Counterproductive

TIME MANAGEMENT IN THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

MELISSA GREGG

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From "Life," 1913.

Efficiency Crank: Young man, are you aware that you employed fifteen unnecessary motions in delivering that kiss?

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MELISSA GREGG

DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS

DURHAM AND LONDON

2018

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Printed in the United States of America on
acid-free paper ∞
Designed by Matthew Tauch
Typeset in Minion Pro and The Sans C4s
by Copperline Books

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Gregg, Melissa, [date] author.
Title: Counterproductive : time management in the
knowledge economy / Melissa Gregg.
Description: Durham : Duke University Press, 2018. |
Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2018035549 (print)
LCCN 2018044222 (ebook)
ISBN 9781478002390 (ebook)
ISBN 9781478000716 (hardcover : alk. paper)
ISBN 9781478000907 (pbk. : alk. paper)
Subjects: LCSH: Time management. | Labor productivity. |
Performance standards. | Mindfulness (Psychology) | Success
in business—Psychological aspects.
Classification: LCC HD69.T54 (ebook) |
LCC HD69.T54 G74 2018 (print) | DDC 658.4/093—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2018035549

Cover art: Richard Ibghy and Marilou Lemmens,
Output Index (1848–1957), from the series, *Each Number
Equals One Inhalation and One Exhalation*, 2016–2017.

Frontispiece: Cartoon reproduced in Mark Sullivan,
*Our Times: The United States 1900–1925, Part IV,
The War Begins 1909–1914* (New York: Charles Scribner's
Sons, 1932), 87.

FOR MY FATHER, who showed me the value of perseverance

in work and the freedom to be gained from building

a world on one's own terms

Contents

PREFACE ix

I THEORY

Introduction: The Productivity Imperative 3

1 A Brief History of Time Management 22

II PRACTICE

2 Executive Athleticism: Time Management and the Quest for Organization 53

3 The Aesthetics of Activity: Productivity and the Order of Things 78

III ANTHROPOTECHNICS

4 Mindful Labor 103

Conclusion: From Careers to Atmospheres 127

Postscript: A Belated Processing 141

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 143

NOTES 147

BIBLIOGRAPHY 179

INDEX 191

Preface

I can't remember when I started doing it. Every time I visit a second-hand bookstore, I head to the business section to look for self-help manuals. The particular style I like is addressed to wannabe executives struggling to get their act together. The frank titles and bold fonts cut to the chase: Getting Things Done. Stress and the Manager. Leave the Office Earlier. How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life. The melodrama of corporate careers, life-job conflicts, and endless bureaucratic bloat transpired in an entertaining yet poignant way. Initially, the books provided solutions to a world of work that I barely knew. I had not personally experienced many of the issues that were commonplace in the authors' stories, which were based on the anxieties that so many others apparently faced. I read to overcome my own lack of exposure to the culture of office life. Perhaps this curiosity came from growing up in an extremely remote place, with no real work culture to speak of, such that the idea of an organizational career seemed completely strange. And yet, over the years that my purchasing practice grew in to the text you are now reading, the dilemmas recounted in my time management guides became increasingly—indeed, painfully—familiar.

When I started buying used self-help books, it seemed nothing more than a perverse side hobby. One day I might have a chance to apply my literary training to these works and write about time management as a genre, I figured. The formulaic advice imparted by productivity gurus fascinated me, especially given how often they simply repackage already well-known tips. If the point of the books is to impart the secrets of pro-

fessional success, how secret can they be? I wondered. How does this insatiable industry for productivity continue trading on essentially unchanging insights? I concluded that the function of the books has to be something other than purely practical or we would never need so many versions of the same advice. The consolation readers find in the idea of productivity is the real basis of my interest: the pleasure entertained in the fantasy that time can be managed.

Time management manuals bear all the hallmarks of the definition of genre that I learned from Graeme Turner, among other scholars of popular culture. A genre is a predictable narrative that provides satisfying imaginary resolutions to persistent social contradictions. Like the fairy-tales from which they typically emerge, genres have the function of acknowledging what is unacceptable or difficult about the organization of a world, only to conclude with an enlightened reassertion of the status quo. The implications of this principle for the politics of contemporary labor form the substance of my analysis in this book. Delivering productivity pedagogy to isolated readers, time management genres have assisted in the dissolution of collective action against the structural transformations to knowledge work over many decades. Their optimistic formulas simulate a structure for "immaterial" workloads—the unquantifiable labors that mid-rank professionals perform to maintain ongoing employment. Productivity instruction is the hokey Band-Aid covering much deeper problems that affect the way work is arranged in the present. And it is here that I must mention another guiding factor in this book's development: the discovery of self-help guides in my mother's library after she died of cancer.

Sandra Gregg (formerly De Soza) was a teacher, a first-generation university graduate from a conservative working-class family. She had few immediate role models for managing a career that involved commuting between an island home on a sheep farm and a job teaching high school girls in the city. The fact that self-development books appeared on her shelf seemed proof to me that a degree of stress attended her characteristically graceful composure for an unknown amount of time. I will always wonder whether work-related anxiety contributed to her persistent illness and whether a different way to organize her schedule would have helped.

As I have come to reflect on this project, the trauma of unexpected

death, my acquisitive practice, and the topic of time management appear to be intricately linked. I now realize that this book is a culmination of many densely buried habits of coping with the disruptive change that my mother's passing precipitated. I expressed some of these suspicions in a blog post following the first complete draft of the manuscript. I wrote to process the surprising outpouring of emotion that came over me when I submitted the book to my patient editor. It was not the typical relief of getting an overdue deadline off my back. Instead it was a vast wave of grief that cascaded out of my body as I meditated alone one evening. In the concluding parts of this book, I explore some of the reasons that this experience of purging and loss may have arrived when I was also extremely happy to have laid something important to rest. The actual blog post I include as a postscript.

I Theory

Introduction

The Productivity Imperative

Counterproductive explores how productivity emerged as a way to think about workplace performance at the turn of the twentieth century and its ongoing consequences for the administration of labor today. This history of time management—in theory and in practice—offers an account of the philosophical underpinnings for productivity, a reappraisal of its original premises, and a set of provocations regarding its ongoing relevance in the modern workplace. At a macro level, productivity is the principal metric used in domestic economic modeling and forecasts for enterprise efficiency. But as my previous research has shown, for the many workers involved in information and communication services, productivity is also experienced as an archly personal, everyday concern.[1] A dwindling supply of secure, predictable jobs, combined with a cutthroat job market for heavily indebted college graduates, creates pressure to prove one's ongoing value. For the generations making a living in the shadow of the Organization, the productivity imperative is an intimate interpellation.[2] It is the cumulative effect of corporate cost-cutting measures that urge employees to "do more with less" and "work smarter, not harder."[3]

A significant contradiction exists in the aspiration to be productive when statistics reflect a decline in salaried compensation relative to corporate earnings. According to the McKinsey Institute, the present generation of workers has little hope of achieving the level of wealth of their parents.[4] In the United States, vast inequalities persist between workers within and across states, split between low-wage service work

and highly compensated technical trades.[5] The outsourcing of "mental" as much as "manual" labor involves evacuating middle-class jobs to the lowest global bidder.[6] Given these circumstances, it seems timely to ask: to what end do we need to be productive—for our own good or for our managers'? Who are our bosses, anyway, in a world of decentralized, algorithmic labor? Is productivity even the right measure for work when jobs with discrete, measurable outputs may be in decline?

