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Volume 4 Issue 2: Editorial

Special Issue: Social Haunting, Classed Affect, and the Afterlives of Deindustrialization

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Everyone knows deindustrialization as an economic process: the loss of factory jobs as production facilities shift location, leaving behind shuttered buildings and localities having to reinvent themselves or face economic ruin. It is not a new process, but is intrinsic to capitalism's 'spatial fix', the need to maintain profit in the face of increased competition. But how does deindustrialization feel, what does it sound like, and how does it continue to hold meaning in its absent presence, long after the factory has closed? What are its affective remnants, vibrations, sights, smells, and how do they assert an affectual presence?

This special issue of the *Journal of Working-Class Studies* brings together a group of articles that explore the affective entanglement of haunted spaces of deindustrialization and the lived experiences of social haunting in different international settings. Believing that a *classed, placed, gendered* and *historically situated* 'politics of affect' is indispensable for any account of contemporary domestic phenomena such as the rise of Trump or the strengthening of the UK right around Brexit, this issue contributes to the development of a grounded theoretical and methodological vocabulary that will sharpen our understanding of the class re-compositions, shifting political alliances, and 'new populisms' that seem to commonly attend the process of de-industrialization.

The issue was initiated by Geoff Bright, Valerie Walkerdine, Joe Varga and Mark James who all have an interest in deindustrialisation and the effects it has had, and continues to have, on communities and individuals. Bright, Walkerdine, Varga and James composed the call for papers and their deep engagement with the ideas of social haunting are evident in the call. And with the recent result of the UK general election, which saw an unprecedented swing away from the Labour party in former industrial areas, the analyses in this issue are timely indeed.

In Jean Spence's 'Twisted Seams: A Gendered Social Haunting' there is a focus on the role of women during the UK Miners' Strike of 1984-1985. Spence's article introduces the concept of social haunting for readers of the issue and writes about the 'ghosts' present in the history of

mining and how they relate to the 'interwoven experiences of class and gender relations of power'.

Bright and Ivinson also bring gender to the forefront in their discussion of 'Ghost Lab' events, which were a series of community memory projects that ran in former mining towns in the north of England and in south Wales. Their article 'Washing lines, whinberries and reworking 'waste ground': Women's affective practices and a haunting within the haunting of the UK coalfields' shows how the creative approaches of working-class women can be used to understand how solidarity in communities is created and maintained.

Aimee Loiselle's article 'Puerto Rican Needleworkers and Colonial Migrations: Deindustrialization as Pathways Lost' takes the gender focus to the US, but via the perspective of Puerto Rican migrant workers who travelled to the Northeast mainland during the post-war period in search of work. Loiselle shows how these women workers suffered the effects of deindustrialisation, not only due to the loss of their livelihoods, but also because their unemployment became racialised and they were excluded from the narratives of labour history that privileged white male workers.

In 'Workers' Identities in Transition: Deindustrialisation and Scottish Steelworkers', James Ferns takes the reader to Scotland and provides an analysis of employment prospects of former Scottish steelworkers. The article aims to shed some light on the 'afterlives' of deindustrialisation.

Former male nickel miners in Canada are the subject of Adam King's 'Gender and Working-Class Identity in Deindustrializing Sudbury, Ontario'. King looks at the ways in which working-class male identity was shaped by industrial work, and how understandings of gender may have changed since the industries closed.

The final article in this special issue is a personal reflective essay by Janet Batsleer. In 'Three Spirits: Breakdowns Present, Past and Yet to Come', Batsleer reflects on approaches and attitudes towards mental illness in British industrial towns and argues for the place of art in creating healing opportunities for marginalised individuals and communities.

This special issue also includes reviews of six books, which once again show the range and quality of books that focus on working-class life and experience. Books reviewed cover a number of topics; Black labour history in the US, labour organising in the US, dispelling the myth of meritocracy in both the UK and the US, a memoir relating a working-class scholar's return to his industrial home town in northern France and an analysis of working-class writing theory and practice. Thank you to Christie Launius for her wonderful work as book reviews editor.

This issue contributes to the growing body of scholarship in working-class studies and demonstrates that there is important work being conducted. Class currently appears to be back in vogue as a topic, and working-class studies scholars and activists from around the world are at the forefront of analysis and understanding of how class works.

Twisted Seams: A Gendered Social Haunting

Jean Spence, East Durham Artists' Network

Abstract

The starting point for this article is the bitterly fought UK Miners' Strike of 1984-1985 in which women played a significant role. The concept of 'social haunting', as developed by Avery Gordon and applied in the Manchester Metropolitan University Social Haunting project, is used to suggest that the strike activism involved a mobilisation and confrontation with the 'ghosts' of the mining past that involved complex and interwoven experiences of class and gender relations of power. The discussion focuses upon what is normally unspoken and unwritten about the impact of living with coal mining on the inter-generational subjectivities of women from mining families. I argue that the strike raised the ghosts of the injustices of mining history but that its defeat subverted the process that had begun of dealing particularly with the ghosts of gender inequality. The experience of the strike now constitutes a further dimension to the complexity of this haunting. Taking inspiration from Gordon's efforts to transcend disciplinary boundaries, I use a variety of sources and approaches, including sociological and historical research, memoir and the participatory learning achieved in a voluntary arts organisation in the ex-mining town of Seaham, to address this gendered haunting from my own, female perspective, and seek ways of raising, and transcending the ghosts through conscious art practice in a local setting.

Keywords

Miners' Strike, coal-mining, women, ghosts, haunting, community, memoir, art

The UK Miners' Strike

The UK Coal Miners' Strike of 1984-1985, provoked by the threat of pit closures, was bitterly fought between the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) under the leadership of Arthur Scargill, and the Conservative Government under the premiership of Margaret Thatcher. It was perceived on both sides as a struggle for the political future of the country and its narratives were dominated by the language of class struggle and the political ideologies of trade unionism versus emergent conservative neo-liberalism (eg. Scargill 1984; Beynon 1985). The miners were pitted against a government that was prepared to marshal all the resources at its disposal to defeat them, including the law, the police and the media (Williams 2019). Against overwhelming odds, and despite the suffering endured, the miners held out for a whole year, their determination bolstered by the support of international mining unions and socialist networks, and various non-aligned groups. The participation of a range of community, identity and interest groups was facilitated largely by the organisation of women from mining families who, although linked to the NUM, created their own self-directing organisation, Women Against Pit Closures (WAPC). The women's activism extended the terms of reference of the strike beyond the narrowly industrial sphere of the dispute and into the family and wider social

and political spheres (Spence and Stephenson 2009; Spence 2010). Striking miners and their families carried a weight of emotionally charged expectations concerned not only with the possibility of reversing the planned pit closures but also of defending the historically hard-won rights of working people against the depredations of neo-liberal policies. Throughout the year, the meaning of the strike was articulated through a developing and dynamic discourse around questions of 'jobs and community' in which women's voices were prominent and in which local community values, employment and industrial issues, and global questions of justice were inextricably linked (eg. Seddon 1986; Witham 1986; Stead 1987).

The strength of the miners' case depended upon establishing that their cause was a just one, and that their strike action was motivated by a very real threat to their jobs and way of life. Against a hostile state and press, miners and their supporters were keen to emphasise the importance to the wider society of the values traditionally associated with the miners' union and with mining life, rather than specific political ideologies. Such values included the right to secure, well-paid employment, the right to live in prosperous, settled and secure communities, the right to self-determination, and the right to expect a decent, secure future for children. Maintaining broad and popular support, notwithstanding political allegiance, depended to some degree upon stressing the 'authenticity' of the struggle and this was personified in the values represented by the active involvement of 'miners' wives' (Spence and Stephenson 2019).[1]

The appeal to values in addition to the economic case, enabled a fairly wide spectrum of different interest groups to coalesce around miners and their families as the legitimate bearers of the social traditions associated with honest and respectable labour. This offered opportunities for women from mining backgrounds to publicly articulate their own understanding of what was at stake in words that were not restrained by the limitations of standard trade union politics and the minutiae of employment matters. Thus alongside the masculinist tropes of mining politics, a developing feminised narrative emerged, centred on ideas of 'community' and the stability of the familial world, that emphasised the emotional meaning of mining to the nation (eg. Parker 1986; Samuel et al. 1986; Witham 1986). The veracity of this narrative was grounded in the experiences of women and their relationship to mining, and its appeal was authentic insofar as it adhered to the women concerned. However, feminised strike dialogue tended to exclude those aspects of female experience and understanding that were not directly linked to mining, in other words to men, and decentred those women who participated who could not claim a direct relationship with a miner. Women's activism was given legitimacy in the strike predominantly with reference to who they were, rather than to their independent opinions. Meanwhile, the narrative of authenticity that facilitated female participation contained inherent tensions inscribed within the historically dependent and powerless position of women in mining life. In a class struggle in which human and social relationships were a feature of concern and a source of legitimation for activism, the female narrative was therefore problematic, inviting the incorporation of conservative family and gender mores into the strike narrative.

The question of pit closures was one of male work in a context of rising unemployment and de-industrialisation. Deep coal mining was already in decline and in mining-dependent localities the traditional bonds of mining life were loosening. From 483 pits, mid-century, there

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1   The matter of 'authenticity' caused some of the women's support groups to exclude women who were not members of mining families. One group, called itself a 'Miners' Wives' group as a 'political statement' even though it comprised women from a variety of backgrounds. The issue also affected the question of membership of the National Organisation of Women Against Pit Closures. (See Spence and Stephenson, 2009; 2019).

remained only 133 in 1984 (McAlister et al. 2015). In County Durham, the focus of this article, the number of working pits had reduced from 121 in 1953 to 57 in 1967 with significant impact upon the reality of 'mining community' as ex-mining villages declined and miners from redundant pits were transferred to mines in other localities (Bulmer 1978). The strike was fought in a bid to halt the acceleration of this trend which presaged the end of the industry. As such, this was a struggle for a future that tended to be imagined in terms of the past.

Conditions for strikers became more desperate as the year progressed, entrenching further the appeal to the past. Miners and their families recalled the strength and determination of their forebears to create a powerful trade union and cohesive and mutually supportive communities, forging political and personal bonds of solidarity in the teeth of persistent oppression, denigration, and hostility from mine owners and the state. Strike narratives, drawing on historic images of mining community that had only partial bearing on the realities of 1980s life, presented the 1984-85 strike on a continuum with past glories, even though those glories were interspersed with some terrible defeats for miners. In so doing the discourse romanticised and idealised the class heroism of striking miners and their families and the fortitude of mining communities (Samuel et al. 1986; Allen 2001; Spence and Stephenson 2009). The cohesion of strikers and the central principle of class loyalty was reinforced by the dehumanisation and public shaming of strike breakers, a serious problem in 1984-85, as 'scabs'. The language of class loyalty, partnership between husbands and wives, trust between comrades, the performance of collective organisation, and indeed, the fate of strike breakers who could never again 'belong', drew inspiration from intergenerational memories of the past, especially the General Strike and Lock Out of 1926, within living memory, in which the miners' union had been at the sharp end of a defeated trade union struggle (Barron 2010).[2] Women are present, if not central in these narratives which continue to inform popular understanding of strike relationships, but they speak only of solidarity and loyalty in class terms. The mutual interest of women with their men is assumed, and gendered power relations are irrelevant to them.

History has consequences

The sexual division of labour in UK mining life derived from the 1842 Mines and Collieries Act that excluded all females and boys under the age of 10 from underground work. Subsequently, women inhabited a separate domain from men, with primary responsibilities for the private spheres of family, home, and neighbourhood, accruing social status according to their success in managing resources and relationships within that sphere. The nature of work in the mines was such that a bond of interdependence was created between men and women. She and her children depended on his wage for their survival. He depended upon her servicing his need to be fit for work, maintaining the comfort of his home, and caring for children and any other family dependents. Family life was shaped by the routines and rhythms of the pit. Men's shifts meant women's shifts plus: women had to be available to wake husbands and sons, perhaps at different times, to feed them, fill tin baths for them, have work clothes and 'bait' ready at whatever time they left for or returned from work and then undertake the usual work involved in childcare, elder-care, health care, and running the home (See Bulmer 1978; Carr 2001).

For much of the history of mining in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, housing conditions were poor, and women were engaged in a constant battle against dirt, lack of

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2   The miners' dispute with mine-owners continued, as a strike and lock-out for 7 months after the end of the 9 day general strike.

amenities, overcrowding, and all the pains that come with poverty. Generally, women were neither expected, nor able to take paid work after marriage, and in most mining districts, there were few opportunities available for such work. Although a few women became active within formal political and community organisations, in the main, these were a masculine domain and the women's organisations such as in the Labour Party or in the Church, were subservient to the primary organisation, dominated by men (Andrews 1957; Carr 2001). It was men who dominated local decision-making in the public sphere and even if women were granted day-to-day control over family decisions, it was men who had the ultimate say. Wives deferred to their husbands. They generally had no income of their own and money given to them by husbands from the wage-packet was intended for the household budget which women were expected to manage. Different families had different methods of dividing the wage, but invariably, the portion given to the woman was intended for family use, whereas the portion retained by the man was for his personal and leisure use. Thus women and children were financially absolutely dependent upon the male wage and men had absolute dominion within their families. The gendered division of labour in mining life, and the limitations it imposed upon women's health, welfare and expectations, has been well documented in a number of studies and memoirs. As Dennis et al. show, it lasted in these terms well into the 1950s (eg. Wilson 1910; Dennis et al. 1956; Williamson 1982; Thew 1985).

The different spheres inhabited by men and women meant different spatial positioning and different relational networks resulting in a correspondingly gender inflected discourse in social life. The inequality between men and women inevitably expressed itself unevenly, with different priorities and understanding according to circumstance and personnel, but for the most part, female knowledge and skill was accorded a lower value than that of the men, and often women did not presume to have, let alone speak an opinion (Dennis et al. 1956). Mining life was therefore imbued with gender tensions and on the part of the women, alive with silences that might only be broken in conversation between women. Even then, common experiences of oppression were not necessarily given words, though implicitly acknowledged in the subtext of what was spoken.

Women were acutely aware of the dangers of mining for the men, and the toll it took on men's health. This fostered a degree of female respect and concern that sanctioned male power. The exercise of that power in the home depended largely upon the vagaries of the individual personalities of adult men, and no matter how benign, it was assumed that such power needed to be managed by women for their own welfare and that of their children. Women lived in states of constant class anxiety that devolved around the dangers of the pit, the inadequacy of the mining wage, and poor quality housing in a degraded physical environment. Deep within that class anxiety was fear that understood the dangers of untrammelled male power, and concern for the future of children who were destined to inherit their parents' conditions. Anxiety about the dangers of underground work could be laced with guilt that men had to suffer so much on behalf of maintaining their families. No matter how much children were loved, they needed to be desensitised as they grew: for boys needed to be hardened to face the physical and mental demands of coal mining, and girls needed to be hardened to bear the physical and emotional demands of servicing the workers in such a brutal and brutalising industry. All had to be taught the importance of the pit, and to identify with the culture of mining life. The unspoken relationship of women with mining was thus complicated. It was both consensual and conflictual. Women's class interests and identities aligned with those of the men, but their gender interests and identities, largely known but unspoken by them, cut across and through these class interests (Williamson 1982; Thew 1985; Barron 2010). The repressions and

subjections of class powerlessness was never just that for women, it was also a context-specific repression and subjection of gender dependence.

By the time of the outbreak of the strike in March 1984, miners and their families inhabited a different world from their grandparents – more prosperous, connected nationally and globally through media and transport links, benefiting from technological innovation both within the pit and without, and as aware of the forces of social change as any other group of people. Local settlements were less monolithic and community relations less tight. Men and women were more similarly (if not equally) educated and women were benefiting from opportunities to take work in a feminising economy, although such work was relatively low paid. Issue based politics, including feminism, anti-racism, and gay rights[3] were intruding on the national consciousness and representatives of these interests were to make common cause with the miners through WAPC (eg. Goodspeed 2019). 'Community of interest' was becoming a more significant organising force than 'community of place' (Bell & Newby 1971). Organising specifically as women, rather than as union or party members, was consonant with the principles of organisation established within second wave feminism and the informal conversations between women in shared, public spaces created conditions similar to those associated with feminist consciousness-raising (Rowbotham 1973a). Participating in traditionally union-organised strike activities such as picketing and public speaking, at the same time as running kitchens and organising food parcels for striking miners and their families, created conditions that called into question the historical silence and invisibility of the majority of women in public life (eg. Seddon 1986). Traces of the past still lived in everyday lives and relationships but the expectations and experiences of women in the strike rubbed against the traditionalist expectations of the historically authentic miner's wife. The appeal to the received and narrated past which, with its emphasis on 'Miners' Wives' spoke of the loyalties of the women to their husbands but precluded the possibility of their self-determination as women with their own class and gender interests (Beaton 1985). Thus the practice of activism in the strike began to open gender wounds and what had been 'hidden from history' began to demand attention (Rowbotham 1973b; Seddon 1986; Witham 1986; Stead 1987).

Finding the cracks between their performed historic roles and their emergent dynamic consciousness too great to hold, women began to grapple with what Avery Gordon would define as the 'ghosts' of mining life and their place within it. This process involved women at the heart of strike activism becoming increasingly self-conscious about their historically complex and changing relationship with mining work and life and indeed with men, in ways that were not always comfortable but that needed to be conceded and dealt with. The unfolding conditions of the strike demanded that 'something-be-done' about the received conditions of gender inequality as it manifested itself in conditions of class oppression in general and in the circumstances of the strike in particular (Gordon 2008, xvi).

The documented evidence suggests that most women activists were forced to deal with the ways in which received truths conflicted with present circumstances. Some repressed the ghosts further. Some acknowledged their existence and addressed the consequences of their presence during the strike, and then after the defeat reburied them. Some attempted to transcend them and changed their lives – often with a great deal of pain:

> Cath: Everything isn't rosy in the women's groups now. In the strike we were all saying how the women's groups are going to go on and on for ever, we were never going to

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3   I have used terms in common usage at the time for these categories of inequality.

stop. It isn't like that. The women are tired, a lot of them are shattered, and they couldn't wait to get back to what they were.

Suzanne: They had a lot of conflict with their men. And now they have got peace. They don't want to start it up again. (Corrigan et al. 1986)

Those who were able to move into different futures mainly they did so as individuals or small friendship groups (Spence & Stephenson 2007). The defeat of the strike subverted the possibility of continuing a wider ongoing process of social transformation. The re-silencing, that followed the defeat, was not only about gender inequality but also about the powerlessness of class positioning. After the miners returned to work, the pit closure programme accelerated with 125 pits closing before the announcement in 1993 that another 30 would be closed precipitating a further wave of WAPC activism (Spence 1998; SWAPC 2018).

My purpose here is not to continue the narrative of the strike and the significance of women in it. That has been told elsewhere (Seddon 1986; Witham 1986; Stead 1987; Fitzgerald et al. 2005; Spence & Stephenson 2009; 2013). I begin with it rather as a pivotal moment in my life that focused on my own troubled relationship with a mining past and one that brought to the surface, as for many women an awareness of the ambiguities, contradictions and tensions of their position and their loyalties (Shaw & Mundy 2005). Following Gordon (2008) and also Bright (2016, 2018), I contend that people from mining backgrounds in general remain 'haunted' by the injustices of a painful history of oppression, including that endured during the strike and that there is a disquiet beneath the surface of the post-industrial and 'regenerated' landscape of ex-mining settlements. In post-mining landscapes, people from mining backgrounds continue to attempt to be 'who they were', struggle to prevent themselves being written out of history, and are impeded in efforts to imagine 'who they might become' in terms that resonate with their received knowledge and cultural expectations. The political turmoil and the dissatisfaction that can be discerned in everyday conversations, social media and local council agendas suggest a disturbance, a 'vertigo' (Young 2007) associated with late- or post-modern de-industrialised conditions. However, the experience of being haunted is not monolithic. It is gendered. The ghosts that trouble women, concern the difficulties of locating the anxieties that articulate with their complex experiences of class and gender relationships in mining history and the culture that emerged through that history.

Social Haunting

Gordon's thesis, as outlined in her seminal text 'Ghostly Matters' is an effort to address, and to find a way of writing about the consequences of the 'hidden injuries' (Sennet & Cobb 1972/3) caused by historic experiences of social violence visited upon particular social groups. She argues that the analysis of oppression through the modernist categorisation of gendered, racialised and classed structures of inequality are insufficient for a full understanding of the ways in which power operates on and through generations, and the ways that injustices present and remembered, manifest in everyday lives over time.

The concept of social haunting draws from a range of theorists in the fields of psychology, history, sociology, and literature and following Barthes' notion of interdisciplinarity, attempts to break some of the disciplinary boundaries to open new ways of thinking and understanding and create 'a language for identifying hauntings and for writing with the ghosts any haunting inevitably throws up (p.7). Gordon finds a way into such writing through literature, exploring in particular Toni Morrison's *Beloved'* and Luisa Valenzuela's, *He Who Searches'* as novels

which raise the haunting of slavery in the USA in one, and of Argentina's 'Disappeared' people in the other. In both these cases, the violence and injustices of the past are unresolved and continue to manifest in the present, disturbing the order of contemporary life in ways that are not easily identified through any rational or empirical attempts to understand. The form of the novels facilitates the possibility of speaking of and to the ghosts. Thus Gordon issues an invitation to social theorists to move beyond research and theory that can only touch what can be seen, and what is known, to acknowledge and work with what is unseen but present, silent but clamorous. To do so demands the use of processes and language that implicates authors and refuses to be bound by subject-object dualities. Such an approach ultimately demands transformation of all involved. In this way, Gordon suggests that sociology can be part of a dynamic social process of private and communal reckoning with the inherited past and the impact of power inequalities in the present. Dealing with haunted conditions, is not simply theory. Encountering ghosts, always demands a something-to-be-done in the present, and the beginnings of this involves acknowledging their destabilising and sometimes frightening presence.

That the concept of Social Haunting is relevant to the history of mining in the UK and that the 1984-1985 strike is a powerful ghost within that haunting has been recognised in the work of Geoff Bright (2016; 2018). The team of researchers involved in the participatory and dynamic Social Haunting research project led by Bright (www.socialhaunting.com), visited the Art Block, a small local art gallery in the ex-mining town of Seaham run by volunteer members of East Durham Artists' Network (edan) and in which I am involved. Using local networks and contacts forged through the community connections of edan, the Social Haunting team stimulated an open-ended process of discussion, reflection and identification with a group of local people that located emotion and memory specific to 'being in this place'. Participating in this process led me to consider how the gallery might use art to enable the beginning of an acknowledgement of the ghosts, and also to attempt to articulate the nature of my own haunting, awareness of which was precipitated by my response to the 1984-85 strike. It raised further questions about how locally based art practice might play a part in the 'something-to-be-done' that involves dealing with the troubled past. The remainder of this article deals with that experience, although it needs to be acknowledged that the very act of writing the article is also a response to the nature of my own haunted condition.

Ghosts of a miner's daughter

My concern with the gendered nature of haunting speaks of my personal ghosts that were activated by the 1984-1985 strike; they would not, and still do not rest. As the daughter of a miner who hated his job and was already dead by 1984, my own relationship with the strike was so fraught that I was almost paralysed by it. I could not join it as a female activist, even though I had done so in the mining strikes of 1972 and 1974, because the feminism that during the late 1970s had inspired me, offered me a new understanding of myself as woman, a voice with which to speak it, and the confidence to act it in the world, had revolted against what being a member of a mining family meant to me: kitchens, wife-dom and an inherent sexism that I did not see being addressed in the early stages of the strike. I was desperate that the miners should win, but no matter how hard I tried, I could not believe they would.[4] I wanted the pits to remain open but I wanted them closed. I wanted my identity to be affirmed, but I didn't want to inhabit that identity or join the struggle as a miner's daughter. I wanted the despoiled landscape to be reclaimed but I did not want the pit wheels to vanish. I wanted women and men

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4   Others felt this too, but it is not apparent in strike narratives. See Chapman, (1999).

to have equal access to safe, well-paid work and that meant an end to mining, but I knew such work did not exist. My ghosts stalked me and would not be put to rest. I was surprised by the depth of my emotion that spilled out in unexpected situations. I had thought I had left mining life behind. I had rejected it, leaving home when I was eighteen. Now, twelve years later, I was back in Seaham, my home town, founded on three pits. It was the only place I really wanted to be and I was unable to participate in the most important locally based class struggle of my lifetime.

Growing up in an almost monolithic mining culture, I had witnessed, and been part of the effort of women to bolster the masculine ego. Negatively, the process involved subterfuge, performance, and lies (Rowbotham 1973). Positively it encouraged the establishment of female networks based on mutual sympathy and recognition. Overwhelmingly, I had felt the anxieties of my mother and aunts in their daily struggles to keep life on 'an even keel'. I had seen violence too. Boys being 'hardened' to behave like men who would laugh in the face of conditions of the pit. Girls and women being cowed to accept the authority of men and the control of the community that judged them by their housekeeping and mothering skills. I had witnessed male pain. Despite the bravado, the humour, and the camaraderie, I listened to pit stories and knew men were often in danger and afraid.[5] Sexism was taken for granted. Racism was part of everyday language. There was gossip. Everybody watched everybody else. My father was claustrophobic but the outbreak of war in 1939 when he was 14 years old left him with no choice other than to go to the pit. I had heard him crying when he had returned from trying to work a shift on the coal face, in order to earn better pay. He was condemned to being a 'banksman', an onsetter working a three-shift cycle, often seven days a week, for the rest of his life. He was perpetually tired and often angry. My mother was exhausted by the constant emotionally and physically draining effort to keep my father 'happy'. I had seen men bedridden on account of accidents in the pit. I had seen women support each other through childbirth. I had seen men drink themselves to a stupor because a boy child had been born. I had witnessed the grief of a mother when a boy of 15 was killed at the pit. There was pain, anger, prejudice, and inequality everywhere. I valued the love and security I had in my family, but I did not want to inherit this world in which I had grown up.

This description of my past skims the surface of my feelings. So, in the following I undertake some experimental memoir writing, I shift gear, and try to raise, acknowledge and deal with the affective nature of my ghosts. Partly I do this in third person, because the ghosts seem 'other'. They are me, not me now, but still with me:

> A cabbage white butterfly flutters towards her father. He claps his hands together and it is dead. Her mother loves flowers. Her father grows cabbages and potatoes because his childhood was hungry. His father was sent to a work camp in Essex in the 1930s. He must work. Her mother sprinkles packets of Virginia and Night-scented Stock seed around the edges of the garden. Her grandfather smells of pipe tobacco and spits into the fire. He is loathed by his six children. He never took them anywhere. He walks into the countryside with her accompanied by the dog and his walking stick. He cuts her bunches of pinks and gypsophila from his garden. Her grandmother says he broke her nose in the sneck of the door. He denies it. He sings Methodist songs. They all watch 'Songs of Praise' every week. One year her father turns away from cabbages and plants rows roses.

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5 In the mining art group to which I belong, men have recently described their feelings about the movement underground of the earth above and below them, and about their fear in narrow tunnels. They too are haunted by their experiences.

She walks through the town park with a friend picking bluebells and primroses for a grandmother. The park-keeper looms behind them shouting. They drop the flowers and run. He is dressed in a brown overall and his face is red. They turn to see him stamping on the flowers and grinding them into the earth.

The slag is spreading. It has smothered the beach and is shrouding the fields. A pit heap slides into a school at Aberfan. She is fourteen and hurts. When she is seventeen a neighbour's nephew and a class mate's father die when the tippler depositing the slag falls over the cliff. They say a prayer at school to mark the loss. There are blue butterflies gathering at the edge of the slag behind the pit. They vanish when the pit closes and a new housing estate is built.

I needed to escape. I went south. But mining followed. Strikes in 1972 and 1974. Being a miner's daughter was never a neutral condition. It made demands on me. Always I felt tension between the rhetoric that elevated miners as heroes of the working class, and my experience as a female in a mining family. I unintentionally returned home, relieved to resituate myself in a cultural milieu where things unsaid were understood. My father died the year after I returned. Then there was the 1984 strike.

In 1993, hoping to assuage the guilt of the strike, concentrating on political issues and class politics, and resolving to ignore my woman's ghosts, I participated in the women's pit camp at Vane Tempest Colliery as part of the national campaign against pit closures. During that campaign, far from staying where I put them, my ghosts became clamorous. I found myself putting aside my feminism in favour of my identity as a miner's daughter, using traditional coping strategies to deal with working class female subordination, and performing a part that was not quite at one with my real self (Spence 1998; Spence & Stephenson, 2019). Could I be authentic? Could I deny that I was authentic? Was I 'one of us' or had I grown a different skin?

The pits closed and local life changed (Waddington et al. 1991). The sights and sounds and smells of work disappeared. The pits heads were demolished. Young men took drugs and some committed suicide. Young women worked as carers and cleaners. Men walked babies and dogs. Legal and illegal drug use escalated. The older mining generation of my parents died. Their colliery and council houses became 'undesirable'. Regeneration projects began the process of 'improvement': public art, pit wheels, heritage. A major First World War sculpture, 'Tommy'.[6] A new population with southern accents living on a new estate on the Vane Tempest pit site. A new marina. Day trippers. Sea glass tourists from the USA. Fences. Fences everywhere where once there had been freedom to roam. Rubbish in the old town park as the cherry trees and roses died. Orchids emerging where once there was slag. Fields and flowers reclaimed from slag and mines, threatened by a ruthless process of housing development. The language of the town's Facebook page becomes increasingly fractious, immoderate, and right wing. I am alienated from people with whom I identify.

Finding a way through

Twenty years after the strike began, Carol Stephenson and Monica Shaw of Northumbria University interviewed twenty women who had been strike activists in Durham and

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6 The 'Tommy' sculpture, officially entitled 11.01, By Ray Lonsdale, installed in 2014, is the main tourist attraction in Seaham.

Northumberland. They also interviewed me, knowing I had been involved in the pit camps of 1993, and I found myself attempting to rationalise my strike paralysis. This triggered a powerful need to understand more fully how gender division in mining life had affected me. The Stephenson-Shaw interviews revealed that most women had experienced ambiguous and contradictory feelings about mining (Shaw & Mundy 2005). This insight opened the way to academic research and analysis that I have pursued mainly in partnership with Carol Stephenson, that is always inflected with our personal stories (eg. Spence 2010; Spence & Stephenson 2007; 2019; 2012; 2013; 2019).

Research-based analysis offers insights that both reflect and affect 'living in the world'. Gordon's analysis of social haunting suggests the need to engage with personal-social 'ghosts' to actively transform that living world (Gordon 2008, p. 22). Applying my developing understanding in my own life has linked research practice with community based practice and impacted on my post-retirement participation in edan that is an explicitly 'non-political' arts organisation. East Durham Artists' Network has been a vehicle to transport me into different language forms – using poetry and the visual arts, to explore a different type of knowledge and understanding from that derived from 'professional' research and writing (edan Writers 2014; 2015).

The membership of edan comprises local amateur and professional artists, some of whom have themselves been miners or have belonged to mining families. Through the Art Block, art work is exhibited with the aim of encouraging arts-based practices relevant to edan members and visitors. Exhibitions raise local issues and concerns, past and present, and workshops and talks offer opportunities for local people to participate in arts-related activities. An edan-sponsored mining art group, comprising men and women, has been formed by an ex-miner to foster the creation of work that both remembers the legacy of mining, and also provokes reflections on that legacy. As part of the organisation, I have participated in a number of mining-related projects. These include the publication of two books of poems and images by a writing group (edan Writers 2014; 2015), and engagement with the Social Haunting project that provided the stimulus for this article (www.socialhaunting.com). Art Block exhibitions that have focused on mining, include 'Mining, Politics and Unions' (2015) commemorating the thirty year anniversary of the end of the strike; 'The Art of Jimmy Kays' (2016) showing prints of work by a Horden miner, Jimmy Kays, (1886-1950); 'Legacy' (2018) displaying new work by the mining art group and 'Ghosts of Our Past' (2018) that derived directly from the input of the Social Haunting project.

The mining-related exhibitions have been exceptionally popular amongst local people. For example, 'Legacy' brought in over 700 visitors in six weeks. Visitors have generally had some connection with mining, including those who travelled from outside the area to see the exhibitions. Teachers have brought primary school children. Stalwarts of the local NUM and Labour Party have come along. The audience has comprised many who would not normally visit an art gallery. The mining exhibitions signify a personal engagement with mining on the part of the artists involved, and this has been key to connecting with the audience. Many visitors have stood in front of particular images and offered information or told personal stories to the edan volunteers on duty and much of this has involved a 'bringing to the surface' personal and emotionally charged memories – some of which are intergenerational.

There has been no questioning or systematic recording of the thoughts of artists or of the stories told by visitors. To do so would interfere with the processes and ethos of the organisation which is not a research project. So, the following simply recounts tales from my own experiences

using three pieces of work. These are, firstly 'Twisted Seams' that I made myself; secondly 'In Memoriam- Dawdon Colliery' made by Jac Howard; and thirdly an untitled and undated Jimmy Kays cartoon.

Twisted Seams (textile and poem)

This piece began in March 2014 as a personal commemoration of the 30 year anniversary of the Miners' Strike. I intended to produce a knitted textile from scraps of wool, mainly inherited from my mother. Into this I would incorporate mining fragments collected from the local Blast Beach onto which waste from Dawdon Colliery had been tipped for many years. I planned to knit a couple of lines every day according to my mood, and to supplement this with a diary that recorded media references to mining during the coming year. I wanted to say something about the household skills of women in mining life and link these to the pit, to reference the environment that was despoiled and polluted by mining, and to record the continuing global impact of mining outside the UK.

The knitting changed shape on 13th May 2014 when a mine in Soma, Turkey exploded, killing 301 men. That explosion, caused by lax health and safety practices (www.amp.france24.com), provoked in me a sea of empathetic outrage and grief. The knitting helped me find some sort of expression for my emotions, casting on 301 rib stitches in white and twisting the whole piece so that this line of stitches formed a new bottom edge. In the image above, those stitches are pinned to the canvas along the bottom and right side, but for the 2015 exhibition, I stretched them in one long line and hung onto each white stitch a white ribbon, bearing the name of each of the miners killed, echoing the black ribbons worn by relatives and supporters in the wake of the disaster. I needed to make graphic the meaning of '301 dead' and I was shocked by how 301 stitches looked.

As the year progressed, I read about the deaths of coal miners in other parts of the world, and incorporated more ribbing in the body of the piece. I added a yellow ribbed strip to signify the deaths of gold miners. On 8th September, I linked this with the history of Seaham's 1880 mining disaster by incorporating a piece of an old aluminium mining flask and recording the anniversary of the deaths of 164 men and boys aged between 14 and 71 (McCutcheon 1955; www.dmm.org.uk).[7]

Increasingly the knitting became a homage to the pains and worries of women in mining life. As I made the piece and recorded the diary I experienced enhanced levels of anxiety and anger and in editing the work for the subsequent 'Legacy' exhibition, I found myself writing a poem to express the nature of my feelings. To my knowledge none of my own relatives, including father, uncles, cousins and generations of grandfathers have been killed in the pit, but throughout my young life, I lived constantly with the fear that they would be. I cried as I wrote:

Twisted Seams

I was knitting you a jumper
son
Knit one purl one knit one purl one
rib.
I had thought to warm your bones
son
Purl one slip one make one
back
I crafted patterns to please girls
son
Linen garter stocking cable
front
I was dreaming of your colours
son
Fancy fair isle red three blue two
black.

