Finding a place in history: Symbolic and social networks in creative careers and collective memory

CANDACE JONES*
Organization Studies Department, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

Summary
Boundaryless careers are pervasive, and yet we have little understanding of the boundaries imposed by categorization processes upon those engaged in boundaryless careers such as in creative industries and cultural fields. Categorization processes underlie symbolic and social boundaries and this study examines whether transgressing symbolic and social boundaries enhances the likelihood of soaring to eminence or sliding into relative obscurity. This study examined a relatively under-research area—the effects of boundary crossing at specific career stages and the capacity to attain eminence—a place in history. The study reveals the importance of symbolic networks and expanding symbolic boundaries though boundary objects such as buildings for attaining recognition and securing eminence in one’s career. Copyright © 2010 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

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Introduction

Creative careers are often boundaryless careers, in the sense that creative actors initiate, disband and move across organizations in order to support their artistic endeavors. Thus, careers occur within a profession, industry, or field rather than within an organization. These dynamics are becoming a pervasive feature of many contemporary employment landscapes (Tams & Arthur, 2010), and scholars have begun to focus on the dynamics of external rather than internal labor markets (Jones, 1996; O’Mahony & Bechky, 2005; Zuckerman, Kim, Ukanawa, & von Rittman, 2003). While Arthur and Rousseau (1996) argued for looking beyond the boundaries of single employment settings, subsequent writers have emphasized the need to better understand what other boundaries exist, and how these may shape people’s careers (Gunz, Evans, & Jalland, 2000).

Recent research reveals that categorization processes form boundaries that influence careers by categorizing who gets what kind of career opportunity. For example, Zuckerman et al. (2003) showed

* Correspondence to: Candace Jones, Organization Studies Department, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467, U.S.A. E-mail: jonescq@bc.edu
that categorization differed for early versus established film careers. In an early career, an actor was penalized if he or she did not signal a clear identity associated with a particular film genre, whereas more experienced actors were penalized for retaining identities associated with restricted or specialized skillsets. O’Mahony and Bechky (2005) focused on early careers and identified career progression strategies that enabled “stretchwork” in high technology consultants and film workers—that is work opportunities beyond one’s current qualifications—and allowed a person to manage the boundaries imposed by decision makers’ categorization that the person was “not skilled enough.”

Categorization processes form two kinds of boundaries—social and symbolic—that influence careers. Social boundaries are “objectified forms of social differences...revealed in stable behavioral patterns of association” (Lamont & Molnár, 2002: p. 168). Social boundaries both form and constrain social networks. Thus, in turn, social capital provides resources through relationships such as mentorship, sponsorship, collaborations, and social embeddedness that enact and also constrain career opportunities and outcomes (Becker, 1982; Collins, 1998, Faulkner, 1987; Farrell, 2001; Giuffre, 1999; Lang & Lang, 1988; Uzzi & Spiro, 2005; Williamson, 1991).

By contrast, symbolic boundaries are “conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space” (Lamont & Molnár, 2002: p. 168). A plethora of research exists on symbolic boundaries in cultural fields, focusing primarily on categorization of genres and who appreciates them (Bryson, 1996; Peterson & Kern, 1996) and the shifts in cultural categories over time such as in music (Anand & Peterson, 2000; Lena & Peterson, 2008) or cuisine (Johnston & Baumann, 2007; Rao, Monin, & Durand, 2003, 2005). Since field level dynamics dominate research on symbolic boundaries, how these boundaries shape the career trajectories and outcomes of a field’s creative actor’s is less well understood. In addition, few studies have compared the influence of social and symbolic boundaries on careers. Thus a critical question is: How do social and symbolic boundaries influence a creative producer’s career outcomes?

One career outcome is the success obtained in terms of recognition during a person’s lifetime and eminence after death. Eminence after death is attention from those in the profession and, thus, entry into collective memory (Collins, 1998; Halbwachs, 1992; Lang & Lang, 1988). Clearly, eminence is most often built upon prior recognition; few individuals arise from complete obscurity before death to high rates of attention to become securely anchored in collective memory after death. Yet, eminence is a relatively neglected concept in careers research.

To address these gaps in the literature, I use an inductive and multi-method study to examine how five architects’ social and symbolic networks, which are built out of and also reveal social and symbolic boundaries, shaped variation in these architects’ recognition over career stages and eminence after death. These architects gained recognition during their lifetimes, as seen in their winning of the AIA (American Institution of Architects) and RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) Gold Medals for lifetime achievement. While alive, they varied in their amount of recognition. Furthermore, after their deaths they varied dramatically in their eminence—their entry into the profession’s collective memory—as reflected by the number of buildings cited as exemplars and attention from critics and historians.

The profession of architecture is suited for such an analysis. Architects move across public and private client organizations, form and disband partnerships to pursue their professional goals, use material and symbolic resources to create images (design and logos) and experiences for the clients and general public (Gutman, 1996). Architects are embedded in social relations of the profession; they apprentice with established architects, collaborate with peers, and complementary professions to design and erect a building, and form professional partnerships to pursue their livelihood. When these social relations form discrete, often rival groups, they engender social boundaries that form movements such as impressionism (White & White, 1965/1993) or post-modernism (Larson, 1993). Creative producers such as architects deploy symbolic forms that encode values, beliefs, and history into
artifacts such as buildings (Campbell, 1992; Roth, 1993), much like artists who create anthems or flags (Cerulo, 1993). Critics and historians use these symbolic forms to decode meaning and to categorize architects into schools, genres, and styles based on perceived similarities (DiMaggio, 1987)

Next, I provide a brief introduction to the key constructs and their relationships that were discovered and elaborated in my inductive research: How social and symbolic networks formed around boundary objects and boundary work, revealing the social and symbolic boundaries that influenced architects’ career trajectories and outcomes.

The Enactment of Social and Symbolic Networks: Boundary Work and Boundary Objects in Boundaryless Careers

Boundary work and boundary objects are complementary constructs that enact social networks by defining who interacts with whom (or is excluded from interaction) and symbolic networks by defining whose aesthetics and ideals are associated with whom across time and space. These networks form around boundary objects, and symbolic boundaries are revealed by whether these boundary objects are valued or dismissed by critics and historians.