These questions, while worthy of analysis in their own right, arise from a set of unresolved issues that linger from my previous book, *Work's Intimacy*, for which *Counterproductive* may stand as a prequel. Both books seek a language to explain why apparently privileged people work as often and as hard as they do.[7] My earlier analysis found that information professionals derive a compelling degree of pleasure from the performance of productivity, at times to the detriment of other personal or social interests. The current book is prompted by this historical curiosity, in which workers learn to "do what they love" in the service of others' profit.[8] I want to provide a backstory for today's heady narratives of passion exercised through work.

To do this, I focus on one resilient trait. *Counterproductive* shows how time mastery became a defining quality of professionals over an extended historical period, remaining constant through successive waves of managerial discourse.[9] The imposition of temporal regimes through efficiency engineering directed the affective intensity of labor accomplishment in two ways: first, toward heroic individual feats for external measurement, and later, toward inwardly generated methods of self-scrutiny and enhancement. This gradual adjustment to productivity as common sense was a necessary reconfiguration of attitudes toward self and work performance. It was the principal means by which management regimes upended the default assumption of labor politics—namely, that solidarity and power are formed through the collective imposition of work limits.

From the earliest instances of time management in the factory to the software that facilitates disparate schedules today, the following chapters show how the productivity imperative separated workers from one another by assuming a logical order of privilege. Valuable jobs became concentrated at the top of the organizational hierarchy, accruing ever greater status, while tasks deemed trivial were delegated or outsourced

to subordinates. Productivity logic thus sanctions those whose labor is regarded as vital in advancing the spirit of enterprise and justifies the ability to offload mundane matters to others. This is the way in which we can say that productivity is hegemonic in the modern workplace: efficiency thinking normalizes asociality and asymmetry in the guise of appropriate professional conduct. To overcome this way of organizing labor requires a fundamental reckoning with the legacy of the corporate firm and the practices inherited from industrialization.

As we will see, much of this history is gendered. In the Fordist era, the executive-secretary was the standard delegation couplet, part of a comprehensive sexual contract that required women's poorly compensated participation.[10] In feminism's aftermath, contemporary productivity technologies displace the ongoing trauma arising from the death of the secretary.[11] Today's startups openly celebrate the delegation dynamic and the beauty of software-led servitude: "By far our most common service," says Ted Roden of the task-harvesting website Fancy Hands, "is making phone calls for people. Calling a restaurant, for example, to change a reservation that was really hard to get in the first place—that's the sort of thing that most of us would like to hand off to someone else, but until now couldn't find anyone willing to do it."[12] The gradual retreat of the office secretary in the service of others' productivity is here offset by technologies that continue the same tradition of entitled delegation. The digital personal assistant—the TaskRabbit, the Uber driver, and the Turk worker—is the technical means by which class privilege can be maintained despite widespread occupational insecurity.[13] For an elite demographic of professionals, technology provides both the *techniques* (skills) and the *technics* (infrastructure) that enable the *practice* of productivity.[14] Digital platforms offer a system for interchangeable tasks and a simulated management function that offsets the need to identify work limits. This process is captured in the tagline for the popular productivity package Evernote, whose premium upgrade "keeps your progress predictable, even when the workday isn't."[15] Technology's dependable role is likewise evident in innovations such as Humin, an app that its website claims "remembers all the tiny details about how and where you met someone"—much like an old-school secretary. In each case, a device running a program ensures elegance in social encounters, especially when status and credibility are at stake.

MANAGING PRECARITY

For its middle-class users, productivity software offers a reassuring if topical salve for a period of perceived ontological volatility. Time management tools are material and psychological support for jobs and careers that are felt to be unstable, improvised, and forever running at a frantic pace. Efforts to control time are a way to cope with this condition of so-called *precarity*, which many scholars consider the defining character of our contemporary moment.[16] By focusing on genres of time management, my analysis continues the work of critics such as Lauren Berlant, especially the textual examples she reads as symptoms of the impasse that post-Fordism represents to notions of "the good life."[17] The very prospect of a salaried lifestyle is just one aspect of the broader paradigm of social security institutionalized, albeit briefly, in the postwar settlement. Paying attention to productivity technologies, and the social practice of delegation in particular, we can see that insecure work seems pervasive now only because it is experienced by growing numbers of workers whose time was once managed by others.[18] For the many partially employed gig workers, contract staff, and laborers who make a living at the will of suppliers, contingency has always been the lived condition of employment. These qualifications are essential to adequately describe the stakes of a globally mediated and persistently racialized division of labor today.[19]

In the case of the salaried workers who are my primary focus, devolved hierarchies, mobile technology and the push for more flexible working hours mean that time is experienced differently than the iconic 9–5 regime.[20] The fetish for collaboration in large and small organizations renders working days subject to individual calendars and dispositions. Schedules become battle zones of alignment between distributed peers in teams, adding a layer of coordination to what had previously been taken-for-granted office presence.[21] This decentralized professional milieu is less a matter of increasing busyness among workers as it is the logistical nightmare of achieving synchronicity. In the words of Judy Wajcman, this is a problem not of time but of *timing*.[22] Wajcman's empirical evidence demonstrates that time pressure results from multiple converging elements. Among the relevant factors, she lists an increase in the *volume* of work expected of employees; an increase in *temporal*

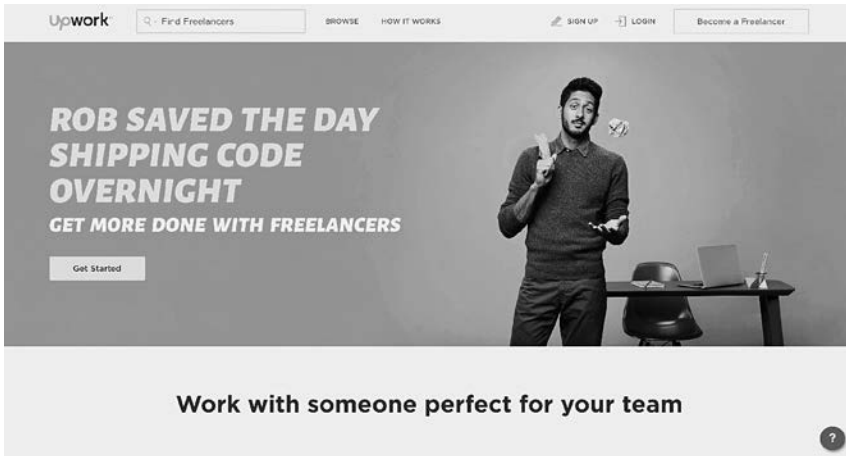

FIGURE I.1 Digital platforms for gig work trade on an idea of productivity that normalizes delegation as the marker of professional success.

disorganization as worker and workplace lose their innate proximity; and the phenomenon of *temporal density*. The latter is the intensification of job function when multitasking and moving between different tasks becomes ingrained.[23] The psychological toll of windows, tabs and feeds filtering through devices, on top of the already hectic pace of meeting-heavy corporate cultures, creates a feeling of perennial context switch. Today's productivity performances are therefore characterized by the porousness of work's physical and temporal architectures, exacerbated by new technologies and platforms. Subsequent chapters reveal how previous examples of efficiency engineering also reflect their own particular socioeconomic and technological circumstances.

