

Occupational Identity and Difference



Reflections Toward Novel
Diversity & Inclusion Practices

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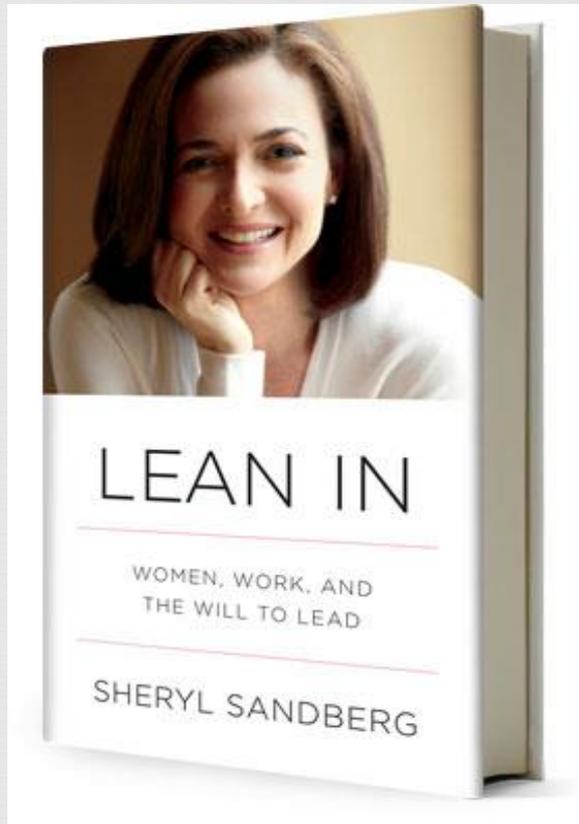
Visions of diversity success



What is 'happily ever after' in your context?



Popular fairy tales



❧ *Déjà vu*: Revolution through self-help?

❧ The message:

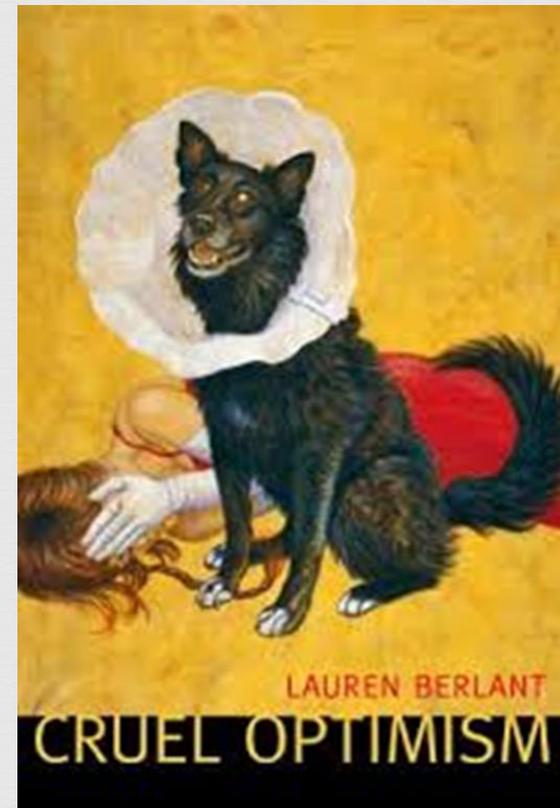
“If more of us overcome (use?) our difference, our numbers will grow, and thus will equality!”

The *Cruel Optimism* of such fairy tales



Case in point:

The painful truth about
women's 'success' in male-
dominated professions



Occupational segregation



⌘ Key distinctions:

⌘ *horizontal / vertical*

⌘ *physical / symbolic*

The daunting truth...