What time will you be home
son?
Wind wool round knit two together turn.
They say your shape has shifted

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7 The ribbons with names, the yellow strip and the flask with names are not shown on the illustration which was reworked for the subsequent 'Legacy' exhibition.

son
make one drop one drop one
neck
They say they can't make out your face
son
Needle into back of loop, wind wool
That they'll measure you by weight
son
Four ply chunky double lace
That they'll bring me home your boots
son
Cast off twisted rib cast off.

When this piece of work was displayed, it was mainly the women who stopped in front of it, read it and then talked about it. Some cried. They did not assess the piece in terms of artistic or literary criteria, but rather from their subject positions as women with personal histories in mining life. They emotionally connected with the knitting. They talked about the jumpers they, their mothers, and grandmothers had knitted. They remembered local disasters that had happened before their time and in their time, about individuals who had been killed and injured. But mostly they said 'that's how it was'. They continue to feel this, as I do; it binds them to

fore-mothers, to other women in their position and to the men; and it informs their political perspective. How could women who feel like this not have supported their menfolk in every strike? In 1984-1985, how could they not have felt the rage when their neighbourhoods were colonised by police and when miners were named by Margaret Thatcher as 'the enemy within'? (See Samuel et al. 1986; www.margaretthatcher.org). Every death in the mine has been a death remembered, inscribed in female anxieties, with the sorrow and anger passed down the generations, as the next piece of work illustrates.[8]

In Memoriam – Dawdon Colliery (Encaustic)

 Jac Howard's father, like mine, worked at Dawdon colliery. She explained this image as follows:

> I did want to show that dark oppressive weight of rock above the men – that entrapment – both physical and mental.
> Yes it was a steady job – with a steady wage – you kept your family in food and clothes – but this particular hamster wheel had the power to kill you...hence naming the miners who lost their lives during the 'life' of this particular colliery' (private correspondence).

Every miner who died in Dawdon Colliery from its opening in 1907 until closure in 1991 is named. Naming, as in the case of the Turkish miners on 'Twisted Seams' is important in overcoming the reduction of human life to bloodless statistics. It recognises not only that there was an individual life there, but that the person concerned had a family name, that the individual was connected to others, was a member of a social network. This point was powerfully demonstrated by one little family who came to the Art Block to especially view this picture.

Two women probably mother and daughter, a girl of about eight and a baby in a buggy stood in front of it. The older woman told me that she had heard it was on show and that they had come especially to see it. Her father's name was there, and she pointed it out to me. He had been killed in 1952 when she was four years old. This wasn't an underground accident. It had happened on bank. It was a mistake. Somebody had left a wire in the wrong place. Her father had stood on it. There was an explosion and he was decapitated. Her mother was left with seven children, and the woman speaking wasn't the youngest.

Her account was brief but said enough. She did not want to own the picture, but seeing her father's name publicly displayed validated his existence not only as a member of her family, but as part of a larger society. It enabled her to 'tell the story' - explicitly of her father's death and implicitly of her mother's struggles. Others should know. She was offering the story to her daughter, her granddaughter and anyone else who might listen.

For me, as a viewer of this image, the sense of entrapment raises the ghosts of my father's claustrophobia and its impact on his work and our family. My father's inability to work at the face meant lower wages. So he worked overtime. Six or seven days a week, fifty weeks a year he laboured on a three-shift system that meant he never had a settled sleep pattern. He was carried out of Dawdon pit with the heart attack that killed him at the age of 55. He didn't die in

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8   I recently talked to an ex-miner who remembered and described to me in detail how the 23 year old son-in-law of one of my mother's friends had died. I had never previously heard this harrowing information. It appears to me that men know and are haunted by the details of a death but seldom spoke of this while the mines were working. Women have repressed those details, even when they have known them, and focused on the feelings of women who are suffering the consequences of loss.

an accident, but just as surely, his work killed him. That his name is not on the official death list serves as a reminder of so many people whose lives have been and are being shortened by their conditions of labour, by the entrapment in particular labour markets.

Historically, mining people were trapped not only by the work itself, but in places where there were few alternatives to mining. They were trapped in life patterns dominated by the demands of the pit. The relative physical isolation of new 19th century mining settlements, the absence of alternative work and the development of a work-related, bounded culture, made mining societies difficult to leave[9] and they were alien, barren places for outsiders (Priestley 1977 [1934]). Leaving mining places remained difficult but became more of a possibility for the generation who benefited from the 1944 Education Act and the 1960s expansion of Higher Education. Migration then became a necessity for many as mining in the UK began its decline in the late 20th century. Leaving was frequently undertaken as an absolute act of abandoning not just a place, but a way of life and its values. Accessing new opportunities could be a source of pride, but it also carried a sense of loss. The ghosts follow.

It is perhaps no accident that Jac Howard's picture was bought by a man who had once worked at Dawdon colliery but had left the area. He had 'done well for himself' but now, back visiting, he was buying a picture about the entrapment and death inscribed within his own history.

Jimmy Kays (Cartoon)
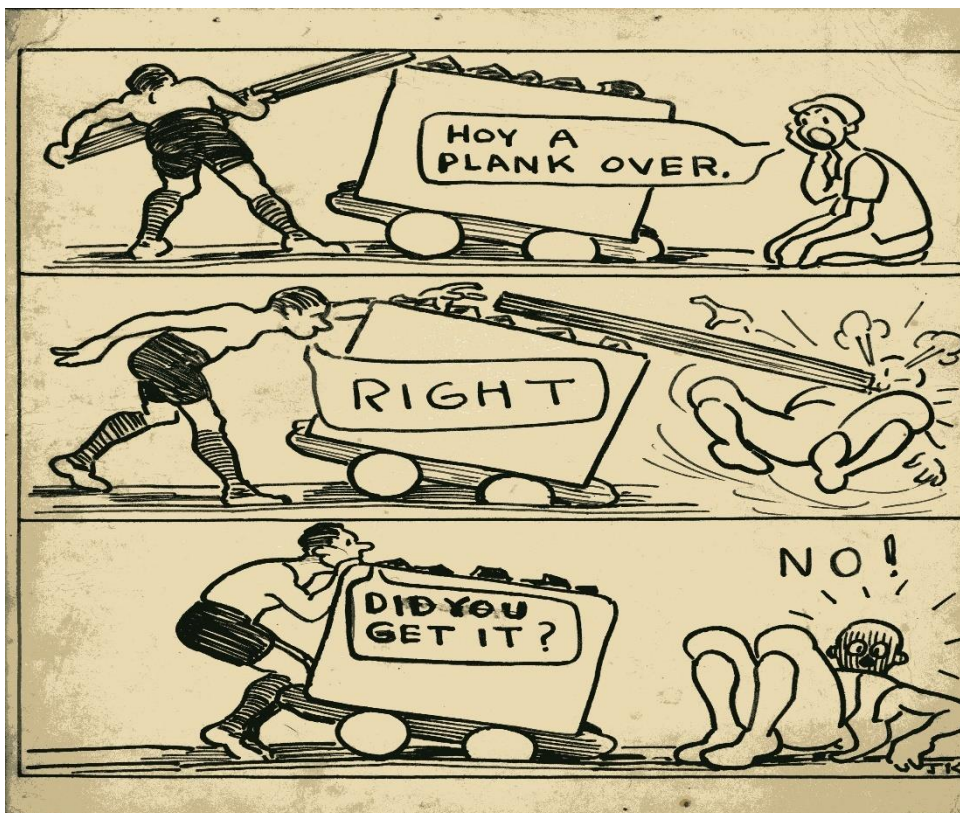
This cartoon was produced some time in the first half of the twentieth century by an East Durham miner, Jimmy Kays (1886-1950). I discovered a batch of his art work on eBay and subsequent research indicated that he had started work in a local colliery at the age of thirteen, eventually becoming a coal hewer. His ambition to become an artist was realised for a short

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9   Although there was always mobility between mines, that in the 19th century was global. See Wilson 1980.

time between 1923 and 1924 when he was employed by a short-lived newspaper, the Weekly Star, to produce cartoons as 'Jimmy Kays, the Horden Miner'. By the end of the 1920s he was no longer working as a miner, possibly one of the 1000 sacked during the 1926 lockout, and he ended his days as a night watchman. His mining images probably all refer to the period between 1901 and 1926.

Prints of Kays' work were first shown at the opening of Horden Heritage Centre, run by volunteers and situated at the edge of a refurbished welfare park in what had once been a mine ambulance station.[10] Later they were shown at the Art Block. At the Horden opening, the excitement shown by local TV and newspapers was exceptional: 'Was this a new Norman Cornish?' (eg. Northern Echo, 12.6.2015; BBC, 12.6.15). This was not the concern of local people who were present. One man talked about underground art work chalked by miners in the tunnels. One woman said how much she had laughed at some of the cartoons of local life which involved encounters between a miner, his whippet and a housewife. People delighted in the local dialect in the cartoons. Kays' humour often plays off the division between male and female worlds, wrong-footing men who find themselves given childcare responsibilities or being out of place in other social worlds such as the theatre. Mostly though, the images use humour to highlight the discomforts, indignities, and dangers of the underground world. That sense of humour, used by miners to cope with their lot, has carried down the generations and is perhaps unfathomable to outsiders.

When the prints were shown in the Art Block, unpredictably, it was the cartoon above that seemed to attract most attention. One man remembered that putting a derailed truck back on the rails was one of the first jobs he had learned in the pit. Another explained that the reason it was necessary to 'hoy (throw) a plank over' was because the sides of the tunnel were too narrow to pass it around the truck. Then an elderly woman spoke about her grandfather. She said he had been 'A big man. And strong'. Indeed he was so strong that he hadn't needed a plank to lift a truck back on the rails. He could lift the truck with his bare hands. After saying this she paused. Then she said that before he died, he was 'like a matchstick'. That the slightest push would have knocked him over, and that this was because of the black lung. The dust of the pit had given him emphysema, like it did so many men. The pit had stolen his strength and eventually killed him. There remain people in ex-mining localities who today are dying of emphysema caused by the pit. One of my own cousins suffers from it. We all know it and it is a collective grievance. Women mourn the diminution of the strength of men by the toll it takes. They mourn the nature of the power it gives them in their own survival and it is their job to carry the story and remember.

Conclusion

Complex and gendered ghosts stalk ex-mining areas. To understand and to begin to create conditions in which they can be exorcised, it is necessary to draw from the deep history of mining, to ask what forces gave people the will and determination that characterised the 1984-1985 strike, and to recognise the damage sustained by the defeat of the strike and the subsequent and rapacious closure of mines.

With the demise of mining and institutional degeneration that has taken place in the public life of most ex-mining localities, there are now few everyday situations in which the significance and meaning of mining can be interrogated. Mostly, public acknowledgement of the history of

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10 The prints and their framing were paid for by East Durham Heritage Coast Partnership.

mining life is mediated by social policy decisions that direct funding towards a process of 'regeneration' that includes memorialising. Regeneration implies degeneration and implicitly denigrates the past. Memorialising airbrushes the historical complexity and imposes sanitised images that are depoliticised, romantic and male. It continues the process of silencing the ghosts. Public art, including the siting of redundant pit wheels in colliery areas, and sculptures portraying the lost world of the underground miner, are a recognition of heritage, but they are almost exclusively masculine. They do not offer any prompt to critical analysis or even reflections that might enable people to enter into communication with their past, and work towards new ways of being. The continued exclusion of the female in these processes demonstrates a failure to acknowledge the role of women historically in the sustenance and maintenance of post mining life not only in the private sphere, but in public activity centred on community health and well-being that was demonstrated so practically in the strike.

Yet women have continued these patterns of social activism since the defeat of the strike and the demise of the pits. They have an active and visible presence in self-help and voluntary initiatives and in the paid community work that is endeavouring to restore some vestiges of self confidence and self-directed renewal in defeated places, and they are frequently central to initiatives such as efforts to restore the mining banners that are potent symbols of mining solidarity and union. Significantly, women have been leading figures in the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign that seeks an official inquiry into the police charge on pickets in June 1984. To move forward beyond the pain and defeat of mining, recognition of the work of women, not just as strike activists but as the bearers of responsibility for a wider social solidarity, collectivity and the search for recognition and justice is essential.

The mining-related exhibitions in the Art Block are but one example of the potential for locally organised initiatives to acknowledge the ghosts and stimulate the type of conversations that allow both men and women to articulate and validate their own histories and identities. Notably, such organisations are usually not funding-led, but they are frequently woman-led. They thrive outside the control of charity and policy agendas. Neither do they necessarily have explicit political or educational aims. They draw from women's traditional roles and address both local people and the diaspora. They include an older generation who remember, and the younger generation who are the recipients of new conditions, who must deal with the legacy of the past. The methods used are neither therapeutic nor educational. Rather they depend on mutual recognition of a troubled, complex past and a desire to use that recognition for transformation which implies confronting the silences of conflict, division, danger, and defeat, and through dialogue, working with and beyond the ghosts.

Author Bio

Jean Spence is the daughter of a Durham miner who, thanks to the expansion of higher education in the 1960s was able to leave her home town and gain a degree in social sciences. She has worked as a community and youth work practitioner, and as a trainer and lecturer in Sunderland and Durham Universities, undertaking research and writing relating to the history and development of youth work in working class areas. In 1993, she took part in the Women's Vigil at Vane Tempest Colliery, since when she has been actively addressing issues that were raised at that time relating to gender in mining contexts. She began working in partnership with Carol Stephenson on this subject in 2005. After retirement in 2010, she joined East Durham Artists' Network (edan) as a volunteer, writer, and learner-artist. Along with other members of edan, she took part in 'social haunting' workshops organised by Geoff Bright of Manchester Metropolitan University that provoked this article.

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Washing lines, whinberries and reworking 'waste ground': Women's affective practices and a haunting within the haunting of the UK coalfields

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Abstract

This article reflects on a series of 'Ghost lab' events (Bright 2019) with local people where creative memory work – stimulated by songs, films, and readings from a pack of what we have called a 'Community Tarot' cards (our main focus here) – was used to register aspects of what, following Gordon (2008), we are calling a 'social haunting' of former coal-mining communities in the north of England and the valley communities of south Wales. The events were part of a joint 2018-19 research project called *Song lines on the road – Life lines on the move!* (*On the Road* for short) that sought to share two independent strands of longitudinal, co-produced, arts-based research in which we have developed approaches aimed at amplifying how living knowledge flows on in communities even when the shocks and intensities of lived experience defy articulation and representation. During the last decade or so both of us have worked with artists to co-produce research projects that enable young people and marginalised adults to communicate with and challenge authority by drawing on the affective power of art. Independently of each other until now, we have both been using creative/affective methodologies to understand how classed and gendered circuits of affect both reproduce and reconfigure vernacular bonds of solidarity and practices of wellbeing in multiple impoverished coalfield communities.

Keywords

Ghost labs, former coal-mining communities, north of England, south Wales, social haunting, creative memory work

Introduction

This article reflects on a series of 'Ghost Labs' that took place in former coal-mining communities in the north of England and the valleys of south Wales during 2018. In each Ghost Lab, (a community workshop design we will describe in detail below) creative memory work – stimulated by films and readings[11] from a pack of what we have called 'Community Tarot' cards – was used to highlight aspects of what, following Avery Gordon (2008), we are calling a 'social haunting' of such communities. The Ghost Labs were part of a 2018-19 research project that we undertook jointly from our base in the Education and Social Research Institute

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[11] Using a simple three-card reading from a pack of 'Community Tarot' cards produced collaboratively with our community partners, this process facilitates a playful, creatively generative reflection on aspects of community presents/pasts/futures. Each card carries a name or image generated in project co-production.

at Manchester Metropolitan University in the UK. Called *Song lines on the road – Life lines on the move!* (*On the Road* for short) our project sought to bring together two different strands of longitudinal, co-produced, arts-based research in which we have each developed a distinctive approach to understanding how classed and gendered circuits of affect[12] can disturb and reconfigure vernacular bonds of solidarity in deindustrialised communities.

Writing out of a life lived in the Derbyshire and South Yorkshire coalfields – as a child in a pit family, as a worker and trade union activist, and as a teacher in adult and community education – Bright has developed a body of research (see, for example, Bright 2012a; 2012b; 2016; 2018), the most recent of which uses comic strip, group poetry, community broadcasting, community theatre and song to explore how the haunted entanglement of affect and imagination in working-class experience has played out in the thirty-year period of coalfield de-industrialisation). 2018 saw the completion of the last of three consecutive UK Arts and Humanities Research Council Connected Communities projects led by him that have considered various aspects of that topic.[13] (See https://www.socialhaunting.com/).

Ivinson has worked in the south Wales valleys communities for over a decade (see e.g. Ivinson 2012, 2014; Ivinson & Renold 2013a, 2013b) and has been part of large scale RCUK[14] funded research projects aimed at developing research methods and methodologies. It was during this series of projects that she came to realise the limits of one-to-one interview methods, which led her to develop arts-based approaches along with Emma Renold and a range of visual, audio and film-making artists[15] (See https://productivemargins.blogs.bristol.ac.uk/projects/mapping-making-mobilising/).

Bringing our experience together, we developed five new Ghost Labs in our joint project – two in the north of England and three in south Wales. Each one was established in partnership with local community activists and based around an occasion of sharing food, films from our previous work, and banter in a safe and hospitable place. It is from that work that this article – which is essentially a contribution to developing 'affective methodologies' (see Knudsen & Stage 2016) for studying the impacts of de-industrialisation – has emerged.

As we have facilitated and participated in the *On the Road* Ghost Labs, we have become increasingly aware of a sharp contestation among the spectres that continue to make themselves known in UK coalfield settings. Reflecting together with our commissioned artist colleagues, Steve Pool, Valerie Walkerdine and Amelia 'Unity' Thomas[16], we realise just how emphatically our joint project has registered a hidden aspect of the broader social haunting of

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[12] Throughout this account we are thinking of affect as 'an impingement or extrusion of a momentary or sometimes more sustained state of relation as well as the passage... of forces or intensities… that pass body to body' (Seigworth & Gregg 2010).

[13] The first of these worked on the South Yorkshire coalfield during 2015, the second was based mainly on the North Staffordshire coalfield during 2016 and the most recent, *Song Lines: Creating Living Knowledge through Working with Social Haunting*, ran from 2017 to 2018 and extended the inquiry on to the Durham coalfield in the North East of England. The research co-production team is extensive and can be seen in full at https://www.socialhaunting.com/our-teams. In Bright's series of AHRC Connected Communities funded projects the two most significant community partners have been the Co-operative College, and Unite the Union.

[14] For details of one most recent multi-phase ESRC/AHRC funded project and the Productive Margins programme, see https://productivemargins.blogs.bristol.ac.uk/projects (Reference: ES/K002716/1).

[15] The full team for the Productive Margins work in Wales includes: Jên Angharad (choreographer), Eve Exley, Eva Elliott, Heloise Godfrey-Talbot (film-maker), Rowan Talbot (sound artist), Gabrielle Ivinson, Seth Oliver (visual artist), Emma Renold and Gareth Thomas.

[16] Use the 'new work' tab at https://www.socialhaunting.com/ to see the artists' work.

the UK coalfields: namely, how the dominant narratives of the 1984-85 Miners' Strike remain strongly masculinised[17] in haunted local coalfield settings and are, thereby, internally haunted by the still marginalised voices of coalfield women. Those voices speak to how the work of Care[18] that women undertook in holding coal mining communities together through the travails of Coal's epoch of expansion continues on into the period of de-industrialisation. As our work over the last decade or so has witnessed, women (and girls) still bear the burden of nurturing children and protecting vulnerable elders in circumstances of swingeing public service cuts, often while struggling to hold down roles as precarious wage earners or, in the case of the girls, as Further Education sector students and young carers. Additionally, women and girls also labour to protect the fragile dignity of no-longer labouring men, a form of value production that partially contests, but is nevertheless firmly bound into, the residual patriarchalism that was once so dominant in coalfield culture.

Drawing on Avery Gordon's work on social haunting; Kathleen Stewart's ethnographic approach to 'ordinary affects' (2007, 2010a, 2010b); Massumi's account of micropolitics (Massumi 2015); Guattari's writing on transversal group practice and linked ecologies of sociality (Gauttari 1989, 2015); Walkerdine and Jiminez's (2012) work on the 'matrixial' in community practices, and Beverley Skeggs' account of gendered autonomous working-class value production (Skeggs 2011), we argue that the coalfield ghosts showing up in our Labs illustrate not only the existence of a gendered *haunting within a haunting* – and the manifold difficulties attendant on that – but also make explicit the role of women in a hopeful gendered micropolitics that, astonishingly, remains alive and well in contemporary times, in spite of the corrosive macro-political vacuum left behind by more than thirty years of corrosive neo-liberal dominion.

A social haunting

What, then, is a social haunting and why, in particular, do we argue that it applies to the UK coalfields? A social haunting, Avery Gordon argues, is made evident in social settings when 'disturbed feelings cannot be put away' (Gordon 2008, p. xvi). It is an entangling reminder of lingering trouble relating to social violence done in the past and a notification 'that what's been concealed is very much alive and present [and] showing up without any sign of leaving [and, as such] alters the experience of being in time, the way we separate the past, the present, and the future' (Gordon 2008, p. xvi). Furthermore, social ghosts, while strongly felt are, however, not easily known. Indeed, a social haunting is 'often barely visible or highly symbolized' residing at the very 'cusp of semantic availability' (Gordon 2008, p. 50, citing Williams 1977).

It should be noted that other work has, to be fair, probed similar territory in the overlap between memory studies' focus on collective social memory (Fentress & Wickham 1992; Olick, Vinitsky-Seroussi & Levy 2011) and emotional geographies of place, culture and de-industrialisation (Smith et al. 2009) with trenchant work coming from within working class studies (Linkon & Russo 2002). Recent research has focused on the Left (Bonnett 2010) and on activism (Brown & Pickerill 2009), as well as specifically on some post coal-mining settings (Perchard 2013). Notably, post-industrial locations have been recognised as sites of spectral affectivity 'in which the visible and the invisible, the material and the immaterial, intersect

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[17] Interestingly, the dominant masculinised narrative is more like to be challenged in cultural production. The films *Billy Elliot* and *Pride* being examples.

[18] Henceforward in this article, we are capitalising 'Care' to signal the informal feminine affective labour involved in a set of classed value practices based 'on reciprocity, care, shared understandings of injustice, and insecurity' to which Beverley Skeggs has drawn attention (Skeggs 2011, p. 509).

[where] ghosts, often barely present in the traces they left, stimulate the construction and transmission of stories which are not merely inarticulate but are suffused with affect' (Edensor 2005, p. 163). The idea that the past acts in the present through affective historical geographies of gender, class and race is, then, already well developed.

Nevertheless, Gordon's notion of a social haunting breaks distinctively new ground, particularly in foregrounding the relationship between haunting and the legacies of social violence – the 1984-85 UK Miners' Strike being, in our view, an exemplary case in point. Significantly, a social haunting, from Gordon's perspective, is also a *generative* phenomenon. In addition to registering levels of damage that may well be traumatic, it is also a 'socio-political-psychological state' (Gordon 2008, p. 57) that, most importantly, alerts us to *positive* futurities that reside immanently within a haunting and can be liberated by addressing how the past 'could have been and *can be* otherwise' (Gordon 2008, p. 57, our emphasis). To this end, a social haunting for Gordon requires that 'something different, different from before must be done' (Gordon 2008, p. xvi). Working with social haunting is of necessity, therefore, a *politicised* practice and, we would argue, a *micro*political practice at that (of which more later).

Why does Gordon's work speak so directly to the coalfield experience? Well, in a fairly obvious way really. Even though the Miners' Strike of 1984-85 is now thirty-five years past and UK deep-mining has now completely disappeared, the affective legacy of coal's singularly conflicted past endures as affective/imaginative intensities that continue to circulate through the absent presences of the industry, flowing now here and coalescing now there, in a complex material entanglement of historical, geographical, economic and psychosocial elements. The spontaneous 'Thatcher funerals' that celebrated the death of former UK Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, in 2013 are perhaps the most vivid example of the workings of these revenant energies (see Bright 2016).

The coalfield gender question

The question of gender relations in coalmining communities has been notoriously weighted with cultural, social and political significance. The outlawing of women's underground labour in 1842 was a major aspect in the production of working class 'femininity' and 'respectability', and the gendered division of labour in coalmining was a key factor in installing patriarchy as the unassailable authority within the emergent British labour movement as a whole, and within coalmining in particular (see Campbell 1986). Meanwhile, the 'paternal order' thus secured (see Beynon & Austrin 1994) was reproduced through its privileged position within that very division of labour. Resurfacing regularly, the tension between the men's imposition of subservient domestic roles on women on the one hand, and their need for freely given gender solidarity at moments of industrial struggle on the other, remained unresolved within a 'geography of gender relations' defined primarily by an 'ideology of virility' (Massey 1994, p. 181). During the 1984-85 strike, however, the contestation that Campbell had represented as a battle with 'proletarian patriarchs' (Campbell 1986, p. 249) presented itself with renewed vigour with the growth of the women's support groups – the 'real radicals' for Campbell (p. 249) – transforming the strike from an industrial dispute to a community-wide social movement.

After the flowering of women's literature that occurred around that time, the topic of 'the women' has been infrequently reprised in the academic literature, even though coalfield women remain very strongly exercised by unfinished coalfield gender business (Bright 2018). For the duration of the strike, things changed as women's involvement developed out of their own

community position into a 'politics of the doorstep' (Spence & Stephenson 2007) that ranged out of and beyond the domestic space, journeying via a wider gender politics even into the conventionally masculine spaces of picket line action. The narrative of the strike as a heroic masculine 'struggle' has, however, remained conventionally gendered as the decades have gone by. Women's educational and social ambitions became once again difficult to express as the gender question retreated after the strike as a return to work re-engineered relationships back to 'normal' in the pit villages, and the domestic space was re-privatised within the doorstep once again. Thirty-five years later, the dark underside of patriarchy – robust, and sometimes violent, male 'enforcement' – which had been already vocalised by key participants in one of our earlier projects (watch *Discussion, Seaham. Part 2,* 1.06 - 2.36, at https://spsheff.wixsite.com/songlines) was raised very sharply again in a contribution by a woman visitor to the first, *On the Road* Ghost Lab in Seaham, County Durham, and has emerged as the central theme of *On the Road*. We will examine women's affective contestations of that force in detail shortly but, first, a little more about the Ghost Labs.

The Ghost Labs

Fundamentally, a Ghost Lab is a participatory *process* space: a semi-improvised, horizontal, community/activist/arts workshop 'event space' (Massumi 2005) which aims to collectively re-imagine 'what the ghosts might want from us' in Les Back's phrase (Back 2011). Its defining feature is a commitment to creating a safe place in which 'ghosts' are allowed to speak, come what may. Co-produced between a group of diverse academics, artists and activists, all of whom subscribe to a commitment to the Labs as an open, acceptant non-judgmental encounter governed by 'an ethic of caring for belonging' (Massumi 2015, p. 43), the Ghost Labs use a repertoire of playful arts devices to approach affective/imaginary materials that are hidden in plain sight in the life of our partner communities. The arts devices employed have commonly included what we've called 'ghost hunting'; co-operative and individual creative writing; comic strip production and – most frequently now – the 'community Tarot readings' mentioned at the outset.

In general terms of design, the Ghost Lab approach has been developed with an eye on the 'new material' turn in academic discourse, and within arts practice in particular. In specific terms, though, Kathleen Stewart's 'ficto-critical' ethnographic approach has been a signal inspiration. Stewart, has characterised her project in a way that resonates strongly with our experience in the Ghost Labs. It involves a

> …slow, and sometimes sudden, accretion of ways of attending to the charged atmospheres of everyday life. How they accrue, endure, fade or snap. How they build as a refrain, literally scoring over the labour of living out whatever's happening (Stewart 2010b, p. 2).

Developing this point, she calls for an attunement to 'ordinary affects' that 'come into view as habit of shock, resonance or impact' (Stewart 2007, p. 1), that 'work not through 'meanings' per se, but rather in the way that they pick up density and texture as they move through bodies, dreams, dramas, and social worldings of all kinds' (Stewart 2007, p. 3). Ordinary affects, that is, are a kind of formally unintelligible and inherently ineffable *excess* that is 'worlded' through the process/labour of 'living out' the everyday – a notion that seems very close to Gordon's conception of social ghosts arising out of the 'blind field' of a haunting, and very close to what we have witnessed in the Ghost Lab, as we'll now detail.

Washing lines, whinberries (the 'shit' card), and re-working 'waste ground'

In this section, we attend specifically to those affective charges present in the densities and textures of ordinary affects that were 'worlded' in the rooms where our Ghost Lab activities took place.[19] Certainly, there were moments that 'glowed' (MacLure 2015) – sometimes darkly – and stayed with us long after we left. We came to realise fairly quickly that the ghosts that made themselves known across the sessions murmured insistently (if obliquely) of the impacts of social and gender violence, both symbolic and actual, in women's lives.

In each session, we started by showing the assembled group short films we had made independently with communities in either the Welsh or northern coalfield sites. One of the films, called *Light Moves* had been made with young people in south Wales. At the time it was made, the young people involved had been keen to speak back to a 'documentary', *Skint*,[20] screened on television in 2015 during the period when Ivinson and her colleagues were working with the community there. In the opening scene of *Light Moves*, the camera scans the landscape around a well-known housing estate in an ex-mining valley town in south Wales, panning across back gardens and clotheslines strung with multi-coloured garments. The deep, gentle voice of the young narrator speaks of her strong sense of belonging to the place and the community.

This film was shown in each of the Ghost Labs discussed in this article. In the south Wales Lab that we are mainly focusing on here, people sitting at the tables around the room began to respond spontaneously and volubly immediately after *Light Moves* ended. Although the film had been created to primarily to emphasise the 'good' side of the estate, contra *Skint*, comments indicated that it was its 'bad' reputation that remained the salient feature. One woman, who we will call Fran – who clearly recognised the housing estate – told the assembled group how her granddad, a coalman, used to deliver coal to the estate and recounted how he disliked delivering there because the coal would get stolen off the back of that cart, saying: 'If it can move, it will be gone'. The 'estate [had] such a bad reputation, even in the past', Fran insisted.

Having worked on the estate, Ivinson had heard this refrain repeated many times. Stories about the 'bad' reputation of the estate circulated around the area as 'well told tales', and had become part of the contemporary mythology of the place. Bright was reminded strongly of how young people in English mining communities will lay claim to their local habitation as a 'shit hole' or 'the worst place in the world' but vociferously refuse such a descriptor if it is used by an outsider. Such tales have a double function: they both signal the real levels of poverty and precarity that have endured across time in such places and, in boldly re-claiming and owning such a marginal space of negation, also *refuse* victimhood (see Bright 2011).

Interestingly, one of the other *On the Road* Ghost Labs involved a return to the actual estate. There, we showed the films and, in the conversation that followed, people told us that the situation had, in fact, got worse in the area and blamed it on 'austerity' economic policies. We had invited artists to the Ghost Labs to sit among us to listen to comments and attune to the

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[19] To ensure confidentiality we will not reveal locations and will move frequently between different moments in different Ghost Labs.

[20] *Skint* is a British documentary series broadcast in three series between May 2013 to 27 April 2015 on Channel 4, a UK TV Channel. The third series was filmed in south Wales.

atmosphere. One of the artists, Valerie Walkerdine, presented a list of things that she found to be troubling people (reproduced, here, from her field notes):

> We had jobs - Now no options - You could change jobs then - in and out now - zero hours contracts.
> House prices have risen dramatically.
> Thatcher moved people off employment and onto the sick.
> Mental health - dire straits. Government have tied our hands. People losing homes.
> Food banks under enormous pressure. Kids starving now, worse than the miners' strike.

Feeling the 'hopelessness and impotence', Valerie (as the artist) wrote in her field notes:

> It was nightmarish, Kafka-esque, hopeless. I wanted to make a work that was a list of all those increases and 'no money' 'no money' 'no money'. I had the feeling of a desolated WW1 landscape.

Back in the Lab with Fran, we listened to her referring again to documentaries like *Skint*, noting how people like her are positioned by those who produce such programmes as a kind of exotic, but deeply inferior, 'other' who is momentarily interesting only in so far as s/he might provide an opportunity for a fascinated sneer on the part of the supposedly more 'sophisticated' viewer. At this point, the 'washing lines' again made an appearance.

> They think we are backward, old fashioned. They come up from London and Cardiff, these townies and take pictures. They took pictures of me smoking a fag out back, by the washing line. When they did that, all my aunt's smalls were put on public display! We are old fashioned in terms of values, but we are not backward. We don't *want* to be like them (GI & GB field notes).

In 'Steeltown', their seminal study of affective impacts of de-industrialisation in Wales, Walkerdine and Jiminez (2012) had noted how women used the low fences between their houses of their estate as a hub of relationality and vernacular knowledge-exchange in a gendered creative social practice which bound them mutually and supportively together. In Fran's parallel example, 'smoking a fag out back by the washing lines' went entirely misrecognised, being seen as an illustration of provincial parochialism by the metropolitan 'London' film crew.

In the Ghost Lab, the conversation circulated and this particular affective charge related to negative valuations of working-class people (and working-class women, in particular) intensified as others expressed how ex-coalmining communities continue to be marked as 'different' Yet the session always proceeded with a robust good-humour such that we, as literal outsiders[21] to this particular group, felt embraced with warmth, even as phrases echoed Fran's expressed fury at being judged as inferior by 'outsiders'. At one point, one of the women – who we will call Jan – referred to a piece of dialogue in *Light Moves* where the speaker refers to a childhood experience of collecting whinberries; a berry most notable for being indistinguishable from 'sheep poo'. This promptly led us into a raucous discussion of whether we needed a 'Shit' card in the Tarot pack and, in a moment of pure comedic improvisation, the

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[21] Our distance as outsiders from this group varied in complex and significant ways that related to a shifting nexus of gender, work background and individual biography, a point that merits a longer discussion than we have the space for here.

same women – whose life had already been quietly indicated as a very difficult one ('full of shit', as she said) – revealed that she had sat and quietly drawn us our additional card during the discussion: a sprig of whinberries and the word 'shit'. The same refusal of victimhood already registered by Fran was, we would suggest, being reprised in this re-claiming of a (now transvalued) negative term. 'Shit', one might say, was deeply ingrained in the women's lives, but owning its stain together allowed them, somehow, to transcend it.

A little later, this same recognition of value being immanent in conditions of devaluation made itself present again in a powerful and generative way. After lunch, the Tarot cards were dealt once more and, amid much mirth and banter, the women chose their three cards; past, present and future. By this point in the afternoon, the men who had been with us before lunch had left. We were now a group of nine women, two younger men (students) and we three visitors, and the atmosphere had changed, having become much more intimate. There was a heightened sense of anticipation as Lizzie turned over her cards. The first card was 'Care'. A hush descended and we felt an unarticulated communal knowing shift rapidly around the room, gripping each woman, holding her still in her place. The affective charge quite stunned us, making us suddenly aware of the gravity of the knowing. After a long pause and many facial grimaces, Lizzie announced:

> 'I will not be talking about the past'

All the others knew what Lizzie was referring to and, for a few very significant moments, the exquisite affective attention of the group held Lizzie, enabling her to occupy multiple affective states one after another and simultaneously, letting the complexity of things simply 'be', without anyone attempting to close matters down and make them 'safe'. An 'ethics of caring for belonging', a micropolitics of affect (Massumi 2015), was being performed in a thorough-going way. The group had a remarkable facility in looking after Lizzie as her undisclosed trouble[22] surfaced and her distress was held in silent care by the other women. Indeed, Care – warranted by a vernacular knowing from the women's collective past – seemed to allow affective dispersal to happen while at the same time enabling elements to be remembered, brought into common, held there, and acknowledged in the space that was now protecting Lizzie. We three visitors were touched, too, by Care's presence and felt its gravity. Clearly, these women had frequently found themselves in situations where painful memories had been worlded and lived through, and they knew what to do to look after each other.