Boundary Work: How Professions Make Distinctions that Shape Networks

Boundary work, first coined by Gieryn (1983: p. 782), describes how professional and occupational members “demarcate” or construct a social boundary, separating it from other domains. Boundary work is a way to gain authority and control over a profession’s or field’s activities. Thus, boundary work is used to explain jurisdictional disputes between professions (Abbott, 1988; Gieryn, 1983). Although boundary work has focused on jurisdictional competition, professions are not homogenous; boundary work also occurs within professions.

Boundary work is enacted through symbolic boundaries, which are categorizations of who is a member or non-member and what constitutes quality (Lamont & Molnár, 2002). Thus, boundary work involves practices that create, maintain or modify cultural categories (Douglas, 1966/2007; Nippert-Eng, 1996). Since cultural categories define who and what is important, they form the basis for judgments of quality that reveal symbolic boundaries seen in who receives opportunity, recognition, and rewards during a lifetime, but also who is honored and entered into collective memory after death, defining “generational chains” of schools and movements (Collins, 1998).

Boundary work influences boundaryless careers in two ways. First, social actors who transgress symbolic boundaries or cultural categories such as genres or research domains are likely to face penalties in their career outcomes (Hsu, 2006; Zuckerman, 1999, 2005; Zuckerman et al., 2003). For example, two University of Utah scientists who researched cold fusion and published their findings in

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1My use of symbolic network differs from Ansell (1997), who used it to define how symbols can become the basis for social cohesion, whereas in my study often no social interaction occurred or was possible. Instead critics linked together architects across time and geographical space based on perceived similarities. Thus, symbolic networks linked a profession across time and space by the connecting ideas, aesthetics and approaches rather than creating social cohesion in attitudes among actors within the same time and geographical space.
the popular press gained widespread derision among professional peers and later in the press, as the findings were deemed a hoax. The scientists had crossed two boundaries; engaged in a questionable research arena within science and published in the press before peer review in scientific journals. Clearly, these events did not help to further the scientists’ careers in their profession. Second, members of a profession may enforce boundaries that exclude and limit career opportunities due to status differentials. Some symbolic boundaries—such as race, ethnicity, and gender—may be taken from the larger society and penalize members with these ascribed attributes (Bielby & Bielby, 1996; Pachucki, Pendergrass, & Lamont, 2007), whereas other boundaries are more directly shaped by the members’ achievements. For example, a profession shapes its symbolic boundaries through who is deemed worthy of being remembered, and of being linked to others as a contributor to the profession’s knowledge and in its history, becoming securely anchored in the profession’s symbolic network.

Boundary work creates challenges of communication and coordination when distinct professions and occupations are interdependent. However, boundary objects facilitate coordination and enable communication within and across professions (Bechky, 2003; Carlile, 2002, 2006; Star & Griesemer, 1989). Boundary work involves the development of boundary objects, which I describe next.

**Boundary Objects: Artifacts as the Basis for Professional Knowledge and Networks**

Boundary objects are “materialized skills and knowledge that require from human actors complimentary skills and knowledge” (Preda, 1999: p. 356). For example, to read a research article demands knowledge of the discipline’s theory and methods, to interpret an architectural plan requires the knowledge to decode the symbols and the skill to translate the plan from two dimensional into three dimensional space. Boundary objects are artifacts that “symbolize” categories (Bechky, 2003: p. 724) such as those who hold the knowledge or roles allowed to read the artifact, and communicate collective identity, beliefs, and values (Yanow, 2006) such as doctors write prescriptions and pharmacists fill them, not vice versa, reinforcing both doctors and pharmacists identities as medical providers and also the status and jurisdictional differences between them. Carlile (2002, 2006) found that for an artifact to function as a boundary object, it must (1) establish a shared language so individuals can represent their knowledge, (2) provide a concrete means to express differences and interdependencies, and (3) facilitate the transformation of knowledge. Because boundary objects represent, translate, and transform knowledge (Carlile, 2002, 2004), they are particularly important for dispersed and diverse members that are often involved in global professions like academia, architecture, and science.

Most research on boundary objects has focused on how these objects facilitate coordination between different groups such as amateurs who identify and collect species, scientists who study them and administrators who caretake their preservation in a natural museum (Star & Griesemer, 1989), or how the diverse occupations within an organization use plans and prototypes to coordinate their activities such as engineers, technologists, and assembly workers to design, produce and assemble semiconductor chips (Bechky, 2003; Carlile, 2002, 2004). Because boundary objects span social worlds and groupings, which may claim competing interests and goals, they often demand boundary spanning that connects discrete groups and enhances innovation (Obstfeld, 2005). Boundary objects also stabilize social order, because they “contain a mark of the past” and facilitate movement toward the future while still in the present (Preda, 1999).

Boundary objects influence boundaryless careers in three ways. First, professionals who engage in boundary spanning behavior such as architects who are also consummate engineers or have indepth
knowledge of construction methods are more likely to innovate, gain recognition and move toward more central positions (see Burt, 2000 for a review). Second, by invoking judgments from fellow members about both the artifact and its creator’s ability to “wield the artifact” (Carlile, 2006), these “judgments of worth” transmit reputations about the creators of artifacts (Bechky, 2003) and shape their career opportunities and outcomes. The notions of both recognition and eminence reflect categorizations or judgments about the quality of a creative producer’s contributions as being “top notch” rather than “less stellar” (Lamont & Molnár, 2002) and are seen in commemorations such as halls of fame (Allen & Parsons, 2006) or other honoraria. Third, in cultural industries boundary objects shape careers because networks are often draped around artifacts and/or the events that create artifacts (Kadushin, 1976; Laumann, Marsden, & Prensky, 1983). Boundary objects such as buildings define social networks, seen in who collaborates to design and construct the building. Scholars have highlighted the importance of these social relations—mentors, collaborators, sponsors—that enhance access to resources and career opportunities (Collins, 1998; Faulkner, 1987; Lang & Lang, 1988; Uzzi & Spiro, 2005; Williamson, 1991).

Next, I describe the data and methods used to apply the above ideas to the world of architecture.

**Methods**

**Sample selection**

I employed theoretic sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) by identifying cases which vary on key dimensions but have similarities on other dimensions, thus allowing for comparisons. Five architects were chosen for a comparative case study based on three criteria: (1) All were recognized during their lifetimes as highly influential and made significant contributions to architecture, as indicated by their winning both the AIA (American Institute of Architects) and RIBA Gold Medal Awards for lifetime achievement, which are the only consistently awarded honoraria in architecture; (2) their strong connections to artistic movements—Arts and Crafts, Chicago School of Architecture and the Deutscher Werkbund—that formed the experience and conceptual basis out of which modern architecture emerged; thus, these five architects link past and future, capturing the “intergenerational chains” out of which creative individuals and schools arise (Collins, 1998) as well as boundary objects (Preda, 1999); (3) they varied dramatically in their recognition by contemporaries (Lang & Lang, 1988) and in their eminence; the attention given to them by professional members and entry into collective memory (Collins, 1998).

