exciting stories about wars, and about prison escapes, they are about men. I think that an awful lot of that is just to do with men shaping history … I think it is to do with that exciting stories tend to be because men are seen outside the home and do the exciting stuff.

Jackie's words echo the sex category distinctions evoked by Isabelle, Pippa, and Mike: men are drawn as active and exciting but also socially belligerent (prisoners, soldiers etc.), while women are constructed as passive, less theatrically exciting, but perhaps nicer (looking after the home). When asked to further elaborate on why men are exciting, Jackie, as with Mike, naturalizes heterosexual sexual desire to buttress binary sex categories (cf. Butler, 1990; 2004), as she explains 'there is a huge element of girls wanting to go and look at good looking blokes in plays'.

In attempting to make sense of the domination of male bodies in professional theatre, Jackie also draws upon a binary distinction between the psychological resources needed to make it within theatre which she equates as naturally possessed by men:

… men are good are really good at taking knocks. And they are much better than the girls at doing that. What is interesting to me in this conversation is there is a massive confidence issue, and that women are much more easily put off.

The notion that confidence and ambition is a trait by which to differentiate men/women, and success/failure in professional theatre was repeated across our study by professionals and students. For example, another professional playwright, Lucy, similarly discusses how women lack an innate confidence required to work successfully in theatre:

… it tends to be that women will come in and say I've had this idea, what do you think about it? Men seem to be much more selfish, and I think part of the answer to the overall question you are asking is confidence. It is a question of confidence.

Here a kind of selfish, brash, confidence, analogous to authentic masculine theatrical characters, is constructed as a natural aspect of men, but lacking in women, yet required to have a successful professional career in theatre. Interestingly, some of the students deployed this male confidence narrative to directly make sense of shifts in the sex-typing of theatre. Sophie, a student within the same focus group as Mike, Isabelle and Pippa, argued that:

… women have nothing to prove in that yeah it [theatre] may be feminine but I'm a woman. So there might be men at the top of their game in all these things because they have to be to prove themselves to be men.

Sophie argues here that while men, such as Mike, may not recognize themselves as men by doing theatre, as men are to be defined against the embodied practices (dancing, singing,

dressing-up) required to do theatre, they can recognize themselves as men if they demonstrate ambition and drive, including the ambition to acquire (though not necessarily possess) those skills which are constructed as innately male.

In sum, across these accounts, remarkably coherent, binary sex categorisations are constructed that recognize men and women as essentially different in order to explain why fewer women work in professional theatre. Although they sex-type theatre as innately male not female, Jackie and Lucy actually deploy similar binary sex categorisations to Isabelle, Pippa, Sophie and Mike: 'real' men are described as active, selfish, confident, yet exciting, people, whereas women appear more passive, consumers (desiring audience), domestic, collaborative, yet rather unexciting. Through such simplistic binary sex category constructs, and accompanying constructs of heterosexual desire, our participants collectively told a consistent story: despite their natural talent for theatre, women are not cut out to deal with the professional realities of theatre as they innately lack the psychological resource required to get on in the industry, and in any case, people with female bodies are simply viewed as (sexually) incongruous to the telling of exciting, active, stories. That is, these sex categories are mobilized to make sense of, and organize, three differently sex-typed realities of theatre work: the 'naturally' female dominated amateur stage, the 'naturally' male dominated professional theatre organization, and the 'naturally' male dominated content, or product, of a professional production. Here doing gender, the produced congruity of gender/sex/sexual desire (Butler, 1990; 2004), does not just legitimize work as continuously male or female sex-typed/dominated, but legitimizes and perpetuates *changes* in the sex-typing of work. Moreover, it is important to note here that these changes are not simply of theoretical curiosity: they correspond to ingrained discriminations, wherein hierarchies are created between bodies disciplined through the reproduction of constraining male/female sex

categories. Before proceeding to consider some possibilities to dismantle such discriminations, we will elaborate on this point.

Across our study the level of discrimination within theatre work was widely known: 'I remember when I was younger my drama teacher said to me that there are half as many female roles, and twice as many male roles but there are half as many men and twice as many girls'. Karen, a student at drama school, suggests how the valorisation of recognizably male bodies on stage may in turn mean that being perceived as a real man in theatre is valued more than the possession of theatrical skills:

> … at drama school they're fully aware, because of the bias in the industry, they won't have more girls than boys if they can help it [2]. There are boys who can't sing in tune in my year and I'm supposedly at one of the best drama schools in the world on a musical theatre course and some of them can't sing in tune or in time. But because they look great, they're just going to work. They've got agents from just standing in a chorus line and it's just because of the huge bias over the fact there are less boys in the   industry and more boys' parts and they want to try and get more boys into the industry.