Throughout the Tarot card readings, as women turned over the 'past', 'present' and 'future' pictogram cards, the communicative web pulsed, vibrated and tangled. Words spoken hinted at things indirectly. Every so often, gestures intensified and came to a crescendo in laughter. At one moment, reassuring, supportive comments were directed by all the women at one of the younger mums, called Kim:

> 'The boys are a credit to you!'

> 'Everything I have ever heard from teachers is how well you have done with the boys.'

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[22] We are minded here of how Donna Haraway (2016) talks of the 'trouble' as that which simmers below what is explicitly articulated in a group, and yet which indicates an unresolved, often inter-generational, problem that will not go away, and which keeps appearing as a ghost.

We now experienced Care being performed once more, very explicitly and consciously as another version of the 'trouble' was invoked, and the women turned their lavish attention to Kim – a stratagem that community worker who had given us access to the group later as a 'love-bomb'.

On Waste Ground

After this spontaneous shift to supporting Kim, Lizzie turned over her second and third – 'present' and 'future' – cards. She seemed puzzled. Her cards were 'Whisper' and 'Waste Ground', with 'Waste Ground' being the *future* card. Immediately, there was a slump in energy that impacted across the whole group. After a while, one of us decided to make an intervention, saying:

'You can build on waste ground'.

This seemed to immediately open another line of flight and the conversation flowed again. The women talked about buildings and who lived in which houses. The tightly packed rows of terrace houses where were the ex-coal mining families lived. The managers had once lived in the bigger house on the hill-top looking down onto the terraces below. They spoke of gendered hierarchies within the community and soon the talk turned to the present. They told us of the religious factions and how, even to this day, the male elders will not take part in Halloween festival or help in the community centre. We glimpsed deeper contours of the trouble, suppressed emotions, denial of the sensual body and strong masculine – feminine divides. We were told that when the children made a mural to commemorate the end of WW1, the elders refused to let the young ones place the mural on the War Memorial. We could feel a pattern found in other communities, of the elders, especially men, holding on to familiar practices of the past.

Listening to the stories, we felt two features emerging. First, that it was the women who were the rebuilders, because only they could acknowledge that the 'waste ground' of the past – of both the physical places and of the collective heart – was actually exhausted. Secondly, that we were edging ever closer to the un-named trouble, but it did not reveal itself until right after the Ghost Lab ended. Later, when we were milling around outside the civic centre, waiting for a taxi back to the railway station (which, incidentally, never came), we huddled outside the main entrance of the community centre in small groups. Kim, the love-bombed young woman, confided in one of us, speaking of her extensive personal experiences of traumatic domestic and sexual violence in a situation that put the care of her children in peril.

Once this issue was spoken, a web of connections were suddenly apparent. The spectre shimmering darkly in the atmospherics of the Welsh Lab was the very same figure of emotional, physical, and sometimes sexual, abuse of girls and women that had been clearly named in one of the English Ghost Labs. There, one woman, Sara, had called out angrily: 'It was not all good! The men were hard, the labour was hard, and they were hard with us!'.

Storying *in common*: narrative fabulation as a micropolitical process?

What is it that we witnessed here, and how might we explain it theoretically and practically? As part of our separate work, Bright has written extensively on the affective legacy of the 1984-85 UK miners' strike as it continues to have an impact on coalfield social life in general but, in particular, on how responses to schooling and education are influenced by classed gender

aspects of the conflicted history of coalfield labour relations (see Bright 2012a, 2012b, 2016). Ivinson, in complementary contrast has focused on how such impacts continue to play out in terms of performative gender practices among marginalised young people (Ivinson 2012; Ivinson & Renold 2013a, 2013b).

For the most part, Bright has used Gordon's work – with its origins in what Gordon has been happy to call a 'magical Marxism' that pays strong attention to dissident Marxisms in Ernst Bloch's, Walter Benjamin's and Raymond Williams' work – to begin thinking this through. Ivinson, on the other hand, has deployed an approach bringing together feminist post-structuralism and new materialism. Interestingly, the space between these sometimes counter-posed orientations has actually been richly productive as we are both very persuaded of the value of affect theory and approaches to group work in radical psychology (particularly in the oeuvre of Guattarri). It has allowed us to think in novel ways about how a simple 'divination' game can open up the reservoirs of 'unlicensed' affective energy that mark a social haunting. Below, we offer some of our preliminary thoughts as to the dynamics of this process.

In the first place, the design of the Tarot game was a purposeful one. The intended simplicity and horizontality of the 'reading' has clearly been significant in practice. It allows for open, divergent responses to participant's own lives, and the only knowledge required for participation is the subject's lived experience (in which the subject is, of course, the only 'expert'). We use a simple three-card reading from a pack of cards, each of which carries a word or an image that has been generated with our communities. So, while the card 'topics' can seem random, they have in fact emerged from vernacular imaginations that our Ghost Lab groups have broadly shared.[23] Secondly, the levelled, transversal, ethos of the Labs – that 'ethic of caring for belonging' referred to earlier – enacts a radically different process of group subjectivation, as we'll see. After reassurances that the person undergoing the reading is in complete control of her/his responses and can terminate the reading whenever s/he wishes, three cards are dealt: one a 'past' card, one 'present' and one 'future'. Immediately, temporal relationality (and its mystery) is opened up as a fluid space for a set of interactions between the 'reader' (or readers – often, in reality, the whole group will feed into the reading) and the person whose cards are 'being read'. Throughout, the 'reading' is storied in a way that is light-heartedly performative and intentionally 'improvisative' (see McMullen 2016).

'Storying', or narrative fabulation, certainly appeared to be a central feature of what was happening with the Community Tarot cards in the Ghost Labs that were part of the original 2015-18 AHRC projects. We were clearly dealing with a poetics there – a poetics where the existential could be seen to meet the aesthetic and the affective at a micro-perceptual level (Massumi 2015), and this micro-perceptual aspect has been particularly important for us in thinking about how we might conceive of an emergent politics of the Ghost Lab setting, a matter that is of particular interest to us both. As we saw earlier, Gordon had originally emphasised how a social haunting always carries a politicised imperative (a 'something that needs to be done') and that means that a social haunting *always* exceeds any simply traumatic content that it routinely carries.

Now, the storying with which we had become familiar was just as present in the *On the Road* Ghost Labs, as it was in all the specifically *coalfield* Ghost Labs, but the presence of trauma was even more emphatic. Might one not plausibly argue, then, that looking for a politics in such pained and injured settings is wrong-headed, and that the primary role of the Ghost Labs

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[23] The Community Tarot pack does, though, require adaptation and translation for work with diverse groups.

in heavily traumatic contexts should more properly be developed as a therapeutic one? Conventional wisdom in community 'wellbeing' would certainly warrant the rolling-out of such processes if the therapeutic and palliative aspects could be neatly isolated and codified and, in truth, we have felt discursive pressure from the UK research 'impact' agenda to conform to that expectation. However, as radical researchers, we contest that agenda, arguing that an accommodation to dominant policy formulations and practice protocols would likely mean a pacification of the flows of *life* that moved, however painfully, through our Ghost Labs. On the contrary, the kind of affective/imaginative production *in common*; the collective storying and 'living through'; of coalfield women's experience that occurred in the *On the Road* Labs is transformative in its own right and constitutes, we believe, a *micro*political process that challenges the pharmaceutical interventions that have become commonplace across the coalfields.

So how might we understand a micropolitics of narrative fabulation? Interestingly, anthropologist Peter Collins has recently considered the challenge that the notion of haunting poses for anthropology, and emphasized that '[g]hostly presence reaches beyond the allegorical and metaphorical' and, further, that the 'relationship between imagination and haunting is complex [and is] an *imaginative process... itself inherently social and generative of relationships…* that has been largely overlooked'. Hauntings, he suggests, 'can only be understood… in relation to narrative' (Collins 2018, p. 99, our emphasis) and, what is more, 'the narrative gaps, spaces, lacunae' that are characteristic of them 'are completed or repaired, most often by the prompting of ghosts' (Collins 2018, p. 111), a process that is recognisable in the Ghost Lab exchanges that we witnessed in the women's accounts given above.

In so far as the Ghost Lab can reasonably be seen as a 'small, moveable environment[s] of potential' (Massumi's definition of the micropolitical, in Massumi 2015), then Guattari's notion of 'resingularisation' of subjectivity (Guattari 2015, p. 97) as the micropolitical core of group practice is significant for the phenomena that we have observed. Massumi describes the micropolitical as a return to the 'generative moment of experience at the dawning of an event, [a] brewing, a world stirring' (Massumi 2015, p. 52). Each such moment, experienced micro-perceptually, opens the possibility of 'reconnecting processually with what is germinal in… living' (Massumi 2015, p. 79) and raises the prospect of 'living more intensely, more fully, with augmented powers of existence' (Massumi 2015, p. 79); 'micropolitics, affective politics, seeks the degrees of openness of any situation, in hopes of priming an alter accomplishment' (Massumi 2015, p. 52) while 'chipping away at the macro problems' (Massumi 2015, p. 79).

More widely, in *Three Ecologies*, (Guattari 1989) Guattari had proposed a 'mental ecology' as a necessary feature of our freeing ourselves from the catastrophe of what he calls Integrated World Capitalism. Key to that mental ecology, is the re-singularisation of subjectivity that emerges from transversal therapeutic group-work practice. For Guattari, singularity is not individuality, although it *is* about being singular. In Gauttarian group-work, re-singularisation is the hinge of the move from the paralysis of the *subjected* group to the autonomous energy of the micropolitical *subject* group. It is an ongoing aesthetico-existential-affective process that is inherently anti-individualistic, and thus reaches beyond any liberal political model of liberation, hence its political radicality.

Re-singularisation in common: the Ghost Labs' politics of ordinary affects

It strikes us that the Ghost Labs' distinguishing feature is precisely their capacity to amplify 'ordinary affects' in a way that facilitates the repair and completion that Collins identifies, but

through micropolitical re-singularisation, as conceived by Guattari. Kathleen Stewart's language – of flows and of pause and acceleration; of accruals and fractures; of embodied dreaming; of densities, textures and, notably, of the refrain of forces and intensities – is the Ghost Labs' natural register to be sure, just as the Lab's laboratory space is the natural locus of these forces' collective 'worlding'. And ghosts certainly are (in Collins' sense) made *material* there by being transformed 'from the apparitional through the concerted efforts of participants who are familiar with their haunting presence' (Collins, p. 111). Guattari's description of how a group moves from being a 'subjected' group to becoming a 'subject' group moves us significantly further on, though. It allows us to see how, in the detail life of an unfolding Ghost Lab, affects and feelings that are initially held privately become available for holding in common in a process that is essentially a re-singularising one for all the individuals involved – and that, we would argue, is the substance the Ghost Labs' classed and gendered micropolitics, and we find a hopefulness in that.

Jean Spence and Carol Stephenson reminded us a decade ago how values associated with 'mining community' remain relevant 'for a self-conscious, politicised reshaping of local relationships in post-industrial conditions' (Spence & Stephenson 2007, p. 309) – but only as long as 'the apparently gender-neutral ideal of mining 'community' is interrogated' (Spence & Stephenson 2009, p. 68). In ex-mining localities, co-operation – the fundamental bond of 'solidarity' – has, as they noted and as we have witnessed, 'shifted from the industrial front to what traditionally has been the female sphere associated with friendship, kin and neighbourhood' (Spence & Stephenson 2007, p. 325) and it is an understanding of the 'nature of agency exercised by women activists in these circumstances' that suggests the possibility of building new and more extensive forms of political organization which interconnect the separate spheres of work and home, public and private, male and female (Spence & Stephenson 2007, p. 325).

This thread needs to be picked up again, as Valerie Walkerdine has recognized. Drawing on the psychoanalyst Bracha Ettinger, Walkerdine articulates a feminist reclamation of the notion of a community as a *matrixial* space[24] in which the affective mantle and burden of pain and depression borne by the women in de-industrialised communities, might be taken away from them and, instead, *shared* by men and women together in 'a shifting of the distance between femininity and masculinity' (Walkerdine & Jiminez 2012, p. 176, our emphasis). Further, Walkerdine's more recent account of how *affective histories* of communities make themselves present through small, anecdotal details in conversations and interviews that, taken together, constitute a space of *community self-determination* (Walkerdine 2016)*,* effectively proposes a research approach not unlike that of the Ghost Labs. While this matrixial re-orientation shifts the focus from the wider haunting of the coalfields on to the gendered haunting within a haunting of the coalfield women, it also has to be a classed shift. In an important 2011 article, Beverley Skeggs argued for a 're-legitimation of [working-class women's] classed value practices' based 'on reciprocity, care, shared understandings of injustice, and insecurity' (Skeggs 2011, p. 509) as an autonomous model of social transformation. In producing such value practices, it is necessary for girls and women to 'establish which practices [are] just and with value'. Such classed gender work routinely enters 'different, nearly always local, circuits of value and generates alternative values about 'what/who matters', 'what/who counts' and 'what is just'' (Skeggs 2011, pp. 505-506).

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[24] i.e. as appertaining to the womb, or specifically in Ettinger's work, the uterus

Conclusion

In the *On the Road* Ghost Labs we saw the 'classed value practices' of working-class women's power to Care unfold as a micropolitical aspect of their being together. Perhaps that is how the ghost of the women of the mining areas might eventually be named more publicly as a challenge to the continuing dominance of heroic masculinity and virile action in the rhetoric of coal and its conflicts, particularly the 1984-85 strike. We also saw the productive capacity of the matrixial enactment of a DIY solidarity which was anchored in the calm, powerful mutuality of groups of women. Together, the women seemed rooted in their collective being in a way that could live through the 'hard stuff' that could not be spoken (being dealt the 'shit card') and, at the same time, allow them to move beyond their own personal pain to a holding of *pain in common* that enabled them by virtue of that, to become a *subject group* of re-singularised individuals in Guattari's terms, living more intensely, more fully, with augmented powers of existence, as Massumi put it. As these changes happened, no one was overwhelmed, no one ran out of any of the sessions. Just occasionally someone left the room quietly for a while, came back, settled back down and slotted back with ease into the rhythms of the non-verbal dance of collective meaning-making and value creation. Everybody knew, nevertheless, that something of moment was occurring, invoked in the main by the playful conjuring of a handful of cards.

In all cases, the steadiness of the women facilitators who had nurtured their groups for a long time before our appearance, was a very telling factor. We could see that clearly. Equally, in each group there were key figures and more peripheral individuals. Nevertheless, the generative affective work that we observed was being successfully shared inter-generationally and with a range of others, thus encompassing a dialogic reach that exceeds that aspired to in most formal educational and support contexts. In those different community rooms, on the different days of our project, these groups of coalfield women enacted their autonomous micropolitics of 'Care in common'. In doing so, the rich productivity of women's informal value practices in the psycho-social life of the now de-industrialised coalfields was made abundantly clear, speaking back in a definitive and richly hopeful way not only to the marginalisation of women's role in the 1984-85 strike, but also to the idea that the women's specific experience of struggle is no longer relevant at the final end of 'King Coal'.

Author Bios

Geoff Bright is a former Research Fellow and currently a Visiting Scholar at ESRI. A former steel worker and rail worker, he has a work background in trade union, adult and further education and an academic background in philosophy. His PhD study was an ethnography of the intergenerational intersection of class, place and gender as it impacts on education in deindustrialized coalmining communities, and his current work grows out of a lifelong relationship to mining communities and ideas of independent working class education. He is now leading his fourth AHRC Connected Communities funded project in that area, which uses arts-based methods and the idea of a 'social haunting' to co-produce possible futures for such communities. He is also currently involved in the EU funded Partispace project which is looking into 'styles and forms of participation' among under 30s, and is a network convener for the ethnography network at the European Education Research Association (EERA). His 2016 article in *Ethnography and Education*: 'The lady is not returning!: Educational precarity and a social haunting in the UK coalfields' won the WCSA international prize for best academic article.

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Puerto Rican Needleworkers and Colonial Migrations: Deindustrialization as Pathways Lost

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Abstract

The dominant narrative of U.S. deindustrialization opens with the Northeast as the definitive starting point for industry followed by a direct linear relocation to the South and then the Global South. In this framework, deindustrialization appears to have a logic, a rational pathway following cheaper and compliant labor. When Puerto Rican needleworkers become visible in the history of the textile and garment industry, however, their colonial migrations complicate deindustrialization, and its linear logic collapses. From the perspective of these colonial women, industrialization of Puerto Rico began at the turn of the twentieth century - the same time factories and mills increased in the South. Thousands of women also migrated to the Northeast mainland, especially from the 1950s to the 1970s, when many white workers were mourning the loss of textile and garment jobs. Puerto Rican women moved to the old factories of the Northeast, which had become outposts for large transnational corporations that did not relocate their manufacturing in a direct geographic path but rather spread their processes over any arrangement that offered the best cost-benefit analysis. For Puerto Rican women, employment in the plants of the Northeast during the 1960s and 1970s offered hope rather than despair, and many took pride in meeting their quotas and providing wages for their families. In the 1980s, when the Reagan administration initiated major reforms to financial policies and the practices of leveraged buyouts made closing old plants a better return on investment, Puerto Rican women mourned the loss of jobs in an industry many experts had already declared 'dead.'

Fragmentation of the archives between Puerto Rican studies and U.S. labor history have allowed for a simplistic narrative of deindustrialization and an erasure of the losses and disappointments of women who left Puerto Rico for the promise of higher wages in the postwar Northeast mainland. When the oral histories and documents related to the migrations of Puerto Rican needleworkers become visible in the larger history of the 'American working class', we see deindustrialization as sprawling and contingent rather than as linear and naturalized. Puerto Rican studies scholars have written about needleworkers as part of their field with particular attention to gender as it relates to notions of motherhood, but this article sets the women as American workers into the losses of the textile and garment industry without eliding their specificity as migrating and racialized colonial labor. In addition, the women expressed grief that went beyond losing a specific job - many of these workers lost their place in the U.S. workforce and the promise of financial stability as they became associated with racialized poverty and welfare debates.

Keywords

Puerto Rico, needleworkers, textiles, apparel, colonialism, labor markets, migrations, Operation Bootstrap

Introduction

As late as the 1970s, Puerto Rican women moved to Willimantic, Connecticut, for jobs in the American Thread factory. American Thread and other companies recruited Puerto Rican workers until 1980, when the disaggregation of textile and garment manufacturing spread beyond the reach of the women's migrations. By that time, Puerto Rican needleworkers had been part of the U.S. domestic textile and apparel industry for several decades. Their stories reveal a working-class identity and aspirations for steady industrial employment. Unlike many white workers in the Northeast, however, they had always understood manufacturing employment as shifting and mobile, rather than as stable and rooted. Their voices challenge the historiography of the U.S. industrial working class, with its traditional focus on white workers, especially men and their families, who identify with particular factories in specific locations.

For Puerto Rican women workers, 'deindustrialization' was not the loss of a geographically rooted and substantial physical plant where their families and neighbors had worked for three or four generations. It was the occlusion of their pathways through an industry that was sprawling into longer supply chains and lines of trade, beyond concentrated hubs like southern New England. That textile and garment industry relied on gendered and racialized labor markets, with the movement of women workers as well as manufacturing in many directions, to drive down costs as needed. In the 1980s, almost all remaining island and northeastern factories closed following the trade and financial policies of the Reagan administration. Despite decades of labor, Puerto Rican needleworkers found themselves without another industrial option, without another place to move for a job.

As Puerto Rican women grieved this loss, they were not legible as the 'American working class' experiencing deindustrialization, but rather as poor women of color seeking welfare. White male workers and their struggles had appeared in popular media throughout the twentieth century, in movies like *Modern Times* (1936), *On the Water Front* (1954), *East of Eden* (1955), *The Molly Maguires* (1970), *Rocky* (1976), *The Deer Hunter* (1978), and *Breaking Away* (1979), and in television shows like *All in the Family* (1971-1979). White women as industrial workers received some visibility in *Norma Rae* (1979) and *Silkwood* (1983) and the television series *Roseanne* (1988-1997).

In *West Side Story* (1961), the two main women characters are Puerto Rican needleworkers, but they appear as exotic beauties and troubled urban teens, not as American workers. In development, performances, and reviews, people did not discuss *West Side Story* as part of any public conversation about the working class (Davine 2016; Acevedo-Muñoz 2013; Garebian 1995).[25] Even in her 2013 memoir, Rita Moreno did not mention the relevance of Puerto Rican industrial needleworkers, despite the fact her mother had worked in island sweatshops and northeastern garment factories (Moreno 2013). Retailers, manufacturers, and government agencies had been analyzing and recruiting Puerto Rican needleworkers since 1898. Yet Maria and Anita of *West Side Story* perform as tropical Others rather than as U.S. labor. Such exclusion further constructed the American working class as white and predominantly masculine.

What happens to the historical narrative when we de-center the Northeast mainland with its familiar North-to-South-to-Global South linear relocation and instead examine the industry

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[25] *West Side Story* was one of three movies with Puerto Rican characters who wielded knives and fought in the city streets, *Cry Tough* (1959) and *The Young Savages* (1961).

from the point of view of Puerto Rican women? The Northeast becomes one significant site among several in the twentieth century, and Puerto Rican needleworkers become visible as labor, legible as the American working class. It also becomes clear global capitalism does not function as a linear advancement but rather as a constantly shifting array of sites, trade lines, investment options, and racialized and gendered labor markets. In the postwar period, the textile and garment industry stretched at an accelerating rate due to federal trade and financial policies and the large transnational corporations that squeezed regional manufacturers out of business. As the industry sprawled, Puerto Rican women moved through it on their quest for better jobs because this constantly shifting array was not new to them.

Puerto Rican studies scholars have written about needleworkers with particular attention to migration, gender and notions of motherhood, and unionization. This history, however, positions the women as American workers within the domestic textile and apparel industry without eliding their specificity as racialized and migrating colonial labor (Whalen 2008, 2002; Boris 1996; Ortiz 1990). It argues that Puerto Rican women understood themselves as U.S. workers and migrated for manufacturing jobs. When structural reconfigurations cut off their pathways to industrial wages, however, Puerto Rican women were not recognized as either workers or legitimate mothers. Their stories highlight two emotional responses: grief and anxiety about the sudden lack of stable employment, and confusion and humiliation about the perception that they came to the mainland just to get welfare.

Textiles and Garments for U.S. Empire

The cotton textile and garment operation, from plantations to retail, spanned the world by the mid-1800s. It was a major engine of global capitalism, with intertwined enterprises stretching from the Caribbean to India and Massachusetts to Mexico (Beckert 2014). The American Thread Company formed in 1898 when two companies, headquartered in Scotland, founded a holding company that bought mills in New England. These included the Willimantic Linen Company in Connecticut as well as a wooden spool factory in Maine. American Thread built its first southern factory in Dalton, Georgia, in 1925 (Nuñez 2007).

The same year as the formation of the American Thread Company, the U.S. occupied Puerto Rico. Just months after the military ended Puerto Rico's semi-autonomous constitution and took over governance, mainland retailers and manufacturers were already sending items to the island for finishing and embroidery. A Spanish tradition of needlework had fostered a cottage industry of rural women doing piecework within a system of insular contractors. Mainland managers quickly realized it could be adapted to their industrial manufacturing needs. The decline of European trade and immigration during World War I intensified both the industrialization of the island and the recruitment of Puerto Rican women to factories on the Northeast mainland.

In 1940, New Deal and island administrators hired Arthur D. Little, a consulting firm headquartered in Boston, to develop a comprehensive economic plan for Puerto Rico. These consultants noted with approval the extensive colonial arrangements, such as extreme exemptions from sovereignty, investment regulations, and labor laws - and the migration of poor women to the mainland (Schmidt 2000, pp. 221-245; Magee 1985, pp. 10-16; Little 1942). U.S. offices, insular investors, and Arthur D. Little adapted the colonial exemptions and bureaucratic infrastructure to cultivate the dual migration of manufacturing to the island for cheapest labor and women to the Northeast as cheaper labor. Many women moved back and forth for training as well as jobs. That plan became the platform for Operación Manos a la

Obra/Operation Bootstrap, which would serve as a model for later neoliberal projects called export processing zones (EPZs) (Schmidt 2000; Bolin 2004; Neveling 2015).[26]

Throughout the 1950s, American Thread consolidated its manufacturing while expanding product lines. The consolidation was not as simple as closures in New England with complete relocation to the South, but rather closures and updates in both regions and extensions into Puerto Rico. For example, American Thread closed plants in Fall River, Massachusetts, and Bristol, Tennessee, during that decade (American Thread Annual Reports, 1953-1979). It also began to recruit Puerto Rican women to Willimantic. By the 1960s and 1970s, white residents of the city noted that the number of Puerto Rican women workers had increased and mentioned the pervasive sounds of people speaking Spanish (Russo 2017; 'Millworkers of Willimantic', 1979-1980). American Thread also opened new sales offices and distribution points in Puerto Rico to service manufacturers on the island (American Thread Annual Reports, 1953-1979; 'Millworkers of Willimantic', 1979-1980; Boujouen 1990, p. 73). These manufacturers had developed since the 1898 occupation of the island and grown with the financial incentives of Operation Bootstrap.

In the 1960s, American Thread's annual reports repeatedly presented its top problem as the dramatic increases in cheap imports. The main competition came from Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, where the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP) and U.S. State Department had helped build a postwar textile and garment industry (American Thread Annual Reports, 1953-1979; Ekbladh 2010, pp. 77-113; Chomsky 2008, pp. 115-126; Rosen 2002, pp. 29-42; Shenin 2000, pp. 15, 28, 41, 67, 133, 162-164). Despite this concern, American Thread developed a 1963 proposal for updating its mill in Willimantic and building a new plant in Transylvania, North Carolina. The new technology for Willimantic, which came from Germany rather than from New England machinists it had used in the past, included equipment for more synthetic materials (American Thread Annual Reports, 1953-1979). American Thread also continued to hire Puerto Rican women in Willimantic, sometimes paying them cash to fly to the island and recruit workers (Boujouen 1990, pp. 95-96).

Puerto Rican Industrial Needleworkers into the 1980s

By the 1970s, there were thousands of Puerto Rican women in the U.S. textile and apparel industry from Massachusetts and New York City to Philadelphia and the island. Most women had moved from rural parts of Puerto Rico to insular cities and then throughout cities in the Northeast mainland (Whalen 2008, pp. 121-150; Whalen 2002, pp. 45-68; Ortiz 1998, pp.105-110; Boris 1996, pp. 33-54; Muñiz-Mas 1996, pp. 181-205; Torruellas et al. 1996, pp. 189-190). They understood mobility rather than rootedness as central to their industrial employment and worker identity. For example, Aracelis Martínez learned industrial sewing at the Ana Roqué High School in Humacao in 1962. She moved from Puerto Rico to New York City in 1964 for better wages, returned to the island and worked in another factory for a few years, and went to New York again in 1970. She was a sewing machine operator in an undergarment factory (Medina 2018; Martínez 2018). Martínez eventually paid for her daughter's flight from Puerto Rico to New York in the mid1970s, and they moved to Springfield, Massachusetts. Martínez worked at Gemini Mill, a former Carter's factory that was owned and managed by Joel Gordon. He was an industry executive from eastern Massachusetts who had attained contracts for OshKosh, B'Gosh and Izod. Gordon told a reporter that he often struggled to find

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[26] I share the Spanish and English terms for Puerto Rican programs so readers can recognize them in other sources. Then I continue with only the English term.

workers with sewing skills and an interest in the job, but Puerto Rican women had the necessary experience (Medina 2018; Robbins 1985, p. B9; Claffey 1979, p. 3; Rumelt 2019).

In the early 1970s, Maria Berríos completed piecework at home in Swedesboro, New Jersey. She made octagonal needlework pieces, sewed them together in a pattern, packed them in boxes, and shipped those to New York City. Berríos would then receive a paycheck and another box of materials. Her daughter helped with packing and labeling. Berríos also made embroidered doilies for their apartment, carrying on the original cultural tradition from Puerto Rico even as she applied her skills to industrial manufacturing. In the late 1970s, Berríos moved the family to Holyoke, Massachusetts, where she worked for the Elco Dress Company until it closed in 1986 (Salgado-Cartagena 2017).

Puerto Rican women continued to move to Willimantic to work at American Thread as well. In her studies of Puerto Rican women in the 1980s, Norma Esther Boujouen found that the majority in her samples moved to Willimantic in the 1960s and 1970s. Some joined family members, some were recruited, and some heard about the lower rents and cost of living with the good jobs at American Thread and Hartford Poultry (Boujouen & Newton 198?, pp. 10-11, 94). A woman named Patria told Boujouen, 'Well, my sister-in-law brought me here. She took me to American Thread. I applied and in less than a week I got a job as a machine operator. Then I wrote my cousins to come here to work… It was easy to find jobs when I came here in 1969.' Another woman named Daria came to Willimantic from Puerto Rico in 1970 because her uncle had written to her parents saying young women could get good jobs (Boujouen 1990, pp. 1-5, 35-63, 76-77, 97-98, 101-106; Boujouen & Newton 198?, p. 13).

Some women felt pride in their jobs at American Thread in the 1970s and 1980s, especially if they met quotas. Others worried about the speed and expectations. Many recalled a particular supervisor who regularly called out, 'Menea esas manos', which translates to, 'Keep those hands busy'. Gabriela liked her time at American Thread, saying, 'I enjoyed looking at my machines filling with thread. Everything looked so beautiful. I did a good job because I was careful. My bosses praised me for my work'. Tatiana had a different experience. 'I was almost always nervous because of the constant pressure to make quota', she said. 'I got nervous every time the bosses came to check my work. I felt I had to hurry up'. Another woman, Renata, described the training process. 'I learned to operate the machines in two weeks. The difficult part was to achieve dexterity to produce the quota. It took me about three months to make the quota'. Lupe, however, easily learned and went beyond the quota in a few weeks (Boujouen Ramírez 2013, pp. 2-5; Boujouen 1990, pp. 1-5, 35-63, 76-77, 97-98, 101-106; Boujouen & Newton 198?, p. 13).

Puerto Rican women understood themselves as industrial workers with options and important roles in the production. They viewed the quota as making basic money for the company. Completing extra piecework, or 'pizual', was earning money for themselves. Dolores, who worked at American Thread as a machine operator from her arrival in Willimantic in the 1960s until it closed in 1985, liked the job. 'I like sewing', she told an interviewer before her last day. 'I never had any accidents. The work there is divided into piecework and the task. The task is what you are supposed to produce in order to earn your salary. Piecework is what you produce after your task… so that we can earn extra money' (Boujouen Ramírez 2013, pp. 2-5; Boujouen 1990, pp. 1-5, 35-63, 76-77, 97-98, 101-106; Boujouen & Newton 198?, p. 13).

Despite the low wages and tough work conditions, many Puerto Rican women expressed pride in their skills and providing income for their families. A woman named Maria went to New

York City around 1950 and learned to sew on multiple types of machines. When a boss refused to increase her wage per piece even though she knew how to run the zig-zag machine, she waited until the factory was backlogged and went to find a job with better pay. Maria did not see herself as a victim, but as a valuable skilled worker with mobility and pathways to improve her contributions to the family (Erazo n.d., pp. 1-5). In Springfield, Martínez smiled when she said she was able to bring money into her household and buy bicycles for her children, which would not have happened without her Gemini Mill paycheck. She was proud that she met her quotas, earned money, and did not need welfare (Medina 2018). Minerva Torres Ríos told oral historians that she went to New York to help her family financially and, like many Puerto Rican women, did not see a sharp divide between supporting the household as both a wage earner and a caretaker in the home. These women's work allowed their children to graduate high school and attend college or find jobs in clerical and medical fields (Torruellas et al. 1996, pp. 187-188).

The Closure of an Industrial Labor Pathway

The 1980s, however, saw intensified changes to the entire U.S. domestic industry, which must include Puerto Rico. The textile and apparel industry had been disaggregating since the turn of the twentieth century, especially after U.S. imperialism multiplied options in the Caribbean, Pacific, and East Asia. The occupation of colonies and participation in warfare around the world, with the resulting federal offices, military bases, and policies, opened new manufacturing sites, labor markets, and investment experimentation. The Reagan administration then launched the 1983 Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), which undermined Puerto Rico's position as a manufacturing enclave exempted from labor and investment regulations as well as from duties and taxes. To qualify for inclusion in the CBI, countries could not have a Communist Party government or property nationalized from a U.S. citizen or corporation (Dypski 2002, p. 103; Rosen 2002, pp. 129-152). In return, the CBI offered Caribbean nations a 'mini-Marshall Plan' and a 'Puerto-Rico style special relationship'. It included investment supports and tax exemptions to diversify export manufacturing, along with trade preferences and duty-free access to U.S. markets. Supporters argued this diversification would reduce the region's vulnerability to fluctuations in its traditional raw material exports. Puerto Rican officials and managers, however, worried about CBI impacts. Some argued it even placed Puerto Rico at a disadvantage because the island had to comply with limited aspects of U.S. labor and environmental regulations while Caribbean nations did not (Dypski 2002, p. 101; Gautier-Mayoral 1990, p. 13; Polanyi-Levitt 1985, pp. 229, 242-243; Pastor 1982). Puerto Rican island needleworkers were no longer part of a site with special advantages.

In addition to that Caribbean trade policy, the Reagan administration triggered a gutting of the mainland industry. Its financial deregulations encouraged leveraged buyouts (LBOs) that were particularly damaging. Even if remaining domestic plants produced reliable earnings, 'restructuring' with financial maneuvers and closures rather than manufacturing management often produced a greater short-term return or tax windfall. In an LBO, a large corporation, finance firm, or investor group buys a company by borrowing against its assets, which usually generates a spiked payment to shareholders. LBOs started in the 1970s when Michael Milken promoted the use of high-yield or 'junk' bonds, the low-rated bonds of small or plateaued companies, to make large capital gains. His firm, Drexel Burnham, began underwriting such deals, which produced high yields for investors and massive advisory fees for Drexel. Even when such deals failed and the share value collapsed, scavenger investors like Warren Buffet at Berkshire Hathaway often bought a cheapened company for the break-up of its enterprises with tax-beneficial closures. Drexel even hosted an annual 'Predators' Ball' in Beverly Hills

during the 1980s (Rodgers 2011, pp. 80-82; MacLean 2006, pp. 312-313; Adler 2001, pp. 234-242). Reagan administration banking deregulation made such deals easier just as it was cutting Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) oversight.

