Subordinated to Oneself:

The Switchboard Operator as Early Self Manager

Luke Munn

INTRODUCTION

In 1878, when the newly formed Boston Telephone Dispatch Company began service, teenage boys were initially hired to be operators. Boys had been sufficient in telegraph offices, working for low wages. Yet in this context, boys seemed to lack the self-discipline for the job: they quickly became impatient, they wrestled instead of connecting calls, and they frequently swore at customers (Fitzpatrick 2005). After six months of such behavior, Alexander Graham Bell hired the first female operator, Emma Nutt; a few hours later, her sister was hired. According to the origin narrative: 'customers were so pleased by Nutt's soothing, cultured voice that the rough shouts of all the boy operators were soon replaced by more and more women's voices' (SBC Communications 2003).

These accounts certainly testify to the gendered nature of switchboard work, as foundational studies have demonstrated (Martin 1987; Fisher 1988; Green 1990; Martin 1991), and more recent work has further explored (Carmi 2015; Gardey 2015). Moreover, the operator undoubtedly slots into a historical lineage that links feminine stereotypes to technological subservience (Goss 2015; Munn 2018). However, some feminist framings, while providing much needed critique, are perhaps overly quick to discard any significant degree of agency. For Sadie Plant (1997, 126), the figure of the operator connecting calls epitomizes an image of women as merely 'an interface between man and world.' For Kenneth Lipartito (1994), the switchboard era was a time 'when women were switches.' While rightfully stressing a gendered regime, here the passive worker becomes subsumed into an informational system, disappearing as a cog in the machine.

Instead, already in the genesis of telephony, there is a sense that this sphere of labor requires a new set of skills. An individual must not only carry out a set of mechanical tasks but must integrate cognitive and affective capacities in a self-regulated way in order to deliver a desirable level of service. While operator work was certainly repetitive and procedural, management could not anticipate every request and code for every conversational variant. Instead, the operator would need to manage herself and her set of cognitive capacities—recalling voices, shifting her attention, and responding to a diverse array of customer queries in an improvised yet expert fashion.

This article thus argues that the telephone operators are an early form of self-managers, anticipating later theories such as the 'technologies of the self' (Foucault, 1988) and the 'enterprise of the self' (Rose

1990). To pursue this argument, I draw upon workers memoirs, academic histories, training manuals, and managerial rhetoric. While this material certainly varies in its aims and authorship, synthesizing the ideals of management with the on-the-ground recollections of operators develops a sense of the unique conditions of this labor. The first two sections of this article trace how this new telecommunication's role challenged management's vision of the worker. As the human interface in a crucial service role, the operator would need to be more than just nominally engaged or mechanically obedient. Independent and autonomous, she would have to internalize the dynamic conditions of labor and adjust her behaviors in an incessant loop of self-regulation. The third and main section of this article outlines four shifts that the self had to undergo: from prescription to adaptation, from ignorance to awareness, from a mechanistic to a holistic model, and from dictation to self-direction. Rather than subjugated from without, the operator would need to enact her own program of self-management from within; in doing so, she preempts the shift, in Byung-Chul Han's phrase, from subjects to projects, 'always refashioning and reinventing ourselves' (2017, 9). The final section of the article thus positions the operator as a precursor for the modern subject. If contemporary technologies have certainly intensified self-management practices, the fundamental model of today's self-audited, self-governed individual is not unprecedented, but instead emerges from a longer sociohistorical lineage.

DOCILE BODIES?

The operator is often framed as the docile body, tightly controlled and thoroughly subjugated by managerial powers. Elinor Carmi's analysis of telephone operators, for example, stresses Bell training programs as attempts to 'exercise power and control over every aspect of their lives'; operators adopted strict body posture, they weren't allowed to cross their legs, they had to ask to wipe their brow, and they were timed by management (2015, 316). In these framings, a heavy disciplinary regime is imposed on the exploited female operator.

Similarly, in her dissertation on the historical development of the telephone system, Michèle Martin (1987, 297) quotes an Ontario paper from the late 1890s that emphasized the disciplinary regime enforced on switchboard operators:

> This is what discipline did. It put a table in the centre of the Exchange and connected every operator at the switchboard to the table. Then it got a serious young lady and placed the receiver on her head; and said to her 'watch'...The lady at the table, if she suspects a breach of this rule, can detect the offender at once. Punishment follows detection. The girls then, are automata…they looked as cold and passionless as icebergs. But that is only discipline.