There are challenges in identifying an accurate or appropriate class subject for the user of productivity tools. This is not a conceptual quibble; nor is it an apology for neglecting to incorporate user studies as part of my method in later chapters. The changing manifestation of class identity is precisely the impetus for my broader project. Along with a number of recent scholars, I maintain that one's relationship to time is a primary means by which power is experienced. Temporal sovereignty—"the ability to choose how you allocate your time," according to Wajcman—is a historically specific form of freedom.[24] And as Sarah Sharma illustrates,

in the current geography of labor, temporal awareness is politically necessary to recognize "how one's management of time has the potential to further diminish the time of others."[25] My specific approach builds on these insights to suggest that the activity of time management is a way to displace anxiety about a much larger concern than mere productivity. The bigger issue that aestheticized activity avoids is the sense that we may have reached the end of a certain kind of salaried worker, whose experience of time on the terms of the Organization served as an enduring index of modernity. Efforts to achieve productivity are in this sense prompted by nostalgia for a time that a clock or a stopwatch *could* determine and define our orientation to a job. The metrics that would replace this form of solace regarding work's completion, as much as its victories, continue to evade us. *Counterproductive* therefore conveys the pointlessness of the quest for productivity in today's workplaces, given the general inability of labor activists to articulate an effective "chronopolitics."[26]

Understanding the futility of salaried productivity in a world of 1 percent profiteers is a vital perspective for labor activists and scholars to grasp. This realization matters regardless of whether we are in fact witnessing a decline in the number of ongoing salaried jobs, which is much debated and generally difficult to assess in a dynamic global economy. It also explains why the practice of productivity is not limited to knowledge workers, even though time-management techniques are best understood within the confines of a very particular history of white-collar affect.[27] Productivity concerns effectively mediate the sense of apprehension that Richard Sennett ascribes to all work cultures "emphasizing constant risk," in which "past experience seems no guide to the present."[28] *Counterproductive* approaches these modern maladies by way of a legacy story, a reenactment of the discursive influences that shaped professional subjectivity in the period of history defined by the factory and the firm. The chapters demonstrate how, over the course of many decades, productivity accrued virtue as a framework for living ethically through work.[29] Such a comforting equation requires detailed interrogation in light of the empirical details of inequality outlined earlier. In devising a new take on productivity practices, I join other critics and thinkers engaged in the unpopular task of arguing that productivity is a unit of measure—at best, a self-illuminating practice—rather than a calling.[30]

PRODUCTIVITY AS POST-SECULARISM

The moral appeal of productivity as it is performed by a specific and influential group of knowledge professionals rests on the term's ability to accommodate a post-secular belief system to guide the expenditure of time and effort. By post-secular, I mean that productivity has a motivational ethos that surpasses, without requiring adherence to, any one cultural belief system or edict. Productivity's capacity to propel *activity* without recourse to any framework of philosophical *purpose* marks its present dominant form. While it may be tempting to read productivity as the secular replacement for the original spirit of capitalism, such a reading would imply that there are other spiritual traditions that continue to be welcome in addition to the quest for productivity in labor. The implication of my argument is that, in the West, this has not been the case for some decades. The reason our leaders struggle to account for terrorism, for example, is that the sacred motivations of nonproductive subjects pose the most inconceivable threat to the Euro-American way of life.

Max Weber's original reading of Protestantism attributed religious devotion to the work ethic. Adherence to duty inspired sacred favor through material wealth, reinforcing the sense of one's chosen status.[31] As contemporary employers seek to motivate workers from diverse cultural backgrounds, this perspective requires revision. In the current context, productivity is an accommodating signifier that fills the spiritual void of profit-driven corporate culture, generating a self-affirming logic for action. Productivity succeeds as an inclusive if myopic belief structure at a time that workplaces are challenged to celebrate a variety of values without privileging any ideology in particular. In the chapters that follow, we will see how the adoption of popular efficiency techniques, tools, and apps avoids difficult questions of meaning and purpose by emphasizing activity *in and of itself*. The aim of this book is to trace the genealogy of these time-management efforts, both in and outside the office, to understand how this work-centric worldview became possible. My further intention, given the exhausting amount of purposeless activity apparently taking place,[32] is to ask how practices of professionalism can be reimagined to better situate our labor in relation to cause and consequence.[33]

Also guiding this account is the observation that the productivity ideal informing both information technology (IT) and workplace design trades on a model of work that is more than a hundred years old. Identifying the origins of time-management tenets reveals how many of the discourses of efficiency inherited from previous eras are ill suited to a world revolutionized by mobile and digital platforms. Scientific management eliminated wasted motion to drive production in the factory and the office at a time that people worked in fixed hours and locations, with measurable inputs and outputs. In today's distributed work worlds, mobile devices turn any location into a potential workplace. What we count as work has also broadened to incorporate the logistical, administrative, and social aspects that accompany the formal demands of most jobs. My analysis, as a scholar of gender and queer life, begins with the observation that the dawn of scientific management was a time of restricted workforce participation and, thus, comparatively simplistic theories of labor composition. Pioneering productivity studies focused on the repetitive manual labor of young, often migrant workers, many of whom were poor women. Assumptions typical of the era established class, gender, and ethnic biases that continue in management theory and practice today. As I will show, the ideas of productivity developed in earlier moments of efficiency measurement hold little credibility in light of findings that suggest coercion in key experiments. Maintaining allegiance to compromised research is not just bad habit. It is symbolic of larger issues affecting the authority of management as a discipline.[34]

Given my background in gender and cultural inquiry, I feel a sense of urgency to redress these issues, especially because of the continuing lack of diversity at the senior level in business schools and the combined effect of STEM and management degrees that appear largely bereft of feminist thought.[35] This critical absence has significant knock-on effects in the practical world of business, where the diversity industry often floats free of post-structuralist theory or complex philosophies power. I will never forget sitting on a conference call at Intel in 2016 listening to the diversity team explain "intersectionality" to management. A century after the first studies of manufacturing targeted minority workers we are only beginning to see the language of corporate America reflecting the subjectivities on which it has relied for its success. In this book, as in

other writing, I try to apply critical theories of gender and management to practical questions in real workplaces, including my own.[36]

STRUCTURE

This book consists of three parts. Part I, "Theory," tackles the legacy of time-management methods introduced by turn-of-the-twentieth-century progressivists to optimize work in the office and factory. Chapter 1 considers the personalities and principles that mark the emergence of time management as a *science*, in the spirit of feminist science and technology studies. Specifically, I note the influence of time-and-motion study in ushering forth the focus on individual performance that productivity regimes continue today. This early work, pioneered by the human factors engineer Lillian Gilbreth, anticipated the link between productivity and athleticism as a compelling vision of workplace accomplishment. As we will see, Gilbreth's articulation of individual outputs with the moral stimulus of self-improvement is the framework through which management regimes encouraged workers to plan and progress their careers for decades. Because Lillian Gilbreth was the wife of the more publicly known management consultant Frank Gilbreth, her position as a founder of human factors engineering and workplace psychology is often overlooked in conventional academic accounts. A growing volume of research documents the substantial contribution made by writers such as Lillian Gilbreth, Ellen Richards, and Christine Frederick in the longer story of scientific management, despite social attitudes that prevented them from being recognized at the time.[37] This history is one of the most exciting discoveries unveiled in the course of my research.