- ❧ Patterns of *segregation*:
 - ❧ Professionalize = *Masculinization*
 - ❧ De-professionalize, decline = *Feminization*

- ❧ Patterns of *integration*:
 - ❧ Infiltration & the Token
 - ❧ *Glass ceiling vs. escalator*
 - ❧ ...and the need to consider race-ethnicity, sexuality, etc.
 - ❧ When the tipping point is reached → ??
 - ❧ *Feminization threats & re-masculinization*
 - ❧ *Re-segregation*
 - ❧ *Flight*

- ❧ Patterns **cannot** be reduced to majority-minority

More sobering truth...



- ⌘ The desirability of an occupation depends on who does it
- ⌘ We should expect:
 - ⌘ *status closure* ↔ *status composition*
- ⌘ Bottom line:
 - ⌘ Occupations have identities too & are **known by the company they keep**

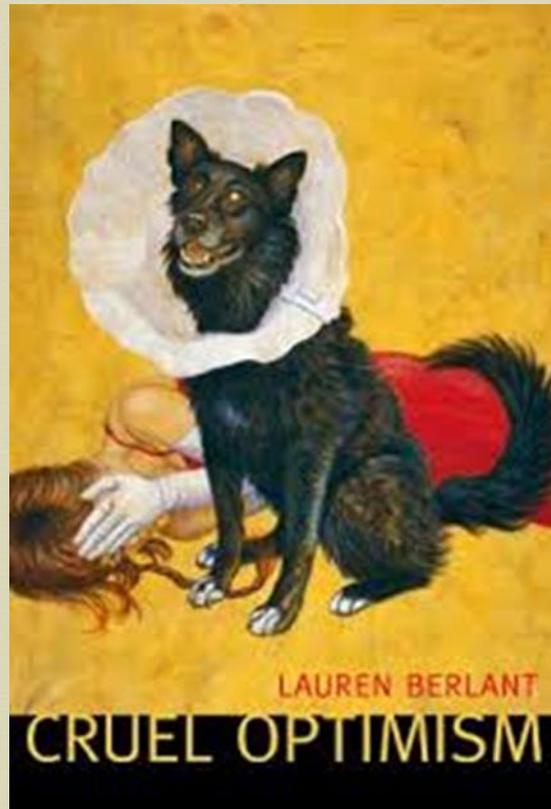


The upshot: Ouch!



- ∞ Occupational segregation:
 - ∞ is global & intractable
 - ∞ is the “smoking gun” of workplace inequalities
 - ∞ thrives on belief in difference (*essentialism*)
- ∞ **CANNOT** be fought from an essentialist paradigm
 - ∞ Stable, categorical difference attached to bodies
 - ∞ Faith in demographics

Cruel to be Kind



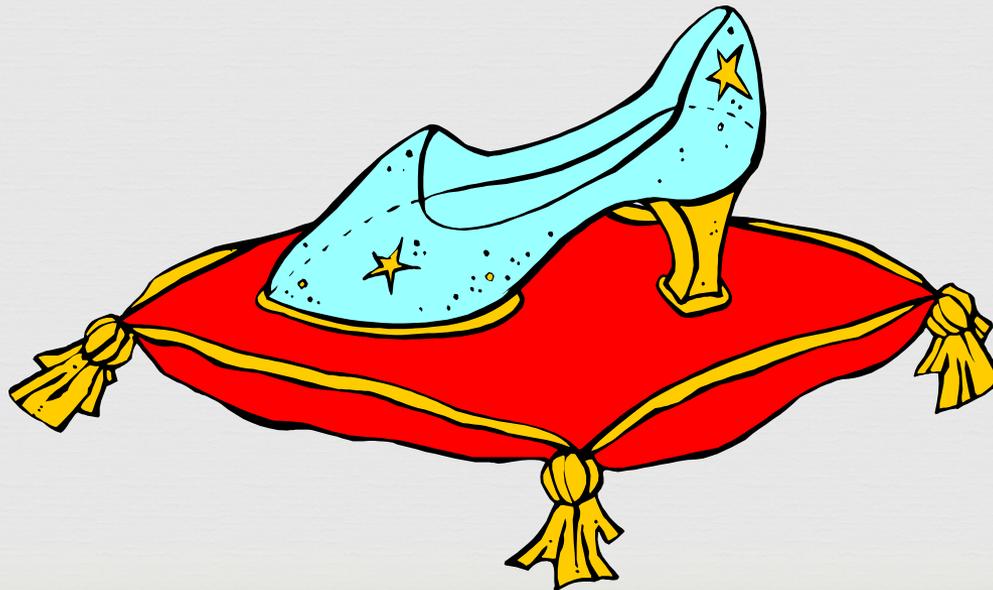
Attachment to Others'
pursuit of 'success'
already defined
against them