Table 1 provides a comparison of the five architects on key dimensions and highlights their mentor relations that connect them to various movements. Wright and Lutyens are a cohort, whereas Mies, Gropius and Le Corbusier, follow 15–20 years later, forming another cohort. Mies and Gropius are essentially a matched sample, based on similar experiences and nationality; yet Mies attained recognition and his eminence has increased over time, whereas Gropius’ recognition peaked in mid-career and his eminence—sustained attention after his death—has slipped over time.

The Arts and Crafts movement, the Chicago School and the Deutscher Werkbund were building blocks for modern architecture (Jones, Svejenova, & Massa, 2009): The Arts and Crafts movement arose in England (1850s-early 1900s), under the leadership of William Morris, was inspired by Medieval architecture and focused on individualism, design unity, handcraft work, and regionalism; Edwin Lutyens was part of the Arts and Crafts movement in Britain (Cumming & Kaplan, 1991). The Chicago Commercial school in the United States (1870s–1890s), was led by the firms of Adler &
Table 1. Sample selection of architects: Comparative cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Birth, Death</th>
<th>First building</th>
<th>AIA and RIBA awards</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Architectural movement</th>
<th>Apprenticed with/mentors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wright, Frank Lloyd</td>
<td>1867–1959</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>1949, 1941</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>Chicago School of Commercial Architecture</td>
<td>Allen D. Conover; Lyman Silsbee (who trained with H.H. Richardson); Louis Sullivan of Adler &amp; Sullivan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutyens, Sir Edwin</td>
<td>1869–1944</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>1925, 1921</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>British Arts and Crafts</td>
<td>George &amp; Peto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gropius, Walter</td>
<td>1883–1969</td>
<td>1909</td>
<td>1959, 1956</td>
<td>German, American</td>
<td>Deutscher Werkbund</td>
<td>Solf &amp; Wichards; Peter Behrens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig</td>
<td>1886–1969</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>1960, 1959</td>
<td>German, American</td>
<td>Deutscher Werkbund</td>
<td>Bruno Paul; Peter Behrens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corbusier</td>
<td>1887–1965</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>1961, 1953</td>
<td>Belgian, French</td>
<td>French Classicism/ Modernism</td>
<td>Josef Hoffman, Auguste Perret; Peter Behrens</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sullivan and Halobird & Root, utilized new materials and technologies such as steel and elevators with a focus on economizing and tall buildings due to expanding population, land restrictions, and commercial clients (Thornton, Jones, & Kury, 2005). Frank Lloyd Wright apprenticed under Louis Sullivan. Deutscher Werkbund (1907–1938) was sponsored by the German state to integrate traditional crafts and industrial mass-production techniques based on consumerism and commoditization (Schwartz, 1996). Peter Behrens co-founded the Deutscher Werkbund, and mentored three important architects: Gropius (1908–1912), Mies van der Rohe (1910–1912), and Le Corbusier (for six months in 1910–1911). Le Corbusier had a longer mentorship with Auguste Perret, who was not part of a movement, but married classical with modern materials and techniques (Wilson, 1984).

Data sources

I employed archival research methods (Ventresca & Mohr, 2002), using multiple data sources and multi-method triangulation (Jick, 1979). I used five distinct data sources:

1. **Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals** to identify writings published in architectural journals about these five architects from 1900 through their deaths, which are indicators of recognition while alive, and then from their deaths to 2004, which captures eminence—that is sustained attention from critics and historians of the profession.

2. **Contemporary Architects** (Emanuel, 1980, 1994; Morgan & Naylor, 1987), a reference book that identifies all buildings and artifacts designed and created by the architects as well as biographical data. These data provide an assessment of productivity throughout the career, social networks in the form of collaborations on buildings, partnerships, and apprenticeships. Productivity has been argued as critical to both recognition (Lang & Lang, 1988) and eminence (Collins, 1998). I use the date of the first building to mark the beginning of their careers in architecture.

3. **Greatbuildings.com** (Matthews, 2004) identifies the “collection of realized exemplars” (Larson, 1993) that guides the profession of architecture. Matthews built the collection while a faculty member in the Architecture Department at the University of Oregon, and holds masters in architecture degrees from Columbia and Berkeley (see www.designlaboratory.com/faculty/matthews.kevin/vitae.html, retrieved 21 June 2009). Greatbuildings source material (plans, elevations, schematics) was provided by the original architects for use by educational institutions and architect practitioners (Matthews, 2004). The website is linked as well to the RIBA online library catalog of buildings. Greatbuildings is now overseen and maintained by Artifice (Kevin Matthews company). Artifice develops 3D modeling software for the building design profession, publishes the electronic journal ArchitectureWeek, and is the Web’s leading general architecture site, architectural media site, architecture community site, the top architectural email newsletter, the best-selling architectural reference CD-ROM, as verified by Alexia.com (retrieved from www.aboutus.org/GreatBuildings.com, 12 June 2009). When the data for this study were collected in December 2008, www.greatbuildings.com included 697 buildings that were constructed between 1850 and 1990. It listed 68 buildings by the five architects.

4. **Biographies, articles, and books written about the architects and also by the architects. Those cited are included in the references.**

5. **Original reviews of each architect between 1896–1969 performed by critics, architectural historians, professional peers, and editors of professional journals.** To assess the content of contemporary opinions, I randomly sampled 5 per cent of the articles written about each architect for three career stages: Early, mid, and late. Early careers were identified as 10 years from the first building listed for an architect; research has shown that 10 years is the time required to develop expertise in an area (Prietula & Simon, 1989). This time period corresponds roughly with the ages...
of late teens through the 20s. Mid career was defined as 11–39 years from first building, corresponding to ages 30–59. Late career was operationalized as 40 years from first building until death, corresponding roughly from age 60 to 90 (Wright lived to 90 and died while completing the Guggenheim Museum). As shown in Table 2, this sampling resulted in 89 journal articles, ranging from 1896 to 1966 that spanned 36 journals and 60 named authors (10 articles had unnamed authors so most likely editors or staff reporters). These texts are artifacts that also act as key boundary objects and central to understanding intellectual and cultural schools and movement (Collins, 1998).