In some LBOs, an acquired manufacturing enterprise then paid fees to the shell finance company for 'consulting services'. This structure eliminated the SEC income-disclosure reporting required for senior management of public companies. For example, in spring 1986, a primary investor partnered with Drexel to attempt a hostile takeover of Warnaco, an apparel manufacturer earning steady profits with Hathaway shirts, Olga bras, and WhiteStag sportswear. The investor group provided about 1% of the financing with Milken raising the rest with junk bonds. The primary investor became chairman of the Warnaco board of directors. He had no interest in managing an apparel corporation and drew no salary, instead cashing in his equity stakes and receiving a monthly 'consulting fee' through his shell finance company. Between 1986 and 1989, that investor paid himself $9 million in fees, which made him one of the highest-paid executives according to *Forbes* but gutted the company (Adler 2001, pp. 246-248).

Political battles over federal trade policy expose how reconfigurations of global markets and large corporations had splintered the domestic industry. Domestic manufacturers and unions were unable to fight the political power of the transnational corporations that now imported finished goods as well as pieces; the major finance investors moving capital around the world; and new discount retailers like Wal-Mart. The 1985 fight for the Textile and Apparel Trade Enforcement Act (H.R. 1562) was one of the last efforts to maintain a domestic industry with mainland employment. The loss of H.R. 1562 was not the result of a 'dying' industry and its waning unions, as if these were inevitable natural declines. The weakened position of domestic manufacturers was a result of postwar U.S. foreign economic policy, financialization, and management consultants that had reshaped and impaired the domestic companies and union membership. The resulting global markets also granted discount retailers an especially formidable influence in any contest (Minchin 2012, pp. 91-158; Collins 2003, pp. 27-61; Rosen 2002, pp. 119-128).

By the 1980s, transnational corporations had become experts at manipulating quotas, circumventing the Multi-Fiber Agreement (MFA), and using transshipments through third countries to enter U.S. markets (Collins 2003; Rosen 2002).[27] New York City labor activist and Puerto Rican needleworker Gloria Maldonado discussed how nations gamed the quota system, with China buying Panama's unused quota numbers so its larger manufacturers could import more to the U.S. (Maldonado 1985, p. 47). Multiple bilateral agreements essentially nullified most legislation to control textile and garment imports and stabilize U.S. employment. Remaining regional companies and unions like the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) and Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) contacted political allies and the Congressional Textile Caucus to pass H.R. 1562. During these years, however, regional companies continued to undermine their own labor allies with anti-union obstruction. But their respective leaderships did cooperate in legislative agendas regarding trade (Windham 2017, pp. 120-126; Minchin 2012, pp. 95-104).

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[27] Transshipments occur when a nation has met its quota of towel imports to the U.S. so its trade office makes an agreement with another country on behalf of its manufacturers to send excess towels to that country, which has not met its quota. That country then ships the towels into the U.S. on behalf of the original nation for a fee.

Secondary suppliers to mills and factories, like companies that provide parts, machine repair, and water testing, also lobbied for H.R. 1562. Unions emphasized the importance of these jobs for women and the racial diversity of the labor force. Union posters and flyers depicted white, black, Latinx, and Asian American workers in various jobs. The National Puerto Rican Coalition gave its support to H.R. 1562, arguing Puerto Rican communities were suffering a great deal due to cheap imports from Asia (Minchin 2012, pp. 95-104, 111). Maldonado understood these complexities, telling an interviewer, 'On the import bill [anti-union companies and politicians in the South are] backing us... [b]ecause they have a lot of textile mills there' (Maldonado 1985, p. 46). She argued the U.S. should not be opening its markets to imports when Japan and Europe do not allow similarly high numbers. 'So if all the work, or most of the work is sent out there, then we are suffering… Japan and other European countries, they won't let in any imports', Maldonado said. 'They protect, they have protectionism, you know' (Maldonado 1985, pp. 40-46, 54-56). Like many union representatives, Maldonado participated in labor activism as an organizer and as part of a movement attempting to shape the terms of contemporary globalization. Their fights, while not successful in preserving a widespread domestic industry, did have an explicit if asymmetrical influence on how the industry changed.

Large transnational corporations that developed and promoted recognizable brands while contracting the manufacturing overseas, such as Esprit and Liz Claiborne, opposed H.R. 1562. So did the largest domestic manufacturer, Levi Strauss, which was in the process of dispersing its production into Asia from its West Coast headquarters to become a brand company. The American Farm Bureau Federation and agricultural lobbies also opposed the bill because they feared trade retaliation, in which nations like China would not buy U.S. wheat and other commodities. Retailers pushed their own opposition, with the National Retail Merchants Association and K-Mart meeting politicians in 1985 to reiterate the word 'protectionist' in the narrowest, most negative connotation of blocking growth and raising prices for consumers (Minchin 2012, pp. 105-120; Collins 2003, pp. 27-61, 104-125).

Powerful opposition also came from the Reagan White House and its advisors who used the rhetoric of 'free trade' and 'free markets'. After months of negotiations, H.R. 1562 passed, but Reagan vetoed it a week before Christmas 1985. Workers, union leaders, and domestic executives from across the U.S. joined in a massive effort to override the veto. Five days before the override vote, however, the Reagan administration announced it had negotiated a tougher MFA with expanded import coverage and mechanisms to block import surges - without acknowledging all the ways transnational corporations and international trade offices evade such criteria. Reagan trade representatives argued negotiation, not legislation, was the best way to address the trade deficit and imports. In August 1986, the override was defeated (Minchin 2012, pp. 105-120; Collins 2003, pp. 27-61, 104-125). By 1987, imports accounted for 57.5% of apparel sales in the U.S. (Lichtenstein 2010, pp. 202-203).

These 1980s policies in support of the CBI, LBOs, and outgoing capital and incoming cheap imports fostered a collapse of remaining U.S. manufacturing. The subsequent closures of textile, apparel, and home goods factories along the Atlantic U.S. from New England to Puerto Rico impacted Puerto Rican women in a substantial but dispersed way. They lost the pathways through which they had navigated and organized as U.S. industrial workers. Employment along these multiple pathways of colonial migration had served as a platform for their income and household stability since the turn of the century. Many older Puerto Rican women had no choice but to retire and attempt to survive on Social Security income. Other laid-off needleworkers struggled to find secure jobs, applying for unemployment insurance and Aid to

Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) welfare payments to make ends meet. Thousands of displaced Puerto Rican women found jobs in lower-wage service fields like home attendant, nurse's aide, or fast food server (Delgado 1984, p. 55; Delgado & Maldonado 1985, pp. 142-144; Boujouen 1990, pp. 189-218; Glasser 1997, pp. 179-181; Torruellas et al. pp. 195, 205; Alvarez 1988, pp. 29-36; Benmayor 1987, pp. 7-8; Juarbe 1987, pp. 14-15, 23).

To conclude the American Thread case study, during the early 1980s it reduced its workforce and closed distribution points in Puerto Rico. In July 1984, American Thread announced that it planned to close the Willimantic mill (Boujouen 1990, pp. 118, 121-129). When the company proceeded with the 1985 closure, it created a noticeable increase in Puerto Rican unemployment and workforce uncertainty for the city. Kendall Company, which made synthetic fabric for disposable diapers, had already closed in 1983, and Brand Rex had reduced its employees from 800 to 650 in 1981 and to 460 in 1983 (Boujouen & Newton, 198?, pp. 29-30). Many Puerto Rican women in Willimantic could not find industry jobs, so they went on unemployment insurance. Some found jobs in service industries like care work or cleaning and others had to rely on AFDC welfare payments (Boujouen & Newton, 198?, pp. 35-36). The experience of Rosario illustrates the challenges for former needleworkers in the 1980s and 1990s. In the 1960s, she was recruited to work in the Hartford Poultry plant in Willimantic and then went to work at American Thread. She had to return to Puerto Rico for a short time around 1980 and could not get another job at American Thread upon her return. She took work cleaning offices but started to have serious back pain and had to leave employment and apply for welfare (Boujouen & Newton, 198?, pp. 13, 36).

Similar conditions played out in other small New England cities. In 1989, the Gemini Mill in Springfield closed after two years of effort by the president to keep it operational, but its recent financial investors had benchmarks beyond profitable contracts (Sandler 1988, pp. 1, 19-20; Robbins 1988, p. E1). Martínez left the Gemini Mill and took a job as a janitor in the city school district (Medina 2018). The last mill in Holyoke closed in 1989. Berríos operated her own 'side hustles' after the Elco Dress Company shuttered. For example, she cooked food in her kitchen and packaged it for take-out orders. People in the neighborhood knew the days she cooked, and many ordered ahead of time (Salgado-Cartagena 2017).

Puerto Rican Women as Laid-Off Workers or Poor Welfare Mothers

Most white workers and their households along the Atlantic U.S. experienced deindustrialization as the loss of a particular factory or industrial complex, with the stability it had provided as the center of a neighborhood. White steel employees, autoworkers, and coal miners appeared in news stories, songs like Billy Joel's 'Allentown' (1982) and Bruce Springsteen's 'Born in the U.S.A.' (1984), and Hollywood movies like *All the Right Moves* (1983) starring Tom Cruise as a high school senior who wants a football scholarship to get out of his dying steel town. In these mainstream representations, white men and their families had a racialized and gendered cultural space to grieve.

Puerto Rican women went through a different loss. They had experienced the textile and apparel industry as shifting and moving. They were almost as mobile as the manufacturing, relocating in multiple directions and working in homes and factories at the same time. When these options ended, it was because the pathways they had traced and shaped through the U.S. industry had been occluded. Federal trade and financial policies converged quickly with new technologies, like barcodes and container shipping, that all facilitated global contracting by massive transnational corporations serving discount retailers. The connected but stretching

lines of the textile and garment industry bent away from the U.S. to Asia, Mexico, and Caribbean nations.

In addition to the loss of their industrial pathways, Puerto Rican women had not been legible as the American working class. They were not granted popular attention for their loss or mainstream cultural space to grieve the economic abandonment. There were no top-ten songs or blockbuster movies about laid-off Puerto Rican needleworkers. Instead, Puerto Rican women became part of the popular cultural narrative of 'welfare queens' and poor women moving to the U.S. to take public services ('Welfare Queen' 1976, p. 51; 'Welfare Queen' 1979, p. B5; Davis 1980, p. A4; Page 1991, p. D11B; Page 1994, p. VYB13; Demby 2013; Levin 2019). The colonial narrative of Puerto Rico as a site of backward and primitive 'dark Others' in need of U.S. assistance merged easily with an emerging racialized narrative of the 'underclass' and the 'culture of poverty' in families of color (Thompson 2010; Briggs 2002). In this framework, poverty was caused by a high birth rate and lack of work ethic in the poor rather than by labor, real estate, banking, and tax policies (Erazo n.d., pp. 1-5; Chappell 2010, pp. 199-241; Orleck 2005, pp. 82-97; Briggs 2002, pp. 177-188; Whalen 1998, pp. 217-222; Torruellas et al. 1996, p. 205).

Questions of poverty increasingly focused on poor women of color and motherhood instead of systemic economic reform. Public health officials from the mainland and Puerto Rico directed more attention and funding toward birth control efforts with a mix of motives that included concern for women's health as well as sterilization ideology and experiments with long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) (Lopez 2008; Briggs 2002). Ignoring their decades of industrial wage work, many policy experts argued Puerto Rican women had shifted from dependence on male breadwinners to dependence on the state - completely missing their distinctive experience of deindustrialization (Whalen 1998, pp. 218-221; Torruellas et al. 1996, pp. 192-193). U.S. colonial offices and Puerto Rican labor agencies had recruited women to work throughout the industry on the island and in the Northeast. Insular contractors and managers and investors throughout the U.S. had made millions of dollars from their labor. But after U.S. trade and financial policies moved on from Puerto Rican needleworkers and left them without possible options, they were not even allowed to mourn as labor.

When Puerto Rican women strategically used public services like welfare or food stamps to address the structural reconfigurations that had cut off their pathways to industrial wages, they were not recognized as workers or as legitimate mothers. Puerto Rican textile and apparel workers in the 1980s and 1990s experienced two sets of emotions from deindustrialization: grief and anxiety due to an inability to find stable employment, simultaneously with confusion and humiliation over the idea that they 'bilked' welfare. Leticia Quiroz had worked in manufacturing jobs for years, but when these became temporary and erratic, she decided she had to apply for AFDC because it offered steady income. 'Sometimes I think if I go back to work and don't like the job or if I get fired, what will I find?' Quiroz continued, 'Jobs are very hard to find today'. Paquita Ramírez arrived in New York City in 1979 with five children and the ambition to make their lives better. When she could not find affordable daycare or a steady job, she had to apply to AFDC. The social worker said, 'Well, if Mrs. Ramírez doesn't want to go back [to Puerto Rico], open her file because we aren't going to put her out on the street with five minor-age children'. After the 1988 Family Support Act, many women were sent to work for their AFDC payments in labor they experienced as degrading, like cleaning empty lots where drug addicts went to shoot up. Most of the women did the workfare and developed 'side hustles' to get better lives for their children (Maldonado 1984, pp. 23-24; Torruellas et al. 1996, pp. 187-206).

Conclusion

The fragmentation of archives between Puerto Rican studies and U.S. labor history as well as racialized, gendered, and spatial notions of deindustrialization have allowed for a simplistic narrative. This narrative erases the losses experienced by Puerto Rican women who had moved throughout the U.S. industry in pursuit of better wages and conditions. When oral histories and documents related to the migrations of Puerto Rican needleworkers become visible in the history of the 'American working class', we see deindustrialization as contingent and erratic rather than as naturalized and linear. Instead of a simplistic overarching explanation of deindustrialization as 'jobs leaving the U.S.' in the late twentieth century, this history shows that industrial capitalism interacts with different manufacturing workers and sites in different ways. It creates a constant if changing catalogue of simultaneous labor options.

We also see Puerto Rican women lost more than a paycheck or specific factory - most lost their position in the U.S. industrial workforce and any possibility of recognition as members of the American working class. Their invisibility as workers in public discourse and popular media allowed them to become associated with racialized poverty and the heated welfare debates of the 1980s and 1990s. While they did not give up aspirations for their children, they endured the dispossession of a certain class status and the loss of economic mobility for themselves.

The stories of Puerto Rican needleworkers demand a historiography of the U.S. industrial working class that addresses racial and colonial aspects of labor markets, worker subjectivity, migrations, and deindustrialization. They also call for a labor history that acknowledges the U.S. as an imperial power throughout the twentieth century, which in turn destabilizes the normalized narrative of globalization. That version presents globalization as a recent event fueled by an unhindered increase of connections and flows. It ignores both the long history of various global connections and the ever-present if asymmetrical limitations and constraints on currents of goods and capital as well as people (Cooper 2005, pp. 91-93).

The erasure of Puerto Rican needleworkers has facilitated political attacks on women of color as people who do not work and 'just want welfare'. It has also served right-wing efforts to demonize all workers of color - in other nations and im/migrants in the U.S. - for 'taking jobs from the American working class'. A full understanding of Puerto Rican needleworkers moves labor history beyond inclusion and reframes ongoing debates about how the constant reconfigurations of capital affect different workers. The insights also open possibilities for more partnerships within the working class, across race and citizenship, as people recognize that jobs change as part of a relentless shifting array of structures. They do not 'leave' in a linear path toward workers of color who 'take' the jobs because they take less pay.

Author Bio

Aimee Loiselle studies the modern U.S. as a hub for transnational labor and capital with an interest in women workers, gender, race, and popular representation. Her research traverses common divisions of method and field to examine how women navigate, resist, and reform the larger systems in which they work and migrate. Loiselle is also interested in the ways pop culture obscures such disconcerting nuances. Her current project *Creating Norma Rae: Southern Labor Organizing and Puerto Rican Needleworkers Lost in Reagan's America* explores the long history of the textile and garment industry that led to the contested production

of the 1979 movie *Norma Rae*. It then analyzes the cultural work the film did to constitute a narrow notion of the white 'American working class' in the 1980s.

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Workers' Identities in Transition: Deindustrialisation and Scottish Steelworkers

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Abstract

Deindustrialisation is often characterised as an ending, with sentiments of intangible loss and identity disintegration defining displaced workers' narratives of job loss. These experiences are important, yet workers do not cease to exist with the closure of their workplace. Despite this, little attention has been paid to the post-redundancy employment experiences of former heavy industry workers or the survivability of their specific occupational identities and work cultures. This article examines the post-redundancy employment of former Scottish steelworkers. Given their previous immersion in a distinctive occupational culture, a study of the post-redundancy employment experiences of these workers offers a window into the afterlives of deindustrialisation. Oral history is indispensable in prioritising working-class perspectives, therefore this article draws on seventeen newly conducted oral history interviews with former Scottish steelworkers who were made redundant in the early 1990s. In order to better understand the long-term impact of deindustrialisation, as well as gage the survivability of occupational identities and work cultures, this article examines the ways in which steelworkers' post-redundancy employment contrasted with steelmaking, focusing on the following thematic areas: the significance of work; trade unionism and collective values; masculinity and emasculation; occupational community and workplace culture.

Keywords

Deindustrialisation, occupational identities, work cultures, Scottish steelworkers, post-redundancy employment

Introduction

The intrinsic relationship between work and identity is a central theme within deindustrialisation literature. Sentiments of intangible loss and identity disintegration commonly define displaced workers' narratives of job loss precisely because work informs both personal and collective identity to such a large extent. As a collective endeavour work can shape the identity of entire communities or regions (Kirk et al. 2002). Strangleman (2008) argues that heavy industries exerted strong cultural influence over the communities in which they were embedded. Displacement from workplaces with such cohesive communities can shatter workers' sense of self and place. The toxic combination of neoliberalism and deindustrialisation has devastated working-class communities, cultures, and organisation. Crime, poverty, and ill-health increased in former occupation-dependent communities in Scotland as the social fabric unravelled with the closure of heavy industry (Farrall et al. 2017; McCrone 2012; Finlay 2004). The impact of deindustrialisation on these communities has been overwhelmingly negative, yet it remains difficult to fully capture its emotional disruption and aftereffects. Deindustrialisation is often characterised as an ending, and while narratives of job

loss are important, workers do not cease to exist with the closure of their workplace. Linkon has highlighted that deindustrialisation 'is not an event of the past' but is rather an 'active and significant part of the present' (2018, p. 1). As such, this article examines the post-redundancy employment experiences of former Scottish steelworkers and the survivability of their occupational identities and work cultures. In order to better understand the long-term impact of deindustrialisation, this article examines the ways in which steelworkers' post-redundancy employment contrasted with steelmaking, focusing on the following thematic areas: the significance of work; trade unionism and collective values; masculinity and emasculation; occupational community and workplace culture.

Steven High praised Tracy K'Meyer and Joy Hart's *I Saw it Coming: Worker Narratives of Plant Closings and Job Loss* for asking workers 'the why question': why they thought their plants had closed, why their work had meant so much to them, and why they felt the way they did about their new employment (Hart & K'Meyer 2009, High's back cover summary). In order to prioritise working-class perspectives, this article similarly sought to ask workers the 'why question'. Given their previous immersion in a distinctive occupational culture, a study of steelworkers' post-redundancy employment experiences offers a window into the aftereffects of deindustrialisation. However, a general lack of archival information which encapsulates the often-emotional narratives of deindustrialisation, compounded by the marginalisation of working-class experiences within dominant remembrances of the past, makes any attempt at reconstructing steelworkers' post-redundancy employment difficult. Oral history was therefore chosen as the primary research method given its effectiveness in the recovery of marginalised narratives and its ability to navigate the realms of emotion and meaning (Thompson 2017; Portelli 2012; Abrams 2016). In capturing complex and experiential narratives, oral history proves indispensable to understanding the significance of deindustrialisation for working-class people.

This article draws on seventeen oral history interviews conducted between 2016 and 2017 with former Scottish steelworkers. Interviewees were employed within British Steel during the 1980s and made redundant in the early 1990s: twelve of these are former Ravenscraig employees, four are former Clydesdale employees, and one was a former Dalzell employee. Given the demographics of Scottish heavy industry in the post-war period, interviewees were predominantly white working-class men. Dorothy Macready was an exception as the only woman interviewed, and described the post-redundancy experience of her late steelworker husband Jim Macready. As a closed shop all steelworkers had been trade union members, and five of them had held representative roles, such as Tommy Brennan, the overall trade union convenor for Ravenscraig. In the interview cohort were also two skilled tradesmen, two managers, and Ravenscraig's industrial chaplain. Given the focus upon employment transition, it was integral to identify interviewees who would have been young enough at the time of closure to seek reemployment rather than early retirement, therefore the majority of interviewees were in their fifties or sixties. Special attention was given to recruiting former Ravenscraig and Clydesdale steelworkers, as the plants' former position as major employers in central Scotland and relatively recent closures in the early 1990s increased the likelihood of identifying candidates for interview. Interviewees were recruited through a number of sources, including social media, local press, and retiree networks and interviewee referrals.

Former steelworkers entered a diverse range of post-redundancy-employment. Following a path common to other displaced industrial workers, some gained employment as production line workers, taxi drivers, cleaners and janitorial staff; others upskilled as mechanics or entered female-dominated public sector employment in social care or education. Unlike steelworkers,

the two interviewed managers did not experience a significant variation in employment post-redundancy, with both men easily transitioning into other managerial roles. Ian Harris accepted an offer from British Steel to transfer to Llanwern Steelworks, which allowed him to retain his role as strip mill manager, while Sam Thompson, the personnel and safety manager for Ravenscraig, was able to find identical managerial roles outside of steelmaking. Former steelworkers generally found their post-redundancy employment inferior to steelmaking: pay and conditions were eroded, social mobility stalled, trade unions were disempowered, occupational communities were destroyed, and workers were atomised. Although largely negative, interviewees' employment transitions did engender some positive outcomes, specifically in relation to a healthier working environment.

The Significance of Work

Deindustrialisation has sparked and contributed to a debate on the nature of work itself. Rifkin (1995), Beck (2000), Casey (1995), Bauman (1998), and Gorz (1999) contend that work has lost its ability to shape identity, declining in significance as a result of profound economic and technological change. This has been contested by scholars such as Strangleman (2012), Doogan (2009), Berman (2010), McIvor (2013), and Wall and Kirk (2011) who have stressed continuity. The post-redundancy experiences of former steelworkers align with this second interpretation. Though steelmaking was remembered as particularly meaningful employment, its loss did not precipitate a catastrophic break in the importance of work itself. Former steelworkers were able to derive meaning from their new employment and maintain a strong association between work and identity.

Steelmaking was remembered fondly, it was both enjoyable and meaningful, able to provide a deep sense of occupational pride. Steelworkers exhibited a great respect for steelmaking itself. Brian Cunningham spoke of the 'beauty of the Ravenscraig', a sentiment similarly expressed by Jim Reddiex, who described newly created steel as 'beautiful, perfect in shape'. Similar to shipbuilding, the centrality of steelmaking's description as meaningful work was the high level of end product tangibility; steel effectively supports civilisation, with almost every commodity either containing steel or requiring it in its creation. Interviewees understood the importance of their occupation:

> You couldn't get more important than making tubes for the North Sea oil... That steel that was made in Clydesdale and the tubes that were made in Clydesdale – that brought the oil out the ground, all over the world (H. Carlin Interview, 2017).

> They made the high-quality steel for rail tracks, they made the high-quality steel for offshore, they made the high-quality steel for the automotive industry (Cunningham Interview, 2017).

This tangibility contributed to a high level of occupational pride among steelworkers. Harry Carlin was 'proud to be a steelworker', while Jim McKeown directly attributed this pride to the end product: 'we were proud of what we were doing in there and proud of what we made'. High and Lewis' interviews with paper mill workers from Sturgeon Falls also revealed the relationship between a strong sense of occupational pride and tangibility of product, with one worker boasting: 'we were making a good product. It was well recognized in the market' (High & Lewis 2007, p. 95). Tangibility of end product provides a basis for meaningful work. The products of heavy industry have an obvious and tangible use value, which provides industrial

workers with a sense of pride in their creation. Brian Cunningham regarded steelmaking as 'noble', and appreciated that his new employment as a mechanic exhibited a similar level of tangibility:

> I mean you are making something, there is an end product there, it's going from that pile of coal and scrap and ore... there's something tangible at the end of it. When I get a truck and it's broke and I fix it, that's tangible, I done that, I achieved that today, that was a good day's work.

Brian considered himself lucky, suspecting that most former steelworkers moved into less meaningful employment.

Dorothy Macready, speaking on behalf of her late husband Jim, described how he was compelled to take less meaningful work. After losing his 'responsible job' as a steelworker Jim held many 'wee jobs' – working in a supermarket for instance – which lacked the prestige and tangibility of steelmaking. Jim eventually gained employment as a postman, allowing him to reassert an occupational pride: 'because he felt it was responsible'. The word 'responsible' is worthy of note, demonstrating that Jim clearly attached greater worth to employment which exhibited a tangible social value. James Carlin also lost a sense of meaning from his work as he moved into Wisemans Dairy:

> I didn't have the same respect obviously for the product... It was just as quick as you could get it done, as quick as you could get it out... if there was damage you weren't really too bothered... people didn't value their job down there, just purely because of the nature of the company and attitude of the company towards you, you just done your shift then you went home, that was it, there was no pride in the end product.

Interestingly, James regained a sense of occupational pride in his current employment in Warburtons, which, among his post-redundancy employment, has been the most comfortable and most familiar to Ravenscraig:

> It's the same process but rather than making steel you are making bread, it's unionised, guys look out for each other, you know what I mean, the health and safety is good, so there is a real team aspect to it... there is a real bond among guys down there and I suppose it is unity in the true aspect of the word, we are all the one big team.

For James, it was the presence of trade unions in Warburtons that fostered a return to a positive working environment. Enjoyable, meaningful work is related to both tangibility of product and a positive work culture, which is itself dependent upon strong trade unions.

Interviewees who moved into care or teaching expressed the most stable continuation of occupational pride. For Jim McKeown, teaching instilled a 'different' but 'equal' sense of pride to steelmaking: 'I like to see the kids that I have been teaching doing well, aye so you still took a pride, and I think it was kind of equal pride, but a different sense of pride'. James Coyle found his experience as a care worker in children's homes similarly satisfying. Although the work was emotionally strenuous, as many children came from 'very troubled backgrounds', James 'loved' the work and strove to make 'a lot of kids happy'. James remembered with pride when one of these children, as an adult, asked him to walk her down the aisle, which conveyed a

sense of fulfilment not possible through steelmaking. Harry Carlin also entered social care, specialising in elder care, where he spent his time meeting residents' needs – 'washing them, bathing them, dressing them, shaving them' – which he too found fulfilling:

> You knew that you done a good job because they would be looking and the wee face would smile when they seen you coming in, or take your hand, they couldn't speak, but they knew you were looking after them.

Harry took a great deal of pride in this work, believing it to be more important than steelmaking as 'you're dealing with human beings, not steel'. Interestingly, many residents were either themselves former heavy industry workers or had close family who were, which gave Harry a sense that he was directly helping people from his community. The move from steelmaking into social care may appear extreme, yet Harry likened his previous role as a trade union representative to that of a social worker: '[Steelworkers] treated you as a social worker, you know. If there were any marital problems they would come to you because they knew you were a good listener'. Harry was 'proud to be a social care worker' for the same reason he was a trade union representative, because he 'liked helping' people, and so the transition into social work came to him naturally.

Despite certain theorists claiming otherwise, the centrality of work to identity remained intact for former steelworkers following deindustrialisation. Ian Harris extolled the 'discipline' and 'rewarding' nature of work, which allows individuals to support themselves and their families. Frank Roy considered work critical to cultivating 'self-esteem… that's what your work is… it brings a worth and it brings a self-esteem'. Social psychologist Jahoda argues that individuals' 'deep-seated needs' are addressed through employment, such as the 'need to structure their day; [the] need [for] wider social experiences; [the] need to partake in collective purposes… [the] need to know where they stand in society in comparison with others in order to clarify their personal identity; and [the] need [for] regular activities' (1982, pp. 83-84). Interviewees understood work in a remarkably similar way:

> It is absolutely critical, you have got to have a structure in your life... you take that structure away from people, James, and it can have a devastating effect on them. You need a reason to go to your bed and get yourself up early. People reach for alcohol, or they end up snorting it or jagging themselves… then that filters down to the next generation and the next generation… Probably one of the most important things, definitely – gives you a focus, gives you a function, gives you a direction, and it can also give you a great deal of satisfaction: a good day's work, fantastic (Cunningham Interview, 2017)

Tommy Brennan expressed how work exposes individuals to wider and more diverse social interactions:

> It's character building, it helps a person find out who they are, it gives them the experience of meeting people, of mixing with people, of making conversation, all this is important to the individual – it brings people out of themselves.

The social aspect and sense of purpose provided by employment was important to Jim McKeown, who chose to postpone his retirement from teaching: 'I need to be doing something every day, I live in the house myself, I live myself, I couldn't imagine sitting watching Jeremy

Kyle all day, you know just doing that, I think I have got to be doing something, and I think work for me it is important'.

Former steelworkers work ethic-based identity survived deindustrialisation and continued to define identity. Brian Cunningham subscribed great importance to his work ethic, he had 'always worked', had 'never been workshy', stating: 'I always had a work ethic… so when I went to work, I went to work… and to this day I'm still the same believe it or not, fifty-five years of age, and I've got scars to prove it'. Similarly, Jim McKeown stated: 'You are supposed be at work to get paid, and I think that is my sense of identity'. A life full of work was a source of achievement. Tommy Brennan recalled with pride: 'I've only lost six weeks work in my whole life'. Equally, James Coyle attributed importance to his continuous employment: 'I've worked all my days… I was maybe idle for a week... I've always worked, always had a job'. The importance they subscribe to hard work and continuous employment mirrors Wight's *Workers Not Wasters* (1993), which identifies the centrality of fulltime paid employment to working-class masculinity. Like their work ethic, former steelworkers' working-class identity remained unbroken. Harry Carlin admitted that he lost a 'sort of identity' as he left steelmaking, but felt that his identity as a 'worker' overshadowed his 'steelworker' identity: 'at the end of the day, as I used to say, you are a worker, you're nothing else, that's your identity, you're a worker, a working-class person'. Although Harry's employment transition into social care was dramatic, it did not significantly alter his identity, he remained a member of the working class, defined by his role as a wage earner. Employment transition did not alter social class. Despite entering a diverse range of employment, all former steelworkers continued to describe themselves as working class, which Jim McKeown exemplified: 'I still see myself as working class, I'm still quite proud to be working class… I think that means something being working class'. Working-class identity was typically defined by a dependency on waged work – 'working for a living' – and interviewees, such as James Carlin, invariably stated their continued pride in their class identity: 'I'm working class, proud of my working-class roots and identity'. However, interviewees believed that positive representations of working-class identity have diminished. James Carlin felt that legacy of Thatcherism and its associated assault upon working-class institutions had transformed working-class identity, once a source of pride, into something 'dirty', which then compelled working-class people to disassociate from the term. This is explored in Savage's *Class Analysis and Social Transformation* which engages with the 'paradox of class', where, despite its continued structural importance, class appears to have declined as 'a self-conscious principle of social identity', allowing inequality to increase 'in a more naked way than before' (2000, p. xii, p. 159).

Whilst work remained central to former steelworker identity, they expressed doubt over whether it conveyed the same meaning for younger generations. Citing the rise of short-term employment Jim McKeown commented:

> Youngsters... change their work quite regularly, move from job to job, and I think that identity is lost... we were loyal and proud because we were there. I think if you only work for a place for six months in a short-term contact you are not going to take the same pride in the place... you can't develop a feeling for the place, a kind of loyalty to your brand or where you work.

These sentiments are similar to those expressed by Sennett in *The Corrosion of Character* and Bauman in *Work, Consumerism and the New Poor*, who respectively claim that the formation of work-based identity is undermined by 'flexibility' and the disappearance of the 'steady, durable and continuous' career (Sennett 1998, p. 10; Bauman 1998, p. 27). However, James'

reflection on the youth's relationship with work was not informed by personal experience, and although some other interviewees shared this view, they were unanimous in stating the continued importance of work to their own identity. In *New Capitalism? The Transformation of Work*, Doogan highlights 'a substantial gap… between many public perceptions of change in the world of work and a more objective assessment of change and continuity in the labour market and the wider economy' (2009, p. 5). This suggests that while interviewees were perfectly able to describe their own experiences, their descriptions of younger generations relied on representations of work informed by the cultural circuit; perhaps indicating the need for a systematic study of younger workers' identity in relation to their employment. According to Strangleman, a great deal of the work in decline literature 'overstates or over-generalises' the situation. In doing so, these theorists undermine workers' 'collective and individual agency', casting them as 'passive victims of globalisation' and romanticising industrial work as highly stable in contrast to the 'permanent flux of the post-modern' (2007, pp. 96 & 100). Similarly, McIvor argues that although the introduction of disruptive technologies and concurrent deskilling and upskilling have transformed the nature of work, it still remains a 'deeply emotional experience', which continues to give workers a source of purpose and identity (2013, p. 75). The centrality of work was further reinforced by Wall and Kirk's *Work and Identity*, which, based upon interviews with railway workers, bank employees, and teachers, concluded that 'work remains central to our lives' (2011, p. 230). Despite what were at times very drastic employment transitions, former steelworkers' testimonies stress the continued importance of work to identity. Deindustrialisation took their job title, demolished their workplace and its associated culture, but it did not annihilate their work ethic or their sense of working-class identity.

Trade Unionism and Collective Values

The loss of a workplace defined by a powerful trade union and collective ethos was the 'biggest culture shock' for many steelworkers (Cunningham Interview, 2017). As a closed shop membership of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (ISTC) was mandatory for employment within steelmaking, establishing a fully unionised workforce. The values of solidarity and trade unionism were integral components of steelworker identity, which though undermined by deindustrialisation, remained intact in their post-redundancy employment.

Steelworkers remembered the power of the ISTC within the workplace, recalling how it demanded respect from management and was quick to respond if workers' rights were infringed. Commitment to trade unionism and a readiness to defend working rights and workplace dignity featured strongly in steelworkers' testimonies. In most instances the overt power of the ISTC remained latent, with simply the possibility of collective action guaranteeing a certain level of conscientiousness from management. According to Harry Carlin this power encouraged respectful management: 'the union had a lot to play, the management respected you – and the workforce knew that'. Equally for Brian Cunningham the union's position fostered 'mutual respect', as its authority:

> Always put the management on notice… because there could be a consequence, a real significant consequence, and if you are a manager in that position and you cause a shut down or a walk out you need to make sure what you did was right... it bred a respect for the workforce... I think that was probably true in most nationalised industries… any place you had large groups of men who were unionised… I definitely missed the trade union environment… that you couldn't be bullied, or picked on, or threatened by your employer or your boss.

Managerial participants' shared and confirmed workers testimonies of respectful labour relations. Industrial relations manager Sam Thompson remembered the 'good relationship' with the union during negotiations and Strip Mill Manager Ian Harris described the normalcy in promoting 'common ground' and understanding.