Enter the *Glass Slipper*:

A fairy tale that **can** come true



The alignment of an occupation with certain embodied social identities, as this yields systems of privilege & disadvantage



The magic behind glass slippers

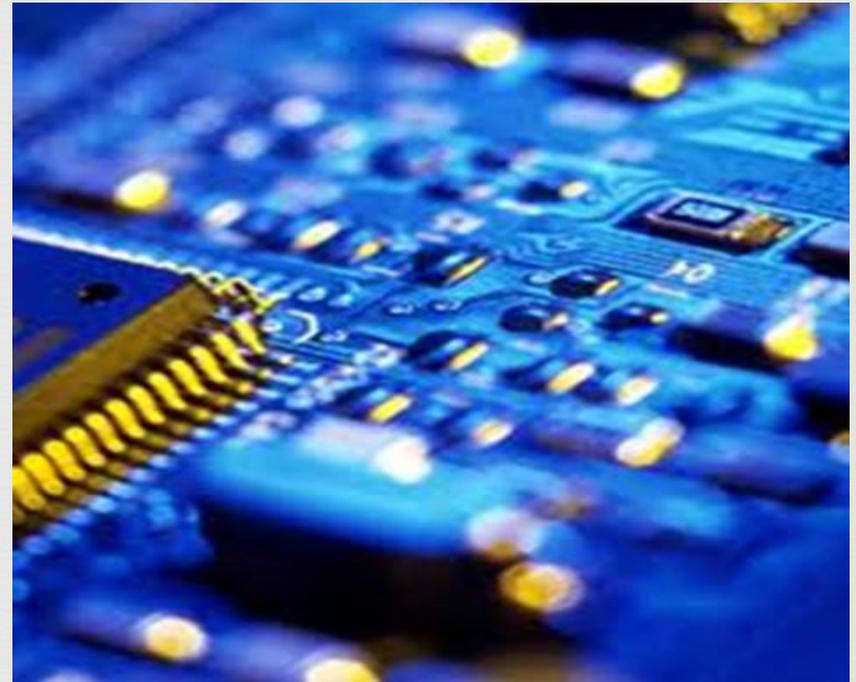


⌘ How are *figurative practitioners* made?

⌘ Two brief cases...



Elite by (dis)association



The Ladybird

If *she* can fly, anyone can!



(Photo by Art Wolf)
By Permission of National Geographic



The Professional Pilot

Trust me: I'm trained for safety!



Computer girls, lone wolves, & leaders

Susie Meyer meets PL/I

The story of how a single language answers the question, "Can a young girl with no previous programming experience find happiness handling both commercial and scientific applications, without resorting to an assembler language?"

Let's face it. The cost of programming just keeps going up. So for some time to come, how well you do your job depends on how programmers like Susie Meyer do theirs.

That's the reason for PL/I, the high-level language for both scientific and commercial applications.

With PL/I, programmers don't have to learn other high-level languages. They can concentrate more on the job, less on the language.

So think about PL/I. Not just in terms of training, but in terms of the total impact it can have on your operation.



Lessons of the Glass Slipper



1. The nature & value of work = invented, not intrinsic
2. Embodied social identities are used to **brand** work, sparking **affect** cycles
3. These branding **histories** matter
4. Understanding & changing them requires a **pluralistic** approach to difference
 - ☞ Goodbye, Mars & Venus! Ask: **Which** men & women?