Along with their male peers, these bold and enterprising women used the latest labor-saving theories to advocate for the efficient expenditure of time in work, although their interest was the domestic labor performed by women. Home economists of this generation predate feminist critics who note women's absence in both Marxist and historical accounts and precipitated efforts to compensate domestic activity.[38] Their writing actively promoted housewifery as a noble calling for middle-class women, even if their own lived example failed to follow these recommendations.

Sharing the skills to create orderly routine amid a range of tasks and distractions, this productivity advice tailored to the domestic sphere finds new relevance today as more people find themselves working from home, dealing with constant interruptions from attention-seeking technologies and contending with the ongoing effects of what in my previous book I termed "presence bleed." Turning to the era of home economics, the movement Ellen Richards described as "the art of right living,"[39] allows us to see that the productive lifestyle facilitated by software services and "smart home" devices today is hardly novel. It is instead an extension of issues first encountered by women in the margins of industrialization.

Domestic science visionaries also advanced the same principle of productivity that has held for more than a century: a covert reliance on delegated labor both in and outside the home. Engaging with time management's precursors, the women running *home* enterprises in the interests of greater efficiency, troubles our assumptions about who the first managers actually were. This different take on the history of management allows us to see that "the servant question" that pervaded discussions in polite New England society continues to define the ethical terrain of workplace relations in the present. Today's productivity apps reinscribe the hierarchy of superiority instituted by the female head of the home enterprise. For every TaskRabbit user empowered by outsourcing odd jobs today, connection to this larger history is needed to understand how routine work takes noticeably gendered and racialized forms.[40]

Part I also consults original materials and archives to uncover the gendered dynamics that allowed an overriding paternalism to color early initiatives in management theory. A selective rendering of workplace sites and participants, coupled with a pervasive blindness to power dynamics, marked a founding flaw in the documents that established the premise of productivity in academic discourse. Yet subsequent iterations of management thought left these unhelpful first principles in place. The further contribution of this opening chapter is to note that in the shift from the home to the firm, the operating assumption driving efficiency reform in labor switched from spiritual motivations to the pursuit of profit.

Part II, "Practice," provides an analysis of time-management techniques in two popular formats: the self-help book and the mobile app. Appraisal of productivity techniques in both written and digital form

shows how time management became a way of life for knowledge professionals seeking affective security amid job volatility. The spike in time-management manuals published in the 1970s and 1990s, and the boom in productivity IT more recently, reflects distinct generational experiences of white-collar affect.[41] It is hardly incidental that productivity pressures rise in tandem with various economic downturns; the point of comparing the two periods of time-management practice is to note the amount of repetition in advice offered to readers and users. The mantras of time-management gurus espoused in manuals and later engineered into software have few empirical bases, even if they offer a kind of consolation at the level of aesthetics, as we will see. Such performative processes are the crucial foundation for productivity as a post-secular activity absent content. To the extent that time management manifests as a distinct genre, the chapters in part II illustrate that there is something structurally predictable in how we are asked to negotiate the changing expectations of knowledge work. My reading reinforces how time-management instruction and adherence have become a necessary form of immaterial labor in an information economy, training workers to embrace their flexibility.

Comparing textual pedagogies of time management with the software services available in app form today establishes the formidable role of self-help genres in the adoption of management common sense. The power of casual citation and mimicry in fashioning authority for time-management techniques gives productivity thinking a necessary cultural weight, confirming its function as "mythology."[42] This is not to discount the material usefulness of time-management training for readers coping with workplace deficiencies of various kinds. In each chapter, I delight in introducing examples that have proved both fun and practical at different times. As in any genre, the degree of predictability that haunts the narratives of these texts provides its own pleasure in the satisfying resolution of lived contradictions.[43] The overriding intent of this middle section of the book is to show that these highly successful popular genres of time management were crucial in encouraging a personalized relationship to efficiency, continuing the initial work of scientific management's prophets and forebears.

Both chapters in part II draw from the writing of the philosopher Peter Sloterdijk to explain the biopolitical turn that sutures career aspiration to self-management. In *You Must Change Your Life* (2013), Sloterdijk

elaborates on the words of Rainer Maria Rilke to produce a theory of the Western individual understood as a practicing subject. The notion of "anthropotechnics" explains the popular tendency throughout history for individuals to engage in various forms of asceticism to improve themselves.[44] Sloterdijk's detailed account of disciplinary regimes and habits is intended to critique the reification of religious practice and thus extends to more secular forms of self-restraint, denial, and training. (A key example is sports.) All of these initiatives are framed in his reading as a response to the feeling of "vertical tension": an awareness of the self within oneself that is haunting one's present insufficiencies. Vertical tension is the perception that there is always something more that one is capable of, a level of self-competence that is not yet achieved and liberated, a degree of excess capacity or potential that can be tapped with the right level of focus. My counter-narrative of management theory over the past century uses this idea to explain how neoliberalism's individualizing discourses enacted a convenient marriage between career ambition and notions of self-worth. Productivity theory traded on our vulnerabilities as practicing subjects, our sense that there may always be more that we can do to prove our contribution and value. In an age of precarity, it is unsurprising that the audience for these feats becomes the potential employer. The capitalist hijacking of self-formation fully exploits our admirable quality of desiring accomplishment, fanning a quest for victories that will never be satisfied or exhausted.

Sloterdijk's practicing individual displays aspects of the self-governing behavior that is customarily attributed to Michel Foucault and Nikolas Rose in their writing on subjectification.[45] Adding a spiritual dimension to these economic and medical diagnoses, Sloterdijk's poetic theory is attractive for highlighting the inner motivation and drive in individuals' efforts to self-realize. Sloterdijk expresses the quest for enhanced efficiency and performance in terms of athleticism. Even colloquially, it is axiomatic that any result can be improved on with a dedicated commitment to training. There is something positive and affirming about this process of goal identification for individuals that typical diagnoses of neoliberalism routinely ignore. In the case of employees, my sense is that this is part of the pleasure of work and its intimacies that I discovered in countless interviews. I have found no better explanation of productivity as it manifests in the work settings of today's information professional

than Sloterdijk's concept of athleticism. It is the primary model for career advancement in organizations that foster individual feats of heroism as the hallmarks of success.[46]

Sloterdijk writes, "The athlete is meant to want something that is not entirely impossible, but fairly improbable: an unbroken series of victories."[47] The analogy to career progression is clearest when we consider how workers are expected to maintain an unbroken series of appointments that demonstrate ever more profound skills and achievements. So while productivity is not in itself a damaging aim for workers, deep analysis of time-management self-help reveals how striving for personal greatness normalizes the asociality of professional aspiration. In the resource-depleted organization, the ultimate effect of career-oriented athleticism is to render all colleagues competitors.[48]

Part III, "Anthropotechnics," brings together my interest in productivity platitudes and Sloterdijk's philosophy to examine the infatuation with mindfulness taking hold in technology and corporate cultures in recent years. Mindfulness practices mobilize aspects of previous time-management methods that create awareness and attention to a broader purpose for one's work. In doing so, mindfulness provides a sanctioned mode of disengagement from the social, a defense against the ceaseless expectation of productivity. The sheer popularity of mindfulness in relation to other technology trends—indeed, the extent to which mindfulness programs have become commonplace within tech companies themselves[49]—points to a desire for *time out* from the non-stop pace of constantly connected work lives. This concern for the belabored self relates to developments in health and wellness services in the workplace as much as it reflects the focus on resilience in activist communities.[50] In the very week that I am revising this manuscript, for example, Intel employees have been invited to join a series of lunchtime webinars to learn the basics of mindful meditation (which I did).