Former steelworkers experienced a profound culture shock as they moved from steelmaking's closed shop into workplaces operating within the context of Thatcherite anti-trade union legislation. Moving into typically ununionized workplaces, the post-redundancy employment of displaced heavy industry workers is defined by a breakdown in mutually respectful labour relations and workers' bonds of solidarity (Hart & K'Meyer, 2009; Waddington et al. 2001). Jim Reddiex had described Ravenscraig's managers as 'enlightened' because of their fairness; steelworkers who entered employment where workers lacked collective strength discovered that management lost any sense of enlightenment as soon as the necessity for conciliatory labour relations disappeared. Where unions did maintain a presence it was generally weaker, with concerns often ignored by management. Tommy Johnston, who moved into janitorial work, commented: 'The union has absolutely no say… they are hopeless, they have no say whatsoever. If we go in with a complaint to management… they will just say "no, and what are you going to do about it?"'. The loss of a powerful trade union is a common theme among former heavy industry workers, and one of the most prominently missed elements of industrial employment (Milkman 1997; Waddington et al. 2001; Dudley 1994). James Carlin was astonished to discover that Wisemans Dairy actively suppressed trade union organising by threat of outright dismissal. Brian Cunningham found himself alone as the only union member as a mechanic, which he attributed to management's hard anti-union stance: 'If you joined a union you were sacked, you were out the door. They were quite open about that'. Authoritarian management and exploitive conditions often prevailed in the absence of a powerful union. James Carlin described Wiseman's management as 'almost dictatorial':

> It was completely foreign to me to go into a work environment where the manager was there, looking over you to see what you were doing: "come on do this faster", "you need to be quicker", you know that whole aspect of it – *clap* *clap* *clap* – "come on, get that done, and I'll be back in half an hour and if you've not got that done I'll be wanting to know why you've not got it done".

James contrasted this with Ravenscraig managers who afforded workers a degree of 'professionalism', rather than oppressive supervision. Management's abusive language and a general lack of respect was the 'biggest culture shock' for Brian Cunningham:

> That bosses can speak to you like that: "you can get yourself to fuck, get your tools and fuck off"... That would never have happened in the steel industry, that manager would have been sacked... there was a mutual respect between the workforce and the unions and the management.

Brian was well aware that this 'mutual respect' was not underpinned by benevolence, but rather necessity – as a means of avoiding potential disruption should the workforce be provoked; workers' treatment by management corresponds to their respective power in relation to management.

Peter Hamill's employment history – from steelmaking to light industry back to steelmaking again – illuminates the stark differences in conditions and trade union power between large and small-scale workplaces:

> When you worked for big firms, the union is strong, but see when you go into those wee firms... there was one man that was in charge of things and he owned the place and he decided what you were doing, you had to fight with him all the time... they treated people like dirt.

After twenty-five years in steelmaking Peter worked in a number of smaller industries for roughly sixteen years. These jobs were typically low paid and exploitative, with weak unions lending themselves to authoritarian supervision, usually administered by the owner. In one such company the owner taunted workers: 'I just bought a big machine, it will make him redundant, it will make him redundant, it will make him redundant'. Peter took it upon himself to unionise his co-workers, but struggled given their precarity. Unlike steelmaking these smaller enterprises were highly informal, often ignoring regulations entirely. Peter explained how this informality and small-scale nature jeopardised wages: 'we always thought, "will we get our wages or will we not get our wages", you know, and we went in one day and he says to us, "I've no money to pay you your wages"... the boy was a conman'. Peter eventually returned to steelmaking, which immediately saw a return of union visibility, high pay, regularity, and respectful labour management.

Deindustrialisation undoubtedly had a destructive effect upon trade union organisation, but it would be inaccurate to remove agency from displaced workers, to forget their ability to shape their new workplaces. Deindustrialisation did not weaken former steelworkers' attachment to trade union *values*. Former steelworkers strived to unionise their new workplaces, demonstrating how former heavy industry workers transmit their culture of trade unionism into their new employment. Despite lacking 'any great knowledge of employment law', James Carlin took on the role of shop steward, drawing on what he had seen as a steelworker and learning through experience he fought for co-workers who 'were getting disciplinaries and sacked'. Similarly, when Harry Carlin began work in elderly care homes it was wholly non-unionised and subject to an authoritarian manager – a fact he quickly changed by unionising his colleagues: 'I became the union man down there right away... when I went in I had to get them all in the union... [the workers] were all afraid you know... I said, "this is the way we will be doing it from now on"'. Harry directly challenged his manager's power, attacking their belittlement of workers: 'she had a great habit of saying she was going to sack people, I said, "you've not got the authority to sack anybody", I said, "the time I'm finished with you you're going to get sacked"'. Gilmour (2010) has also highlighted an example of culture transmission by describing how former shipbuilders brought their culture of trade unionism with them as they moved into Linwood car factory following the decline of shipbuilding. Yet values are largely irrelevant in the absence of power, and it must be admitted that deindustrialisation shattered organised workers' power. James Carlin's summary of the power balance of a non-union workplace – 'we never had any power, we never had any voice' – demonstrates the removal of all necessity for respect, reducing workplace dignity to the whim of management.

Masculinity and Emasculation

Work, specifically full-time waged employment, has been strongly associated with masculinity (Whitehead 2002; Goodwin 1999; Wight 1993). Traditionally, notions of 'being a man' have been entangled with breadwinner status. Not only has work been described as central to

masculinity, but certain types of work are commonly perceived to be more masculine than others. Steelmaking and heavy industry generally fall under this category, being traditionally styled as highly masculine forms of employment. It could therefore be supposed that the transition into female-dominated employment would impact steelworkers' masculinity, engendering some sense of emasculation. In *Masculinities and Culture*, Beynon (2002) discusses how ex-industrial workers 'felt demeaned' by occupying 'women's jobs'. Beynon highlights an ex-miner's testimony who found employment in a chicken packing factory, which lacked 'the technical challenges, dangers and male camaraderie' of mining; he did not consider it a 'proper job', but instead, 'a woman's job' (Beynon 2002, p. 88). Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012) explored masculinity and deindustrialisation by interviewing residents of a former steel-dependant town in Wales. Here, the closure of the steelworks engendered 'intergenerational trauma', where young men describe feelings of shame and embarrassment over their failure to attain traditionally masculine employment in steelmaking (2012, p. 10). Men who take work in the service sector were a source of shame for their former steelworker fathers, and were bullied by male and female peers, who questioned their sexuality and belittled their masculinity (2012). While some interviewed Ravenscraig and Clydesdale steelworkers identified steelmaking as 'macho' work, their sense of masculinity remained intact as they entered new employment, subscribing importance to work itself, rather than type of work.

Exploring the operation of masculinity within Clydeside heavy industries, Johnston and McIvor found a prevailing 'cult of toughness' which socialised young men into a macho work culture (2004, p. 138). Steelmaking was an almost exclusively male occupation, as Harry Carlin summarised: 'there was nae women that worked with us'. Frank Roy described the shop-floor culture as 'manly', which was both 'merciless', defined by quick and often savage humour – 'the joking was brutal, brutally funny' – and 'comradely', where men would support and cover for one another. Steelworkers' language was colourful and expressive, Harry Carlin remembers 'mad language all the time': 'the foreman never took any great thing if you swore at him because he swore at you, tell you to 'f-off' haha! But that was the way it was, shop-floor talk, that's what you used to call it'. Steelmaking had a strong intergenerational aspect, which interviewees remembered fondly. Young workers entering the steelworks were inducted into and socialised by the culture of older workers, which for Brian Cunningham provided 'a good schooling and a good grounding': 'honestly it was terrific, and you had all different levels different ages, boys 18, 19, to guys in their 60s... You had that bond with the union, that camaraderie, that standing up for yourselves'. Relationships formed 'a big family type environment' according to James Carlin, where 'the older guys tended to look out for the younger ones'. James described the fatherly aspect of older workers:

> I was the youngest... I can remember a couple of times I went in with a hangover and you know they, they used to give me a hard time, they would say to me, "you should be ashamed of yourself", and all that sort of stuff, "coming in in that state" you know, so I suppose a lot of father like figures as well and they looked after me.

Jim McKeown enjoyed the educational aspect of the intergenerational environment: 'it was an education... the university of life – they taught you a lot of things other than steelmaking, it was enjoyable'. Steelworkers' masculinities also reinforced their trade union culture, encouraging a readiness to defend working rights. Disrespectful or threatening language from management was received with little tolerance from union officials:

> McCard was our shop steward at the time and we were at a meeting, it was a dispute, and the [HR] guy threatened him… he says, "if you don't get these men back to work Mr. McCard you're gonna go out here without a job", and big McCard says to him, "if I go out here without a job you're going out here in a stretcher son, and I ain't fucking kidding you on" (Cunningham Interview, 2017).

Interviewees' readiness to defend themselves relates to Johnston and McIvor's point concerning the possible 'synergies between class and masculine values', where, 'being a man in the Clydeside heavy industries also involved standing up for your rights against authoritarian management' (2004, p. 140).

Despite the familial environment and culture of solidarity, steelmaking could often be ruthless. Older workers enforced workplace cultural norms on younger workers, and deviation from these behaviours could result in ridicule or ostracism. Andrew Kane described the intolerance some workers held for anything designated as effeminate:

> Your hands were like leather. And [my brother] says to me one time, "can you not put hand cream on your hands?" And I burst out laughing and he says "what you laughing at?" There was a guy that started one time and at the end of the shift he combed his hair, and he was called a 'poof' after that... imagine me taking hand cream in!

Respect for senior steelworkers was paramount, which often represented a steep learning curve for young men:

> For younger guys, you need to grow up fast, really fast, you go in there and you think you are good with your mouth and you think you are a bit of a tough guy, trust me, you find out how tough you are (Cunningham Interview, 2017).

Although jokes were predominately 'good natured, good bantered', there were 'lines you didn't cross' (Cunningham Interview, 2017). Brian Cunningham described how fights would break out if younger workers were perceived to lack respect for their elders, or in response to sexual comments regarding family members: 'I seen a wee guy getting punched right across the table because he made a comment about a guy's daughter'. Jim McKeown recalled how this atmosphere could be difficult at times:

> The one thing you didn't show was any weakness... as a young fellow you are in the shower and the next thing your clothes get thrown in beside you, and you just laughed it off because if you didn't they would do it again sort of thing. Or maybe you went down for the toilet or something, burned paper, newspapers go underneath the door and set on fire, that kind of thing you know – "for a laugh" – you know, and you didn't react because if you reacted you would make it worse... pranks we would call it, sometimes it was hard, but there was a kind of macho feel aye, real macho feel.

It is important to consider that a number of interviewees did not identify with the characterisation of steelmaking as particularly macho. Unlike a marker such as social class, which was readily understood and talked about, the idea of a job being either masculine or feminine was widely rejected. Interviewees worked to earn money to support their families and

because they enjoyed working. Tommy Johnston 'never ever looked at it that way', simply viewing it as 'an everyday job'. James Carlin 'struggle[ed] to sort of grasp the meaning of the word macho'. Rejecting any comparison of his former and current employment in terms of being more or less masculine James went on to describe how the dangers inherent in steelmaking can actually make men feel very vulnerable: 'there was a guy that actually fell into a ladle [of molten metal], it was obviously horrific for the guys that witnessed it and for any of the guys family members, but, see on the back of that accident, I don't think that guys felt macho'. James' recollection is similar to Johnston and McIvor's statement that heavy industry has the potential to emasculate workers through occupational accidents and disability (2004, pp. 135-152).

Changes to workplace culture and language were noted by former steelworkers who transitioned into female dominated employment. Tommy Johnston illustrates the temporary 'culture shock':

> From the steelworks where it's all men, 'who's got the porn the night'... to go working with all women, that was a culture shock for a while, till you got used to it, you know, you're not allowed to swear and things like that, where up in the Ravenscraig steelworks, or any environment where men are, there will be cursing all the time and telling jokes and all that, talking about football.

Harry Carlin also expressed the need to sanitise his language, as a social care worker he adopted a more 'hoity-toity' professional tone, which he attributed to both the more public facing side of his work and the presence of female colleagues: 'It was a different culture... the language that we use, shop-floor language, it was a wee bit hoity-toity... You had to change dramatically in your language... you're dealing with families'. The need to maintain a tough façade and tolerate co-workers' pranks was the 'biggest thing' Jim McKeown noticed missing in teaching, where relations were more 'professional, more respectful'. Despite noting these cultural differences, former steelworkers who transitioned into female-dominated employment reported no sense of emasculation whatsoever. Employment, irrespective of its gendered reputation, was seen as a vital component of workers' identity. Wight (1993) has outlined the social value of paid employment over unemployment within working-class communities, as such, emasculation emerges from a lack of work, not necessarily the type of work. McDowell has questioned the premise that men are emasculated by traditionally non-male employment. She explored the masculinity of young men employed in the service sector, which, apparently immune to the supposed crisis of masculinity, 'emphasised the heroic struggle necessary to overcome consumer resistance in selling occupations, or the camaraderie of the long hours/hard work culture of the burger bar' (McDowell 2002, p. 51). McDowell's interviews with school leavers from the early 2000s, many of whom occupy 'low-level entry jobs', did not uncover endemic emasculation, instead, 'waged work' remained the 'central element' of 'acceptable and respected masculine identity' (McDowell 2003, p. 236).

Similarly, Cross and Bagilhole interviewed men in traditionally female-dominated employment, where, contrary to any sense of emasculation, these men were 'actively maintaining traditional male values' and would remark upon how they outperformed their female colleagues, who they supposed lacked professionalism and commitment to quality work (Cross & Bagilhole 2002, p. 221). Rather than recoil under the gendered reputation of his work, one former miner from this study, now a nurse, simply stated that 'a job is a job' (Cross & Bagilhole 2002, p. 116). Former steelworkers also held the outlook that 'a job is a job', with importance given to continuous employment, rather than type of employment. Rather than

emasculation, former steelworkers continued to express a stable work-based identity and masculinity. Given the fact that women have been marginalised into precarious, non-unionised and low paid employment, the sense of emasculation described by other industrial workers who enter female-dominated employment relates more to the exploitive working conditions of typical 'women's work', rather than the supposed shame of working a job considered effeminate.

Occupational Community

Steelworks are often publicly remembered as strongholds of labour militancy, but former steelworkers' recollections of steelmaking conjure a powerful sense of occupation-based community identity, a form of belonging which compliments but also goes beyond the scope of organised workers and powerful unions. Brown (1985) contends that heavy industry workers report a greater sense of occupational identity than other workers as their typically long period of service allows them time to develop occupational bonds. This is further reinforced by heavy industry's propensity to foster occupational communities through its position as the primary source of employment within a given locality (Brown 1985). Highlighting the cultural similarities between coalfields in Poland, Turkey and the UK, Kirk et al. state that work 'marks a region's potential distinctiveness', producing 'culturally distinct traditions that shape everyday life', citing the existence of miners' welfare associations, union halls and work-based bands or sporting clubs across cultures (2002, pp. 6-7). Similarly, Strangleman argues that heavy industry imprinted a 'distinctive cultural pattern' upon regions – influencing 'culture, class, language, attitude and gender relations' (2008, np). Displacement from workplaces with such cohesive communities can shatter workers' sense of identity, as was the case with former Ravenscraig and Clydesdale steelworkers.

Intersecting throughout former steelworkers' narratives, 'camaraderie' was consistently used to describe workplace culture. Interviewees fondly remembered the comradely shop-floor culture, strong sense of community, and constant 'banter'. This culture was embedded into steelworkers themselves, it 'moulded character', and was 'something that [got] into [their] blood' (Cunningham Interview, 2017; Thompson Interview, 2017). Peter Hamill particularly enjoyed steelmaking's characteristic humour, commenting that 'every single day you got a good laugh'. The heavy unionisation of the workplace encouraged a culture of solidarity and co-operation. Harry Carlin states: 'I loved it, I liked the camaraderie, you know, working with the people there. I was heavily involved in the unions with the men, and I loved it, absolutely loved it'. Being 'part of something' was an important aspect of steelmaking, instilling pride and purpose as well as fostering a culture where 'all looked after each other and all looked out for each other' (McKeown Interview, 2017). Steelmaking tended to be concentrated within families, informally passing from parent to child; it was not uncommon for fathers, sons, uncles and cousins to work side-by-side. This interfamily aspect of steelmaking, exemplified by Tommy Brennan – 'I worked in the Craig, my brother worked in the Craig, my two sons worked in the Craig, my brother's three sons worked in the Craig' – encouraged even greater bonds between workers, blurring the lines between the workplace and the family. Steelmaking was felt to be part of workers' heritage, central to their identity, which James Carlin illustrates:

> That's what I wanted to be, because I came from that sort of history, that lineage within my family, we were all steelworkers, we worked in heavy industry, and I was desperate to leave school and get into the steelworks.

Displaced workers within the secondary literature also describe their former workplaces through 'metaphors of home and family', emphasising strong bonds of community (High 2003, p. 44). High's examination of the closure of Sturgeon Falls paper mill especially conveys the 'closeness of social relations' and importance of the workplace within occupation-dependent communities (2018, p. 273). In Hart and K'Meyer's *I Saw It Coming*, former manufacturing workers expressed similar sentiments. The comparison to a family atmosphere was evoked by Charlie Noyes: 'it was just like being part of a big family, an extended family' (Hart & K'Meyer 2009, p. 60). While Phil Nalley recalled the comradely nature of the workplace: 'a camaraderie and loyalty... we trusted each other and we would take care of each other's family' (Hart & K'Meyer 2009, p. 39).

Steelmaking was a highly socially embedded occupation with a strong occupational community which afforded steelworkers a large degree of social capital. A vibrant community social life shaped steelworkers and their families' lives, structured through a range of formal and informal voluntary associations and recreational clubs which catered for hobbies, sports, socialising, and politics. The variety of social opportunities was extolled by Brian Cunningham:

> The social side of it was terrific... we used to do overnight stays, dinner dances, we used to do mid-week breaks for the golf... obviously you had your anniversaries, weddings, engagements, so the social side of it was really good.

The regularity of socialising fortified a sense of community, as Ian Harris described: 'My wife knew my workmates, knew their families... you got invited to everything, so you were at the fishing club dance, the bowling club dance – I was in the golf club so I was at the golf club dance, the football dance, everything'. Workplace social clubs, like the Clydesdale Club or Ravenscraig's Jerviston House, acted as focal points for occupational community. Harry Carlin recalled the popularity of the Clydesdale Club: 'a massive club, very well attended, right up to the redundancy. It opened every night – there used to at one time have a debating society in it. They had their football teams... Aye that was a good club, everybody loved the Clydesdale Club'. The shift structure of steelmaking was a key foundation of steelworkers' cohesive social life, which Frank Roy linked to steelworkers' strong sense of occupational identity:

> It *was* your identity. And the reason why it was your total identity was because the lifestyle, because we worked a thing called a continental shift pattern, which was dayshift, backshift, nightshift... So you knew weeks in advance, months in advance, what shift you were... your social life was round your days off… you had a diary in your head where you knew your shifts.

Regular shifts and group time off supplied stability which allowed steelworkers to structure their social life in advance. Workers on the same shift pattern planned social outings together to fill regular intervals, as Tommy Johnston outlines:

> The camaraderie was excellent... if you were nightshift, you are away golfing during the day with all your pals. They used to have golf sections, football teams, fishing clubs, so you were either playing football in the afternoon, golfing in the afternoon, or away fishing... a big community.

May and Morrison's interviews with displaced KEMET Electronics Corporation workers also revealed a fondness for regular shift patterns, as it allowed workers to 'lead more predictable, patterned lives' – especially important to those with families (2003, p. 171).

The World Health Organisation defines social capital as 'the quality of social relationships within societies or communities, including community networks, civic engagement, sense of belonging and norms of cooperation and trust' (2011, p. 3), which has been linked to positive mental health (Almedom 2005). Steelworkers had access to a great deal of social capital by virtue of the various voluntary associations, social clubs, educational programmes, and political groups associated with their workplace. The duality of a large workforce, which was both highly organised and defined by a strong sense of social embeddedness, allowed steelworkers to easily mobilise their collective influence and organise initiatives which benefited their community. Jim Reddiex described a scheme where Ravenscraig workers collectively deposited their money into a bank and used the accumulated interest to purchase yearly Christmas presents for local disadvantaged children. Brian Cunningham remembered a similar scheme where workers raised money for two ambulances for the Law Hospital. The strength of steelmaking unions also increased workers' access to social capital in terms of education. In Clydesdale, Harry Carlin and fellow trade unionists established an open learning space to address steelworkers' lack of formal education: 'We started a sort of open learning thing down there, it was an office, where men could go in, wanted to improve their English and their maths and things like that.' Social capital and social embeddedness have also been associated with increased political participation (Klandermans & Stekelenburg 2010). Indeed, steelmaking cultivated a politicised workforce, with union politics encouraging participation in the wider labour movement. Brian Cunningham verbalised the richness of political activity:

> I've always been politically motivated... that was the steelworks, I grew up in that environment... trade unions are political animals... that always filtered down... there was always something on the go.

The material basis of steelworkers' working-class culture was demolished alongside the steelworks itself. Deindustrialisation in Scotland was rapid and pervasive. According to Finlay 'there was no transitional phase', with the 'economic and social transformation of Scotland' comparable in speed to 'former soviet nations' (2004, p. 386). James Carlin had seen steelmaking as part of his heritage, a gateway into the labour movement and central to his working-class identity. Deindustrialisation ruptured this identity, provoking a sense of placelessness:

> I just couldn't settle, I couldn't settle, you know what I mean, it was always in my head about the steelworks... that will be 25 years until the plant actually closed, and I have always classed myself as a steelworker, I don't know why.

The tendency of closure to uproot and destroy workers' sense of place and identity has been referenced by High, who describes how displaced US workers label themselves 'gypsies' – deindustrialisation had uprooted them, compelling them to move from place to place in search of transitory employment (2003, p. 65). Employment transition disrupted interviewees' previously vibrant social lives, with their new employment lacking steelmaking's interwoven social aspect. The end of the continental shift pattern made socialising difficult for Tommy Johnston: 'It started just fading away. After a year, I stopped playing football, I stopped playing golf'. Tommy added that annual leave in steelmaking, due to its collective structure, provided more opportunities for socialising than janitorial work: 'I've been off work for five weeks, I'm

bored out my skull; I mean if I had been off five weeks in Ravenscraig I'd be away golfing, away fishing, away playing five asides'. In Ravenscraig Brian Cunningham had regularly socialised with colleagues, with social outings common and simple to organise given workers' regular intervals of free time. This culture was lacking in his new employment, where social events were typically limited to sparsely attended Christmas dinners.

Dudley states that 'bonds of solidarity' are common within factory environments, which encourage workers to 'band together to express their collective opposition' (1994, p. 115). These bonds were noticeably absent from steelworkers' post-redundancy employment. James Carlin found Wisemans Dairy isolating: 'there was no camaraderie, there was no team aspect to it, you were an individual and you stayed an individual till the day you went home'. The combination of exploitive working conditions, authoritarian management, and lack of a union created a tense environment:

> The culture was completely different, it wasn't uncommon for you to see fights among guys down there... there were people starting on a Monday and walking out on a Wednesday, they just couldn't handle it... Managers were getting attacked and everything in there... they spoke to you different, they had no respect for you; you were at their beck and call.

James Coyle's time in children's care homes also lacked steelmaking's sense of community: 'I missed the banter, the day-to-day banter with individuals – the repertoire with the guys'. Enjoying both the emphasis on teamwork and the social side of steelmaking, Jim McKeown found teaching very individualized, with little sense of community during or beyond work: 'In Ravenscraig you knew everybody... in the school I can maybe walk into the staffroom and sit down, somebody walks past; I don't know who it is'. The 'cultural environment' of Jim's workplace had 'totally changed', finding a 'kind of falseness' among teachers which was alien to the more 'genuine' character of steelworkers. Teachers were less likely to confront issues directly, opting instead to suppress their emotions and play 'politics': 'teachers don't like to see themselves as being weak in any way, so they never admit, they never come for help... [in Ravenscraig] if there was something wrong it was out in the open, it was dealt with'. It was steelworkers' lack of such pretention which Jim particularly missed: 'I miss the people... that sort of rawness, that sort of rough and ready, the sort of straight to the point people'. Displaced Welsh and Yorkshire miners also mourned the loss of their social life and culture, finding their post-redundancy employment lacking mining's characteristic 'comradeship' (Witt 1990, p. 35). Perchard found similar sentiments among former Scottish miners, concluding that mining's demise had 'left profound psychological scars in coalfield communities', rupturing culture and identity (2013, p. 78). In *Bowling Alone*, Putnam outlines the deterioration of social capital in North American society, citing a decline in voluntary associations (2000). In a similar way, the erasure of Scottish heavy industry prompted the virtual disappearance of highly socially integrated workplaces, which contributed to a decline in social capital among working-class people.

The loss of both employment in steelmaking and the structure provided by the ISTC, in tandem with a reduction of free time, weakened many interviewees' connection to the labour movement, diminishing their political participation. Tommy Johnston explains:

> I've left the Labour Party... Didn't have the time, whereas [in Ravenscraig] we were off during the week you could go to Labour Party meetings... but when

> you are working Monday to Friday... you couldn't get going anywhere so it just
> fell away.

Former active Labour Party members thought that the party had undergone a demise, which they attributed to the destruction of heavy industry. Interviewees such as Harry Carlin believed that the Labour Party had lost touch with its working-class constituents: 'The Labour Party changed... it *was* a working-class environment, and you *were* represented by working-class people. The mines went, the steelworks have went, so it's not the same environment'. Linking deindustrialisation to the erosion of working-class leadership in the Labour Party, Sam Thompson stated:

> I think is going down the tubes the Labour Party, and that is because of heavy
> industry... we don't have people coming through that were militants... having
> the ability to lead people... it's taken away Labour traditions there is no doubt
> about that, there is not any leadership.

Although employment transition diminished political participation, it had no bearing on general political outlook, which remained strongly left wing. This runs counter to the experience of some deindustrialised US workers, who adopted an individualised outlook in response to deindustrialisation. Carlie Noyes' recurring experience of job loss, for instance, eroded his sense of trust in collective action: 'There's nobody out there you can trust... don't never put all your trust in a union' (Hart & K'Meyer 2009, p. 138). In contrast, former Scottish steelworkers continued to express faith in trade unionism and collective action – with deindustrialisation fortifying commitment rather than weakening it.

Yet the end of steelmaking alienated former steelworkers from one another, terminating decade's long workplace relationships and shattering their sense of occupational community. For Dudley, it is this destruction of the 'social structure' which represents the most 'devastating' aspect of deindustrialisation (1994, p. 134). This was strongly articulated by former KEMET electronics workers, who felt grief over the loss of the family atmosphere and social connections which had defined their workplace (May & Morrison, 2003). Jim McHale, a tool-and-die maker interviewed by High, aptly summarised the emotional disruption of deindustrialisation: 'you're in a little world. Then you leave that world' (2003, p. 41). Reflecting the same tone, Jim McKeown described losing a part of himself, a feeling he believed was even more pronounced among the older generation of steelworkers:

> There was bit of me missing, because a lot of those people, even though they
> are living round about, I've never seen them again... I think a lot of the older
> ones, who knew they weren't going to work again, when you meet them a
> couple of times they seemed – a part of their soul was missing.

Frank Shannon, who was part of this older generation agreed, stating that many lost their sense of purpose, living a life defined by loneliness: 'I know a lot [of] people that didn't last a year, dead... maybe drink, gambling... work was their life... it was devastating'. Transition from a workplace with a strong sense of occupational community can shatter workers sense of self; or as Brian Cunningham stated: 'You take dignity away from people and what are you left with? You're left with a shell'. The impact of closure of a major workplace reverberates throughout the entire local community. Interviewed on behalf of her late steelworker husband Jim, Dorothy Macready spoke of how the closure of the steelworks fundamentally altered the day-to-day structure of language within former steel town, Motherwell:

> It knocked the heart out of Motherwell, when the Craig closed. The first conversation you had when Ravenscraig was working was: "what shift is Jim?" ... and you would say, "oh he's night shift, he's day shift". When it closed it was: "Has your Jim got a job yet?" Conversations changed.

Deindustrialisation has left major social, political, economic and cultural scars across working-class communities. Identity disintegration became a fact of life for many former steelworkers in Lanarkshire's deindustrialised communities: 'Some guys it devastated. Some guys would never recover from it, some guys retired from it, I know one guy who committed suicide' (Cummingham Interview, 2017). Just as radioactive material loses its toxicity very slowly over time, Linkon (2018) has labelled these long-term scars the half-life of deindustrialisation. Deindustrialisation 'is not an event of the past', but is rather an 'active and significant part of the present', as the half-life of deindustrialisation 'generates psychological and social forms of disease', made manifest in the 'high rates of various illnesses as well as alcoholism, drug abuse, and suicide' that plague deindustrialised communities as they 'struggle with questions about their identities and their place in a global economy that has devalued workers and their labor' (Linkon 2018, p. 1). Ravenscraig's Industrial Chaplin, Rev. John Potter, shared this interpretation in his description of the impact of the closure:

> It wasn't a thing that happened, it *is* happening. The aftermath of the demise of heavy industry in a place like Lanarkshire has a long term effect on individuals and the community… a community that is still paying the price.

For Rev. Potter, 'it was not just the individual that was redundant, it was communities'; for them the 'loss of identity was a significant blow', with communities like Lanarkshire 'struggling to find a new purpose and identity' amidst the ruins of heavy industry.

Smokestack Nostalgia?

Industrial workers are often castigated as remembering their industry through a rose-tinted lens, guilty of first degree smokestack nostalgia. Considering that heavy industry in general has a notorious history of destroying workers' health and crippling their bodies this must be addressed (Johnston & McIvor 2000, 2007; McIvor 2017). Oral historians can often jeopardise their interviewees' agency, as well as the reliability of oral history methodology itself, by an overzealous fixation upon nostalgia and its impact upon interviewees' ability to accurately depict historical events. The idea that steelworkers' were blinded by rosy nostalgia, painting an overly positive version of steelmaking and suppressing its inherent harshness is inaccurate. Alongside the positive social aspect and strong sense of collectivism described above, the adverse health effects and persistent danger of steelmaking were spoken about openly and honestly, and were strongly condemned. Many former industrial workers share stories of recovered health and improved workplace safety after leaving heavy industry, which McIvor has usefully termed 'escape narratives' (Hart & K'Meyer 2009; McIvor 2017, p. 37).

Steelmaking was remembered as uncomfortable, performed in a dirty environment under intense heat. Andrew Kane recalled how steelworkers 'took a sweat towel' to work and were supplied with 'salt tablets' to prevent dehydration. Dirt defined Jim McKeown's memory of steelmaking, coating everything: 'your clothes were always dirty in there, everything was always dirty, always had that – that Ravenscraig smell'. 'Day and night' was a common parallel used to differentiate the radical environmental change in workplace standards. For Harry Carlin

the difference between the steelworks – 'dirty, warm and hot' – and the 'lovely and clean' elderly care homes was absolute. Most interviewees entered more hygienic and comfortable employment, with the differences expressed most strongly by those, like Harry, who entered the public sector. Steelmaking was not simply uncomfortable, but exceptionally dangerous. Former steelworkers were able to indicate their now faded scars and burns, yet many spoke of the still present mental scars of witnessing co-workers killed on site. A typical working day could switch from 'mundane, repetitive, monotonous, to absolute terror', as Brian Cunningham stated: 'when it went wrong, it went spectacularly wrong'. Jim McKeown partially lost sight in one eye when drip water from the roof 'mixed with steel and exploded', lodging 'a wee piece of metal' in his eye. James Carlin lost part of his finger, which 'was quite commonplace at that time'. Brian survived various accidents, including narrowly avoiding a falling ladle of molten metal. Yet he confessed that other workers were not as lucky, that 'a lot of the guys paid the ultimate price in there, lot of guys lost their life in that place'. Exposure to death took a toll on steelworkers. Peter Hamill recalled witnessing his first occupational fatality:

> I remember the first one that got killed... for some morbid reason everybody ran over, and they are round about this boy, he's got – the wee nurse is there – and he's got a cover on him, he had been feeding a rope in and it had whiplashed him, cut him, killed him.

Tommy Johnston, a shop steward, experienced his 'lowest point in Ravenscraig' when one of his union members was 'strangled in a conveyor belt'. The prominence of danger and death was thankfully missing in Tommy's new employment as a janitor: 'If I made a mistake in the crane, putting the hot metal in, I could have killed about 6 people, whereas you're a school janitor now, all you have got to worry about is kids shouting back at you and calling you names... totally night and day'. Like Tommy, most interviewees transitioned into safer employment, exiting an industry which had killed and disabled so many of their co-workers. Alongside immediate injury or death, long-term employment within steelmaking jeopardised workers' health. Interviewees recalled how the air was 'rife' with toxic gasses and dust. This dust, rendered visible when rays of light pierced the factory roof, was what Andrew Kane 'hated most' about steelmaking: 'The sun used to shine through and you could see all this – all swirling around – all the stuff you were breathing... it was disgusting... it was as opposite to healthy as you could get'. This environment directly contrasts Andrew's current employment as a taxi driver, where out in the fresh air he feels 'a lot healthier'. Now a teacher, Jim McKeown feels that he would 'not be as healthy' if he had remained within the 'hellish' environment of steelmaking: 'the dust was always in the air, it was the dust, heavy dust in the air all the time, and the smoke, you were always covered in smoke'.

It is clear that improved health and safety stand as one of the few positive experiences of deindustrialisation. But it is possible to both oppose deindustrialisation and criticise the most dangerous aspects of industrial capitalism. Workers' experiences of employment are seldom two dimensional. Chatterley and Rouverol's *I Was Content and Not Content: The Story of Linda Lord and the Closing of Penobscot Poultry* (1999), records the life history of one woman, Linda Lord, after the closure of her workplace, Penobscot Poultry. The books title, 'I was content and not content', is given in answer by Lord when questioned about her job loss (1999, p. 21). In the book's foreword, describing the complex and seemingly contradictory emotions which workers feel towards their employment, Frisch, author of *Portraits in Steel*, compares Lord's statement to the interviews he carried out himself with steelworkers, who at once 'both liked and hated their jobs' (1999, pp. x-xi). Frisch cautions against attempts to place the experiences of working-class people into 'obvious categories', instead suggesting that their

views on work are defined by 'multivalence' – they hold many values simultaneously and without confusion (1999, p. xii).

Conclusion

This article has examined the employment transitions of Scottish steelworkers who were displaced as a result of deindustrialisation during the 1990s. It has placed an emphasis on identity and experiences of work, specifically the survivability of occupational identities in post-redundancy employment. The most pervasive representation of deindustrialisation within the literature is the deterioration thesis, which outlines the often-instantaneous collapse of working conditions and community cohesion. Former steelworkers' post-redundancy experiences generally align with the deterioration thesis' portrayal of deindustrialisation, with a few qualifications.

Deindustrialisation fundamentally shattered occupational communities, rupturing workers' social lives and bringing an abrupt end to socially embedded workplaces, representing the most profound impact of deindustrialisation upon former steelworkers' identities. The work culture of steelmaking had been characterised by an intense sense of occupational community. Bonds between steelworkers were likened to that of an extended family. The plethora of voluntary associations, sporting teams, charity initiatives, educational programmes, hobby networks, and political groups attached to steelmaking were absent from their new workplaces. The social aspect of steelmaking had immersed steelworkers and their families in a vibrant and often all-encompassing culture, which extended well beyond the workplace into the heart of community life. The material basis of this culture was demolished alongside the steelworks. Yet it would be wrong to assume that work itself lost its meaningfulness. Employment remained a fundamental aspect of identity, it continued to inform how workers defined themselves and underpinned their self-respect. Former steelworkers' work-based identity did not shatter under the pressure of deindustrialisation. Similarly, while job titles changed, former steelworkers' working-class identity remained fixed and unbroken. The most dramatic consequence of employment transition was undoubtedly the exit from a heavily unionised workplace, which had been typified by a powerful union and a respectful management. As their new workplaces were often wholly non-unionised, any necessity for respectful relations was removed entirely: interviewees generally found their new management autocratic and openly hostile to trade unions.