Lessons...



5. 'Neutral' descriptions of **tasks & skills** are rarely so
6. **Faking it** takes extra work, whereas **fitting** is a privilege
7. The power of **glass**: Invisible systems can be made transparent & fragile



Breaking the Glass Slipper Toward *Kinder Optimism*



☞ **Promote more constructive *motivation***

☞ **Such as:** All work should reflect the plurality of its constituents



☞ **Not:** 'Others' deserve a chance at desirable work (already coded as such by their absence) = Cruel optimism

Toward *kinder optimism*



❧ **Don't deny difference. But do destabilize it.**

❧ Principle of *emergence*

❧ Cultivate historical consciousness & contemporary humility/curiosity

❧ Minimize “helping” logic

❧ No more one-way self-help for the Others

❧ *Privilege Traitors*, not Rescuers & Saviors

❧ Commit to difference as powerful precisely because **unpredictable**





Kinder optimism through destabilizing difference



❧ **Disentangle *physical & symbolic*.
Keep difference *unsettled*.**

❧ Forget finding 'the right' practitioner; keep them shuffling, shape-shifting, surprising

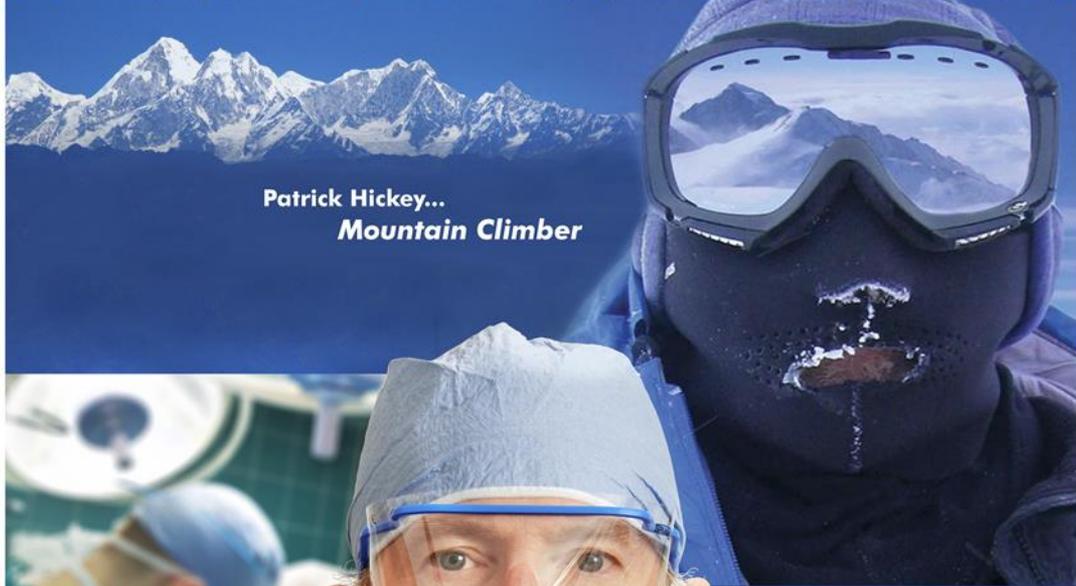
❧ Focus more on practices than practitioners

❧ Develop a *queer eye* for the character(s) of work

❧ Contrasting examples:

❧ North American men in nursing & Norwegian Air Force

ADRENALINE RUSH



Patrick Hickey...
Mountain Climber

Patrick Hickey...
O.R. Nurse
Assistant Clinical Professor
in the College of Nursing at
the University of South Carolina

Nursing

Come Join Us... We've Been Expecting You!

Do what you love and you'll love what you do! To learn more about Patrick or for more information on how to become a nurse follow this link to the "20 x 20 Choose Nursing Campaign" <http://aamn.org/choosenursing.shtml> or visit the American Assembly for Men in Nursing website at: www.aamn.org

Thank You!



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