According to this description, telephone operators were reduced to robots, mechanistic drones. Those warm human qualities—emotion, personality, expression—had been stripped away, transforming them

into cold logical agents. Tight discipline produced docile subjects, thoroughly pierced with a panoptic gaze. As Carmi asserts (2015, p. 321) 'bodies, behaviors and voices were under scrutinized control and inspection.' Framed in this way, workers not only conformed to pressure but become assimilated into a cookie-cutter logic that stressed regularity. Unique personalities were truncated and uniformity imposed.

Evidence suggests there was a strict protocol for operators, particularly in the early days. A *Saturday Evening Post* article titled 'Diary of a Telephone Girl' (anonymous 1907) lists the small subset of expressions and phrases deemed valid, at least for this particular operator:

> 'Number?'
> 'They don't answer.'
> 'Line busy.'
> 'Line out of order.'
> 'I have no such number; please refer to your directory.'
> 'Telephone has been taken out.'
> 'I will give you Information.'
> 'I will give you Chief Operator.'

Yet the strong stress on discipline in these framings tends to truncate agency, foreclosing any analysis of the operators' involvement in their own transformations. In fact, the same article also confesses some of the unpoliced realities of operator work, practices that clearly deviated from official work protocols. The anonymous author writes that the 'girls do awfully mean things when they're exasperated by angry subscribers. You can, for instance, switch three or four couples together—a pair of lovers, maybe, two business men and one woman gossiping to another—and then sit and hear them rage at each other' (1907). Rather than unwavering obedience, an autonomy emerges, one that obviously exceeds the abilities of supervision.

Though officially disallowed, this same 'telephone girl' also admits to eavesdropping, providing long records of how conversations shift in tone throughout the day, from business to pleasure, or from annoyance to intimacy. In one remarkable description, she describes this snooping as a kind of radio of the vernacular. 'It's so queer to press down the row of "listening keys" one after another and get bits of the different conversations!' she writes: 'Different voices, different dialects, different emotions, tempers, subjects! All sliced off like Neapolitan ice cream—little bits of pulsing human lives' (1907).

Alongside these pranks and personal ruptures of discipline, labor conflicts provide a political and communal example of agency. In the very same year—1907—workers at the Bell Telephone Company of Canada conducted industrial action, with 400 operators walking off the job in Toronto. Historian Joan Sanger (1978, 110) observes that the strike 'was characterized by a militance and solidarity which contradicted the contemporary dictums about women's passivity.' This kind of activities puncture the

image of the operator as a thoroughly subjugated body—a doll-like individual, permeated by discipline and shoehorned into the necessary mold.

FROM DISCIPLINE TO DESIRE

In fact, the mold itself was the problem. Poised at the critical intersection of an information infrastructure, the switchboard operator needed to execute a performance that was affective and cognitive, physical and mental, adapting to alterations in the sociotechnical environment in a way that was efficient yet still natural. A holistic performance was necessary. Yet the Taylorist framework (Taylor 1913) of scientific management and process efficiency was highly mechanistic. Obsessed with repetitive gestures and wasted time, it 'tried to systematize workers as if they were components of machines' (Hughes 2004, 187). Such a thin understanding of the human had no vocabulary of desire, creativity, or spontaneity. The old approach of autocratic discipline, as organizational theorist Ordway Tead critiqued, 'does not take account of the desires of those commanded; it ignores the relation of willing, sustained action to knowledge and desire; it appeals solely to the fear motive and not at all to the great variety of other more positive and more creative motives' (1933, 272). Demanding obedience to a set of rules and gestures was authoritarian and ineffective. The organic, individualized performance required exceeded the conventional frames of management.

Coinciding with the integration of psychological techniques into management, the operator provided a human test-bed for new ideas. Tead's 1933 book *Human Nature and Management: The Applications of Psychology to Executive Leadership* introduced a novel strategy he termed constructive discipline. Rather than external coercion, Tead argued, an internal energy must be activated within each employee. It is only through this kind of self-directed program that companies can 'capitalize on those inner forces of thought and emotion combined which spontaneously give rise' to the performances and productivities required (1933, 273). Instead of rigid rules, interplay and improvisation are encouraged. Instead of the mechanistic office drone, the affective and cognitive are desired. Also, instead of punishments and penalties, that which is beneficial and uplifting is foregrounded. This variety of positive motives, Ordway concludes (1933, 273), 'helps each individual in a group to apply himself, to subordinate himself in a reasonable way, and to contribute to the group effort as a natural result of his normal desire to express himself in action.'