However, like the survivability of their class and work-based identities, former steelworkers retained their commitment to collectivism and trade unionism, underlining that displaced workers cannot be cast as passive victims. Deindustrialisation has been portrayed as a potentially emasculatory experience; one which may tie into the supposed 'crisis' of masculinity. Yet former steelworkers who entered female-dominated or mixed workplaces reported no sense of emasculation whatsoever. The presence of women colleagues did not belittle their masculinity, neither did their performance of traditionally 'female' work. Employment with decent conditions and pay – regardless of gendered employment stereotypes – was the crucial factor which designated decent work. The emasculation felt by other heavy industry workers who enter female-dominated employment relates less to working in a job considered effeminate, but rather to that fact that women have been historically marginalised into precarious, non-unionised, and low paid work.

Steelworkers' post-redundancy employment experiences demonstrate that deindustrialisation cannot be understood as a single event; its impact upon workers and their communities is an

ongoing process, one which continues to define the lives and identities of displaced workers and the subsequent generations who have grown up under the reality of industrial ruination. Working-class jobs have become endemically low-paid, exploitative, and insecure. Decades of neoliberalism have crippled the labour movement, delegitimised working-class history and identity, almost erasing working-class collective memory and action. For many young workers low paid precarious work is norm. Yet 'post-industrialism', the 'end of the job for life' and the 'gig economy' are not a shocking new postmodern phenomenon. They are normal elements of a social system which continuously undermines the stability of working-class communities and employment. The impact of deindustrialisation on occupational communities and working-class culture can be aptly summarised by Marx and Engels: 'Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty... All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned' (1848, pp. 38-39). The post-war consensus of stable, decently paid working-class employment represents an effective blip in the history of work. Walkerdine and Jimenez have rightly cautioned against the tendency to cast working-class communities before the advent of deindustrialisation with a 'salt-of-the-earth stability' (2012, p. 7). In truth, industrial communities have always been characterised by periods of struggle and change. The distinguishing feature of deindustrialisation, especially in Scotland where it was both rapid and pervasive, was the accelerated destruction of the material basis of organised working-class culture through the demolition of heavy industry. Former steelworkers did not cease to exist with the closure of their workplace, neither did their occupational identities and values, which they brought with them into their new places of employment. However, the question posed by Tovar et al. – 'how long can memories of an industrial past survive when there are no material traces of the formerly dominant industrial activity?' (2011, pp. 339-340) – shows that while the occupational working-class culture of steelworkers survived deindustrialisation, it did so only within the identities of steelworkers themselves. As is the case with modern working-class employment, the long-term survivability of the specific occupational cultures of heavy industry appears precarious.

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Gender and Working-Class Identity in Deindustrializing Sudbury, Ontario

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Abstract

In this article I explore the making of a gendered working-class identity among a sample of male nickel miners in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada. Through 26 oral history interviews conducted between January 2015 and July 2018 with current and retired miners (ages 26 to 74), I analyze how the industrial relations framework and social relations of the postwar period shaped – and continue to shape – a masculinized working-class identity. I then examine the ways in which economic restructuring and the partial deindustrialization of Sudbury's mines have affected workers' ideas about gender and class. I argue that, amid growing precarious employment in both the mining industry and the regional economy more broadly, the male workers in this study continue to gender their class identities, which limits attempts to build working-class solidarity in a labor market now largely characterized by feminized service sector employment.

Keywords

Deindustrialization, class, working-class identity, gender, masculinity, mining

Introduction

This article traces how male nickel miners in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada formed a gendered working-class identity from the post-World War Two period to the present, and asks how deindustrialization and the recent growth of feminized service sector work in the regional economy have troubled these men's limited conception of who comprises the working class. As historian Bryan Palmer (2017) nicely puts it, class is 'always situated in a particular context and a specific social setting,' and, as a result, is necessarily 'one part structured necessity…and one part creative action' (Palmer 2017, p. 378). Following Palmer, I am concerned with the conscious activity of workers as social subjects who both respond to given historical circumstances and attempt to reshape them. Toward that end, this article engages with the dialectical process of class formation through oral history interviews with male nickel miners. By analyzing their historical narratives, I show how these workers constructed gendered class identities over the course of the development of the nickel mining industry in their community. I then explore the impediments that their form of working-class identity created as deindustrialization transformed the social relations and institutional structures on which such an identity rested. The article is concerned with how, in the process of organizing their union and gaining the rights of 'industrial pluralism' (Burawoy 1982), workers generated a masculinized form of working-class identity, the historical particularity and limitations of which have slowly been revealed during the past three decades of industrial restructuring and local economic change.[28]

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[28] The two best, and most recent, overviews of the changes to resource mining in Sudbury are Leadbeater (2008) and Peters (2010).

A confluence of sociopolitical factors shaped the cultural reproduction of gendered working-class identity in Sudbury's mines. Because of the ways that employers, unions, and the state embedded a gendered division of labor and a dual labor market in the postwar industrial relations and social policy frameworks in Canada (Bezanson & Luxton 2006; McInnis 2002; Vosko 2011), class formation was arrested and delimited by boundaries of gender and sector, among other factors. Unionized male workers in the primary labor market drew on ideas about their 'natural' breadwinner status to buttress their demands for dignity and fair compensation at work (Forrest 1995). When the mining companies in Sudbury began to restructure their operations through the introduction of labor-saving technologies in the late 1970s, workers' resistance continued to draw on this gendered class identity and was effective only at mitigating the worst aspects of the social and economic fallout. Up to that point, no women had been hired for underground or mill jobs. In fact, women's struggles to enter the paid workforce and union coincided in the late 1970s with the first wave of major labor-displacing technologies (Keck & Powell 2000). In the subsequent decades, massive job loss and the eventual internationalization of ownership deeply restructured the local mining industry. Alongside deindustrialization and the growth of precarious and contract employment in the mines, highly feminized service sector employment have transformed the regional economy, in the forms of public sector work in administration and health care on the one hand, and low-waged, private sector service work in retail, sales and tourism on the other hand.

In light of these changes, this article considers how a subset of male workers' class identities have shifted, readjusted, or, conversely, remained unmoved by the reordering of class and gender relations in their households and the broader community. Through analyses of workers' narratives, I show the ways that working-class identity can simultaneously strengthen bonds of solidarity while it also imposes limits to the broader formation of workers into a class across gender identities, occupations, and space. Oral history interviews are an especially revealing methodological tool for uncovering the ways that workers' collectively reproduce working-class identity, as well as for probing the self-imposed limits such identity places in the road of class formation.

The article is organized as follows: After first reviewing some relevant research on deindustrialization and working-class responses, I provide historical and socioeconomic background about Sudbury's nickel mining industry, its industrial restructuring, and the growth of precarious employment in the community more recently. This is followed by a brief discussion of the demographic characteristics of the workers interviewed and the methodology employed in this research. The empirical portions of the article then analyze the role of gender in the making of the mining industry and workers' identities, as well as the ways that economic and labor market changes in Sudbury have destabilized the identities of working-class men. The article concludes by considering some of the ways that male workers have built class solidarity and how these continue to haunt attempts by unions and social activists to broaden class formation and respond to the rise in precarious employment in the regional economy.

Literature on Deindustrialization and Working-Class Culture

Scholars from many academic disciplines have pushed us to explore the making of historically-specific masculinities. Historians and social scientists of the working class, in particular, have explored how masculinities have shaped working-class male identity, particularly among blue-collar industrial workers (Dunk 2003; Maynard 1989; Murphy 1997; Willis 1981; Yarrow 1991). Indeed, this is so in part because of how frequently working-class men have relied on notions of manliness to assert their dignity and press for rights on the job (Meyer 2016). This

research is frequently in conversation with feminist scholarship that has challenged the outsized attention received by the stereotypical male industrial worker in working-class history (see for example Cohen 1988; Meyer 2016; Sugiman 1994). Feminist social scientists and historians have drawn our attention to both the role of female wage workers in working-class history and the labor of social reproduction, in the process blurring the line between productive and reproductive labor (Armstrong & Armstrong 2010; Porter 2003). Although early labor history might have paid inordinate attention to working men, the working class has always been multi-gender, constituted and reproduced in both the workplace and the home.

The phenomenon of deindustrialization, however, has generated new focus on industrial workers, particularly (white) men. In popular discourse, the white, male worker seems to make iterative reappearances as the object of quasi-anthropological fascination, and of scorn – responsible for the growth of right-wing populism, unlikely electoral outcomes, or even cultural decay and backwardness (Vance 2018; Williams 2017). Yet, the gendered and racialized making of certain sections of the industrial working class has always been a two-sided process, at once a matter of the conscious activity of workers and the contradictions and constraints of institutionalized class relations in the state, labor laws, and union bureaucracies. Moreover, just as the dialectic between institutions and activity produced particular embodiments of working-class identity, so too have industrial restructuring and deindustrialization generated unique tensions as workers attempt to manage the resultant individual, familial, social, and cultural impacts. In fact, too often explorations of the cultures of working-class people, particular working-class men, obscure the repercussions of deindustrialization and other forms of capitalist restructuring in their emphases on ostensibly autonomous 'cultural' issues (Maisano 2017). To avoid fetishizing culture, researchers must situate working-class experience and its political, cultural, social, and narrative expression in the context of always-shifting material, class relations.

Sudbury's nickel mines are in this sense a somewhat unique case through which to study the reconstitution of working-class identity amid deindustrialization. Although there is considerable scholarship on various facets of deindustrialization across sociology, history, political economy, and geography, much of this work centers on places impacted and workers 'displaced' (High 2010, p. 159) by plant shutdowns or closings resulting from outsourcing, and other forms of capital flight and job loss. Much less is known about processes of making and reproducing working-class identity in areas where deindustrialization has not meant full shutdowns, so much as restructuring, foreign acquisition, and workforce reductions, as is the case in Sudbury.

Since deindustrialization was first identified as a growing socioeconomic issue in the early 1980s, literature on its causes and consequences has grown substantially (see High 2013; Strangleman & Rhodes 2014 for reviews). Originally emerging in response to the significant social dislocations caused by shuttered factories and displaced blue-collar workforces, this scholarship has grown and deepened to include wide-ranging concerns, such as deindustrialization's cultural and psychological impacts, its historical origins and economic impetus, and labor's efforts to resist and reform affected factories or industries. Notably, oral history approaches have brought new methodological tools and concerns to bear on the topic (Bluestone & Harrison 1982; Camp 1995; Clemens 2011; Cowie & Heathcott 2003; Dublin 1998; Dudley 1994; High 2003, 2010; High & Lewis 2007; Milkman 1997; Moody 1997; Strangleman 2007, 2013). This research has been highly interdisciplinary, in terms of the range of approaches undertaken and the questions asked.

Scholarship in which workers figure centrally as the subjects of research has also broadened the study of deindustrialization, taking up questions of race, gender, culture, affect, and loss (Altena & van der Linden 2003; Bluestone & Harrison 1982; Cowie & Heathcott 2003; Dublin 1998; Dunk 2002; Finkel 2013; Frisch & Rogovin 1993; High 2010, 2015; High & Lewis 2007; McKee 2008; Strangleman 2004). Bluestone and Harrison's (1982) classic work *The Deindustrialization of America: Plant Closings, Community Abandonment, and the Dismantling of Basic Industry* marked a significant shift wherein deindustrialization was studied more holistically, attending to its social, communal, and personal impacts, or what the authors referred to as its 'social trauma' (Bluestone & Harrison 1982, p. 65). As a result, more of the literature has sought to place workers as active subjects at the center of political, social, and economic processes. Yet, in some cases, there persists a lack of engagement with longer processes of class formation and class reproduction, which fails to take full account of deindustrialization's place within the long history of capitalist spatial dynamics (Cowie 1999; Harvey 2006; Silver 2003).

More recently, research has emerged that offers deeper conceptual criticisms of both deindustrialization and the original studies tracing its patterns (Joshi 2002; Strangleman 2017). The latter has taken a number of forms, such as critiquing what one scholar refers to as 'smokestack nostalgia' (Strangleman 2013) for equating the longing for good jobs and economic security with romanticized portraits of industrial work (see also Hart & K'Meyer 2003; Mah 2012). Others have taken aim at the gender and racial inequalities of postwar industrialism (Sugrue 1996; Joshi 2002), as well as its environmental devastation (Hurley 1995). Scholars of culture and cultural industries have also criticized 'industrial heritage' and other forms of social remembrance for frequently expunging class and class struggle in representations of industrial work (Chan 2009; Finkel 2013; Rhodes 2013; Stanton 2006; Taksa 2003). Despite their innovative contributions, however, some of these studies have tended to lose focus on workers and class relations, specifically as they have moved to analyzing cultural, affective, and discursive representations.

This article thus has more in common with literatures on deindustrialization and working-class cultures which use oral history and memory studies as a set of theoretically informed methodological tools (Halbswachs 1992; High 2003, 2010, 2013; Passerini 2009; Portelli 1991, 1997, 2011, 2017). I seek to build on the methodological innovations of sociologists and historians employing oral history and narrative analysis strategies (Passerini 1992; Riessman 1993) in the study of deindustrialization by looking at how the gendered identities of working-class men in Sudbury have come under strain amid profound local socioeconomic change. Here my objective is to show the multiple axes across which workers narratively construct class subjectivities and reproduce identity over time.

The Case of Sudbury, Ontario

Before turning to the analysis of workers' narratives about deindustrialization, this section provides some historical background on the nickel mining industry and workers in Sudbury.

Prior to the discovery of nickel in the Sudbury Basin in the 1880s,[29] the town of Sudbury, located in Northern Ontario, had been little more than a railway station. The town's origins and identity have thus been inextricably tied to the nickel mining industry since its rapid

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[29] The discovery of ores in Sudbury is steeped in folkloric mystery. Reports of Indigenous people mining copper had circulated since as early as the 1630s, but the actual 'first' discovery of nickel in the region is the subject of multiple and competing stories (Wallace 1993, pp. 18-19).

development in the early twentieth century (Wallace & Thomson 1993). As was the case with much of Canada's industrialization (Clement 1992) American investment played a pivotal role in establishing Sudbury's mines. In 1902 the Morgan Trust swallowed the small firms Canadian Copper Company and Orford Copper of New Jersey, and incorporated as the International Nickel Company (Inco) in New Jersey. However, over the years Inco 'Canadianized', moving 'the benevolent monopoly's' headquarters to Toronto and becoming identified in the popular imagination with Canada, and Sudbury in particular (Swift 1977, p. 28).

Nickel's applications in shipbuilding and armaments meant that the United States Army and Navy were the initial destinations for much of Sudbury's ores before other consumer uses – such as stainless steel – were later developed. By 1950, Inco was supplying 80 percent of world nickel, a position the company held until the mid1970s (United Steel Workers of America 1987). Sudbury's large nickel deposits and strategic value, as well as the monopoly ownership structure of Inco, thus combined to create a political-economic environment in which, once workers secured labor legislation and collective bargaining rights in Canada, unions could push for relatively good compensation for their members.

The organization of nickel miners into unions, however, was a slow process. The early mining industry attracted workers from a variety of national and ethnic backgrounds, French-Canadian, Irish, Italian, and Finnish. Many of these workers were new immigrants to Canada who spoke little English, which generated fragmentation and antagonism between workers that mine bosses used to their advantage (Clement 1981). Moreover, the transient nature of life in work camps and company-provided lodgings initially militated against longer-term settlement conducive to union organization (Wallace 1993). Prior to Privy Council Order 1003 in 1944 (McCrorie 1995; Wells 1995a, 1995b), which ushered in the system of industrial relations that Tucker (2014) refers to as 'Wagnerism' in Canada, production largely took place under what Burawoy (1985) characterizes as 'market despotism', wherein 'despotic regulation of the labor process is constituted by the economic whip of the market' (Burawoy 1985, p. 122). At Inco, physical repression or long periods without work or income were enough to starve out striking workers; and before state-regulated union recognition and collective bargaining, workers had limited ability to turn periodic strikes into lasting victories (Clement 1981; Palmer 1992; Thomson 1993).

The Communist-led International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers (commonly referred to as Mine-Mill) was the first union to secure a lasting organizational base among Sudbury's miners. However, after impressive growth throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s, employers and governments utilized growing Cold War anti-Communism to attack Mine-Mill for its Party affiliation (Abella 1973; Lang 1995). After the U.S. Congress passed the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947, restricting workers' ability to strike and requiring unions to sign 'non-Communist affidavits', union leaders as well ratcheted up the purging of Communists from the labor movement throughout North America (Heron 1996, pp. 82-83; Lichtenstein 1982, pp. 238-241). The Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL, later CLC), after a series of conflicts with Mine-Mill leaders, expelled all of the union's locals from the Canadian labor federation. Mine-Mill remained the certified bargaining agent in Sudbury throughout the 1950s – fighting an historic but ultimately unsuccessful strike in 1958 – before eventually succumbing to the isolation and sustained barrage of Cold War hostility imposed by the broader Canadian labor movement. They were replaced by the CIO-CLC-backed United Steel Workers of America (USW) Local 6500 in 1962.

The Steel Workers' certification in Sudbury portended Inco's full integration into the postwar system of industrial pluralism. With Mine-Mill defeated, Inco was compelled to concede what other industrial employers in Canada had already been forced to accept – that collective bargaining, automatic dues check-off, legally-stipulated processes for striking and managing workplace conflict, and a general system of regularized labor-management relations was the new norm (Panitch & Swartz 2009, pp. 10-19). However, as many scholars of the postwar industrial relations system have argued (McInnis 2002; Palmer 2017; Wells 1995b), the trade-offs that unions made to procure this class compromise had lasting impacts on working-class self-organization and consciousness. Unions were made responsible for disciplining their members and, when necessary, suppressing rank-and-file militancy during the lives of collective agreements. It so happened that this task fell to USW leaders in Sudbury at the same moment that broader rank-and-file rebellions were erupting as a wave of wildcat strikes across mid-1960s Canada, led largely by young workers (Palmer 2009, pp. 229-232). Among the oldest workers interviewed in this research, this process of de-radicalization is often remembered for its substantial conflict and discouraging adjustment. Leon, who began work in 1965, remembers the 1966 wildcat strike as "scary […] to be honest."

> A lot of guys were angry. And the union, you see, they didn't call the strike, and couldn't support it. People had shotguns they were firing at the company helicopters. I think they were just trying to scare 'em, not actually hurt anyone. But [pause] blockaded roads, the whole thing. I'd been there less than a year, and there wasn't much anybody could do in the mines about it [poor working conditions]. The union guys [elected local officials] definitely wanted it to end, for us to go back to work and wait till the next contract.[30]

In his autobiography, former union local president Homer Seguin also describes the militancy of the wildcatting workers:

> The picket line was manned by a few guys with guns. Some of our guys broke in at the Copper Cliff Smelter. I remember this well. They took the bulldozers and pushed big boulders and blocked the highway to Inco's offices. They blocked it for days and they cut the telephone lines, some of which served the Copper Cliff hospital. They even had the overpass at Copper Cliff dynamited, all set to blow (Seguin 2008, p. 46).

Seguin, from his retrospective leadership position, however, characterizes the strike as foolhardy, conducted as it was during a minor slump in nickel and copper prices. Most importantly, he and other union leaders wanted to contain workers' effusive hostility and funnel their organized energy into the next round of bargaining in 1969. In this they were relatively successful, eventually fitting one of the more historically militant sections of the Canadian working class into the Fordist system of industrial relations.

During the next decade and a half, the union made impressive material gains, bargaining significant wage increases, extended health benefits, and eventually, a 'thirty and out' pension scheme.[31] However, to the degree that the union was able to bargain over issues related to work

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[30] Leon (pseudonym). Interview by author, Sudbury, ON. February 12, 2015. Pseudonyms are used throughout to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of interviewees.

[31] 'Thirty and out' refers to a guaranteed, defined-benefit pension plan after thirty years of employment, irrespective of the age of first employment or retirement. This pension arrangement became the hallmark of Fordist industrial relations and business unionism, though it was secured somewhat later at Sudbury's mines than in the Steel and Auto sectors.

organization, it largely did so through what Russell (1999) refers to as 'job control unionism' (Russell 1999, p. 162). Rather than mount a broad challenge against deskilling and the fragmentation of the labor process, union representatives instead pursued a strategy of fairly rigid job control coupled with frequent use of the grievance system (Clement 1981). In practice, this meant that the union would bargain job classification schemes into collective agreements, and then vigilantly monitor any managerial abuse of job parameters in the workplace. Partly arising because of the way unions conceded to management the right to organize the workplace under the postwar industrial relations framework (Wells 1995b), this type of occupational policing formed a new pillar of conflict at the point of production. Employers sought flexibility and workers wanted job security, and the grievance system became the terrain on which this battle was fought. Yet, most significantly, job control unionism left unions much less able to impede or influence the iterative introduction of labor-displacing technologies.

As global economic contraction set in during the 1970s, Inco began to feel the squeeze of costly collective agreements coupled with decreased global nickel demand and consumption (Swift 1977). Given the spatial fixity of Sudbury's mineral deposits and mining infrastructure, the company pursued substantial workforce reductions through an intensive project of labor process innovations. In 1971, employment at Inco, and USW 6500 membership, peaked at 18,224, after which it began a decline, 'at first slow and irregular and then rapid and steady' (United Steel Workers of America 1987, p. 3.2). By 1986, when the Steel Workers commissioned researchers to study the impact of new mining technologies, employment at Inco had fallen to 6,518, down 63 percent from its peak fifteen years earlier (United Steel Workers of America 1987, p. 3.3). As USW's study showed, Inco had spent considerably on research and development between the early 1970s and mid1980s, and introduced new labor-saving technologies as a direct response to union power and rising labor costs.

By the 1990s, mechanization and automation were extensive throughout the mines and refining facilities (Hall 1993), leading one commentator to describe the local workforce as 'unrecognizable' (Buse 1993, p. 277). When Brazilian conglomerate Vale Ltd purchased the mines in 2006, slightly more than 3,000 workers remained (Saarinen 2013, p. 165), this in a city and surrounding area of roughly 164,000 people (Statistics Canada 2016).

The loss of blue-collar, unionized work in Sudbury is in many respects an intensified microcosm of wider trends in Canada. From 1981 to 2012 Canadian union density declined from 37.6 percent to 29.9 percent. Because of the significant loss of union jobs in male-dominated, goods-producing sectors (manufacturing, mining, fishing, utilities, construction, oil and gas), male unionization dropped more substantially than the overall decline. While women's unionization remained constant at 31 percent due to high public sector union density in health care, education, and social services, men's unionization rates dropped from 42 to 28.5 percent (Galarneau & Sohn 2013).[32] As well, private sector workers fared worse than their public sector counterparts. While the unionization rate for the latter grew slightly to reach 71 percent by 2014, union density in the private sector fell to 15 percent, down from 18.1 percent fifteen years earlier (Statistics Canada 2018). The implications of these changes are on full display in Sudbury. A substantially weakened union has been unable to stem the growth of a pool of contingent, non-union, contract workers on whom the mining firms rely to complete various servicing and supply tasks and to fill other short-term jobs (Robinson 2005; Roth, Steedman & Condratto 2015). And, as we will explore below, a growing service sector

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[32] However, despite the loss of male-dominated, blue-collar, union jobs – and the now higher unionization rate among women – a gender pay gap that disadvantages women remains (Vosko 2011, p. 81).

dependent on precarious, feminized labor has transformed the regional economy, the local workforce, and the households of working-class families (Leadbeater 2008).

Research Methodology

In total, 26 workers were interviewed during this research, between January 2015 and July 2018. Interviews lasted between 45 and 120 minutes, with most taking approximately 90 minutes to complete. In the interviews, workers recounted their work histories, and if applicable, those of other family members who have worked in the mines. Workers were also asked about the history of mining in Sudbury, as well as about contemporary issues at work and in mining more generally. However, in the tradition of working-class oral history (Passerini 2009; Portelli 1991; Sangster 1994; Terkel 1997), research participants were encouraged to steer the interview narrative, and interview 'prompts' were more frequently employed than questions from the interview schedule.

Participants ranged in age from 26 to 74 years, with an average age of 48.2, and only one worker (age 45) falling between 38 and 49 years of age. My sampling method and the hiring history at Inco/Vale likely combined to produce this distribution of ages. This is first because male working-class friendship networks tend to be 'informal' (Dunk 2003, p. 7), with loose parameters of inclusion. Networks of friends, though quite expansive, are usually fairly age-determined. Thus, research contacts tended to suggest additional participants close to their own ages. In addition, particular waves of hiring and attrition-based job loss (Clement 1981; Leadbeater 2008) at Inco/Vale make the age range 38 to 49 less represented in the workforce as a whole. My sampling did not intend to reflect this and does not do so in any statistically exact way. It was not my objective to produce a representative sample of workers in Sudbury, but instead to intensively explore the making of working-class identity among a subset of miners.

All interviewees were male, reflective of an industry that only quite recently began hiring women in underground jobs in any sizable number (Keck & Powell 2000). The study's snowball sampling methodology, though not intended to exclude female informants, nevertheless contributed to this result. That no female miners were interviewed is a limitation in terms of the representativeness of the data sample, though quite instructive in terms of the analysis of masculinized working-class identity that I pursue below. Interviewees were also all 'white', though some retain ethnic, linguistic, or cultural affiliations that they expressed as meaningful to their identities, particularly French-Canadian and Scandinavian heritages. This is reflective of Sudbury more broadly. In contrast to Ontario as a whole where visible minorities account for 29.3 percent of the total population, in Sudbury visible minorities represent only six percent of the population (Statistics Canada 2016). Finally, I intended this research to focus on rank-and-file workers, not elected union officials. Though I am attentive to the relationships between union structures, institutional forms, and working-class identity, I am concerned with 'workers' more broadly conceived, not simply their elected representatives. Of the 26 interviewees, only five had ever held a position in their union local. Four had held health and safety committee positions, and one was previously elected to an executive leadership position.

During data interpretation I treated single interview narrative analysis and thematic coding across the interview data as in conversation with one another. But in developing the arguments that follow, I have attempted to situate the interview text within its social context by reading it against the political economy of mining in Sudbury and the histories of labor and gender, both regionally and nationally. As I understand it, working-class men in Sudbury construct and

perform their identities within this complex interplay between social relations and narrative expression.

Gender in the Making of Working-Class Identity

Mining in Sudbury has been and continues to be heavily male-dominated. During nickel mining's early history in the region, male workers often lived without spouses or children in mining camps, and low wages made sending money to often distant 'dependents' difficult (Clement 1981). However, as in the coal mining regions of Appalachia, mine owners encouraged family settlement under the assumption that the presence of wives and children would discourage strike activity and alcohol consumption among the working men (Portelli 2011; Yarrow 1991). As retired worker Bob Miner put it in his oral history with Wayne Roberts (1979), 'most miners who grew up in this camp and raised families felt the same way as I did. I'd have sooner broken my boys' legs than see them work in the mines' (Roberts 1979, p. 4). Miner was not alone in his longing for escape from the dangerous working conditions at the mines, or in his gendered conception of who would likely constitute the next generation of workers, i.e. the 'boys'. Many miners with whom I spoke also expressed a desire to see their sons and other relatives find work outside the industry. Yet, despite this sentiment, they frequently describe themselves and older relatives taking mining jobs as a means to 'raise a family'. In this way, mining becomes masculinized in workers' narratives through the duties of family responsibility and economic provision. Despite an ostensibly widespread desire among many workers to see their children pursue work elsewhere, whether due to lack of opportunity or because of the relatively good compensation that unionized mining could secure, work at the mines has frequently been intergenerational.

Brad, a third-generation miner, recited a comical illustration of the family provider narrative,

> I still remember. Dad would tell this story all the time. His dad had passed, young. He [Brad's father] quit school and was gonna work in the mine, there. But he was a tiny guy, hardly weighed nothing, and he was too young, you know? So, he eats like two bushels of bananas before he's supposed to have the physical and get weighted and all that. Well, he gets there, and he's stuffed, right. And the, Christ, they're like 'oh sorry, we don't have time to see you today. You'll have to come back tomorrow'. So, he did the whole thing again the next day! Got the job though.[33]

This story, though told as an entertaining tale about the length to which Brad's father went in order to be hired by Inco and assist his widowed mother, also nicely exemplifies the way that many interviewees' stories about work in the mines draw on notions of masculine obligation. Similarly, the way that twenty-eight-year old Yves discussed his father's stories about unionized mine work also illustrates how these stories shaped Yves' ideas about working-class masculinity,

> Dad talking to us about the mines for sure had an impact on me growing up. I definitely looked up to him, and to a lot of his buddies who were working at Inco and would be around our house. […] I remember that the shiftwork was sometimes an issue with my mom. But it was obviously hard on him too. It's hard on anyone, plus, add to it that you're doing hard, physical labor, right. But yeah, I think him working there shaped what I thought about working later on, like I thought of it as a good-paying job, you

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[33] Brad (pseudonym). Interview by author, Sudbury ON. February 13, 2015.

could get ahead, the union was there to protect guys. And *he was able to take care of us* and everything (emphasis mine).[34]

From his experience growing up in a working-class household with a gendered division of labor Yves derived a picture of economic stability built upon the waged labor of a 'breadwinning' man (Forrest 1995). Many workers interviewed during this research utilize this 'typical' gender order as a measure of working-class material security. The ability of a single (male) job to sustain a household functions as a yardstick against which to measure work's value, and additionally provides a normative contrast to the growing supply of precarious jobs in the local economy.

As Yves also mentions, shiftwork played a role in solidifying the contours of gender relations in mining households. Male shiftwork increased the already disproportionate share of household labor performed by women. As many workers' narratives suggest, however, the work of social reproduction included more than the physical and material reproduction of husbands and children. Working-class women, whether they worked for wages outside the home or not, frequently supplied emotional labor as a palliative for the harsh working conditions of nickel mining and the iterative stresses of class conflict in a region so heavily dependent on the work of resource extraction. As retired miner Walter remembers, 'I think I was pretty open with the wife about my job. It was tough going sometimes, so I could talk about that at home. She was a big help often times'.[35] Walter emphasized throughout our interview how frequently he told his wife and children stories about work. By doing so he figuratively brought the workplace home, affirmed his place in the gender division of labor, aired his frustrations, and often obtained necessary emotional support. Such examples poignantly demonstrate how a certain portrait of working-class male stoicism in which difficult working conditions or periods of economic hardship are faced down without excessive complaint was in many respects sustained by the affective labor of women in the 'hidden abode' (Fraser 2014, p. 55) of the home.

A gendered division of labor centered on male waged labor and female social reproductive work became even more entrenched through the structures of postwar bureaucratic unionism and the forms that social and employment policy took under Canada's welfare state. Like the United States, Canada's industrial relations system – once it provided for union security – was based on decentralized bargaining units, for the most part at the workplace level. Under these circumstances, unions were far more likely to form in large, industrial, and thus male-dominated workplaces. Because women in paid employment were more likely to be in small firms, engaged in service sector work, and to exit and re-enter the labor market, they were largely excluded from the benefits of private sector unionization (Cameron 1995). At the levels of employment and social policy, governments further reinforced gender inequality in the labor market by structuring state-provided social protections and benefits around the 'standard employment relationship' of full-time, permanent work with a single employer (Vosko 2011). As a result, many working-class women either only had access to these social protections through a male partner, or had limited or no access to them because of their positions in the secondary labor market. These gendered legacies persist, both in terms of unions' difficulties organizing in the growing service sector of smaller firms and variegated ownership structures (Coulter 2014); and also in the falling rates of access for such things as unemployment benefits,

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[34] Yves (pseudonym). Interview by author, Sudbury, ON. June 27, 2017.
[35] Walter (pseudonym). Interview by author, Sudbury, ON. May 19, 2015.

as the supposedly 'secondary' forms of work typically performed by women become the new norm in a service-dominated labor market (Porter 2003).

Gender also figured prominently in the building of industrial unions and the shaping of male working-class identity. When describing the struggles to improve work, pay, and safety in Sudbury's mines, many workers relied on narratives that centered the role of men as 'natural' breadwinners deserving of the rights of industrial unionism. Access to unionization took on the tone of a masculine demand, a means through which to attain the status of 'the family breadwinner'. As Anne Forrest (1995) summarizes,

> Before World War II the practice of collective bargaining had been limited to a small minority of predominantly craft workers, and only they had been assured of a wage sufficient to support a dependent wife and children comfortably. The 1940s, by contrast, was a decade in which unskilled and semi-skilled men sought to broaden the boundaries of that privileged group. Union representation was the means by which working-class men asserted their claim to the status of family breadwinner (p. 143).

Workers interviewed during this research who were old enough to recount early struggles to secure union recognition emphasized the difference unionization made to their household incomes, usually meaning that their spouses could remain outside of the paid labor force. Seventy-two-year old Leon, for instance, recounted how 'being union' provided his family with what he described as 'independence',

> Oh yeah, you see, before the Steel Workers, the guys couldn't say nothing. Inco ruled the roost in Sudbury. When I started, the union [the USW] was getting going, you know, finally getting the men what they deserved. For example, we lived in a company house, an 'Inco house'. But being union, you know, wages went up, my wife could be stay-at-home, you know, with the kids, and we could buy the house ourselves, own it outright, you know? That was a big deal at the time. For a working man to own his house, it gave us independence. Didn't feel like I was owned by the company.[36]

For Leon, unionization, home ownership, and a 'stay-at-home' wife were intimately intertwined. The battle to gain material security through strong union contracts was equally a means to solidify a normative family structure that simultaneously affirmed the dignity of 'working men' and shielded women from the paid labor force.

As Stephen Meyer (2016) brilliantly shows in his history of auto workers, masculinity underwent profound reinvention in the spaces of industrial work and unionism. The masculine dignity and male dominance that unionization and the family wage provided, in many respects, compensated for the class subordination and loss of skill and control men experienced at work. As workers resisted the alienation and subordination that characterized blue-collar, working-class life, they drew upon and reproduced other gendered (and often racialized) systems of oppression in the process of making their class identities.[37] Strikes, union campaigns, or work stoppages to defend union gains thus frequently took on a masculinized tone. This continues to be the case among miners in Sudbury. When Brazilian multinational Vale purchased Inco in

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[36] Leon (pseudonym). Interview by author, Sudbury, ON. February 12, 2015.

[37] Classic studies employing ethnographic methods such as Dunk (2003) and Willis (1981) have made this point with particular sharpness. Palmer's (1988) essay '"What the Hell?" Or Some Comments on Class Formation and Cultural Reproduction' remains an excellent theoretical exploration of the links between male, working-class alienation and culture.