If we adapt the sociological lens of time scholars such as Eviatar Zerubavel,[51] the turn to mindfulness can be seen as a response to the decline in collective opportunities to experience ritual in the workplace. As performed by Silicon Valley personalities, already famous for rejecting the temporality of the buttoned-up office, mindfulness continues an established tradition of finding enlightenment in alternative cultures that smooth the way for more stimulating business transactions.[52]

In contrast, my account of the mindfulness movement explicitly links the desire for self-care through time out with previous versions of labor politics. I suggest that the selfless qualities of meditation have the capacity to refashion a different relationship to time from the one enshrined in the organizational form. The ultimate question raised in chapter 4 is whether an emerging practice of mindful labor can introduce ethics to the pursuit of productivity once the pact between time and self-sovereignty is suspended. Mindful labor may prove the best means currently available to reinsert collegiality and other-oriented concern into the conversation about work futures.

Mindfulness and wellness initiatives are an important opportunity in the broader history of productivity that this book outlines. They introduce the prospect that our dominant attitude toward time could depart from one of possessive individualism to something much more lateral, even collective, in the interests of sustainable livelihoods. In the conclusion of the book I explore alternatives to productivity as a mode of conduct for personal and professional achievement, drawing on my latest research investigating new enterprise activity. The examples chosen shift the typical focus of work from the model of competitive, linear athleticism to something less heroic, even ephemeral. My case studies feature collectives that gather outside the office clock and calendar, experimenting with new forms of collaboration beyond the enterprise. In these "productive atmospheres," workers are developing social worlds that make a virtue of contingency, building communities of support to withstand the anonymizing effects of the job market.

Counterproductive aims to decenter the "individual contributor" as the pinnacle of workplace agency. This objective is inspired by Kathi Weeks and other writers who are developing feminist interpretations of autonomism and workerist principles.[53] In so many debates about the future of work today, we remain trapped in a paranoid register of loss and nostalgia, buoyed by nightmare scenarios of robots and algorithms stealing whatever secure jobs remain. Leaving aside the complexities of this technological transition, in which machine-assisted work will still require our consent and training, this book aims at a different target. Versed in the knowledge of management theories that consistently have exacerbated individual fears throughout history, we must now move the conversation about work from the angst of careers to the cultivation of

atmospheres. Understanding the social conditions of our labor not only better reflects the nature of privilege and exploitation—our dependence on one another as we seek freedom from and within work—but it also recognizes the material consequences of our chosen livelihoods on a finite planet.

My concluding provocations therefore offer a set of recommendations for *post-work* productivity. These principles invite a new attitude toward technology and workplace design: a toolbox with which we can begin to construct durable work worlds in and adjacent to the compromised institutions of labor and its politics. As someone who has regularly moved the location of my professional practice in the search for an accommodating environment, I do not mean for this book to serve as an abstract account of the problem of productivity. I seek fellow travelers interested in developing counterproductive gestures within and outside the organizational forms we inherit, to realize more liberating, cooperative, even selfless experiences. Right now, mindfulness techniques of personal care provide small comfort for the trauma of productivity, a pause button for the drama of days with too much To Do. But placed in the context of a hostile political culture and the malaise that accompanies looming environmental threat, mindfulness may prove pivotal in recognizing the degree of reactivity that attends our public conversations as much as our everyday work. Consumer-led software innovation, coupled with other attributes of a sharing economy, provides a nascent infrastructure for a renewed sense of perspective and solidarity in the wake of the bureaucratic organization. For the good of the planet and our health, this generation's labor movement has no choice but to be collective in mind and spirit.

METHOD

I should admit that I draw heavily on Sloterdijk's *You Must Change Your Life* as both a generative model and an act of homage. I encountered the text at a time of profound personal transition, having left my home in Australian academia for the unknown world of American high tech. I found solace in the book's message, which helped me understand why I so regularly seek new horizons for my thinking and writing. It gave

me comfort to know that my serial attraction to transformation and self-realization has precedent dating back thousands of years. That said, Sloterdijk's characteristically confident missive had little to offer when I faced the realization that few colleagues from my previous life seemed destined to join me on this journey. Having moved my work to an industry audience, I struggle to maintain connection with close academic colleagues and friends whose personal productivity pressures leave little time for an e-mail or a Skype date. Feeling overwhelmed by a new job and a new country while writing this book exacerbated what were already unhelpful habits of stress accumulation, angst internalization, and social avoidance. While I have often been described as "productive" (a word I never took as a compliment), the fact that my health suffered in my new location left me feeling lost and without bearings. All of my usual metrics for workplace performance and inclusion seemed lacking, and I did not know where to find them. The irony of this experience continues to plague me, given the motivations uncovered by reflecting on my past and my mother's illness.

For Sloterdijk, anthropotechnics is an other-oriented ethics. It welcomes and celebrates a diversity of ascetic practices as long as these efforts advance the shared project of planetary survival, or "co-immunity." Emerging from his Spheres trilogy,[54] the concept of co-immunity provides a connection among "bubbles," the psychological and spatial support structures individuals develop as protection from the traumatic contaminants of the outside world. In the best possible light, I view productivity practices as so many variations of this need for personal insulation. Productivity genres summon a membrane of protection against the aggressive climate of a capitalist economy and the private worries of an interior world. In the bubble of personal productivity, the practicing subject finds a more accommodating environment than the formal genres of management surveillance. Productive atmospheres enable self-propelling support systems that may prove more sustainable than previous identities forged through labor. These are the best intentions we can bestow on the examples of co-immunity illustrated in this book.

Adopting this framework has limitations, however. Taken literally, there is no guarantee that elite workers concentrated in particular neighborhoods will offer sanctuary to those whose unproductive lifestyles prove questionable. In *Chaos Monkeys* (2016), his caustic account of life

at Facebook and Twitter, Antonio Garcia Martinez captures the zeitgeist of modern-day San Francisco when he writes that Californians will "step right over a homeless person on their way to a mindfulness yoga class":

> It's a society in which all men and women live in their own self-contained bubble, unattached to traditional anchors like family or religion, and largely unperturbed by outside social forces like income inequality or the Syrian Civil War. . . . Ultimately, the Valley attitude is an empowered anomie turbocharged by selfishness, respecting some nominal "feel-good" principles of progress or collective technological striving, but in truth pursuing a continual self-development refracted through the capitalist prism: hippies with a capitalization table and a vesting schedule.[55]

Like the world-changing rhetoric of so many startup entrepreneurs, productivity always risks being a solipsistic performance, a belief structure premised on individual sovereignty. It assumes that both time and one's self can be known and conquered through the exercise of determined will. This is why productivity has become such an accommodating capsule for contemporary notions of freedom: being productive, we embrace a pressing sense of responsibility to carry out tasks that appear obvious and necessary in a broader catalogue of things that always need doing. The effect of this circularity is to obviate the need for frank conversations about morality or virtue, which can be related only to the distribution of work and of wealth at a time of growing inequality.[56]

The simultaneous discipline and arrogance involved in the quest to master time is fallibly human. It is not incidental that the productivity imperative holds prominence as we enter an era some are calling "platform capitalism"—that is, an economy and a society increasingly built by software engineers.[57] Time management's delegation dynamic appeals to the programmer mind set, which, after all, continues to trade on the language of masters and slaves in delivering the infrastructures of command and control. But productivity has shaped professional subjectivity in each period of capitalist enterprise. When we covet productivity in the present, we rarely consider its relationship to the manifold conditions that transformed work and home over the course of a century. Among these, a partial list would mention the decline in domestic servants, the shrinking size of families, the persistent presence of women in paid work across every class bracket, the character and location of

housing, increased life expectancy, the passions of religious belief, the availability of information, education and communication media, and the growth in cheap and powerful computation devices. Together, these and many other developments have placed greater expectations on individuals to navigate their own course through life as secular organizations retreat from the obligation of resource provision. I crave more substantial encounters among anthropology, history, information and computer sciences, design, engineering, management, and gender and cultural studies to account for these manifold developments. Of course, the very forces of productivity that I explore here are some of the most prominent obstacles that prevent such writing from occurring.