Karen, continues to elaborate on such discriminatory practices:

> I had a conversation with my Head of Music about it and he said, "We will only take girls that don't have any vocal problems, all their vocal technique is there who are ready to go into the West End now. Boys we will take with vocal problems and we will fix them." I thought that was very interesting.

This hierarchical arrangement, where differently sexed bodies are held accountable (West and Zimmerman, 1987) or disciplined (Butler, 1990) in different ways, also appears in an account of a university dance class recalled by Sophie:

> We do dance theatre, so dance would have been stereotypically a female thing to do, and George is in our dance class. George cannot dance for toffee, but neither can a few of the girls. Yet when George does something [the lecturer] is like you are incredible, you have done so well … when the girls can't do it she is like why can't you do it … you should be able to do this. Why should they be able to do it, and George it is like an amazing thing when he can do it and we should all praise him.

There are parallels with previous un/doing studies where men are celebrated for displaying behaviours associated with women, while women who display such behaviours are simply said to be competent at their job, because these behaviours are normalized as a natural part of being a woman (e.g. Kelan, 2008; Pullen and Simpson, 2009). But here men are not simply being celebrated for their proficiency at certain 'feminine' work behaviours (Kelan, 2008; Pullen and Simpson, 2009), rather their lack of proficiency is organizationally calculated for, offset and celebrated.

Undoing gender and unchanging theatre

Our analysis has thus far focussed upon how binary sex categories are deployed to construct certain realities of men and women in order to enact particular realities of theatre work. This analysis enables us to understand how the shifting sex-typing of theatre work is legitimized

and organized, from amateur to professional work. Following Butler (2004), and Deutsch (2007), we were also concerned with the potential for these binary sex categories to be subverted or rendered irrelevant to the doing of theatre work; that is the *undoing* of gender (Nentwich and Kelan, 2014). It might be expected that such practices could provide discursive resources to help draw attention to the 'constructedness' of binary sex categories and so render the sex-typing of theatre, unintelligible, disorganized. What was remarkable, perhaps all the more so given the cultural association with theatre and the performance of certain gender roles, is the lack of evidence of undoing gender along the lines discussed by Butler (2004) and Deutsch (2007). We will discuss here the two closest instances encountered in our study and their possibilities for addressing gender inequalities.

James is a professional theatre director working for a regional theatre. James explained to us in interview how he left primary school teaching for theatre because of the possibility to challenge ways men are traditionally held accountable, or recognized as men: 'I just felt that in terms of my own identity I combined with a passion for theatre that I actually would be much truer to myself and be able to express … I would develop my own identity and personal and professional development in an arts context rather than in an education one'. As James explains: 'my move into the industry was partly about my own personal identity and wanting to move out of what I considered to be a closed, small minded, homophobic education system'. James articulates here how it was precisely the possibility to overthrow heteronormative sexual desire, and the sort of binary sex categories discussed in the previous section, that attracted him to theatre. Interestingly, James also consistently expressed to us that gender was not an important issue in British theatre, citing the presence of people with recognizably female bodies and, (mostly) homosexual men, in senior management and artistic positions in his own theatre. As James explained, in theatre: 'People employ people

on their merit… who is the best person for the job' By disconnecting theatre from the exclusionary gender norms he himself had sought to escape, James thus more or less refused to acknowledge the possible presence of those norms within amateur or professional theatre.

James was not alone in explaining how theatre work can subvert simplistic binary sex categories. Andrea, a freelance theatre producer and director, described how she actively attempted to undo gender norms during a theatre workshop:

> … we were put together to work on the project, they just started taking decisions. In the back of my mind, I was thinking why don't they ask me, why don't we all take a turn? I realised the way in which the men, I don't know, the way in which it's a very active interaction, "I think we should do this, let's do that, let's go ahead and
do this." Ok, not like, "What do you think? Shall we do this or that?" whereas perhaps with women, we're encouraged to be more facilitators and placators and soothers, not necessarily that one's mother's going to teach you to be like that. But certainly you are socialised to be like that and I realised very quickly to get a stake on this project, I needed to throw all that crap out the window and interact with them as they were interacting with me. When I did that, it was extremely fruitful. Instead of sitting back waiting to be asked and taking a turn, they weren't steamrollering me but it was like, what are we going to do, let's get on with it kind of attitude.