Analysis

The original source historical documents were in portable document format (pdf) and translated to rich text format (rtf) for data analysis in the qualitative software program MAXQDA. In the cleaning and coding process, each text was read at least three times.

Boundary objects were operationalized as architects’ artifacts: Their Buildings, books, plans, and designs. To assess the response of critics toward these boundary objects, and gain insight into which were categorized as stellar versus less stellar, revealing symbolic boundaries, each review was read and coded as positive, neutral (primarily descriptions or plans), and negative by the author and a second coder. Since raters were forced to assign numbers to each category (e.g., 1 for presence of negative, neutral, or positive, 0 for absence), the fixed multi-rater $\kappa$ coefficient was used (Brennan & Prediger, 1981; Siegel & Castellan, 1988). The $\kappa$ coefficient for per cent of overall agreement was $\kappa_o: 0.887641$ and the $\kappa$ value of the Fixed-marginal was 0.738813, where values above 0.70 indicate adequate inter-rater agreement.

Since the most prevalent boundary objects were buildings, I coded every building mentioned in the texts using MAXQDA to identify those buildings by the architect most often discussed by critics. This resulted in 70 buildings out of the more than 1000 buildings designed and erected by these architects. Buildings that were mentioned across 4 per cent or more of the texts were included as exemplars. To locate the dates of the buildings and match them with career stage, I used *Contemporary Architects* reference guide.

Boundary objects and boundary work revealed social and symbolic networks.

**Social Networks** were identified through three sources of information all found in *Contemporary Architects*: (1) Apprenticeship—with whom the five architects apprenticed for their professional training, (2) Partnerships—with whom, if any one, the five architects engaged in an architectural practice, and (3) Collaborations—with whom the five architects collaborated as architects on buildings and designs. Collaborations were tracked by whom an architect was co-credited on a building as the architect.

**Symbolic Networks** were gathered from critics’ reviews of the five architects. To identify symbolic network, I coded every person mentioned in the critics’ reviews. This resulted in 189 people. I then
examined the co-occurrence of actors mentioned within the same paragraph of a text. A paragraph represents a complete thought, and thus an appropriate level of who is compared, contrasted or linked with whom (Krippendorff, 2004). This process identified symbolic relations, based on categorizing social actors on similarities/dissimilarities. Thus, symbolic relations may be negative, positive, or neutral, and captured which architects the critics talked about in reference to one another.

To visualize the symbolic network, I included only those social actors that were mentioned in 10 per cent or more of the texts for one of the five architects (e.g., occurred in 10 per cent of a target architect’s reviews), resulting in 37 people. To create the symbolic networks, I used the Code Relations Visualization tool in MAXQDA, which creates a code by code matrix where the cell represents the number of times the two codes co-occurred in a paragraph. I then imported this matrix into UCINET (Borgatti, Everett, & Freeman, 2002) and used the software tool “netdraw” to visualize the network. The line size corresponds to the strength of tie between two people. In order to clarify relations and enhance readability among the 37 people in the architects’ relations graph, I visualized relationships that had two or more co-mentions (the mean was one, and thus did not clarify relations). In practical terms, this measure indicates all dyadic relations which had two or more co-mentions in a paragraph. Finally in order to understand the co-occurrences identified in the texts, I used the text retrieval function to extract all paragraphs were two actors were co-mentioned for further reading.

Next I describe the interpretations of the analysis for how boundary work and boundary objects shaped architects’ recognition across career stages and eminence after death.

Results

Figure 1, based on Avery Architectural Index, shows the similarities and variance in architects’ recognition across career stages and eminence after death. In their early careers (first 10 years), they were remarkably similar—all relatively unknown. In mid career (11–39 years after their first building),
they were still quite similar in the amount of recognition, even though Lutyens at this point had received both the AIA and RIBA Gold Medal Awards and was the most productive architect in terms of buildings. However by late career (40+ years until death) and then after death, the amount of attention given to them diverges dramatically.

Table 3 identifies the overall tone of reviews by career stage, showing that in their early careers, architects had garnered little recognition, which came during their mid-careers and was mostly positive in tenor. Table 4 reveals the specific buildings that were the focus of reviews, which by and large foreshadowed those buildings most likely to be recognized as exemplars for the profession after the architects’ death. It also highlights the percentage of buildings that garnered attention by each architect. Table 4 reveals that Wright, Mies, and Corbusier had much higher rates of recognition in mid and late career by contemporaries than did either Lutyens or Gropius, foreshadowing their differences in eminence and suggesting that consistent recognition in mid and late careers were pivotal for securing and stabilizing eminence in a profession.

### Boundary work: determining social networks and social boundaries

Boundary work demarcates social boundaries of who is included and excluded in the profession’s recognition. It also highlights symbolic relations that guide interpretation and understanding among diverse members about key figures in the profession.

The architects’ social networks are shown in Figure 2. These architects had little interaction with one another even though they created buildings during the same time period and three of them (Mies, Gropius, and Corbusier) apprenticed with Behrens. Instead, each architect created his own art world—those with whom they interacted professionally (Becker, 1982)—forming discrete cliques or subgroupings within the profession. Mies, Corbusier, and Gropius had much larger social networks than Lutyens or Wright. Mies, Corbusier, and Gropius also were more likely to engage in multi-architect building projects, as indicated by the connections among multiple architects (e.g., Gropius, Breuer, Bayer, and Moholy-Nagy who were part of Gropius’ Bauhaus school). Often these social relations formed around collaboration on a single, large scale building such as the United Nations Headquarter in New York City (e.g., Corbusier-Harrison-Neimeyer-Robertson).
The vast majority of these relations are weaker ties, except for Gropius who tended to collaborate on many buildings with Adolph Meyer, Maxwell Fry, and Marcel Breuer. Fry and Breuer were also partners at different points in his career (indicated by the circle in a box). The size of these social networks appears to have little influence on recognition or eminence: Lutyens and Wright are comparable on social networks, but had very different levels of recognition and eminence. The same is true for Gropius with Mies and Corbusier. I indicated the relations with other AIA or RIBA Gold Medal winners (coded light grey) which were spread among architects.