My earlier study of information professionals made a feature of sharing participants' experiences in their own words. In *Work's Intimacy*, I deliberately wanted the workers to speak for themselves. In situ interviews were critical for revealing just how fraught the vocabulary for social contribution through work had become. In the late 2000s, employees felt torn between the competing pleasures and constraints of digitally mediated jobs. Their legitimate gratitude for workplace flexibility assisted by mobile devices made them feel lucky to work wherever they could. At the same time, the very character of work, and what productive labor actually meant to them, remained largely unexamined. This left a fair proportion of study participants unable to "count" as "work" the growing habits of checking email, anticipating contact, and using personal time to catch up on tasks left aside in the service of other, presumably more urgent duties. At this juncture, maintaining a reliable, responsive, available, and competent professional persona was considered a necessary evil, despite the damage this might have wrought to health, families, and friends. For this book, I consult the past, and some distinctly unfashionable artifacts, to track the origins of the discursive formations routinely invoked in my previous project. I always suspected a degree of repetition would become apparent in the common neuroses arising around productivity; indeed, I saw value in sharing this simple observation, imagining it might be empowering for workers to feel less lonely in their encounter with intensifying workloads.

The consistent interest in productivity techniques I have found in popular culture over the course of many decades shows that optimizing output is hardly a recent concern. Nor is productivity solely the domain

of managers at the forefront of economics and industry. Our ability to organize ourselves and our work is a chronic source of professional anxiety. From the materials assembled in this book, we can note that it is a burden carried especially by workers with little power in organizational hierarchies and whose jobs lack clearly measurable outputs. While these findings and methods map on to my disciplinary training in gender and cultural studies, English literature, and sociology, I am also excited that this work has led me to new audiences in science and technology studies, critical management studies, feminist media studies and software studies. These hybrid conversations are only going to be more necessary as our work and home lives become algorithmically mediated. By placing scientific management and its myths of origin under scrutiny, we can question the functions served by productivity's self-perfecting impulse when the social, material, and spiritual rewards for labor are no longer so obvious—not least because of the same processes of software engineering that give rise to the dawning data economy. My hope is that this book offers a more accurate and beneficial discussion of work in the past *and* present so that employees of the future may not only understand the true value of their many contributions but, in so doing, entertain a broader set of options for making a life around a living.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1 Melissa Gregg, "Getting Things Done: Productivity, Self-Management and the Order of Things," in *Networked Affect*, ed. Ken Hillis, Susanna Paasonen, and Michael Petit (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015), 187–202; Melissa Gregg, "Presence Bleed: Performing Professionalism Online," in *Theorizing Cultural Work: Labour, Continuity and Change in the Creative Industries*, ed. Mark Banks, Rosalind Gill, and Stephanie Taylor (London: Routledge, 2013), 122–34; Melissa Gregg, *Work's Intimacy* (London: Polity, 2011).

2 I discuss the Fordist idyll that haunts notions of job security after the 2008 crash in Melissa Gregg, "The Return of Organization Man: Commuter Narratives and Suburban Critique," *Cultural Studies Review* 18, no. 2 (September 2012): 242–61.

3 The first example of the phrase "work smarter, not harder" uncovered in the course of this research is in Alec Mackenzie, *The Time Trap* (New York: AMACOM, 1972). The longevity of the phrase as a productivity maxim reiterates the point I make repeatedly in what follows: that time-management mantras offer vernacular speech acts as a substitute for structural workload reform.

4 McKinsey Institute, "Poorer than Their Parents? Flat or Falling Incomes in Advanced Economies," report, McKinsey and Company, July 2016, accessed March 19, 2017, http://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/employment-and-growth/poorer-than-their-parents-a-new-perspective-on-income-inequality. See also Raj Chetty, David Grusky, Maximilian Hell, Nathaniel Hendren, Robert Manduca, and Jimmy Narang, "Executive Summary: The Fading American Dream: Trends in Absolute Income Mobility since 1940," Equality of Opportunity project, accessed March 19, 2017, http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/assets/documents/abs_mobility_summary.pdf.

5 Enrico Moretti, *The New Geography of Jobs* (New York: Mariner, 2013).

6 Andrew Ross, *Fast Boat to China: High-Tech Outsourcing and the Consequences of Free Trade—Lessons from Shanghai* (New York: Vintage, 2007); A. Aneesh, *Virtual Migration: The Programming of Globalization* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

7 Classic management textbooks pose this question on behalf of the factory worker, the typical model for productivity theory: see, e.g., Michael Burawoy, *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process under Monopoly Capitalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

8 "By now it's evident that the more hours workers put in under more exploitative conditions, the more management sees that it can extract from them, and the *less* it is willing to give them in return": Miya Tokumitsu, *Do What You Love: And Other Lies about Success and Happiness* (New York: Regan Arts, 2015), 153.

9 Stephen R. Barley and Gideon Kunda, "Design and Devotion: Surges of Rational and Normative Ideologies of Control in Managerial Discourse," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (1992): 363–99, accessed March 19, 2017, doi: 10.2307/2393449.

10 Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988). Melinda Cooper and Catherine Waldby update this history to address new power geometries in *Clinical Labor: Tissue Donors and Research Subjects in the Global Bioeconomy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

11 Angela McRobbie, *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change* (London: Sage, 2009). On the enduring quality of the subservient female voice, see Helen Hester, "Technically Female: Women, Machines, and Hyperemployment," paper presented at the Inhuman Symposium, Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany, 2015, accessed March 19, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSBefHq7C_o&feature=youtu.be.

12 "The Founder of Personal-Assistant Service Fancy Hands, Ted Roden, on How to Know When the Time Is Right to Start a Business," *Fast Company*, August 18, 2015, accessed March 19, 2017, https://www.fastcompany.com/3049278/ignite-positive-change/the-ceo-of-personal-assistant-service-fancy-hands-ted-roden-on-how-to.

13 Sarah Sharma, "Speed Traps and the Temporal: Of Taxis, Truck Stops, and TaskRabbits," in *The Sociology of Speed: Digital, Organizational, and Social Temporalities*, ed. Judy Wajcman and Nigel Dodd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 131–51.

14 My use of the term "technics" is indebted to the work of Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1934). It also anticipates my use of Peter Sloterdijk to elaborate an anthropotechnics of mindful labor in later chapters.