While Andrea here initially constructs norms of 'men'/ 'women' along the lines of Jackie and Lucy, she then takes an active decision to ignore how she is held accountable through gender (Deutsch, 2007) or views it as a performance with no substance (Butler, 2004) and starts to subvert those binary sex categories. However, just as with James, her own subversion of

binary sex categories is also accompanied by a general reluctance with us to engage with the pervasiveness of such norms for others. As she put it to us when we started to introduce gender statistics: 'Sitting around talking about how crap it is, I don't think works'. Just as with James, Andrea's own experience of undoing gender is accompanied by a refusal to discuss the prevalence of gender inequalities.

The accounts of James and Andrea subvert the simplified binary sex categories used by many of our other participants to justify the changing sex-typing from amateur to professional theatre work. And yet, concomitantly they also render the prevalence of gender norms, and inequalities, as not only less relevant to their experience (Deutsch, 2007) but as unspeakable. James and Andrea's accounts appear so disconnected from the experiences of how others do gender in theatre that it becomes difficult to even recognize inequalities and oppressions associated with the changing sex-typing of theatre work. Indeed both seemed incredulous to the point of disbelief when we mentioned industry gender statistics. Given this, it can be argued that James and Andrea may be understood to have only partially undone gender. This is because, while they clearly dispute the binary gender norms used to make sense changes in theatre work, they fail to adhere to the care for translation suggested by Butler (2004). To recall, as Lloyd (2008) sets out, for Butler (1990; 2004) gender norms cannot simply be subverted *sui generis*, from a gender-neutral, Archimedean vantage point. Rather such subversions involve the translation between multiple gender norms, thus rendering a movement that not only references their fantastic constructedness but possibilities for them (existing norms) to be reworked. For James and Andrea the closing down of any debate around the concept of gender, and extant norms, denies such possibilities for on-going translation (despite their initial translations). Indeed, both more or less claimed to us in interview to now embody something akin to gender-neutral vantage point.

Butler (2004) suggests that a more effective strategy to undo gender is to not dismiss earlier gender norms but rather to oscillate between those and 'new' norms. This is precisely why Butler (2004) discusses how drag is both a doing and undoing gender that can 'allegorize the spectacular and consequential ways in which reality is both reproduced and contested' (p218). If Andrea has a different image of 'woman' to Lucy or Jackie, then she might not simply dismiss that earlier norm but rather she might enter into dialogue with it and then seek to resolve conflict through translation. Specifically: 'To resolve this conflict, therefore, each side has to rethink its own presumptions about the human, about liveable lives, and about what counts as a universal claim. Each side, that is, has to confront the particularistic cultural limitations of its own conception of the universal and open itself up to the other before it can develop a more encompassing version' (Lloyd, 2008: 152).

By foreclosing discussion around gender inequalities, James and Andrea cannot pursue the careful translation work suggested by Butler (2004) that occurs between new and existing gender norms. We can start to understand why this might be the case with reference to Gill's (2014) analysis of the repudiation of sexism within cultural and creative industries. In particular, Gill (2014) argues that within these industries a neoliberal subjectivity – stressing creativity, individualism and entrepreneurialism, exemplified perhaps by Andrea, the freelance theatre director/producer – 'requires the elision of broader structural inequalities in favour of an emphasis on working hard and working on the self' (Gill, 2014: 523). That is, the repudiation of sexism, of gender inequalities, is demanded as part and parcel of being recognized as a cultural worker. Or, as Andrea, explains:

> For me, the more I rant about the negative things [gender inequalities], it doesn't really work for me because there's no solution. The only solution is you've just got to make more work and keep banging on the door until someone says yes.

Andrea here suggests, as with Gill (2014), that the repudiation of ingrained work inequalities is a necessary aspect of becoming an entrepreneurial, creative worker. The subversive potential of such acts of undoing gender, where binary norms are displaced, implies, not admitting, let alone challenging, extant gender norms and inequalities. In short, the radical potential of undoing gender is negated.