Boundary work, traced through recognition as a collaborator or partner, reveals the social boundaries of the profession through who is absent. Engineers (structural, mechanical-electrical), building

Table 4. Stellar boundary objects: Architects buildings recognized as exemplary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architects &amp; careers</th>
<th>Total bldgs</th>
<th>Contemporary critics:</th>
<th>Eminence (greatbldgs)</th>
<th>Building exemplars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wright</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Wright House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Career</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Taliesin, Imperial Hotel, Unity Temple, Larkin Bldg, Robie House, Coonly House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Career</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
<td>12 (9%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Career</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>2 (1%)</td>
<td>17 (9%)</td>
<td>Falling Water, Johnson Wax Admin, Marin Civic Center, Guggenheim Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutyens</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Career</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Career</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>1 (&gt;1%)</td>
<td>4 (2%)</td>
<td>New Delhi masterplan, Heathcote, Nashdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Career</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gropius</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fagus Factory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Career</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Career</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>1 (&lt;1%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>Bauhaus Bldgs, Gropius House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Career</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>Graduate Center Harvard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mies</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Barcelona Pavilion, Tugendhat, IIT Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Career</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Career</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
<td>5 (9%)</td>
<td>Farnsworth house, Lake Shore Apts, IIT (Chapel, Crown hall), Seagram Bldg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Career</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>6 (8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corbusier</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Villa Savoye, Garches, Ozenfant (primarily houses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Career</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Career</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
<td>7 (5%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Career</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>3 (4%)</td>
<td>12 (18%)</td>
<td>Ronchamp, Chandigarh, Carpenter Ctr, Convent La Tourette, Unite d’Habitation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Bolded and Italicized buildings garnered higher attention among contemporaries.
contractors, and a myriad of occupational subcontractors, not to mention architectural specialists (e.g. acoustics or building specialists such those as for museums or stadiums) are all absent. They have been eradicated from the profession’s memory in its reference materials, highlighting what is valued in the profession. Only those who designed, rather than constructed the buildings, are recognized for their contributions by the architectural profession.

Boundary objects: Determining symbolic boundaries and symbolic networks

Boundary objects provide the potential for common points of conversation about what is worthy (or problematic) and the challenges its members face in the profession; thus, boundary objects facilitate shared meaning and transference of learning among professionals. Buildings were the most common boundary objects identified in both the Contemporary Architects reference material, as well as the critics’ reviews, except for Le Corbusier, who had an equal mix of reviews that focused on his buildings and books.
These boundary objects often sparked dialog and heated debate among reviewers (who were architectural critics, historians, and professional peers). The intensity of the debate and polarization of opinions indicated that symbolic boundaries had been crossed, signaling threats to the purity of categories (Douglas, 1966/2007). Importantly, the buildings most contested when constructed have become exemplars in the profession such as Wright’s Larkin Building and Taliesin and Corbusier’s Villa Savoye. Wright’s Larkin Building has been the center of controversy; it heralded a fundamentally new building aesthetic, a modernist rather than classical approach that was at first condemned by critic Russell Sturgis in his 1909 review:

Few persons who have seen the great monuments of the past, or adequate photographs of them; who have loved them and have tried to surmise their secret of artistic charm, will fail to pronounce this monument, as seen in Figure 1, an extremely ugly building. It is, in fact, a monster of awkwardness...

Sturgis was a Classical revivalist, a movement that Wright strongly opposed. Thus, the review reveals a symbolic boundary scuffle within the profession. In Wright’s late career (48 years after the building was erected), architectural critic Ada Louise Huxtable offered a eulogy on the fate of the controversial building and raised it up as an exemplar for architects to emulate:

In 1950, Frank Lloyd Wright’s Larkin Company Administration Building was sold for $5000, to be demolished immediately for a $100 000 truck-storage garage. Its passing was little noticed although, when it was newly completed, this same building electrified the architectural world... Soon the center of impassioned comment and controversy, its influence was destined to be worldwide: it became a landmark, an undisputed turning point in commercial design. In less than fifty years, the initial antagonism turned to acceptance, and then to apathy. ... The unique contribution of the Larkin Building was that it did present a fresh approach, a total departure from accepted practices. Conceived with clarity and monumentality, it offered a straightforward, logical answer to specific requirements. ... The underlying lessons of the work—its simple logic, its remarkable efficiency, and the superb handling of its utilitarian forms—are only now becoming the accepted governing principles of contemporary commercial architecture.

Controversy that signals symbolic boundary transgressions also surrounded Corbusier, focusing primarily on his writings rather than his architecture. In 1928, one reviewer commented on his book "Towards a New Architecture":

Le Corbusier’s book in Mr Etchell’s spirited translation has raised a storm. On a people so essentially poetic and literal as the English the book has had a much more disturbing effect than the actual experiments of Lurçat, le Corbusier et Jeanneret, and Mallet-Stevens.

Architectural historian Henry Russell Hitchcock, placed Corbusier into the traditions of the architectural profession rather than an invoker of new and bizarre ideas that had no place in architecture. He offered this reassessment in 1952 of an early Corbusier building: “It is when we study the plan, however, that we really recognize the presence of a markedly original talent. For the use of schemes of proportion to organize facades had long been a part of the post-Renaissance tradition.” In contrast, Banham Reyner in his 1955 review argued that Corbusier transgressions of symbolic boundaries made him hard to categorize and place into history. He argued that his contribution was the transposition of new artifacts into the profession; he translates into rather than transforms the profession’s knowledge-base.

Le Corbusier is seventy this year, yet it is only in the last eighteen months that anyone has been able to pin down a quality that genuinely runs through the whole of his work. ... Corb is an erudite, rather
than an inventive architect...[when]...faced with a particular problem—how to put a hand-rail on a spiral stair, or a motor-road though a city—Corb can always find in his mental filing system (or his notebooks) a ready-made answer that he remembers having seen somewhere or other... Where Corb is original—indeed, where he is Corb—is that his ready-made answers are picked up from all over the place, from Turkey, aeronautics, the peasantry, prehistoric remains, his own followers, ships, bicycle-racing and practically anything else you like to name, and a large part of his genius lies in the craft with which they are transposed out of context and turned to utterly unexpected use.