15 This is one of several occasions in which I cite direct e-mail marketing campaigns that adopted different slogans over the course of writing. This version from 2014.

16 Guy Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011); Rosalind Gill and Andy Pratt, "In the Social Factory? Immaterial Labour, Precariousness and Cultural Work," *Theory, Culture and Society* 25, nos. 7–8 (2008): 1–30; Brett Neilson and Ned Rossiter, "From Precarity to Precariousness and Back Again: Labour, Life and Unstable Networks," *Fibreculture Journal* 5 (2005), accessed March 19, 2017, http://five.fibreculturejournal.org/fcj-022-from-precarity-to-precariousness-and-back-again-labour-life-and-unstable-networks.

17 Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

18 In this way, my argument adds volume to Sarah Sharma's elegant account of chronopolitics and temporal asymmetry in *In the Meantime: Temporality and Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

19 See Lisa Adkins and Maryanne Dever, eds., *The Post-Fordist Sexual Contract: Working and Living in Contingency* (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). As will become clear in later chapters, my writing on this topic is strongly indebted to scholars such as Rutvica Andrijasevic and Jack Qiu, who introduced me to the work of Pun Ngai and Jenny Chan. Lilly Irani, Winifred Poster, and Mary Gray all provide essential insights on the "hidden layer" of human labor behind productivity in dispersed digitally connected geographies. I reference these authors elsewhere in text.

20 As Erin Hatton shows, in the history of formal salaried employment, the possibility of alternative hours and flexible scheduling brought about by "temp" and part-time work has been particularly important for minorities to gain a foothold on middle-class incomes, even if this has not obliterated the 9–5 paradigm entirely: Erin Hatton, *The Temp Economy: From Kelly Girls to Permatemps in Postwar America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011). Similar arguments are made in relation to today's "gig" economy, which I address in the conclusion.

21 This is one reason prominent knowledge economy companies such as Yahoo and IBM reinstated mandates for employees' presence on campus in recent years. In their efforts to retain leadership in technology innovation, each firm assumed that a degree of time, and therefore productivity, was lost in the effort to locate and connect remote colleagues.

22 Judy Wajcman, *Pressed for Time: The Acceleration of Life in Digital Capitalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015). See also Melissa Mazmanian, Wanda J. Orlikowski, and JoAnne Yates, "The Autonomy Paradox: The Implications of Mobile Email Devices for Knowledge Professionals," *Organization Science* 24 (2013): 1337–57, accessed March 19, 2017, doi: 10.1287/orsc.1120.0806. Ned Rossiter highlights the role of software in coercing management's inter-

ests in *Software, Infrastructure, Labor: A Media Theory of Logistical Nightmares* (London: Routledge, 2016).

23 Wajcman, *Pressed for Time*, 74.

24 Wajcman, *Pressed for Time*, 164.

25 Sharma, *In the Meantime*, 149.

26 The term is Sharma's, and her writing on temporal dissymmetry is a touchstone for ethically situated writing about time in academia.

27 This is an evolution from my previous writing: see, e.g., Melissa Gregg, "On Friday Night Drinks: Workplace Affects in the Age of the Cubicle," in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 250–68.

28 Richard Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998), 97.

29 On the difficulty of attributing virtue in secular settings, see Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2d ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984).

30 Fellow travelers that have inspired this project include William Davies, *The Happiness Industry: How the Government and Big Business Sold Us Well-Being* (London: Verso, 2015); Charles Duhigg, *Smarter, Faster, Better: The Secrets of Being Productive in Life and in Business* (New York: Random House, 2016); Geert Lovink, "Indifference of the Networked Presence: On Time Management of the Self," in *24/7: Time and Temporality in the Network Society,* ed. Robert Hassan and Ronald E. Purser (Stanford, CA: Stanford Business Books, 2007), 161–72; Tom Lutz, *Doing Nothing: A History of Loafers, Loungers, Slackers, and Bums in America* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006); Adrian Mackenzie, "The Affect of Efficiency: Personal Productivity Equipment Encounters the Multiple," *Ephemera: Theory and Politics in Organization* 8, no. 2 (2008): 137–56, accessed March 19, 2017, http://www.ephemerajournal.org/sites/default/files/8-2mackenzie.pdf; Corinne Maier, *Hello Laziness: Why Hard Work Doesn't Pay*, trans. David Watson (London: Orion, 2005); Frank Partnoy, *Wait: The Useful Art of Procrastination* (London: Profile, 2012); Andrew Smart, *Auto-Pilot: The Art and Science of Doing Nothing* (New York: OR Books, 2013).

31 Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1930). See the important additions to Weber's outlook in the context of U.S. self-help literature and its religious underpinnings in Micki McGee, *Self-Help, Inc.: Makeover Culture in American Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

32 David Graeber, "On the Phenomenon of Bullshit Jobs," *Strike!* August 17, 2013, accessed March 19, 2017, http://strikemag.org/bullshit-jobs.

33 Barry Schwartz provides a thoughtful reading of labor incentives in *Why We Work* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2015). On meaningless work in aca-

demia, and how to overcome it, see Mats Alvesson, Yiannis Gabriel, and Roland Paulsen, *Return to Meaning: A Social Science with Something to Say* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

34 Hence the rise of critical management studies as a fusion of sociology, political economy, and philosophy in European and Commonwealth nations. In this book, I focus on a specific lineage of charismatic business consultants who influence management theory as it has been conventionalized in the United States, since this corresponds with the popular texts and technologies that are also my objects. Management and organization studies has a comparatively progressive agenda in other settings, including Scandinavia, where I write this note. See Chris Steyaert, Timon Beyes, and Martin Parker, eds., *The Routledge Companion to the Humanities and Social Sciences in Management Education* (London: Routledge, 2016).

35 The acronym STEM stands for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. These combined fields are currently subject to intense scrutiny and campaigning because of their role in shaping the professional ambitions of young women contemplating a career in traditionally male-dominated industries. However, my experience in technology so far suggests that gender bias is as much a problem in management theory and practice (i.e., the level of decision making in large companies), which only exacerbates the lack of diversity in engineering training. Of course, there are notable exceptions in the literature. The pioneering work on gender remains Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation* (New York: Basic Books, 1977). Nicole Biggart provides detailed evidence of why women retreat from corporate workplaces to build livelihoods in keeping with their roles and values in her prescient *Charismatic Capitalism: Direct Selling Organizations in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989). Robin Ely, Pamela Stone, and Colleen Ammerman advance a more accountable history of graduate outcomes for women at Harvard Business School in “Rethink What You ‘Know’ about High-Achieving Women,” *Harvard Business Review* (December 2014), accessed July 25, 2016, https://hbr.org/2014/12/rethink-what-you-kno w-about-high-achieving-women. Internationally, the Gender, Work, and Organization conference and the European Group for Organization Studies are important sites of activity. On the constraints arising from the professionalization of diversity work over the past several decades, see Sara Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

36 For another example, see Melissa Gregg, “The Deficiencies of Tech’s ‘Pipeline’ Metaphor,” *The Atlantic*, December 3, 2015, https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/12/pipeline-stem/418647.