Concluding discussion

Our analysis supports the value of concepts of un/doing gender to understand, and perhaps challenge, *changes* in the sex-typing of work. In developing this argument we challenge some current tendencies in un/doing gender studies of sex-typed/dominated work. Notably, existing studies have increasingly tended to be cautious about proposing that interactional acts conceptualized as un/doing gender can make a difference to changes in the sex-typing of work. Increasingly, institutional explanations have been promoted which suggest that sex-typing is driven by 'structural', or macro-level, forces (e.g. diversity policies, laws, religions and customs) (see e.g. Charles, 2014; West and Zimmerman, 2009). We do not set out here to reject the salience of such institutional, or formalized factors, indeed our analysis suggests they do play a role in changes to sex-typing within theatre (e.g. the decision by UK drama schools to insist on sex balanced recruitment), but we do want to question the idea that future work should be exclusively or mostly orientated towards discussions of how 'institutional', or

'structural' forces, shape un/doing gender (Charles, 2014; Kelan and Nentwich, 2014; West and Zimmerman, 2009). Instead, the research presented here reveals how concepts of doing gender, especially those of Butler (1990; 2004), can be engaged to show how everyday interactions, which involve the production of binary sex categories, help people make sense of, and legitimize, changes in the sex-typing of work.

Within British theatre *changes* to the sex-typing/domination are at least partly legitimized and organized through interactional gendered doings. To understand why we conclude with this argument it is important to recognize that our analysis departs from some un/doing gender studies (and indeed the ethnomethodology of West and Zimmerman, 1987) in admitting a more direct relationship between un/doing gender and binary sex categories. Instead of viewing sex categories as more or less decoupled from acts of doing and undoing gender (as West and Zimmerman propose), our analysis drew us towards a more Butlerian approach to gender where sex categories are performed as a 'ground' on which individuals can ascribe gender norms to changing work activities, simultaneously fostering binary possibilities to be recognized as human or not (Butler, 1990; 2004). We did not set out our research study to develop this link between un/doing gender and sex-typed work, rather it emerged from the way our participants tended to construct essentialist sex categories, and binary images of men and women, to simultaneously make sense of, and legitimize, the shifting sex-typings of British theatre. Specifically, remarkably simplistic binary sex categories helped participants construct, and sustain more dynamic, or multiple patterns of sex-typings. However, our analysis also develops Butler's (1990; 2004) ideas too: specifically, our analysis suggests not only do binary sex categories endure despite abrupt changes in processes of sex-typing but rather they seem to endure through such changes: the evocation of binary sex categories

required the perpetuation of different times and spaces in which to be 'male/professional' and 'female/amateur'.

In recognizing these more dynamic, or multiple, sex-typings in work, our analysis draws attention towards two specific points. Firstly, the different sex-typings, and attendant gendered doings, we encountered were markedly hierarchical: they involved a recursive relationship between the production of a hierarchy between male and female sex categories, and the production of different 'realities' of a form of work. These realities corresponded to a hierarchy where theatrical bodily behaviours were rendered subservient to career skills and the content of theatrical productions. Moreover, these hierarchies were sustained through distinctions drawn over space and time, for example amateur stages are naturalized as female/feminized, just as professional plays are rendered male/masculinized; this act of spatiotemporal separation allows different amateur/female and professional/male binary sex-typings to not coincide with each other and not cancel each other out. This finding resonates not just with calls to understand the relationship between un/doing gender and sex categories (Messerschmidt, 2009; West and Zimmerman, 2009) but the establishment of hierarchies associated with those categories (Nentwich and Kelan, 2014).

Secondly, our analyses reveals something else about the interplay between these different sex-typings: the multiplicity of sex-typings we encountered cannot simply be characterized in terms of their separation but also their co-production. That is, it can be said that these three differently sex-typed 'realities' of theatre (bodily behaviours, career skills and theatrical content/product) required each other to be sustained. For instance, the discriminatory outcome wherein male bodies can be recognized and positively desired in professional theatre appears to be somewhat prefigured on the notion that people who are recognized by

themselves, and others, as male (Butler, 2004) are dissuaded from studying theatre. After all, if recognizably male bodies did dominate theatrical study, or at least participated in more equal numbers to women, the dismissive 'naturalness' of female participation in theatre, which, as we have explained above, feeds into acts of discrimination (towards women and men), would appear harder to sustain.

Although British theatre provided us with an exemplary domain to theorize the shifting multiplicities of sex-typed work, we were quite surprised by the lack of possibilities our research encountered to challenge such discriminatory shifts. Indeed, it might be anticipated that performatively doing and undoing gender lies at the core of theatrical work. However, where our participants did undo gender norms, these acts remain shorn of their radical potential as they were channelled into the self-making projects of entrepreneurial, creative subjects, repudiating, not challenging, existing gender inequalities and norms.