Table 4 shows that Lutyens’ or Gropius’ buildings were selected rarely as exemplary boundary objects for discussion—either by contemporaries or by greatbuildings.com for inclusion as professional exemplars even though Lutyens was the most prolific of the architects and even though he won both the AIA and RIBA Gold medals during his mid-career. Further, contemporary and post mortem assessments do not agree on any of Lutyens’ building as exemplary: Contemporaries highlight his designs for New Delhi, whereas greatbuildings.com lists four of his country manors. Lutyens married aesthetic forms to create ambiguity and paradox in his buildings (Inskip, 1979), continuing the Arts and Crafts tradition, unlike Wright, Corbusier, Gropius, or Mies whose buildings challenged or transformed prevalent approaches. In the introduction to a series of review articles done seven years after Lutyens’ death, the editor introduces Lutyens’ career and signals his lack of eminence in the profession:

The opportunity is provided here by the recent memorial publication of the work of Sir Edwin Lutyens. The extensive survey raises a question that has been asked and answered one way or the other, many times: was Sir Edwin Lutyens a great architect? The memorial volume makes it easier than it has been hitherto to give a reasoned reply. Easier—but still not easy. For the paradoxes remain—the paradox of the builder of follies who was at the same time an architect of the common man, the paradox of eccentric who achieved such remarkable worldly success, the paradox of the revivalist in whose work geometry is more insistent than in that of any living architect bar Corbusier, the crowning paradox of the twentieth-century architect of prodigious gifts who contributed nothing whatsoever to the main stream of development of twentieth century architecture.

Pevsner, the architectural historian and critic whose texts are routinely used in college courses, in his 1951 post mortem (part of the above special issue), pondered why Lutyens was so successful during his lifetime and ends with: “he is so completely divorced from all that architects of the last 50 years have striven for, that a balanced judgment of his place in history is perhaps impossible.” Thus worldly success—projects, opportunities, and recognition particularly in his early and mid careers—did not translate into eminence after his death. These historians and critics did not judge Lutyens’ contribution as worthy of continued attention.

Similarly, most of the reviews of Gropius throughout his career highlight his founding of the Bauhaus and his innovative approach to teaching. Even his RIBA Gold Medal ceremony in 1956, during his late career, focused on these rather than his buildings or his contributions to design. The third speaker highlighted how different Gropius was from Wright and Corbusier; his focus on methods not design and his relation to industry.

These three great architects [Corbusier, Wright and Gropius] are of course generally regarded as the pioneers of modern architecture. I believe that they all started with a common point of view. The thing that interests me so much now is the difference between them and the different contributions that they have made to architecture.

I cannot help feeling how very great these differences are. If you think of Le Corbusier or if you think of Frank Lloyd Wright, you think of the very powerful and personal style of building. The
influence of our Gold Medallist this evening is no less great but his influence has been of a different kind. I believe that it has been an influence not on style but on method, and that seems to me to be the very important thing about it. His influence is the result of a tremendously sustained effort to give the designer his place in all aspects of industrial production.

Ironically, James Stirling, in his review of Corbusier’s Ronchamp, illuminates why Gropius’ buildings are not heralded as exemplars. They fail to address and resolve design challenges.

“Since the Bauhaus, the fusion of art and technology has been the lifelong mission of Gropius, and yet it is this aspect which denoted his least achievement. The Dessau building itself presents a series of elevations each of which is biased towards either art or technology.”

In 1968, Mies, a contemporary of Gropius and successor as Director of the Bauhaus, offered this succinct assessment of Gropius’ major contribution “the best thing Gropius has done was to invent the name Bauhaus. I wouldn’t change it for anything.” “Further, Gropius is being downgraded, whereby 44 per cent (7 of 16) of his buildings were de-listed in the 2008 AIA Guidebook to Boston from the 1992 version (Southworth & Southworth, 1992, 2008), even though the authors are the same and the buildings still exist. This is most surprising in Boston because Gropius headed the Graduate Design School at Harvard for over 30 years and was central to the social and professional networks in Boston, training many of its members. While his social network was extensive; his symbolic network, which is constructed by critics and historians, was limited.

During the late career, critics in their reviews were taking stock of these architects’ contributions. Even in late career, Mies, Corbusier, and Wright still sparked controversy and provoked disagreement among professional peers, critics, and historians. In their late careers, they were noted for reinventing themselves and their styles, trespassing their own symbolic boundaries and signaling their continued capacity to transform the profession’s knowledge base. William Jordy, the architectural historian, explains how Mies did this in his 1958 article “Seagram Assessed”:

weightless interpretation of Miesian ideals...With all odds favouring a weightless result when Mies employed the curtain wall for the Seagram, he refuted reasonable expectations. In this refutation, with what is visually, all things considered, the first weighty skyscraper to be completely enveloped in its glass window wall, lies the meaning of the Seagram.

Louis Mumford’s 1959 review of Mies’ Seagram reiterates how the building exemplifies a profound shift, a reinvention of a symbolic boundary, in Mies’ architecture

this tower is such a divergence from the mode of his Farnsworth house, his Illinois Institute of Technology, and his Lake Shore apartment houses that it must give all the little mice-like Mieses who have been coming forth from the architectural schools a touch of panic, for this is not the particular academic cliché they have so sedulously identified with modern architecture.

In the same way, Pevsner in 1939 describes the reversals of Wright’s style and approach to architecture over time and his influence on other architects.

There was not one of these conflicting schools of thought which has not at one time or other experienced some stimulus from Wright. And as if this were not enough of confusion yet, one has to add that by then—as is known — Wright had changed his own style considerably. Midway Gardens, Chicago (1913, Fig. 5), and the Imperial Hotel, Tokio (1916 - 20), represent a new Wright, gone all romantic, fantastic, Eastern—far more personal and unimitable now than he had been when Europe first got to hear of him.
Exemplary buildings are used by the profession and its members to showcase their judgments of what is “stellar”—that is what is worth highlighting, defining, and remembering in the profession and shaping its collective identity and values. As boundary objects, exemplary buildings provide a focus of attention, a basis for shared discourse about the profession’s past and future, and who has resolved its challenges and what should be emulated. It also highlights what skills and activities are considered most important—design rather than teaching or methods. Since the profession is geographically dispersed and nationally diverse, boundary objects facilitate communication among members through journals (which are themselves boundary objects), transfer solutions to existing problems, and are a means for enacting collective values and beliefs about the profession.

These boundary objects—books, buildings, and designs—and their architects, however, are not assessed as isolated objects. They are embedded by critics into a web of meanings and relations seen in symbolic networks, which join architects across time and space. Figure 3 shows the symbolic network, as derived from the critics’ reviews. Wright, Mies, Corbusier, and Gropius are the central players, as indicated by the size of their nodes and also their placement toward the center of the figure. Although these four architects never worked together as architects since they created and moved in distinct social worlds, they are symbolically associated with one another as the founders of modern architecture.