Tead's subordination of self appears prescient, anticipating by almost 50 years Michel Foucault's theorization of technologies of the self. In his 1982 lecture, Foucault first developed the notion, admitting that 'perhaps I've insisted too much in the technology of domination and power' (1988, 19). Rather than a model of subjugation crushing the subjected, he had become interested in 'the history of how an individual acts upon himself, in the technology of self' (1988, 19). Subordination to oneself offers a productive corrective to the constant cries of subordination by others—both then and today. In fact,

Foucault frames subordination quite positively, seeing self-curation as necessary for individual flourishing. Both in these early theorizations and the later *History of Sexuality* volumes, the focus was on the ethics of self-care within practices of antiquity—practices underpinned by the concept of *epimelesthai sautou*, 'to take care of yourself' (1988, 19; 1990, 73). Yet by abstracting out this specific focus on improvement in the context of antiquity, more general (and more double-edged) elements of self-formation appear. Decoupled from their ethical imperatives and emancipatory connotations, technologies of the self essentially become 'the transformations that one seeks to accomplish with oneself as object' (Foucault 1990, 29). Rather than self-improvement, they can be leveraged for self-management.

Returning to Bell and the operators, a simple mantra became clear: to remake the self, management had to remake itself. Infused with new psychological research, management would have to become a catalyst for self-management. As Nikolas Rose would later stress (1990, 14), the world of work would need to be 're-conceptualized as a realm in which productivity is to be enhanced, quality assured and innovation fostered through the active engagement of the self-fulfilling impulses of the employee, through aligning the objectives of the organization with the desires of the self.' Rather than imposing rules on the body in order to produce an optimal performance, it would have to reach into the inner life of the individual, enrolling each operator in their own transformation. This would mean drawing out a new subjectivity—a development requiring four fundamental shifts.

FOUR SHIFTS FOR THE NEW SELF

The first shift was a move away from prescription and towards adaptation. As a company, Bell was underpinned by a deep culture of mathematics and engineering that foregrounded the empirical and the measurable. Indeed, many of Bell's technologies were directly grounded upon this work, from Thornton Fry's 'Probability and Its Engineering Uses' published in 1928 to Claude Shannon's masterwork 'A Mathematical Theory of Communications' published in the long-running *Bell Labs Technical Journal* in 1948 (Mitra 2005). However, the notion of 'service' as a natural, human-centered performance was acknowledged as something which could never entirely be codified. Harold Prescott (1940, 87), setting out the tenets of excellent service in *Bell Telephone Quarterly*, insisted that:

> service, individually pleasing, cannot be brought about by written instructions and routines. It cannot be obtained by formula. It implies freedom to give expression to the natural tendency of all Bell System employees to be friendly and pleasant… it cannot be limited by numerous restrictions without destroying the employee initiative and spontaneous action which are so necessary to its accomplishment.

> Since each employee has the sincere desire to give such a service, his or her own judgment — in the light of that understanding — will then establish its own restrictions, suggest the occasions and opportunities, tell when to act, and how far to go. Some employees will visualize and understand the objectives more quickly than others. Not all will detect the same possibilities. But each will discover the means of expressing his or her own personality in the rendering of a more friendly and personal service.

This is not to say that operators had free reign, nor to suggest that labor conditions, as alluded to previously, were not strenuous and fatigue inducing (cf. Goldmark 2010). [1] However, Bell's own literature recognized the indeterminacy opened up when social exchange was placed inside a calculative system. Moreover, this indeterminacy meant that performances could never entirely be prescribed. Instead of slavish adherence, an overall logic was internalized by the operator, and this logic had to be adapted and adjusted as it encountered diverse customers with disparate needs.

For Foucault as well, protocols surrounding a subject are never simply copied verbatim. Within the cultures of antiquity, for example, the transferal of ideas between generations or tutors was not meant to create a dull facsimile. As Foucault cautions (1997, 213), 'the idea is not to constitute…a series of "portraits," recognizable but "lifeless."' Instead, the imperatives and influences are taken up and customized—accommodated to fit the life-world of the subject. In fact, for Foucault, the self was not some untainted, pre-existing figure, but emerged through adaptation to the set of forces surrounding them. 'The subject' he posited, 'constitutes the intersection between acts which have to be regulated and rules for what ought to be done' (1988, 34). Self-formation results from navigating through pressures of various types and intensities: social, cultural, political, sexual, economic, and so on. Steering far clear of one, adjusting to others and ignoring some altogether—each negotiation is internalized into an ever-becoming self.