2006 and entered contract negotiations with the union in 2009, it became clear that the new owners sought significant concessions from workers in the areas of pensions, bonuses, and workplace control – particularly around the use of contract laborers (King 2017; Peters 2010). When narrating episodes from the year-long strike that followed in 2009-10, workers often recounted stories that highlighted the strike's most conflictual or even near-violent moments. For example, Dale, a mechanic, describes a confrontation he had on the picket line,

> I was fired up on the line last strike. I mean, they were shipping product out. Never before had I seen that. I got right up the side of the truck with this guy, told him to 'get out' if he thinks he's tough enough. There's a tradition here of dealing with scabs, in my opinion. Driving a truck to haul product [pause] that, to me, is no different. We shouldn't stand for it.[38]

Other interviewees, upset with what they saw as a lack of resolve among many of their fellow members during a long and ultimately unsuccessful strike, contrasted the apparent 'softness' of the lines in 2009 with other historical examples which, to them, better exemplified how the union once made and protected material gains. 'I mean, scabs, guys used to know how to deal with that. You'd find tacks in your driveway or spray-paint on your garage door', Charles remarked.[39] As well, Alain contrasted 'older times when the company shut down production, and the men held hard on the line until the fight was done' with how 'soft the lines were last time'. 'The company keep up production, yeah, they did. Trucks were in and out, and we couldn't stop them', he remembered.[40]

However, generational tensions emerged around the question of contract labor. For the older workers in the sample, 'scabbing' by 'hauling product' or servicing equipment during a strike is among the most reprehensible things one can do. As Larry, a middle-aged miner, expressed it,

> I mean, contractors, as far as I'm concerned – and many other guys would tell you the same – they're scabs. No two ways about it. 'Rent-a-miners' we call 'em. Yeah, if their tools go missing, or someone pisses in their gear, I don't feel too bad about it.[41]

Doug, another retiree, framed his assessment of contract laborers who worked during the strike in explicitly gendered language,

> Look, it's like this: there's a history here, a tradition. Guys came before and fought like hell to have a union, to have all these things, like a pension and a decent living. This new company comes in and basically says 'to hell with us', and then a bunch of guys, as far as I see it, they're helping 'em [the company]. 'Man up', really! I know times are tough for a lot of guys, but you don't take away from what we built.[42]

For Doug and many other workers, the long-term restructuring of the mining industry in Sudbury represents an assault on a way of life. In their opinions, some younger contract

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[38] Dale (pseudonym). Interview by author, Sudbury, ON. February 12, 2015.
[39] Charles (pseudonym). Interview by author, Sudbury, ON. June 28, 2017.
[40] Alain (pseudonym). Interview by author, Sudbury, ON. February 10, 2015.
[41] Larry (pseudonym). Interview by author, Sudbury, ON. June 30, 2017.
[42] Doug (pseudonym). Interview by author, Sudbury, ON. June 30, 2017.

workers are insufficiently attentive to how their individual actions may be contributing to the erosion of collective material security. To them, a lack of solidarity with fellow miners is an 'un-manly' comportment.

Yet, because younger workers are often employed as contractors prior to gaining full-time, union jobs – if they ever do – they tend to see their actions differently.

> Like, I was that guy [a contractor] and I was just trying to work, you know? From my perspective, I'd done worse jobs. I get that the union – and I got it then – was trying to protect guys, but, to me, the issue is with the boss, not the guy [contractors] just trying to earn a living.[43]

Many young workers, like Ryan, have direct experience of the fraying of the labor market in the mining industry and beyond in Sudbury. Additionally, difficult union concessions, such as two-tier wage and pension schemes, tend to generate inequalities between workers of different ages. As a result, these young workers see their individual actions as simply necessary under the given circumstances. However, what is especially noteworthy is the way that masculinity figures in both of the above narratives. For older workers, solidarity and collective action through the union are positioned as both masculine in their form, and as necessary to preserve a particular family structure. For younger workers, on the other hand, precarious employment has redefined the masculine obligation. In a slack labor market with less room for upward advance, and without the collective protections that a strong union presence once provided, young workers need to 'do what needs to be done', as Dave put it, in reference to his time working for a contracting firm. This is especially the case when the insecurity of mining work and the rising cost of living have further necessitated two household incomes. As we will see in the following section, young miners frequently complain about the working-time, pay, and conditions that their female partners encounter in the local service sector economy.

Male Working-Class Identity and Female Waged Labor

Labor's integration within the postwar industrial relations system buttressed a gendered social division of labor in Sudbury, and further circumscribed women's labor market opportunities (Keck & Powell 2000). The 'breadwinner model' either restricted women to the unpaid labor of social reproduction, or largely consigned them to insecure, and often poorly paid, work in the secondary labor market. In the process, the gendered occupational identities of male miners became tied to the 'good jobs' of this gender division of labor between workplace and home (Luxton 1990). It is therefore common to hear working-class men describe married women's work outside the home as largely supplementary, secondary to social reproductive work, and certainly subordinate to the primary wage-earning of men. For example, Tim, a miner in his early fifties, positioned his wife's work at home when their children were young, and her later work outside the home, as choices made in the context of his secure, union job and wages.

> Inco meant a good-paying job you could support a family on. Mining wasn't just automatically a 'good job', right. Having a union made it that way. My wife could stay home and be with the kids and that. Once they got a little older, she worked a bit, but things were pretty much taken care of.[44]

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[43] Ryan (pseudonym). Interview by author, Sudbury, ON. February 11, 2015.
[44] Tim (pseudonym). Interview by author, Sudbury, ON. February 10, 2015.

However, as workplace restructuring, the loss of secure mining jobs, and the growth of precarious employment have transformed the regional economy, it is along the gender division of labor where we can detect some of the greatest impacts. For example, younger workers who began work as contractors in less secure positions told stories about how their partners have worked various, usually precarious or contingent, jobs. When these men secured full-time, unionized jobs at the mines, some of their female partners left paid employment while others continued. According to workers' narratives, negotiating these transitions has at times been contentious. Below James describes how his wife combined online retail sales with care responsibilities in the home when he was working as a contractor. According to James, she continues this work, though as his laugh at his wife's meagre earnings indicates, James does not consider her paid work central to their household.

> Like, when I was contract, things weren't as good. We weren't struggling, struggling, but it was tough sometimes [pause] mainly because I didn't know what was going to happen a lot. We had the kids then, you know, and that's when [his wife] starting doing the online sales stuff [selling beauty supplies]. It wasn't bringing in huge money or anything, obviously [laughs]. But it helped, and it worked at the time with the kids not being in school. She keeps it going still.[45]

In our interview, James positioned his wife's income as secondary despite the lower pay he was receiving during the time when he was 'contract'. Yet, her lesser income was certainly not 'supplementary' in the sense of it being non-essential to their total household income. Later, James admitted, 'there were definitely times when the online money kept the ship sailing'. The partial deindustrialization of the nickel mines, the growth of contract labor, and the spread of service sector employment have necessitated dual incomes for many working-class families in the region – a process hardly uncommon across North America. However, working-class identity among male miners remains gendered and wedded to male-dominated employment and income generation. In our conversation, James did not consider his wife's experience servicing the needs of online customers as in any way comparable to his own work situation where, according to him, he often deals with controlling managers and other representatives of his new, multinational boss. For James, his wife's experience is not a *classed* experience in the same sense in which work is for him. This is not only because her class situation is somewhat obscured by its ostensibly 'freelance' veneer, i.e. that she can manage her own time and work from home. Other young workers with working spouses in more recognizable employment relationships also engaged in similar characterizations of their partners' labor force participation. Such characterizations reveal, rather, the ways that these working-class men think about class and work. For them, working-class identity is structured by the particular social relations of industrial employment, i.e. its full-time status, its occupational characteristics, unionization, and, notably, its male-dominance.

For example, Anthony described how his wife worked in retail during the time when he could only obtain contract employment. To him, her employment was temporary, a necessity only because his income at the time was insufficient to provide her a labor market exit option. During our interview, Anthony contrasted his wife's non-union job at a heath food and supplement store – where she had to deal with a difficult boss – to his current unionized job at the mine, and then indicated that he is pleased that she no longer works there.

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[45] James (pseudonym). Interview by author, Sudbury, ON. February 10, 2015.

> Well, when I was still working for contractors, that's when [his wife] started working in town [in Sudbury], working at [a vitamin/health shop]. We needed two incomes, you know. My money was good but it sometimes wasn't steady, that's the problem. She had a shitty boss and it wasn't a good job. Like, I kind of felt bad she was there at the time. I was glad when she quit.[46]

Anthony recognized the ways in which the lack of collective voice in his wife's workplace rendered her vulnerable to the dictates of her unscrupulous boss. He also described the difference his wife's paid employment made to their overall well-being. Yet, for him, her employment was a necessary evil only to tide their finances over until he was able to secure full-time work underground. Unionized male employment, in many of the narratives of working-class men, remains a path to 'breadwinner' status and a means through which to 'protect' working-class women from the vagaries of the low-wage labor market. Class – as both a social relation and an individual identification – derives from male employment. The historic attachment of class identity to the industrial unionism of the postwar order prevents many working-class men from considering their spouses' waged labor in comparable class terms to their own. As Anthony described it, his wife did not so much need a union at her job, but an exit option from employment altogether.

Because Anthony eventually acquired a union position, he and his wife had the option of her leaving paid employment; for most young working-class families, labor market exit is not viable. Moreover, in a regional economy where stable blue-collar work no longer occupies the central place it once did, the historic ties between unions and working-class life are unravelling. The experiences of precarious work in the service and retail economy and the growth of insecure, contract work in the mining sector are part of the same process. Both are representative of the ways that neoliberal capitalism has shifted more of the burden of both maintaining corporate competitiveness and of social reproduction onto the backs of working-class families. However, male miners, by and large, do not express their experiences in these terms. Class, in their expressions, remains affectively gendered, which haunts not only their narrative constructions of working-class identity, but also any effort to reconstitute working-class power across sectoral boundaries. The partial deindustrialization of Sudbury is then not solely about the loss of particular, male-dominated, 'breadwinning' jobs. This economic transformation is also registered in the narrative accounts of male workers as they cling to a bounded and historically-contingent characterization of working-class identity, even as this impedes an understanding of the forces which transform their lives, as well as those of workers of all genders in the region.

Re-imaging the Working Class, and the Limitations of Masculinity

Thousands of lost jobs and the growth of precarious employment have transformed Sudbury's regional economy over the last several decades, redrawing class relations at the mines and in the broader community in the process. However, these structural changes have not translated into significant efforts to rebuild organized working-class power. In part, institutional impediments such Wagnerism's system of decentralized bargaining account for organized labor's inability to make lasting inroads into the retail and service sectors. Industrial unions, such as the United Steel Workers, although they have begun to organize among social service providers, have not been able or willing to invest the resources necessary to build union footholds in the private service and retail sectors. In 2018, Canadian union density in wholesale

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[46] Anthony (pseudonym). Interview by author, Sudbury, ON. May 18, 2015.

and retail trade stood at 12.4 percent, while accommodation and food services remained at just over six percent (Statistics Canada 2018). Unionized female workers are common in public health care and educational services, and public administration, but among the working-class interviewees in this research (whose female partners, when in the paid labor force, worked almost entirely in the private service sector), there was no female union membership. The result is a highly gendered conception of being working-class among the men interviewed during this study, where their long-term commitment to work is distinguished from women's supposedly weak attachments to the labor force.

Other historical legacies persist as well, haunting the narrative pictures of class conflict that working-class men paint. For many workers, it is not only that class struggle has been a decidedly masculine affair and a mechanism through which to secure male dignity; it is rather the case that women played an instrumental role in the struggle for union security and working-class welfare. But, according to this narrative, women played a subordinate or supportive role. Women are not absent from the history of male workers' long struggle to improve the conditions of labor in the mines. Rather, their support was vital, though ancillary. They were there in the Women's Auxiliary, providing food or warm clothing during strikes, and in the homes of working-class men, finding creative ways to make food stretch over long periods in which picket pay was the only source of income. As Luxton (1990) shows, women have historically played an integral part in the union's social and cultural life in Sudbury. Their organized participation in the ten-month strike at Inco in 1978-79 – as well as the union's conflicts with the 'Women Supporting the Strike' committee – is also brilliantly captured in the 1980 film *A Wives' Tale*. Yet, this secondary role accords women, in the narratives of working-class men, only partial agency, their primary interest remaining to provide assistance to the struggles of working men. Within this narrative framework, it becomes difficult to imagine working-class women responding to the conditions of precarious employment with collective resistance directed toward addressing their own workplace interests.

In other ways, however, when working-class men recount the various struggles to improve mining work, they present a more dubious account of women's contributions to this objective. According to some workers, for example, women had a tendency to equivocate in the face of employer aggression. Perhaps the clearest example of women's ambiguous impact on strike action appears in men's stories about the 1958 Mine-Mill strike, which is also remembered as the death knell of the Communist-led union. Miners' wives in the Women's Auxiliary were heavily involved in the strike. In response, local politicians attempted to undermine the union by dividing the organized women from the striking men. As several older workers tell it, the mayor of Sudbury at the time, playing on male anxieties about socially-engaged wives, called a meeting with the Women's Auxiliary to discuss the strike. To the surprise of those in attendance, the local media subsequently quoted the mayor as saying the Women's Auxiliary had voted in favor of ending the strike – a claim that the women vociferously denied. However, the myth that 'the women' publicly undermined the 1958 strike persists (Luxton 1990). Examples such as this also shape a view among some working-class men which sees women as less committed than men to unions and potentially unreliable during periods of class conflict. Again, stories such as these highlight the difficulties many men in this study faced in adapting their historical understanding of working-class identity to the changing gender composition of the local workforce.

The persistence of a gendered class identity among some male miners' results also from the class dynamics during the period when women first entered the mining workforce. Although nickel mining remains male-dominated, beginning in the late 1970s, women did start to obtain

jobs underground and in the mineral processing facilities in small numbers. Many of these women had to struggle against reluctant and obfuscating male human resources personnel in order to be hired, as well as recalcitrant male managers and supervisors once at work (Keck & Powell 2000). However, it was not only men in positions of power who presented an obstacle to female employment at the mines; harassment from male coworkers was also a significant issue. Retired miner Walter, remembers, 'oh, it was bad in the beginning. I admit, I wasn't fond of the idea [women in the mines] at first. But I came around, and now some of the best people in there are ladies. But, boy, some fellas really gave 'em a hard time'.[47] Although a large portion of the harsh response to women working underground was a result of sexist attitudes among the men, the class conflict during the period in which women began working in the mines must also be part of the explanation. Female employment increased concomitantly with the technical reorganization of production at Inco and the precipitous job loss which this entailed. Thus, in some respects, a class conflict over how to manage the introduction of labor-saving technologies became partially expressed as a gender conflict. As job losses mounted through attrition and periodic lay-offs throughout the 1980s and 90s, male miners interpreted the growth in female miners as labor market competition. Brad, for example, remarked that his father had often complained about women in the mines, stating, 'he was like "I've got buddies who have gone elsewhere [to other jobs] but all these women are getting hired"'. In some cases, men understand the influx of women into the workforce at Inco/Vale as a microcosm of issues in the labor force as a whole. How working-class men interpret labor market competition and class solidarity is shot through with the historical legacy of class and gender relations in Sudbury.

Conclusion

Through an analysis of 26 in-depth, oral history interviews with male nickel miners in Sudbury, Ontario, this article has explored how the organization of unionized labor and social reproductive work facilitated the constitution and reproduction of a masculinized working-class identity. With the partial deindustrialization of Sudbury's mines, growing precarious employment in both the mining industry and the regional economy has re-made the gender composition of the local workforce. For men in this study – particularly the young workers with female partners in paid employment – these changes to work and home have placed their masculinized class identity under considerable strain.

The persistence of a circumscribed male working-class identity, though partly reproduced through the social networks of working-class men (Dunk 2003), is also the legacy of the postwar industrial relations system and social policy framework of the Canadian welfare state. A dual model of labor market regulation (Cameron 1995; Fudge 2005; Vosko 2011) meant that male workers had much greater access to unionization, collective bargaining, and employer-based benefits, as well as greater coverage through the ostensibly universal social insurance programs provided by the state, such as unemployment insurance and old age pensions. Nonstandard workers (part-time employees, contract workers, and temporary staff), who were and remain disproportionately female, were relegated to a low-wage secondary labor market, had limited access to benefits and state supports, and were made dependent on poorly enforced minimum employment standards legislation designed precisely not to trouble low-wage employers (Thomas 2004). As employment in the primary sector has shrunk, and employers and governments engage in sustained attacks on unionized workers' pay and employment conditions (Panitch & Swartz 2003), the Canadian labor market is increasingly characterized

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[47] Walter (pseudonym). Interview by author, Sudbury, ON. May 19, 2015.

by nonstandard – and often feminized – service sector work (Vosko & Clark 2009). Sudbury is in many ways exemplary of these changes to work and labor in Canada.

Generating solidarity under these circumstances is difficult. As unionized workers in the primary sector fight to protect the relative privileges they still possess, their fights often take the form of limiting women's access to the shrinking preserve of union security. Male workers in this study often expressed such sentiments. By contrast, when workers in the service sector struggle to raise the standards and protections at the bottom of the labor market, they face the institutional challenges perpetuated by labor market dualism and bureaucratic unionism (Camfield 2011; Coles & Yates 2012; Pupo & Thomas 2009).

A contradiction lies at the heart of working-class identity as I have characterized it in this study. On the one hand, the male workers in this study draw on a highly gendered class identity in the process of making solidarity meaningful and durable over time. On the other hand, it is precisely this circumscribed articulation of class identity that limits class formation across gender and sector, and in turn, constrains working-class agency as the material conditions that gave rise to the postwar class compromise come undone. Untying the knots of class and gender remain a daunting but necessary task for these workers if they are to confront the challenges posed by deindustrialization and the growth of precarious employment in Sudbury.

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Three Spirits: Breakdowns Present, Past and Yet to Come

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Abstract

This paper is a meditation on processes of social abjection within working-class life, on how they have changed and yet how they remain haunted by the possibility of an otherwise, especially in relation to bodily and mental and emotional pain and distress, anguish and torment, otherwise classified as depression, or nymphomania, or hypersexualisation, or anxiety, or paranoia and so on. Social abjection is a process of rendering certain lives and life experiences as unreadable except as social detritus. Working-class pain is abject, individualised and still often shamed. And the process of abjection is itself painful and not without the marks of struggle. Usually the role of women is to offer comfort and strength, often through classed practices of care and mothering (Crean,2018). But what happens when it is the women whose pain is abject? The haunting I am writing about here therefore is the haunting possibility of a return to a more collective approach to such distress, a return to a sense of future possibility as yet unfulfilled. In order to bring this possibility more fully to mind, I consider Martin Parr's photographs recently in an exhibition at Manchester Art Gallery and Alisha's poetry which was posted as part of her work with The Agency, (a creative project with young people). These rather different art works open up the question of how 'mental health' emerges as a threshold at which both capital-based violences and a resistant working-class affect can be found.

Keywords

Social abjection, mental illness, working-class mental health, working-class art

'Get back to Middlewood', 'you'll end up in Rauceby like your mother'. Insert the name of the local County Lunatic Asylum anywhere in England and probably Scotland and Wales and Northern Ireland too. 'Get back to ….' A taunt against a crazy looking man, or just against someone who isn't wanted and doesn't fit. A fearful, aggressive taunt. Such taunts have followed me and others in my family as long as I can remember. What follows is a reflection on a personal history of engagement with 'mental health' as working-class experience, through my working life in Manchester and through my family history in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. The buildings of the County Lunatic Asylums are now often demolished or else turned into luxury flats. They were enormous, with long echoing corridors, high ceilings and extensive grounds. Now they seem generous in their size and proportions. They were populated by working-class people, many of whom lived there for a lifetime. Among them were those who had shown no more sign of lunacy than to have children out of wedlock, or protest too angrily at or be traumatised by domestic or workplace violence, or who experienced trauma in war, or who went wandering when there was no one to care for them. The Lunatic Asylums were built about the same time in the nineteenth century as many of the pits were opening and the urban industrial areas were being developed. They closed in the late twentieth century as the pits, steel works and other factories were being closed.

Pain is common in working class life. So common it is often not worth commenting on. It is simply endured, well or badly. But the silences surrounding what we call 'mental health' (meaning 'mental illness') give form to a common and enduring pain that remains abject, is routinely individualised and shamed. It is also routinely unsupported. Casualised workers, on precarious contracts, have no support when they reach breaking point. This is often the breaking point when 'low pay' becomes 'no pay' in what social scientists call the 'low pay no pay cycle.'

Social abjection is a process that renders certain lives and life experiences as unreadable except as social detritus. In such conditions, bodily, mental and emotional pain, distress, anguish and torment has been otherwise classified and experienced (in the past or now) as depression, or nymphomania, or hyper-sexualisation, or anxiety, or paranoia. Diagnoses of mild to moderate and severe mental illness remain prevalent in working-class life.[48] Such pain is classified in an ever-proliferating set of languages and diagnostic labels which nevertheless fail completely to disguise the possibility that much of this pain is socially instigated, part of working-class experience, can be struggled over collectively, could come to an end. What follows is a personal meditation on the ways this struggle has been lived and on the ways it might yet be lived.

Stave 1

The Spirit of Breakdowns Present: A moment in the life of a community arts project, encountered in 2017

The Miner's Community Arts Centre is a working-men's club in Moston, a district in North Manchester which is a target seat for UKIP/The Brexit Party. The Miners Estate used to be known as the 'rough as fuck' estate right at the northernmost edge of the city of Manchester. It is a very long time since the mines were there (more than seventy years), and you only know now because of the subsidence under the houses. So Andy tells me, a stand-up comic who I met over coffee in the New Miners Community Arts and Music Centre (supported by Forever Manchester), with its big screen TV for sports and Manchester United banners everywhere. There was a quiet and focussed atmosphere in the rooms at the back that were once the pub or club snooker rooms but are now being used by a community arts project. Twelve working-class young people are here working on their own projects with the support of community-based youth workers.

Abdullah and Amin are discussing using different genres of music to link people together in a performance; Andy wants to reopen the local park café and encourage all children …boys and girls…to go fishing. Tench, perch and pike. Kiara and Sam want to promote different African cultures through fashion. They say that tribes are represented by the different designs and cultures; their project will promote sewing and learning to sew; sell products and do fashion shows; promote knowledge of culture. They know which shop they can purchase the fabrics from; they will run pop up stores. It could be very cheap and affordable. Together with another two girls, they will hold a festival to spread African culture: there will be fashion, but also entertainment, face painting, music, art work, beauty. Maybe too there will be cooking classes with an experienced chef.

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[48] See: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25323051, https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/statistics/mental-health-statistics-poverty
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Chris says, 'I never had a desire to create a project until I came to think of it here.' Now he says he would like to have Origami classes for children to relax and enjoy their life. Thomas, is a wild and imaginative inventor. He wants to create a workshop where people can design and make stuff of all sorts. 'There are all sorts of ideas that I want to put on to young people.' Ben will make a film. On a low budget, with a few friends. (This is a place of friendship in Ben's mind.) He wants to share a passion for Cinematography. He links with Jo who is developing a Code Club. Irfan, an Afghan refugee, wants to run a project called *'Say Yes to Migrants'*, 'to show we can do something for the community to show that migrants aren't always doing bad things.' He wants to bring together lots of volunteers to gain support in speaking English. Dylan wants to introduce people on his estate to gaming. He wants to work closely with people who are 'closed away and have anger issues.'

This is the context in which I first met Alisha Loco. She tells me she has overcome depression and ADHD as well as a suicide attempt through creative writing and wants to reach out to others of her own age and younger (aged 12-16) who are suffering. She feels she can work from emotion to find form especially in poetry and she tells me she sees the written word as a healing tool. She expresses particular moments in mental health crises in her writing, such as in the poem about a girl denying her pain and saying she is OK until it is almost too late for her. Alisha captures the way she is talked about and blamed by others: '*People around described her as unstable, she knew she was no angel*.' Her hurt is not yet visible in physical injuries. Alisha writes to alert others to the silent pain, '*You didn't see the hurt/but you should of been able to sense the alert'* and to the difference between responses to physical and emotional damage; '*What if she broke a bone, you'd make sure she wasn't left alone.'* She calls her website '*Open Minds but Silent Sounds'* and it is above all to the silence and inarticulacy surrounding mental illness and emotional distress that her work is responding.

(In the room the arts project is using there is a pastiche work of art about Maggie Thatcher with a Paul Weller song 'For liberty there is a cost. It's broken skills and leather cosh' and a copy of *The Star*, a Sheffield newspaper, with a headline saying 'We can never forgive her.)

During the six months of the arts project Alisha made a website for her poetry which remained open between 2016 and 2018 (called *Open Minds but Silent Sounds*) and began to promote poetry writing as a way of making sense of depression, self-harm and attempted suicide. She invited other young people to join a writing process, and offered meditation as a tool at the beginning and end to help them manage their emotions. She says that she wants people in North Manchester to be more aware of mental health issues so that sufferers don't have to hide away. In this Alisha stands full square in the tradition of the Survivors UK, who were major contributors to the struggle within and against psychiatric oppression in the 1980's and 1990's. Alisha communicated silent and invisible hurt in her writing. *Open Minds but Silent Sounds* for a time involved twenty other young people in her local area. Their poetry points to an edge of experience. On the social housing estate that both Alisha and Dylan live on (and they are the only ones in this group who do; the others are in private rental places on the whole, or in accommodation provided by NASS, the National Asylum Seekers Service), every-one's mum, or nearly every-one's mum 'has mental health'. The diagnosis is being passed on from one generation to the next. So this condition is both common and invisible. A working-class girl in a working-class family doing what working class girls do perhaps means swallowing tablets. Mum's tablets might be at the centre of her life. The scars which women carry are of course not unknown to poetry. The elite poet Sylvia Plath, whose distress (what doctors now term 'suicidality') was a source of her poetry, wrote, 'There is a charge/ For the eyeing of my

scars'[49], In contrast these scars carried on working class bodies of 'my mum's mental health' are commonplace and scarcely merit a mention. Alisha's writing is alert to the danger of the silence that has developed around this commonplace experience of depression: the dangers involved in some one being left alone. Evidence of the practice of self-harm and attempted suicide which Alisha refers to can be seen regularly in the A and E departments of hospitals. These cracks and tears, these scars are witness to the challenge of caring under neoliberal regimes. Such experiences can be found in all the places in which the cracks start to show in the long celebrated, maybe long-lost working-class ethic and culture of 'community': the places populated by the apparently disposable people.

Alisha seems a slight quiet girl but she has a real temper on her, she says. Then she tells us that she has been bullied and subsequently excluded from school, on the grounds that her skirt was too short. And she is stubborn, she says. Here it is again, that management of being woman, of being a working-class woman, through the management and control of our unruly bodies. Ties or no ties, skirts, trousers, head coverings. Alisha's turn to poetry can be seen as a turn away from any simple somatising of experience, from any cutting of her arms or breaking of windows. Instead Alisha has a poetry website and her words instil a quietness and calm and offer a way through intense isolation to a place and possibility of connection. This is a good place to be in response to oppression. Her mother is strong and she took Alisha back to school and contacted the local paper (the *Manchester Evening News*)[50] to say that a whole group of girls has been stopped from taking their mock exams because Their Skirts Were Too Short. But still, Alisha needed to find her own ways to resist.

Alisha the poet is Linked In and has her sense of individuality in her presence on the World Wide Web, but she is still troubled by diagnoses. Or rather, untroubled by them and accepting of them, in a way. It is as if there is a medical explanation for all this (the so-called biopsychosocial factors). These terms can be used to sum up and disguise the reason we are now at the bottom of the heap and our schools have to send us home on exam days because our bodies and the clothes we cover them with and the places we put them and the parts of other bodies we get into proximity with and where we do that, all these things are wrong, wrong, wrong and shameful. So, if like Alisha's, voices are quiet, it is because it is better and safer not to have a megaphone. With a megaphone, alongside our presence we broadcast our shame. This shame is now one of the blocks that builds the culture of silent sounds of abjection. It is also a stumbling block. It trips us up on a daily basis, and is a marker of a memory of suffering and trauma. Alisha's whispered poetry gets into a slipstream that avoids this shaming process. The poetry is not a place of shame and offers a possibility of connection here in Moston, Manchester with amazing different others who might now constitute 'the working-class neighbourhood': like the Afghan boy who makes beats and gives Alisha a beat to perform to.

Stave 2

Spirit of Breakdowns Past: Prestwich Mental Hospital in Art Photos and other Lunatic Asylums

Martin Parr's photographs[51] from his 1972 project called Prestwich Mental Hospital were shown again in a new 2018 exhibition at Manchester Art Gallery. They can be found in Natasha

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[49] 'Lady Lazarus', Sylvia Plath, 1964 https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/49000/lady-lazarus
[50] https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/manchester-communication-academy-short-skirt-12527060
[51] https://www.martinparrfoundation.org/product/prestwich-mental-hospital

Howe's catalogue 'Martin Parr: Return to Manchester' published by the art gallery and on the Martin Parr foundation website. I became entranced and obsessed by these photos as like Parr I was a visitor to a Mental Hospital in 1972, visiting my mother, as I continued to do throughout her life which effectively ended in an overdose on a psychiatric ward in the late 1990's. There is something polished and shiny and troubling about Martin Parr's early photographs of Prestwich Mental Hospital, a hospital on the outskirts of Manchester. This is like and not like the polishing undertaken by clinicians to find the right diagnoses and the right medication for the people who are poorly and poor and need a bit of help right now. There is an objectivity in Parr's photographs and a certain deliberate lack of empathy. These are not sentimental working-class family snapshots. Parr was introduced to Prestwich Mental Hospital when the brother of a friend with whom Parr was studying at Manchester Polytechnic was admitted there. In Parr's own commentary on the work, he says he was immediately taken by the possibilities of the space.

In front of Martin Parr's photographs of Prestwich Mental Hospital, I feel a terrible reproach. I do not know the women there. I wonder about the friend who introduced Parr to the space, and about his brother. Is his brother still alive, and if he is, is he still on drugs, and if he is not alive, how did he die? Is he being cared for or neglected 'in the community'? Here though is my brother and my sister and my mother, in any case, reflected back to me and reproachful. My own family members were both forcibly and voluntarily detained in such places at that time. Prestwich Hospital closed finally in 1996, having once been the largest mental hospital in Europe. Rauceby Hospital, my family alma mater, closed in 1997. I do not however think that the working-class political rhetoric of comradeship or brotherhood ordinarily extended to there. Football did though: the football field photograph in Parr's exhibition offers a hope of connection, only to deny it cruelly.

The great football field is empty as the footballer looks rather shyly out at the camera. His stance is ungainly and he is entirely alone on the pitch. He reminds me of Jack Charlton, slightly bald, in an all-white strip, Leeds United. I do not know whether the inmates at Prestwich played in a Wednesday or a Saturday league. The footballer's stance (soccer we mean here) does nothing to suggest that he is missing the other twenty-one players. His isolation is intense. Football pitches, established places of working-class community life, were usually packed out with men, on the field and on the terraces. His isolation is intense, even while he is connected through the football strip, the boots and socks and through the white lines that are already fading, no longer newly marked, and through the empty goal, to a whole way of life and way of being a man. This way of being stretches back through the industrial period and was still finding expression as a form of 'working-class culture' in the North West of England in the 1970's. Even now in 2019, when all the top UK football teams are recruited internationally and the players are multimillionaires, football still retains its significance as a working-class sport. It is still one of the only sports in England not dominated by men and women of privilege, who began their sporting careers in the English Public Schools which offer an elite education to the wealthy.

I gaze at him, and think about Parr, the boy photographer from Surrey newly arrived in Manchester in 1972. The footballer seems awkward, standing so still. He is ready to move, to run for the goal, to hear the roar of the crowd or the applause of his girlfriend, who has turned up to watch him play, and to get wet standing on the side-lines, standing by the touchline on a Saturday afternoon. But he is a fifty-year-old man, or he looks it. He was born nearer the beginning than the end of the most violent of centuries, and was sent to Prestwich in the middle of it, long before the 'post' in post-industrial. What is he doing here now on the walls of

Manchester City Art Gallery and why was he there, then, in Prestwich County Lunatic Asylum? Did he once go quite crazy so his mother had to care for him until she died, and now he is here, as his sister was too old herself to cope with him and anyway did not want to? We can only make an informed guess. A guess informed by our experience of the lives of working-class people, who no longer had any recourse to family support and had to face the shame associated with places like this. The Workhouse. The Lunatic Asylum.

Most of the other photos are of women.

In this sequence of photographs taken at Prestwich Mental Hospital one in particular seems to me to stand out from the others in the harshness of its revealing objectivity. Two particularly ordinary women, toothless as was so common in my childhood then or with bad teeth, two older women, standing under the benign protection of the staff who have turned them into figures of fun. Round their necks are two placards announcing them 'Miss Prestwich 1972' or 'Miss Prestwich 1971'. They look out proudly at the viewer whilst the staff who have decorated them for Christmas stand, equally proudly it seems, behind them. I wonder how these women be other than figures of fun and dire warnings to those current beauties with much more of a claim to the 'Miss World' titles. Memento Mori. Give the residents a paper hat and a flag to wave at a photographer for some Royal Jubilee or other. Lives deteriorate, and the loved ones who are still just about sane look on, powerless to intervene. In any case, the young women standing behind Miss Prestwich 1972 have become the focus of my attention. They are young and their nurses' uniforms are crisply ironed and starched. This is in stark crisp contrast with the shabby, sagging but rather comfortable looking cardigans, buttoned up over equally sagging bodies, which are the special outfit for both the Misses Prestwich. The title speaks of glamour and a kind of meat market all at once. But the picture is the shadow of both of these: a competition of the decrepit and dilapidated, taking place in the old rag and bone shop of the ward.   Now I am sure these young nurses were brought up to respect their elders. I was, although often I didn't. I am forced to remember, what I learned first in childhood and what I see still visiting other family members in care homes, how hard it is in fact to be dealing with the blood or with the faeces of the incontinent day in and day out. It is hard to be dealing with no longer disciplined frail and mortal bodies, with the strange communication and the non-communication that happens in homes for the demented and insane. No wonder at all then that there are days when the places must turn to carnival and everyone (everyone on the staff that is) gets giddy, turns up the music, sings loudly to the Karaoke and makes merry or even gets drunk. I imagine 'If you were the only girl in the world' sounding out loudly as Miss Prestwich reaches out again blatantly asking for a kiss, for a touch, for love, in the only way that is left to her. Oh Mother! And here is Martin Parr, noticing the kind of space which a place like this offers to a photographer.

The Lunatic Asylums like Prestwich grew up in the same period as the industries and, like the industries, they closed. Richard Hoggart, in the classic account of working-class culture 'Uses of Literacy' (1957), wrote, whilst the industries and the asylums were both going strong, of how the sentimentality about and the attachment to 'Mother' grew up at the heart of working-class cultures in which both 'home' and 'Mother' were given an apparently elevated standing. 'Be it never so humble, there's no place like home.'

So when the ones who could not be held on to (because they were insane) were let go of, think of the shame and shaming of failure to provide a home and care that accompanied that. Shame was and is complex. It is shameful at some level not to have been able to care, not to have been able to provide. I associate this in my own family with attempts at and failure to continue in

'being respectable.' I am sure this should not be generalised across all working-class responses to a family member going to Middlewood; or Prestwich; or Rauceby or one of the other places. But a failure to care and a handing over of a family member to such a place was experienced as a shameful event.

Shaming is a ruse of power. Like someone sitting in the stocks as punishment, the laughing stock is a place where someone is put to be publicly shamed and humiliated. You can throw things at them if they are in the stocks and it is permitted to mock them. Power can be shamed but usually only in carnival mode and only for a day. (Putting teachers or clergy in the stocks and paying to throw wet sponges at them: a fundraiser. In the past, those seeking admission to Holy Orders had to undergo 'The Humiliations'.) But the powerless are shamed routinely at the hands of the powerful, and sometimes at the hands of their own community. Such experiences of being scapegoated and put outside the bounds of community life (being sent away to Middlewood or Prestwich) are close to the sacred, to Homo Sacer, to bare life, to life that had no place in the settled order of the industrial respectable working-class community.