The concurrent affirmation and repudiation of gender inequalities is perhaps especially concerning within theatre. Unlike other industries, the gendered doings and undoings – the congruities drawn or not drawn between gender/sex/sexual desires – that are rehearsed within theatre offer a potent frame for countless individuals to recognize their own selves (Butler, 2004), just as Isabelle's fictional 'little girl' watching *High School Musical*. While attending theatre remains, at least in the UK, a rather exclusive cultural pursuit, the influence of theatre upon film and television, via training, multi-medium careers, adaptation, remains significant. As a result, while we offer our analysis here of theatre as a point of departure for future studies of work domains experiencing similar sex-typed shifts (not least other creative and cultural industries – e.g. fashion, fine art, cooking), we must also recognize that theatre, like television or film, may have a wider significance. The interactional gendering processes that

we have argued legitimize and organize the dominance of male bodies' on stage, while mostly organizational and work-related, have a socio-cultural influence that is arguably more directly and widely consumed than other industries (e.g. engineering, agriculture, and nursing), and indeed may influence those in other industries (e.g. filmic or theatrical representations of engineering, nursing, agriculture etc.). Future work along these lines might consider in more detail the nature of this relationship – that is: how do the un/doings of gender within cultural products, as discussed within media, culture, and theatre studies, interact with those in the work sites of cultural production and consumption. Specifically, future studies may examine how audiences might glimpse the doing and undoing of gender before the final call, or opening credits, helping to denaturalize theatres as sites for the rehearsal of restrictive and constraining gender norms. We hope that theatre practitioners themselves continue to support ourselves and indeed others drawn to this expressly performative task.

Notes

1. We have not worked within a sensemaking approach, yet there are resonances between our analysis and forms of sensemaking, especially Mills (2005) critical sensemaking; however there are important differences. Notably, sensemaking is usually said to be prompted by an event outside of the research study. In contrast, in our study we directly introduced an ambiguous event to our participants – the shifting sex-typing of theatre as evidenced by statistics on the shifting presence of male/female bodies; this event functioned as a 'cue' for individuals in interviews and focus group to plausibly, though not accurately, make sense of,

and enact, those realities (Pauldi and Mills, 2011). This is why we prefer the less esoteric phrase 'make sense of' rather than 'sensemaking'.

2. Specialist drama schools are responsible for training many individuals involved in the British theatre industry (as well as television and film), either in 3 year undergraduate or 1 year taught postgraduate programmes. Some of these schools predate the first university drama departments by almost 50 years. Given their established reputations these schools are highly oversubscribed for their limited places. At the time of press, only two schools, Guildhall School of Music and Drama and Royal Central School of Speech and Drama have the power to award degrees; the remaining schools currently award degrees through nearby universities. Despite the higher rates of applications from female students, all drama schools insist upon sex balanced admission.

References

Advance (2015) Gender Equality in England's Theatres: A Project by Tonic Theatre. Tonic Theatre, available online at: http://www.tonictheatre-advance.co.uk/

Ainsworth, S. Batty, A. and Burchielli, R. (2014) Women Constructing Masculinity in Volunteer Firefighting, *Gender, Work and Organization*, 21, 1, 37-56.

Alvesson, M. and Sandberg, J. (2013) *Constructing Research Questions*. London: Sage.

Butler, J. (1990/2006) *'Gender Trouble': Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge: London.

Butler, J. (2004) *Undoing Gender*, Routledge: London.

CEA (2015) UK Cinema Audience by Age and Gender. Cinema Exhibitors Association Ltd, available online at: http://www.cinemauk.org.uk/facts-and-figures/uk-cinema-audience-analysis/uk-cinema-audience-by-age-and-gender/

Charles, N. (2014) Doing Gender, Practising Politics: Workplace Cultures in Local and Devolved Government. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 21,4, 368-380.

Connell, R. (2005) *Masculinities*. 2nd edition, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Deutsch, F. (2007) Undoing Gender. *Gender & Society*, 21,1, 106-127.

Ely, R. and Meyerson, D. (2010) An organizational approach to undoing gender: The unlikely case of offshore oil platforms. *Research in Organizational Behaviour*, 30, 3-34.

Foucault, M. (1978) *History of Sexuality Volume 1: The Will to Knowledge*, Allen Lane: London.

Gardiner, V. (1998) The New Women in the New Theatre. In L. Goodman and J. de Gay (eds.) *The Routledge Reader in Gender and Performance*, pp. 74-79. London: Routledge.