Secondly, rather than being ignorant, the operator must be aware. Granted, much of a switchboard worker's knowledge was learned by rote. After all, the ability to recall hundreds of commonly-used numbers and extensions was a fundamental skill. In *Bell Telephone Quarterly*, Henry LaChance (1931) explains that 'intensive drills are given to the students in certain features of their work, such as locating lines on the switchboard, the use of phrases, and the understanding of speech as heard over the telephone by an operator.' Here the remaking of the self adheres to a strict regimen in which key positions, words, and digits are burnt into the brain. Indeed, this disciplinary mode of self-formation appears perfectly captured by Foucault (1990, 27), a mode: 'practiced through a long effort of learning, memorization, and assimilation of a systematic ensemble of precepts.' However, for Foucault, this was just one possible mode among several; and for Bell too, the real value was attained when operators began connecting up these basic knowledge blocks—knowledge of callers, knowledge of numbers, knowledge of lines—into a smoothly mediated interface. At that period in time, the subscriber (the caller), often gave minimal

information, requiring assistance to connect the call. Bell thus depended heavily on the ability of operators to offset the technical illiteracy of the caller. In another *Bell Telephone Quarterly* article, K.W. Waterson (1922, 31) stressed that:

> When we consider that the subscriber simply announces the office name and number desired, it will be evident that the operator must be well trained and expert to know instantly through which one of many channels that office is reached and the proper operating method and equipment to employ in each case.

In a dense, metropolitan city such as New York, for instance, there were thousands of connections routed to hundreds of office buildings. The article observed that although telephonic infrastructure had become increasingly automated, this complexity often amplified the skills required of operators. Waterson (1922, 28) points out, for example, calls which required dual operators to connect, or the 'many automatic signals by means of which the operator follows the progress of the call, advises the subscriber if the line is busy and attends his wishes if further action is necessary.' Awareness of telephone infrastructures, conversation structures, and caller habits dovetailed into the figure of the operator, offering callers a rich cognitive product.

To be sure, this facilitation of knowledge stemmed from value-added imperatives, rather than emancipatory employment notions on behalf of Bell. Moreover, undoubtedly certain kinds of knowledge were encouraged while others were suppressed. Carni notes (2015, 321), for example, how the adoption of certain hobbies was seen as healthy, whereas interest in politics, individual rights, and unions was actively discouraged. Similarly, for telephone operators in Germany, it was understood that critical to the 'hygiene of mental labor' was the avoidance of politics, which only 'agitated the soul' (Killeen 2006, 172). However, the key point here is the recognition of the cognitive capacities of the operator. More than a drone or a mechanical worker, the company required someone with education and expertise who could distribute their attention and deploy their judgment. Indeed such a combination of work neatly anticipates the 'knowledge-intensive activity' (Powell & Snellman 2004, 199) that would later come to characterize 'cognitive capitalism' (Boutang 2011). The switchboard operator was an expert in connecting a social network of customers through a technical infrastructure of cables, a role in which knowledge was acknowledged.

Thirdly, the performance of the operator had to move from mechanistic to holistic. In 1940 Bell released a new training tool called *Hear Yourself As Others Hear You*. Here, service skits developed at Bell's Traffic department were created and performed in order to communicate the contrast between a merely 'technically good service and an equally good but personalized service' (Prescott 1940, 94). According to the newsletter, the program was highly successful and rolled out to the other departments. In this vision, the subjectivity desired is a total one, comprising not just physical labor but affective labor, and

not just nominal function but attuned cognition. As Prescott writes (1940, 90), 'simply having the desire to render a pleasing and personal service is not enough. Activities directed specifically toward developing the right viewpoint.' For Bell, parroted phrases could not encompass the deeply personalized service desired of the operator. Instead of slavish grunt-work, the operator must draw upon internal facilities: memory, judgment, learning. This kind of holistic performance is illustrated by a former 'telephone girl' Dorothy Johnson (1997, 74) describing two of the best operators in her branch:

> Either of them could ring a number (front key plus a button for L, K, Y or X) with the left hand while flipping a back plug into a hold with the right hand and caroling 'That party doesn't answer' with no hands to somebody else. Meanwhile she could remember that 90 had blinked before 144 and therefore deserved to be answered first and, when she had a second to spare, open two or three keys to inquire 'Are you waiting? Are you through?' and pull out the plugins without disconnecting anybody.
>
> [They] could remember that when Kalispell called back to report…the man who had placed the call on Ticket at the Cadillac Hotel pay station wasn't in the booth any more but she should ring the desk clerk, who would trot down the hall to his room to get him.