Figure 3. Architects’ symbolic network: Critics’ perceptions
Thus, in a review of Mies, a critic is just as likely to mention Wright, Corbusier, and Gropius in the same paragraph.

Symbolic centrality is seen most vividly in Wright, who is at the center of many clusters. Wright is attributed as symbolically connecting key movements within architecture: The British Arts and Crafts, the Deutscher Werkbund, and Chicago School. The British Arts and Crafts movement is represented on the bottom left of Figure 3 by Morris, Voysey, Mackintosh, Ashbee, Lutyens, and Ruskin. Wright also connects the Deutscher Werkbund and its key members: Gropius, Mies, Behrens, Breuer, which resides in the center of Figure 3. Wright also anchors the Chicago School, from the center to the upper right of Figure 3, containing: Root, Sullivan (original members), Wright, Mies, Skidmore, Owings, Merrill (known as SOM, which specializes in commercial architecture) and Bunshaft (a partner at SOM). Wright apprenticed with Sullivan for six years and knew Root and Burnham, who were key founders of the Chicago School.

Symbolic distance or decoupling is also revealed in Figure 2. For critics, Lutyens is not connected to other members of the British Arts and Crafts, but instead to Wright and Corbusier. Lutyens was socially connected to members of the British Arts and Crafts, knowing many members personally and also designed buildings in that style. Yet, he resides at the periphery of the graph, indicating what the qualitative data already revealed: Critics assessed Lutyens’ buildings and work as peripheral to transforming the profession's knowledge. Ironically, Lutyens’ received the RIBA and AIA Gold Medals at a much earlier career stage and younger age than the other four architects.

The primacy of symbolic rather than social networks is also revealed in the Chicago school. For example, Mies van der Rohe became the acknowledged next generation of the Chicago school rather than Wright, who had worked with Sullivan and Adler. Henry Russell Hitchcock in his 1952 article on the evolution of Wright, Mies, and Le Corbusier notes that:

The two apartment towers at 845–860 Lake Shore Drive in Chicago by Mies van der Rohe, although not even finished yet, are already among the most prominent objects on the distinguished shore line view of the city. Surprisingly enough, Mies seems to have picked up again here after fifty years the line of Sullivan’s great buildings.

Louis Mumford’s 1959 review of Mies’ Seagram reiterates this insight and highlights Mies continued originality and how it is anchored in and connects with key historical figures and goals of the Chicago school exemplar—Louis Sullivan, who was Wright’s mentor:

Mies van der Rohe himself has gone back to Louis Sullivan’s concept of the skyscraper as a “proud and soaring thing” and has designed one with unqualified emphasis on the vertical. . . .

The graph also reveals the symbolic chains of influence in the Chicago school flow from Sullivan to Mies to SOM (Skidmore Owings and Merrill), as perceived by historians, critics, and peers in reviews. Indeed, there is only one social relation among these architects that comprise the Chicago School: Mies collaboration on a building with Halobird and Root. This building, however, is not noted as an exemplar or discussed by the critics. Jordy in his 1961 “Assessment of Mies”, highlights the importance of the symbolic rather than social in assigning who inherits and extends a school or movement:

“Mies’ language must be judged, first, by looking at those buildings which are closest to Mies in that they both frankly resemble his work and partake in some measure of its quality. . . . There are the best of the business buildings by the sizeable firm of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, as inspired by the leadership of the chief designer in the New York office, Gordon Bunshaft.”

Thus, Mies’ vocabulary and grammar of buildings is seen as extended by SOM (specifically Skidmore, Owings, and Bunshaft) rather than any student Mies trained. The lineage and legacy of the Chicago School passed from the firm of Adler and Sullivan to Mies van der Rohe to SOM.
Owings, and Merrill) based on symbolic materials and connections rather than social affiliation or mentor networks in contrast to Collins (1998) who argues that schools are passed down through interaction rituals, primarily from mentor to protégé.

Symbolic networks are illuminated in how historical architects are associated with contemporary architects. In this way, a building and its creator both become boundary objects—connecting the past to the future while still in the present (Preda, 1999). By doing so, contemporary architects become anchored symbolically into the profession’s history, revealing what skills, concepts, or approaches are central to the profession’s knowledge based and how these are extended by contemporary architects. For example, Corbusier is likened to Palladio because both focused on form and created mathematical approaches to architecture, seeking harmonious proportions. As Godfrey noted in his 1936 review of Cobusier’s Radiant City and Rowe in his 1947 article on Corbusier “Mathematics of an Ideal”:

Built up on the principles we have discussed, it is worked out with that incredible vitality and almost vegetable sense of form which have given Le Corbusier a place in international architecture unoccupied since the time of Palladio.

A more specific comparison that presents itself is that between Palladio’s Villa Foscari, the Malcontenta, and the house which in 1927 Corbusier built for M. de Monzie at Garches. A diagrammatic comparison will reveal the fundamental relationships.

In another way, this linkage is quite ironic because Palladio, the 16th century architect who rediscovered Roman architecture and applied it to contemporary buildings culled and developed classical traditions, which Corbusier expressly rejected, calling traditions a lie and drawing his inspiration from modern technology such as airplanes, ocean liners and all manner of sources (as noted in the prior section, see also Corbusier’s book *Towards a New Architecture*). The reviews illuminate how key audiences—critics and historians—make sense of and actively anchor Corbusier’s place in architectural history. Neither Lutyens nor Gropius were linked in this same intensity or to such prominent historical personages as were Corbusier, Mies and Wright.

Figure 3 illuminates the important role of critics to architects, primarily as their sponsors and advocates. For example, Pevsner supported Gropius and in fact spoke at his RIBA Gold Medal awards. Hitchcock, after initially dismissing Wright in 1932 (Hitchcock & Johnson, 1932/1995) as a “half modern”, revised his opinion and became a strong advocate for Wright and Wright’s contribution to modern architecture. Louis Mumford both critiqued and complimented Mies’ architectural approach and style, whereas Jordy was consistently a strong advocate. Johnson was originally an architectural historian, who sponsored and promoted Mies, became an architect himself and co-designed with Mies, the Seagram building—considered a masterpiece of architecture—and then eventually became critical of Mies’ approach.