37 Megan J. Elias, *Stir It Up: Home Economics in American Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Laurel D. Graham, “Domesticating Efficiency: Lillian Gilbreth’s Scientific Management of Homemakers,

1924–1930," *Signs* 24, no. 31 (1999): 633–74, accessed June 14, 2017, doi 10.1086/495368; Jonathan Grudin and Gayna Williams, "Two Women Who Pioneered User-Centered Design," ACM *Interactions* 20, no. 6 (2013): 15–20, accessed June 4, 2017, doi: 10.1145/2530538; Jane Lancaster, *Making Time: Lillian Moller Gilbreth—A Life beyond "Cheaper by the Dozen"* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2004); Janice Williams Rutherford, *Selling Mrs. Consumer: Christine Frederick and the Rise of Household Efficiency* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003).

38 Among a large list are Silvia Federici, *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012); Leopoldina Fortunati, *The Arcane of Reproduction: Housework, Prostitution, Labor and Capital* (New York: Autonomedia, 1995); Kylie Jarrett, *Feminism, Labour and Digital Media: The Digital Housewife* (London: Routledge, 2016).

39 Ellen Richards, *The Art of Right Living* (Boston: Whitcomb and Barrows, [1904] 1911).

40 This dynamic explains the outcry against TaskRabbit's "We Do Chores, You Live Life" advertising campaign from 2016, depicting various aspirational activities that could be enjoyed by users of the for-hire labor service. A woman doing yoga with the accompanying text "mopping the floor" directly referenced the housework that had been delegated for the benefit of the woman's health regime: see Michael Zelenko, "Ditch TaskRabbit and Do Your Own Laundry," *The Verge*, September 15, 2016, accessed September 16, 2017, https://www.theverge.com/tech/2016/9/15/12933074/taskrabbit-app-ads-chores-leisure-work-startups. On labor dissymmetry and intersectionality more broadly, see Marion Crain, Winifred Poster and Miriam Cherry, eds., *Invisible Labor: Hidden Work in the Contemporary World* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016); Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild, eds., *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy* (New York: Holt Paperback, 2002); Sharma, *In the Meantime*.

41 I make conjunctural analysis a method of accessing such moments in other writing on the workplace: see Gregg, "On Friday Night Drinks." For a description of conjunctural analysis in the history of cultural studies, see Melissa Gregg, *Cultural Studies' Affective Voices* (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), chap. 3.

42 Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (Frogmore, UK: Paladin, 1973).

43 Graeme Turner, *Film as Social Practice*, 4th ed. (London: Routledge, [1988] 2006).

44 Peter Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life* (London: Polity, 2013).

45 Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*, ed. Michael Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Nikolas Rose, *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power, and*

Personhood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Nikolas Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself: Biomedicine, Power, and Subjectivity in the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006). See also Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991).

46 Timon Beyes explains some of the many fruitful possibilities in Sloterdijk's thinking in "Peter Sloterdijk," in *The Oxford Handbook of Process Philosophy and Organization Studies*, ed. Jenny Helin et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 567–84.

47 Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life*, 292.

48 Here and elsewhere my thinking is heavily indebted to Illana Gershon, *Down and Out in the New Economy: How People Find (or Don't Find) Work Today* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

49 While not restricted to high-tech firms, mindfulness is certainly more established in Silicon Valley as a result of high-profile practitioners at Google, Facebook, Medium, and others: see David Gelles, *Mindful Work: How Meditation Is Changing Business from the Inside Out* (Boston: Mariner, 2016).

50 Vanessa Valenti, "Building a Culture of Care in Online Feminist Activism," paper presented at the Symposium on Social Media and Psychosocial Wellbeing, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, April 2014. Micki McGee outlines her excellent theory of the belabored self in *Self-Help, Inc.* I thank Ilana Gershon and Sverre Spoelstra for immediately noting this connection.

51 Eviatar Zerubavel, *Hidden Rhythms: Schedules and Calendars in Social Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, [1981] 1985).

52 Adam Fish, "Technology Retreats and the Politics of Social Media," *Triple C: Communication, Capitalism and Critique* 15, no. 1 (2017): 355–69, accessed June 14, 2017, http://triple-c.at/index.php/tripleC/article/view/807/992; Fred Turner, "Burning Man at Google: A Cultural Infrastructure for New Media Production," *New Media and Society* 11, nos. 1–2 (February–March 2009): 73–94, accessed June 4, 2017, doi: 10.1177/1461444808099575; Fred Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); R. John Williams, "Technê-Zen and the Spiritual Quality of Global Capitalism," *Critical Inquiry* 37 (Autumn 2011): 17–70, accessed June 14, 2017, doi: 10.1086/661643.

53 Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011). See also Federici, *Revolution at Point Zero*; Fortunati, *The Arcane of Reproduction: Housework, Prostitution, Labor and Capital*; Jarrett, *Feminism, Labour and Digital Media*.

54 Peter Sloterdijk, *Bubbles—Spheres Volume 1: Microspherology*, trans. Wieland Hoban (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011); Peter Sloterdijk, *Foam—Spheres Volume III: Plural Spherology*, trans. Wieland Hoban (Cambridge, MA: MIT

Press, 2016); Peter Sloterdijk, *Globes—Spheres Volume II: Macrospherology*, trans. Wieland Hoban (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013).

55 Antonio García Martínez, *Chaos Monkeys: Obscene Fortune and Random Failure in Silicon Valley*, Kindle ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2016), loc. 3582.

56 Mark Banks, *Creative Justice: Cultural Industries, Work and Inequality* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017).

57 Trebor Scholz, *Platform Cooperativism: Challenging the Corporate Sharing Economy* (New York: Rosa Luxemburg, 2016), accessed August 30, 2016, http://www.rosalux-nyc.org/wp-content/files_mf/scholz_platformcoop_5.9.201650.pdf; Nick Srnicek, *Platform Capitalism* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2016).

1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF TIME MANAGEMENT

1 I include my own previous writing in this assessment. However, I remain chronically disappointed with analyses of work that continue to use heteronormative, nuclear-family parenting as a frame to lament the lost sanctity of the home—for example, Bridget Schulte, *Overwhelmed: Work, Love, and Play When No One Has the Time* (New York: Picador, 2004), which updates Arlie Russell Hochschild's groundbreaking *The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work* (New York: Henry Holt, 1997). These popular accounts can be reticent to acknowledge the empirical reality that women have *always* worked through and amid others' leisure, including their own: see Leopoldina Fortunati, "Gender and the Mobile Phone," in *Mobile Technologies: From Telecommunications to Media*, ed. Gerard Goggin and Larissa Hjorth (London: Routledge, 2009), 23–34; Larissa Hjorth, *Mobile Media in the Asia-Pacific: Gender and the Art of Being Mobile* (London: Routledge, 2009); Judy Wajcman, *Pressed for Time: The Acceleration of Life in Digital Capitalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011). In line with feminist and queer scholarship, I prefer to see women's work as the basis for another vocabulary of accomplishment that sustains more than just the individual. This is important in my later chapters, which describe the conditions of labor in cognitive capitalism and the growing experience of women's historically task-oriented relationship to time: see Cristina Morini, "The Feminization of Labour in Cognitive Capitalism," *Feminist Review* 87 (2007): 40–59, accessed May 5, 2017, doi: 10.1057/palgrave.fr.9400367.

2 Christine Frederick, *Household Engineering* (San Bernardino, CA: Ulan, [1915] 2014), 1–3.

3 There were similar appeals to housewives in Australia, as illustrated in advertisements analyzed in Ann Game and Rosemary Pringle, *Gender at Work*