Time and motion studies had focused on the worker as a mechanism: the movement of the arm from left to right, the elimination of unnecessary footsteps, the simplification of a stacking sequence (Gilbreth, 1914-1918). Such optimization largely ignored psychology and emotion, privileging the exterior surface of the body. However, Foucault emphasized that when remaking oneself, one must also attend to the internal state. In *Technologies of the Self*, he cites the example of Greek philosopher Gregory, who transformed the biblical parable of the lost drachma (coin) into a fable about the importance of inward contemplation and self-reflection. 'Gregory exhorts one to light the lamp and turn the house over and search, until gleaming in the shadow one sees the drachma within' (Foucault 1988, 21). Elsewhere in 'Self Writing' he cites Seneca, who stressed that knowledge must always be internalized, penetrating through the exterior to transform the inner life of the individual. 'Whatever we have absorbed should not be allowed to remain unchanged, or it will be no part of us. We must digest it: otherwise it will merely enter the memory and not the reasoning power' (Foucault 1997, 213). In both cases, the self focuses on remaking itself completely, a reconfiguration from the inside out. Switchboard work exceeded a mechanical set of tasks, requiring more than drone-like repetition. Rather than slavish adherence to a set sequence, the operator would need to deliver a more holistic performance encompassing memory, speech, gesture, and emotional cues.

Fourthly and finally, the operator's performance had to become self-directed rather than dictated. For service to seem natural and not coerced, it would need to emerge from an internal subjectivity rather than being externally imposed. In another Bell training program, supervisors monitored the calls of

operators for feedback purposes. However, this was not simply collated and dictated from above. Instead, as Prescott (1940, 91) outlines, the supervisors and operators would meet, 'discuss what has been heard, and reach a common understanding.' This is not to discount, of course, the undoubtedly asymmetric power relations at work between supervisors and operators. However, the program here recognizes the limitations of universalization—instead of the one-size-fits-all employee manual, the individual is developed individually. It also recognizes the limitations of dictation—rather than managerial rules parroted by human resources, the worker is an active participant in their development. As Prescott outlines (1940, 92), 'employees are encouraged to adopt in their own work the principles developed during the listening and discussion.' If this process was instigated initially by management, it must ultimately be recognized as beneficial and transformed into a program enacted on the self over time. As Rose suggests (1990, 6): 'The enterprising self will make a venture of its life, project itself a future and seek to shape itself in order to become that which it wishes to be.' The onus to change is on oneself.

This self-integration is envisioned as an ongoing process, a perpetual regimen striving to arrive at perfection. Prescott explains that management's goal is to give employees the 'means for discovering for themselves their real needs and interests—a continuing plan for individual self-development.' The training program finishes, yet the training continues. In this sense, the operator's lifelong project of self-directed education anticipates Deleuze's characterization of the contemporary in which one is 'never finished with anything' (1992, 5). For Foucault too, technologies of the self are perpetual. Foucault cites Greek philosopher Epicurus, who insists that self-development is a continual program to be carried on indefinitely. He proclaims 'one should philosophize when one is young and also when one is old. It was a task to be carried on throughout life' (1988, 21). To grow closer to this goal, the self must constantly reassess her progress, taking note of her strengths and weaknesses. Of course, perfection is asymptotic, never ultimately attained. The self must set goals, work towards them, fulfill them—and then immediately set new goals. In Foucault's words (1988, 33), the philosopher of antiquity understood that he was 'a permanent administrator of himself.' Mastery of the self comes through incessant self-management.

LEGIBLE LABOR

What did the operator's self-management strive to produce? A performance, in itself, was not enough. Instead, the performance needed to be made sociotechnically intelligible. The objective was the *legibility of activity*. For example, Bell's mantra was the 'voice with a smile.' Yet the operator on the line was a faceless entity, making the transmission of an affective dimension difficult. Through the particular adjustment of jaw and neck, tongue, and teeth recommended in the elder Bell's 'Standard Elocutionist' manual, a friendly expression might be registered (Bell & Bell, 1878).