By analyzing how critics write about these five architects, we have a window into how the social and symbolic networks of the profession play out in garnering attention and securing (or derailing) eminence for these architects. Critics used symbolic associations, essentially analogies to history through comparing and contrasting a contemporary architect with historically eminent architects, to anchor an architect into the profession’s collective memory. These activities were noticeably absent for Lutyens and Gropius. Lutyens and Gropius were anchored to contemporaries, but rarely to historically eminent architects. Thus, it is not enough to be known and well recognized by contemporaries. An architect’s eminence is not controlled by the architect; an architect becomes eminent when critics weave the architect symbolically into the profession’s history by associating him (or her) with historical exemplars—both other architects and particular buildings.
Discussion and Conclusion

This study began with the question of how social and symbolic boundaries influence a creative actor’s career outcomes of recognition and eminence. My inductive study revealed that social networks were constructed by the architect: With whom the architect trained, mentored, collaborated, and partnered. In contrast symbolic networks were constructed by critics who compared, contrasted, and likened the architect’s buildings and practices to contemporary and historical figures in the profession. Although most scholars have focused on social networks, particularly mentoring networks (Collins, 1998; Williamson, 1991), as key for career opportunities and outcomes, symbolic networks appear to be more important for late career recognition and eminence after death. Specifically, an architect’s centrality in symbolic networks revealed how critics saw his contributions and to which historical personages these contributions were linked, anchoring the architect into history.

The study also illuminated the importance of artifacts—buildings, books, and designs—that functioned as boundary objects to coordinate a globally dispersed and diverse profession. Buildings as boundary object represented a professional’s knowledge and how the architect had (or had not) transformed that knowledge (Carlile, 2002, 2006). Buildings were the basis for fellow professionals’ and critics’ focus of attention and provided a collective sense of identity (Rafaeli & Pratt, 2006). Boundary objects were also the pegs around which individual careers and the profession’s social networks were draped (Kadushin, 1976), revealing discrete groups that pursued different goals and approaches within the profession. Although boundary objects have been recognized as a means by which individuals (Nippert-Eng, 1996) and diverse groups within organizations coordinate actions (Bechky, 2003; Carlile, 2002, 2004), they have not been recognized as means for structuring careers and professions.

The study reaffirms previous scholars’ proposals about how careers link micro phenomena to macro contexts. For instance, repeated patterns of action define careers (Barley, 1989) and are thus shaped by reference to collective behaviors and beliefs (Hughes, 1937) that can be uncovered by tracing career events and sequences over time (Jones & Dunn, 2005). In the case of this study, these micro–macro linkages are seen in how an architect’s place evolves sequentially over time, in career stages, and is defined by the critics who collectively see and symbolically link the architect to historically important architects. Thus, this study illustrates how boundaryless careers are significantly shaped by macro-level dynamics beyond the immediate control of the individual actor. Previously, Galenson (2006) identified the success of artists as an individual phenomenon and posited a typology of early and late bloomers, while Accominotti (2009) re-analyzed Galenson’s data and showed how these painters’ careers peaked in cycles that aligned with the peak of the artistic movements to which they belonged. Thus, career outcomes were not solely an individual phenomenon, but also shaped by social or collective forces. The profession shaped its members’ individual careers through who was given recognition, while individuals’ careers shaped the profession by how they transformed its knowledge-base and enacted its collective identity.

Finally, prior research on the film industry has highlighted that categorization processes constrains careers in the form of penalties for those who violate symbolic boundaries (e.g., Hsu, 2006, Zuckerman et al., 2003). A challenge of this work on film has been the short time frame in which career outcomes are assessed—typically one to three years. In contrast, my study traces career outcomes over an entire career history and after death. My research provides a more nuanced explanation; positive reviews and ease of categorization did not determine long-term positive career outcomes. Both Lutyens and Gropius had the lowest rates of eminence, but the most positive reviews across career stages. In addition, short-term penalties did accrue to those who violated symbolic boundaries but these controversies were also associated with positive long-term benefits for the architects Mies, Wright, and Corbusier. Breaches of
symbolic boundaries signaled novel approaches and transformation of the profession’s knowledge. The prolific and ongoing work of Colin Martindale and Dean Keith Simonton have shown the importance of novelty in both contemporary and transhistorical judgments of creative products and producers across the sciences, humanities, and politics (for summaries of this research see Martindale, 1990; Simonton, 1984/1990). This insight complements the work on robust identities, which will “not work for anyone” (Padgett & Ansell, 1993); however, they may be demanded for those who wish to attain eminence. Eminence may require a riskier and less certain career path and eventual outcome—who can say when and whether controversy and condemnation will turn into accolades and reassessments?

This study also has limitations. One limitation is its restricted sample size. A larger sampling of eminent architects would facilitate verification of insights and trends. However, this limitation also provides opportunities for future research by examining variance among eminent architects (or other creative producers). A second limitation is that the reviews were primarily in English, meaning that the US, UK, and bi-lingual publications dominated. Although fully 60 per cent of Avery articles are in English, it is not possible to check whether these interpretations by reviewers were constant across journals which were published in German or French. To do would require translations of articles. Future research may explore this issue. A third limitation is that the research focuses on the critics’ perspectives. The architects’ responses to accolades or criticism are not captured. The five architects may have used different strategies to ameliorate the sting of and threats to career from criticism by eminent historians and critics, particularly in early and mid career. Finally, although the statuses of clients, awards and building projects were not mentioned by the reviewers, these status markers may drive who merits a review as well as its tone.

In conclusion, this study examined a relatively under-researched area—what boundaries may constrain creative careers, specifically the role of social and symbolic boundaries illuminated by boundary work and boundary objects. My findings revealed the importance of symbolic networks rather than social networks and the role of critics, who wove the architect’s contribution into the profession’s knowledge and collective memory by associating an architect with an eminent historical figure and highlighting how the contemporary architect continued dialog across time and space.

Authors’ biography

Candace Jones is an associate professor of Management in the Organization Studies Department at Boston College. Her research expertise is in networks, institutional theory, professions, and creative industries. Her current research focuses on language, networks and cultural understandings in professions. She has forthcoming articles in Administrative Science Quarterly on institutional logics in medicine and in the Journal of Organizational Behavior on the role of social networks in understanding social identities and identification. She has published in Organization Science, Academy of Management Review, Organization Studies, Management Learning, and Journal of Organizational Behavior.

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