Garfinkel, H. (1967) *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, Prentice-Hall, Eagle Cliffs, NJ.

Gill, R. (2014) Unspeakable Inequalities: Post Feminism, Entrepreneurial Subjectivity, and the Repudiation of Sexism among Cultural Workers, *Social Policy*, 21, 4, 509-528.

Guardian (2012a) A-level results 2012: breakdown by subject, gender and region, *The Guardian*, available online at: http://www.guardian.com/education/datablog/2013/jan/29/how-many-men-and-women-are-studying-at-my-university

Guardian (2012b) Women in theatre: how the '2:1 problem' breaks down, *The Guardian*, available online at: http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2012/dec/10/women-in-theatre-research-full-results

Guardian (2012c) Women in theatre: why do so few make it to the top, *The Guardian*, available online at: http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2012/dec/10/women-in-theatre-glass-ceiling

Hall, A. Hockey, J. and Robinson, V. (2007) Occupational Cultures and the Embodiment of Masculinity: Hairdressing, Estate Agency and Firefighting, *Gender, Work and Organization*, 14, 6, 534-551.

HESA (2013) Gender of UK Drama Students, Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2007/8-2011/12, Personal Enquiry, 25th October 2013.

Kelan, E. (2008) Emotions in a Rational Profession: The Gendering of Skills in ICT Work, *Gender, Work and Organization*, 15, 1, 49-71.

Kelan, E. (2010) Gender Logic and (Un)doing Gender at Work. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 17,2,174-194.

Kerbel, L (2012) Swimming in the Shallow End: Opportunities for girls in youth drama, focusing on the quantity and quality of roles available to them. *Tonic Theatre*, May 2012, available online at:

http://www.tonictheatre.co.uk/images/tonic_theatre_Swimming%20in%20the%20shallow%20end_Report_May2012.pdf

Lloyd, M. (2008) *Judith Butler: From Norms to Politics*, Polity Press: Cambridge.

Long, J. (1998) What share of the cake now? The employment of women in the English theatre (1994). In L. Goodman, L. and de Gay, L. (eds) *The Routledge Reader in Gender and Performance*, pp. 103-108. London: Routledge.

Mavin, S. and Grandy, G. (2013) Doing Gender Well and Differently in Dirty Work: The Case of Exotic Dancing. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 20,3, 232-251.

McDonald, J. (2013) Conforming to and Resisting Dominant Gender Norms: How Male and Female Nursing Students Do and Undo Gender. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 20,5, 561-579.

Messerschmidt, J. (2009) "DOING GENDER" The Impact and Future of a Salient Sociological Concept, *Gender & Society*, 23, 1, 85-88.

Mills, J. (2005) Organizational Change and Representations of Women in a North American Utility Company, Gender, Work and Organization, 12, 3, 242-269.

Nentwich, J. and Kelan, E. (2014) Towards a Topology of 'Doing Gender': An Analysis of Empirical Research and Its Challenges. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 21,2, 121-134.

Paludi, M. and Mills, J. (2013) Making sense of the Latin American "other": executive women in Argentina, *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 32, 8, 732-755.

Pilgeram, R. (2007) 'Ass-kicking' Women: Doing and Undoing Gender in a US Livestock Auction, Gender, Work and Organization, 14, 6, 572-595.

Powell, A. Bagihole, B. and Dainty, A. (2009) How Women Engineers Do and Undo Gender: Consequences for Gender Equality. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 16,4, 411-428. _40

Pullen, A. and Knights, D. (2007) Editorial: Undoing Gender: Organizing and Disorganizing Performance, *Gender, Work and Organization*, 14, 6, 505-511.

Pullen, A. and Simpson, R. (2009) Managing difference in feminized work: Men, otherness and social practice. *Human Relations*, 62,4, 561-587.

Risman, B. (2009) From Doing to Undoing: Gender as We Know It. *Gender & Society*, 23, 1, 81-84.

Skillset (2012) Creative Skillset Employment Census. Available at: http://www.creativeskillset.org/research /activity/census/article_9235_1.asp

West, C. and Zimmerman, D, H. (1987) Doing Gender. *Gender & Society*, 1,2, 125-151.

West, C. and Zimmerman, D, H. (2009) Accounting for Doing Gender. *Gender & Society*, 23, 1, 112-122.

Williams, C. (1992) The Glass Escalator: Hidden Advantages for Men in the "Female" Professions, *Social Problems*, 39, 3, 253-267.