Similarly, Bell's productivities mandated a certain tempo of labor. As Dorothy Johnson's memories of switchboard work make clear, by juggling multiple connections, coaxing slow callers, and mastering physical gestures, a rapid hourly call-rate might be registered. Moreover, Bell's claim was a quality of service. By internalizing a rich array of knowledge and linking it together in unique ways for callers, a threshold of satisfaction within a local calling area might be registered. Along with this registration of action was an *obfuscation of activity*. As gestured to earlier by the pranks of the 'telephone girl,' the performances of the operator sometimes deviated away from those deemed valid or productive. However, whether executed silently, during times of lax supervision, or through pure inconspicuousness, these activities were made illegible. Unregistered within Bell's sociotechnical schema, they could not impinge on the operator's reputation or earnings.

To count, practices need to be made appropriately calculable. In antiquity, one of the primary means for feedback on the self was letter writing. As Foucault asserted (1997, 217) 'through the missive, one opens oneself to the gaze of others and puts the correspondent in the place of the inner god.' The transformations enacted on oneself did not take place in isolation, but rather within circuits of sociality as the philosopher exposed himself to the evaluation of others. If the letter was the mechanism for this exposure in antiquity, the algorithm might be its analog in the contemporary. Surrounded by platforms, software, and services, the individual today is constantly being appraised: every task is tracked, every project logged, every failure noted. Data provides a highly detailed mirror, allowing performance to be cross-indexed with previous periods and ranked against competing peers. In this sense, Foucault's description (1997, 220), written half a century ago, still resonates strongly with today's algorithmic cultures: a 'whole set of meticulous notations on the body, health, physical sensations, regimen, and feelings shows the extreme vigilance of an attention that is intensely focused on oneself.'

Given today's technically audited environments, the legibility of the laboring self takes on new significance. The imperative, not just to act—but to articulate that activity in a way most conducive to its registration—has been both extended and amplified. Today one must carefully note how each effort lands within a socioeconomic sphere—how it becomes translated into core metrics and key performance indicators. To be successful, the self must reorient its ways of being and doing until they become indexed in the most visible or optimal way. 'The enterprising self is thus a calculating self' Rose argues (1990, 6), 'a self that calculates about itself and that works upon itself in order to better itself.' By internalizing the logic involved, performing these logics in ways that are legible, observing the results that follow, and then adjusting the self as necessary, a loop is established. Self-management thus provides a powerful engine for self-formation, one driven by a desire to bring into 'congruence the gaze of the other and that gaze which one aims at oneself when one measures one's everyday actions' (Foucault 1997, 221). The self becomes individualized through iteration.

Given its effectiveness, the rise of this self-initiated, self-driven form of management should come as no surprise. 'Foucault did not see that the neoliberal regime utterly claims the technology of the self for its own purposes,' argues Han (2017, 30), 'perpetual self-optimization—as the exemplary neoliberal technology of the self—represents nothing so much as a highly efficient mode of domination and exploitation.' Far from being empowering or emancipatory, technologies of the self have been leveraged towards a more comprehensive instrumentalization of labor, fuller exhaustion of their value. In this regime, the modern self constantly checks its performance against a set of imperatives and then adapts its behavior accordingly, enlisting the cognitive and the affective towards an ever-improving performance.

Yet if contemporary conditions certainly intensify the pressures on this self, the figure of the operator shows how the fundamental logic of self management emerges from a longer sociohistorical lineage. Such a lineage emphasizes the continuity between modes of power over time. Tech pundits tend to proclaim that our digital conditions are unprecedented; we are constantly entering a new age, a new era, a revolutionary epoch (Zuboff 1989; Brynjolfson and McAfee 2014; Sidhu 2016; Skinner 2018). Previous understandings no longer apply, and a whole new set of new theories and approaches are required. However, while today's conditions are undoubtedly distinct from those of the early twentieth century, I have argued in this article that the core imperatives of labor—and their reshaping of the self—were present in nascent form even then. This reshaping is not a revolutionary rupture, but an evolutionary process, emerging over time as the self adapts itself to new formations of technicity and labor.

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NOTES

[1] Josephine Goldmark's 1912 study of fatigue in a set of then recently industrialized professions demonstrates the demanding conditions within switchboard operation: physically strenuous work, compulsory overtime hours, the curtailing or complete absence of relief periods, and the overloading of the operator at peak hours. See: Josephine Goldmark, *Fatigue and Efficiency: A Study in Industry,* New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2010, 48-53.

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