Shame, a prevailing form of affect both shaping and rebutted in the direct gaze of Parr's photographs, comes into being as a collective emotion, which nevertheless sharply divides families and communities. As a woman dedicated to care, I feel shamed in the gaze of these photos for not doing enough. We are shamed for not protecting the community which saw its frailest members taken into the asylums, which were always located at some distance from the centres of population, virtually impossible to access without a car. Parr's gaze is that of an outsider and shares in that imposed distance. But it also demands, from this viewer, a kind of reconnection with a working-class politics of solidarity and care.

Stave 3

Spirit of (Revolutionary) Breakdown and of Solidarities Yet to Come

At the point of the defeat of the 1984-5 Miner's Strike in the UK the issue of how the politics of mental health might be addressed within the Labour Movement was sharply in contention. Helen Spandler is the current editor of *Asylum* magazine, [52] which was founded in Sheffield by mental health workers and activists in the North of England who had actively supported the 1984-5 Miners' Strike. In 1986 they became involved in campaigns about 'Community Care' which the Thatcher Government was introducing. They were keen to see patients freed from the old mental hospitals but (rightly as it turned out) fully aware that the impact of the closures might be to leave them isolated and unsupported in the 'community' which was now breaking up. In this context, some activists looked to the models of *Psychiatria Democratica*[53] in Trieste, with its workers co-operatives and collective social support. When *Asylum* was founded, two key members of the collective were psychiatrists Alec Jenner and Tim Kendall, and they invited members of *Psychiatria Democratica* to visit the UK (Spandler, forthcoming). Helen Spandler writes:

> Lyn Bigwood, a psychiatric nurse and active trade unionist in York, heard about the Italian's visit and contacted Jenner. After talking with her, Jenner persuaded a couple of the Italian visitors to stay on to speak at a conference she was organising in Wakefield. The event was for 'rank and file' Health and Social Service workers to

[52] https://asylummagazine.org/
[53] https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=it&u=http://www.psichiatriademocratica.com/&prev=search

discuss the implications of closing the mental hospitals and emerging community care policies. The conference ended up being 'dominated by reports and discussions of the Italian experience of just such a policy (*Asylum,* 1986, 1.1: 2).

At the end of these discussions, a decision was made to set up a magazine to introduce and promote the idea of democratic psychiatry to a British audience. The three co-founders: Jenner, Bigwood and her partner, Phil Virden established *Asylum* to continue discussions and debate the possibilities of democratic mental health care in the UK. It was produced with the help of a small group of Yorkshire-based mental health workers, ex-patients and other interested parties. Appropriately, given its connections to *Psychiatria Democratica*, the magazine was printed by a local worker-ex-patients' co-operative for a number of years.

Helen knows these stories well as a key member of the current *Asylum* collective. I know different versions as my brother Phil Hutchinson was a member of this ex-patient co-operative, Print Aid, and was also a member of the original *Asylum c*ollective. Through our conversations I learn over and over again of the importance of the fragile forms of solidarity offered first by the Print Aid Co-Op in Sheffield, Yorkshire where the magazine was printed for many years and then by *Asylum* magazine. *Asylum* continues to offer a collective voicing of working-class suffering, and elation, and frustration, and exclusion, and joy in the context of struggles both with psy-professionals and, most significantly recently, with the regime of sanctions and punishments associated with claiming welfare benefits in the UK.

Mark Fisher (1968-2017) was one of the keenest commentators on the way the working-class experience of mental and emotional distress changed in the period following the defeat of the Miner's Strike, the end of the Cold War and the success of what he called 'Capitalist Realism.' He highlighted a form which he termed magical voluntarism - a formation in which we come to feel our individual will is all powerful and can change our social circumstances – and its inevitable shadow, depression, and associated worthlessness, uselessness and inferiority which accompany our individual failures to bring about those changes. Where once there was shame at the failure to care for a family member, there is now shame at the inability to be resilient, to 'pull yourself together.' Depression, and taking the tablets that go with depression is now widespread. This is a systematic cruelty, not an individual pathology.

The labour of love is always a dissident and discontented labour. It is happening in places now termed in popular culture 'shit estates' through small initiatives such as the one Alisha took part in. And so I want to raise the ghosts of the asylum in living gatherings as part of a process of raising what we can term 'care consciousness'. Classed social relations of care are found in both waged and unwaged labour most often in the past and to this day undertaken by women. There is emotional labour too involved in affirming the right to be cared for and to feel belonging as well as in affirming the need to feel love and give care as well in encountering the pain experienced in neglect or abandonment. This emotional labour is full of discontent with a class system which drives us into positions where we are forced to neglect the very values of care which are woven through the narratives of working-class women's lives.

Mental health workers from North Manchester were amongst those present at the meeting with *Psychiatria Democratica* and also at the Chesterfield Conference of 1987 alongside members of the Hearing Voices Network and *Asylum* Magazine collective. This was a gathering in Chesterfield Derbyshire – when Tony Benn was MP for Chesterfield - what the UK Press termed 'the loony left.' Those present who were connected even if loosely with *Asylum*- myself included – wore lapel badges saying 'We are the loony left.' When new movements which are

reported in *Asylum* –for example 'Recovery in the Bin'[54] - challenge once again the hegemonic prevalence of medical diagnoses of - both distress and recovery, locating clearly once again the social, political and environmental conditions, in which diagnosed mental illness emerges, I celebrate. 'We live in a time when it is not only animal species that are disappearing; so too are the words, expressions, and gestures of human solidarity. A cloak of silence has been forcibly imposed on emancipatory struggle: the struggles of women, or of the unemployed, the 'marginalized', and immigrants - the new proletarians' (Guattari, 1989: 134).

As a result of the work of collectives such as *Asylum* Magazine, the extinction of forms of solidarity is not yet complete. *Asylum*, 'Recovery in the Bin' and others stand in continuity with the working-class 'care consciousness' which formed a significant aspect of the movement to close the County Lunatic Asylums: those spaces whose possibility inspired the photographer Martin Parr. The ghosts of both the survivors of the Lunatic Asylums and of the survivors of the Miner's Strike are crying out to be freed from the prison of collective depression. The imagination of a more collective transformation of class society and of new forms of solidarity makes its ghostly presence felt. We are haunted by a future that failed to happen, when the Yorkshire Trade Unionists met with the founders of *Asylum* magazine in the 1980's, in the aftermath of the Miner's Strike. It is a future that therefore remains as a possibility, a tangible hope for Alisha and all the rest.

Author Bio

Janet Batsleer has worked for 30 years in the field of youth and community work. Her research has focussed on anti-racist and feminist approaches to youth work; on the theory and practice of informal education in youth work settings; on alternative education traditions and the resources they offer to people whose lives are conducted at the margins of the mainstream. She is currently leading a team on a significant three-year ethnographic study of young people's social and political participation across seven European cities, including Manchester: the **Partispace** project. Her publications include: *Young People and the Struggle for Participation,* 2019, Routledge, *Youth Working with Girls and Women in Community Settings: A Feminist Perspective,* 2013, Ashgate and *Rewriting English,* 2013, Routledge.

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[54] https://recoveryinthebin.org/

Trotter, Jr. Joe William (2019) *Workers on Arrival: Black Labor in the Making of America*, University of California Press, Oakland, CA.

Review by Scott Henkel

Joe William Trotter, Jr's book *Workers on Arrival: Black Labor in the Making of America* is the type of book that shapes an entire field of knowledge. It is the type of book that I wish every senior scholar would write: a book that only becomes possible to produce after a significant amount of time and effort in careful study, paying attention to the broad movements in the field and the thousands of nuances that it produces. Entire fields of knowledge are diffuse things, filled with debates, as well as general views, developed and honed through those debates. It is very valuable to have a book that, in Trotter's words, 'synthesizes research on black urban labor and working-class history since the early twentieth century,' (185) and which achieves that task in such an admirable fashion.

In tracing that synthesis, Trotter charts a diverse yet coherent intellectual trajectory starting from W. E. B. Du Bois, Charles H. Wesley, Sterling D. Spero, Abram L. Harris—writers of the 'first generation' of scholarship in the field (186). This early research was the first organized rebuttal to the white supremacist writing from the late 19th and early 20th century, what Du Bois, in *Black Reconstruction*, called 'The Propaganda of History.' Trotter builds from that point through the contemporary moves in the field, in all its range, from sex work (36) and gig work (94), questions about the 'long Civil Rights movement' (202), the digital humanities (96), the turn from a national to a transnational frame (205), environmental issues (203), and more.

Put plainly, the contribution that *Workers on Arrival* makes to the field is to organize an exhaustive record of the field's major moves. It is difficult to convey the amount of labor that goes into producing such a book, but nearly every paragraph includes an endnote citation that references perhaps a dozen pieces of scholarship. (Readers of the *Journal of Working-Class Studies* will note that the book's first citation is to work by Michael Zweig [xv, 211]). The result is a wealth of material for several audiences, from graduate students seeking to learn the broad intellectual trends of the discipline to scholars seeking paths for particular details.

It would be easy for such a book to turn into a mere list, but that is what sets Trotter's book apart from others with a similar approach: *Workers on Arrival* weaves together a vast narrative of broad movements in the field, but also delivers a rich level of detail. A great volume of information and evidence sets the conditions to show broad trends, as well as the exceptions to and nuances of those trends (11). Therefore, the whole of Trotter's book comes to be far more than the sum of its parts.

Even though the sweep of this history is broad and inclusive, people and their contexts come alive. Several examples show some of the rich detail. For instance, the story of the Colored National Labor Union, organized in 1869, whose members at that year's convention declared that 'our mottoes are liberty and labor, enfranchisement and education. The spelling-book and the hoe, the hammer and the vote, the opportunity to work and to rise… we ask for ourselves

and our children' (67). Or the story of Dr. Henry Ossian Sweet, a Howard-educated dentist, who moved into a previously all-white neighborhood in Detroit. When a white mob came to his house, Sweet shot back at them, killing one person in the mob and wounding another. When the police arrived, they left the men in the mob alone, but arrested the occupants of the house and placed them on trial for murder (100). Or the story of Paul Kirk, who was the UAW's first paid Black organizer (111). Or the story of Dora Jones, a Black domestic worker who helped to form the New York-based Domestic Workers Union (117). This, ultimately, is the art of *Workers on Arrival*: thousands of stories like these, represented in the hundreds of works of scholarship that Trotter cites, accumulate to show both the complexity and the coherence of the field of Black Working-Class Studies and History, and of the millions of people that make up the experiences and narratives of that field.

A possible objection—which, in this case, I do not share—is that given this book's task (a broad, inclusive work of synthesis) and its scope (a history of 20th century scholarship of Black workers, covering the colonial era to the present), such a book must find a shared vocabulary to discuss these different examples in some coherent fashion. For Trotter, the key term in that vocabulary is 'worker.' Of course, the conditions of work, the types of work, and the degree of autonomy in particular cases all vary: the work of Black women differs from the work of Black men; enslaved workers are categorically distinct from waged workers because enslaved workers are themselves sold as commodities, whereas waged workers are not (xvi); work in urban settings differs from work in rural settings; the dangers and precarities of particular types of work vary by context. For Trotter, therefore, the key term 'Black worker' is a capacious, flexible, dynamic category. It is active and productive. Trotter uses an array of more specific terms when referring to specific cases: in the antebellum U.S., for example, 'southern free wage earners of color' and 'enslaved African American workers' (17). Yet even given a diverse catalog of tremendous exploitation, domination and dis-enfranchisement, in this reading, 'worker' is a category expressing immense power, and it is the category that Trotter uses to make the field cohere, successfully in my judgement.

Trotter concludes the book with an Appendix titled 'Interpreting the African American Working-Class Experience: An Essay on Sources.' The many rich details in the book's chapters drive those chapters forward; the 'Essay on Sources' drives the book as a whole. The essay on sources tracks changes in perspectives in the body of research, showing in broad strokes from where scholarly trends have come, how they shifted, and where their trajectories may point. This is incredibly useful work and, as I noted above, this is a perspective that only comes after years of study and participation in scholarly debates. It would be impossible to write this book credibly without putting in that time and labor.

Ultimately, Trotter's book brings the evidence necessary to show the complexity of Black Working-Class Studies and History, showing that, in his words,

> African Americans have a unique history of labor exploitation and wealth creation on American soil. Along with the labor of men and women of diverse ethnic groups, black workers are critical to any discussion of the nation's productivity, politics, and the future of work in today's global economy. [...] Drawing upon the conceptual and substantive insights of nearly a century of research, *Workers on Arrival* focuses on black urban labor and working-class history, documenting the movement of urban black workers from the periphery of the African American working class during the first three hundred years to its center during the twentieth century. It calls attention not only to the ongoing coercive dimensions of this process but also to the equally important ways that

people of African descent gradually forged transnational liberation movements to free themselves from both local and global forms of inequality (xv, xv-xvi).

My expectation, and my hope, is that current and future generations use *Workers on Arrival* as a foundation or a touchstone for their work. The research that will build from Trotter's book will be all the richer for standing on his shoulders and seeing this greater perspective.

Reviewer Bio

Scott Henkel is the President of the Working-Class Studies Association. He is also the director of the Wyoming Institute for Humanities Research and Associate Professor in the departments of English and African American and Diaspora Studies at the University of Wyoming. He is the author of *Direct Democracy: Collective Power, the Swarm, and the Literatures of the Americas*, which won the 2018 C. L. R. James Award for Best Published Book for Academic or General Audiences from the WCSA.

Greenhouse, Steven (2019) *Beaten Down, Worked Up: The Past, Present, and Future of American Labor*, Alfred A. Knopf, NY.

Review by Jack Metzgar

Terrence Wise works two jobs making $7.50 an hour at Pizza Hut and $9.47 an hour at Burger King for a combined 12- to 16-hour day. His girlfriend Moe, with whom he has three daughters, is a home health aide (median wage: $12 an hour). They get $240 a month in food stamps, and the children are covered by Medicaid, but Terrence and Moe have no health insurance for themselves. Though Terrence bemoans having so little time with his daughters and not being able to afford the 'real wedding' Moe wants, they can get by if nothing bad happens. But it did. Moe sprained her back lifting an obese patient and could not work for three months. They missed rent payments, got evicted, and had to move in with Moe's brother – 'eleven people crowded into a three-bedroom apartment,' with all the strain and animosity that can cause.

Terrence and Moe's is just one of the many intimate stories Steven Greenhouse tells to illustrate the myriad ways workers are 'beaten down' in American workplaces today. But the couple also shows up later to illustrate the 'worked up' part of Greenhouse's book. Terrence was one of the strikers (at both jobs) in Kansas City's Fight for $15 campaign, where his storefront preaching skills made him an ideal spokesperson for the campaign, as Moe and their daughters joined him on the picket line.

Beaten Down, Worked Up is a strange book with unusual ambitions. Greenhouse's 2008 *The Big Squeeze: Tough Times for the American Worker* documented in heartbreaking detail the deteriorating conditions of workers across many different economic sectors, none more than retail and warehousing. This book attempts to evoke those conditions to a reading public he presumes knows about them, and then to show how labor unions once dramatically overcame even worse conditions, why those unions have been depleted and destroyed, and some of the new struggles, tactics and strategies that provide hope for a resurgent labor movement.

Labor historians and activists will justifiably criticize each part of the book for being relatively superficial in recounting current mainstream progressive conventional wisdom. But all four parts read together present a compelling case for labor unions in today's context. Imagine general middle-class readers, people who read serious books like this, who have little knowledge or experience of labor unions, and who have recently gained some sympathy for them. This book should enhance those sympathies as it fills gaps in those readers' knowledge across a broad front. One can only hope it becomes a best seller.

Greenhouse, *The New York Times*' labor and workplace reporter for two decades, is gifted at creating poignant profiles of people and their situations while at the same time illustrating larger trends and social realities. He must be especially good at winning a wide variety of people's trust because he gets the kind of details that people are often uncomfortable revealing. He brings working people alive in all their complexity for folks who don't know many, while at the same time providing the thrill of recognition for those of us who do. While this is not

quite poetry, it is amazing how each of his profiles and stories exemplifies some larger reality, whether historical or contemporary.

The book's brief history makes no attempt to be comprehensive or synthetic. Rather, Greenhouse retells the stories of a handful of struggles and the people who participated in them: the 1909 shirtwaist workers' strike known as the Uprising of the 20,000; the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire and its influence on Frances Perkins; the United Auto Workers' sit-down strike at General Motors in Flint in 1937; Walter Reuther as the so-called 'builder of the middle class'; and the 1968 Memphis sanitation workers' strike during which Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. This approach is bound to irritate those with a more extensive and complicated grasp of American labor history, but taken together these individual stories very evocatively illustrate the huge accomplishments of the labor movement in the first two-thirds of the 20th century.

The section on unions' long-term demise is more analytic and, predictably, overemphasizes publicly visible events like the failed PATCO strike in 1981. But even where you might disagree with what Greenhouse backgrounds or outright neglects, his analysis is broadly sophisticated and credible, based as it is on a thorough exploration of the 'demise' literature. And, again, what makes Greenhouse's account special is his gift for weaving humanly revealing stories in and through his analysis.

I found the final part of the book, on current worker struggles, to be its strongest. Greenhouse covered many of these struggles as a reporter, and he has access to a wider variety of sources than most other reporters. The campaigns he covers are all pretty well-known – the Fight for $15, the Immokalee farmworkers in Florida, the dramatic revival of the Los Angeles labor movement, the recent teachers' strikes in conservative states, gig workers organizing, and various efforts at labor-management and labor-community partnerships. As someone who followed all of these campaigns as they were developing, participating in a few, I found Greenhouse's accounts of each especially revealing since he so skillfully narrates a story from beginning to end while what I observed from the outside were disparate events as they came into and out of my awareness. To have all these well-told stories serially presented was both revealing and heartening, fulfilling Greenhouse's obvious intention of providing hope for the future of a revived labor movement, most likely in new and different forms than in the past.

This points to a weakness which is the other side of the book's strength. Greenhouse, as reporters do, is looking for dramatic new things that gain widespread public attention – new forms of worker organization particularly. In doing so, he misses how various traditional contract-based unions have transformed themselves by revitalizing their internal organizing and broadening their focus on the public good. I'm in Chicago where Illinois AFSCME recently won a series of sweeping improvements in state workers' contracts after heroically defending themselves against four years of GOP Governor Bruce Rauner's scorched-earth attacks. Likewise, the Chicago Teachers Union just won a two-week strike where key issues were about having nurses, social workers, and librarians in every school, thereby 'bargaining for the public good.' Both unions have traditional union structures, but over more than a decade they have been transforming themselves by systematically organizing their own members for battles both in the workplace and within the broader public. Though some new ideas played a role in each case, none were nearly as important as the long-term, steady organizing work it took to activate and unify workers around common goals.

For people in unions today or tomorrow, these processes of internal transformation within traditional structures are likely more important, and more hopefully inspiring, than even Greenhouse's most inspiring stories of creative new struggles. But for general readers, *Beaten Down, Worked Up* may be the single best introduction to the past, present, and potential of worker organization in America.

Reviewer Bio

Jack Metzgar is Emeritus Professor of Humanities at Roosevelt University in Chicago, a WCSA past president, and author of *Striking Steel: Solidarity Remembered* (Temple U. Press 2000).

Friedman, Sam, and Laurison, Daniel (2018) *The Class Ceiling: Why It Pays to Be Privileged,* Policy Press, Bristol, UK.

Markovits, Daniel (2019) *The Meritocracy Trap: How America's Foundational Myth Feed Inequality, Dismantles the Middle Class, and Devours the Elite,* Penguin Press, New York, NY.

Reviews by Tim Strangleman

Neither faith in, nor critiques of the idea of meritocracy are new. Michael Young's famous 1958 book *The Rise of Meritocracy* argued that class privilege and advantage were likely to be amplified as financial and cultural capital passed across generations in families. Each new generation would benefit from existing structural advantage created by their parents and even grandparents. They might be talented individuals, hardworking and driven to succeed, but they would owe their achievements in part to a myriad of inherited class advantages. Young intended the title of his book as a satire, but for many, it seems to promote the ideal of egalitarian opportunity.

A recent rash of books critically revisit the ideas in Young's now six-decade-old book. In *The Class Ceiling: Why it Pays to be Privileged,* Sam Friedman and Daniel Laurison provide a wonderfully accessible account of contemporary class analysis in the UK, examining the complex ways in which class influences life chances. The authors leaven the numbers with fascinating vignettes from the field showing how successful middle-class professionals are sometimes aware of their own class privilege. As one put it, 'I was lucky to have a following wind.' The book does not offer a crude demonization of privilege. Instead, the study gets to the heart of how talent and hard work don't sufficiently explain how good jobs get allocated. Often times, as *The Class Ceiling* shows, it's the lucky breaks that already privileged people enjoy that allow them to achieve yet more success.

Take 'Mark' for example, a successful TV executive in his late thirties. Mark relates to Friedman and Laurison his own 'following wind.' The son of successful educated professionals, he was privately educated before gaining a place at Oxford. While he was at Oxford, Mark's parents paid for him to go on a holiday to New York to do research for his undergraduate dissertation. He stayed in Manhattan for free in an apartment owned by a contact his father had met on the side-lines of a rugby match. This same contact then provided Mark with an introduction to the television industry. The upside of the anecdote is that Mark is fully aware of his privilege and luck.

The Class Ceiling is peppered with similar tales of advantage and their mirror image, such as the pairing of Nathan and Jim. Nathan's CV is littered with prestigious roles in TV and film. He attributes his success to 'just working incredibly hard' and 'making good decisions' like turning down jobs he didn't believe in. As he explains, 'no job is worth sacrificing yourself for.' Jim, by contrast, has decided to leave the acting profession after 'sacrificing' himself and his career by taking the kind of parts Nathan can afford to avoid. Jim's working-class origins still constrain him in his forties. He struggled so hard to get into the acting profession, but the typecast jobs he has to take ultimately end up damaging his career and lead to offers drying up altogether. Class both constrains and enables after all.

The old formula so loved of politicians and defenders of the status quo that success can be reduced to Talent + Hard Work = Success is well and truly nailed by *The Class Ceiling* and its intimate stories of success and failure, which show how the safety net allows some to take chances and enjoy opportunities. What emerges is a profound story of wasted, unrealised talent for those from working-class backgrounds.

This theme is picked up in another important recent book, *The Meritocracy Trap* by Daniel Markovits. For Markovits, meritocracy isn't working for either the losers *or* the winners. For middle-class families, the stress involved in 'making it', even for those with privilege, involves constantly monitoring children's progress, pushing them to excel in a bewildering array of extracurricular activities so that they can compete for the jobs or opportunities in the future. *The Meritocracy Trap* highlights the effect this has on both parents and their off-spring, creating profound and enduring anxiety and mental health issues. The solution for Markovits involves radically improving education for all social classes to take away incentives to leverage class privilege in schools and colleges.

In *The Rise of Meritocracy,* Young described precisely the 'following wind' that Friedman and Laurison talk about in *The Class Ceiling* seven decades later. Sheer talent and hard work wasn't then, and isn't now, going to allow those further down the social scale the chances they need to really succeed. One of my colleagues who researches drugs policy has this neat formulation that politicians 'need to follow the available evidence, not what people would prefer to be true.' This is also true for commentators who defend the common-sense view of meritocracy that talent and hard work will out. In study after study, social scientists repeatedly show that class and other forms of stratification get in the way of merit. Privilege, or the lack of it, shapes individuals' merit, and it can undermine someone with great talent and commitment, or give someone an extra push. So what do we do in the face of the enduring attraction of meritocracy? It helps to keep repeating the inconvenient truth to anyone that will listen. Books like *The Class Ceiling* and *The Meritocracy Trap* help enormously by making complex arguments accessible to a wider public, providing the numbers but also giving names and faces to what those numbers represent.

Note: This review originally appeared on the *Working-Class Perspectives* blog

Reviewer Bio

Tim Strangleman is Professor of Sociology at the University of Kent, UK. He is the author of *Voices of Guinness: An Oral History of the Park Royal Brewery* (2019), and is co-editor

(with Christie Launius and Michele Fazio) of the forthcoming *Routledge International Handbook of Working-Class Studies.*

Eribon, Didier (2013) *Returning to Reims,* Semiotext(e), Los Angeles, CA.

Review by John Lennon and Magnus Nilsson

In a 1982 interview with Rex Martin, Michael Foucault stated, 'I don't feel that it is necessary to know exactly what I am. The main interest in life and work is to become someone else that you were not in the beginning.' While Foucault was speaking about the ability to grow as an intellectual, Didier Eribon's fascinating philosophical-sociological memoir *Returning to Reims* shows the possible cost of becoming one, especially if one starts out from a different social position than Foucault's. Whereas Foucault grew up in a wealthy family and went to elite schools, Eribon comes from a family of poor, working-class men and women: maids, factory workers, coal miners, and window washers. Most children from such families stop school at 14 and take on crushing jobs; they, in turn, have their own kids early and often, experiencing a cyclical poverty that settles within their bodies. Many drink too much and suffer from anxiety and depression; they are also often violent and homophobic. This is the world from which Eribon escapes, running to Paris to, as he states, 'invent' himself as a gay intellectual while disidentifying from his family and class origins.

In his writings, intellectual study, and lifestyle, Eribon certainly does become a different person; by returning to his hometown Reims – this Cathedral city and center for Champagne production in Northern France, which is also a place where deindustrialization and neoliberal politics is taking its toll on large parts of the population – he confronts a part of himself that he has disowned. While spending a good part of his professional life scrutinizing one aspect of his identity, his homosexuality, he has hitherto avoided analyzing his working-class origins. But, in *Returning to Reims* he asks himself what it means to be working-class. As a philosopher and sociologist who was a zealous Jean-Paul Sartre acolyte before studying (and becoming friends with) Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault, his reminiscences are centrally about issues of power, connecting his personal story to a larger milieu of a decades-long French working-class political shift from left-wing identification to association with racist right-wing politics. While growing up, Eribon's family – like many other class-conscious workers – voted solidly Communist in the elections, but now they vote mostly for far-right candidates. This memoir deals with Eribon's initial suppression of his family's roots, uncovering them to see where he has come from and where his country is heading.

Eribon returns to the area of his childhood shortly after the death of his father, a man whom he hated through his whole life (just like Foucault) and severed all communication with after leaving for Paris. When he returns, he is unable to recognize in a photo the 'tyrant' who worked in a factory (when employed) from age 14 to 56 and only sees a 'pathetic figure' who has been beaten down from age and a system that 'exploited him shamelessly.' While his hatred ended with his father's death, he certainly has no forgiveness for the man. He is more sympathetic towards his mother, and he traces backward, telling the story of his maternal grandmother who abandoned all of her children in an orphanage. Eribon's mother was therefore unable to finish school (a lifelong regret) and instead married a man whom she did not love, existing within a life of physical and emotional violence. She, too, worked in a factory when money was tight and her husband faced unemployment. Eribon's three brothers were loutish and violent, and when he was young, he rejected his family's brutishness by desiring a life of the mind, physically and socially apart from the local rural bars and the physical punishment of a factory

life. After leaving Reims, Eribon became a journalist who moved easily within the intellectual circles of France before becoming a professor of Sociology and author of a respected biography of Michael Foucault and a ground-breaking sociological tract about 'the gay question,' translated into English as *Insult and the Making of the Gay Self*.

In one way, then, *Returning to Reims* is a memoir that underlines the cost of social mobility, which often manifests as individual movement. For Eribon to live the life of the intellectual, he needed to leave his family behind, and, as he states bluntly, 'I was selfish.' However, this insight is a new one; it comes to him only when he revisits his hometown and he begins to question why he had never written specifically about the working class:

> Why, when I have written so much about processes of domination, have I never written about forms of domination based on class? . . . Why, when I have had such an intense experience of forms of shame related to class, shame in relation to the milieu in which I grew up, why, when once I had arrived in Paris and started meeting people of such different class backgrounds I would often find myself lying to them about my class origins, or feeling embarrassed when admitting my background in front of them, why had it never occurred to me to take up this problem in a book or article?

The intellectual world is not the only social space in which Eribon has been troubled by his class background. At a young age, he joined a radical Trotskyite organization. However, his relationship to the working class – and especially to his own class background – was marked by a high degree of ambivalence: 'politically, I was on the side of the workers, yet I detested to be part of their world.' Thus, even *within the communist left*, he felt ashamed of his belonging to the working class, which may appear a bit puzzling to those of us who come from countries where communist activists usually wear their (not always bonâ fide) proletarian credentials on their sleeves.

By returning and connecting to his own past, Eribon works through his loathing and pinpoints large structural injustices that have led to the working class embracing far-right discourses. He argues that the Left political establishment has abandoned the working class. During the 1980s and 90s, Left politicians argued for individual rights and responsibilities instead of class solidarity, clearing a path for Macron's neo-liberal austerity measures and the National Rally's (formerly National Front) racist rhetoric of blame. By searching through his family's history, Eribon argues that the working class was never a global proletariat whose ties were ideologically fashioned; instead, by voting communist, workers were primarily rejecting their daily lives of suffering. When the Left started blaming them for their own poverty, they began seeking another culprit.

Nevertheless, Eribon also emphasizes the importance of ideology for class formation. When the French Left stopped interpellating (to use Althusser's term) workers as members of the working class, they stopped self-identifying with this class and instead found a new way of organizing and of expressing their world view in the political far right. Eribon's highlighting of this connection between ideological interpellation and class formation means that he is critical of those who think that class consciousness is a product of class position. On the contrary, he argues that the oppressed possess no 'spontaneous knowing' and that the 'position that any individual occupies within the social world and within the field of labor is not sufficient to determine that person's 'class interest' or their perception of that interest.' Because he does not believe in 'spontaneous knowing,' Eribon discards 'any sociology or any philosophy focusing on the 'point of view of the actors' and the 'meaning they give to their actions.' It

risks, he argues, 'simply reproducing a shorthand version of the mystified relation that social agents maintain their own practices and desires, and consequently does nothing more than serve to perpetuate the world as it currently stands—an ideology of justification (for the established order).'

Even though 'social shame' is a central concept in his analysis of class-politics, Eribon critiques those theorists who disconnect class from capitalist exploitation and treat class injustice as a fundamentally political or cultural problem. According to Eribon, there is nothing emancipatory in a 'philosophy of democracy' 'that is content simply to celebrate the primary 'equality' of each and every person and to rehearse the notion that each individual is endowed with the same 'competence' as everyone else.' He finds fault in this philosophy because 'it never inquires as to how the results of this 'competence' can change directions—for better or worse—on the individual level, or on the level of a social group, according to place and circumstance.'

Eribon's theoretical understanding of class helps him to avoid making *Returning to Reims* a story of victimhood. Eribon does not romanticize the working class, and by laying bare the brutality that he faced while growing up, he justifies his need to leave his background behind. In this way, his book retells a story that is well-known from older working-class literature, namely how workers need to distance themselves from the milieus in which they have grown up in order to become political militants or intellectuals who can contribute to political class struggle. This story is important still today, as evidenced by the ever-widening genre of working-class memoirs that has gained recent popularity. In the U.S., the perhaps best-known example is J.D. Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy*. Like *Returning to Reims,* it is frank in its discussion of the way poverty breeds violence, substance abuse, dysfunctional familial relationships and unhealthy mental states. Both works look backward at the authors' humble rural upbringings from a middle-class professional perspective, and both do not like the view. The difference is that while Vance places the blame for working-class exploitation almost solely on the backs of the workers, Eribon connects their poverty to systems of power – rooted in capitalism – that place a 'guilty verdict' on the working class even before they are born.

For example, Eribon is extremely critical of the provincial schooling system that creates working-class alienation, whether it be primary schools that are mere waiting stations until students can legally leave for the factory or local universities that can 'be nothing more—or barely anything more—than a dead end.' He directs his angriest prose (and personal take-down) towards the conservative sociologist Raymond Aron, a 'pompous and tedious professor' and bourgeois ideologue partly responsible for 'the hegemony of right-wing forms of thought on French intellectual life' in the 1980s and 1990s. As he writes, 'I cannot help but see the infernal machine in the school system, given the way it functions in front of our eyes.' Unlike Vance, who uses his story as a Republican talking point for his rags-to-riches story of the need for personal responsibility, Eribon shows that if he happens to 'make it' and escape the poor working-class, this does not disprove the systematic violence that keeps them situated and powerless. Defending the working class without fetishizing them, Eribon's understanding of class is both personal and political. In this way, his book reads as a memoir, an academic analysis, and a political tract, with discussions of his father's drunken fistfights interspersed with clear analysis of both Foucauldian theory and the development of French society. The toggling between related genres differs from recent working-class memoirs like Cash Carraway's *Skint Estate* or Stephanie Land's *Maid* that stay solidly within the world of the author. Eribon, instead, is always more interested in looking outward. Because of this view, he has become an inspiration for Edouard Louis, the French memoirist of *The End of Eddy* and

Who Killed My Father? which details a similar narrative of growing up as a gay youth within a provincial working-class environment and who has stated that he is indebted to Eribon and *Returning to Reims,* which was first published in France in 2009, for giving him the freedom to tell his story.

Eribon left Reims so he could be an intellectual and live the life of the mind. When he returns to Reims, he refuses to give that up. As previously stated, Foucault argues that he writes so he can become someone else. Eribon did become someone else, but he shows that his previous self directly influenced who he became. *Returning to Reims* is not just an essential addition to the growing field of working-class memoirs but it is also important to the larger field of working-class studies because it insists upon situating the personal within a clear socio-political context. For readers of current U.S. working-class memoirs which tend to be more invested in personal stories of working-class lives without directly connecting to larger historical and political forces that shape these lives (Sarah Smarsh's *Heartland* being a primary exception), reading *Returning to Reims* shows the potential of the working-class memoir to engage the ways the personal and the political selves are fiercely interrelated. It's an important addition to this field of working-class memoirs and has the potential to shape the larger political discourse of class politics.

Reviewer Bios

We wish to acknowledge equal work in our review and the order of names is alphabetical.

John Lennon is an associate professor of English and the Director of Graduate Studies at the University of South Florida. With Magnus, he co-edited the collection *Working-Class Literature(s): Historical and International Perspectives*. A second volume from Stockholm University Press will be forthcoming in 2020. His book *Boxcar Politics: The Hobo in Culture and Literature 1869-1956* (2014) explored the working-class politics of hopping trains. His current book project, *Conflict Graffiti*: *From Revolution to Gentrification, the Politics of Writing on Walls*, examines graffiti as an evolving language of protest that is rooted in the specific material culture of a particular area but is read, interpreted and remixed by a global audience.

Magnus Nilsson is professor of comparative literature and pro dean at the Faculty of Culture and Society, Malmö University (Sweden). Working-class literature across media and languages is his main research interest. His English-language publications include the monograph *Literature and Class: Aesthetical-Political Strategies in Modern Swedish Working-Class Literature* (2014), the book chapter 'No Class? Class and Class Politics in British Heavy Metal' (2009), and the journal article 'Working-Class Comics? Proletarian Self-Reflexiveness in Mats Källblad's Graphic Novel *Hundra år i samma klass*', 2018.

Clark, Ben and Hubble, Nick, eds. (2018) *Working-Class Writing: Theory and Practice*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York, NY.

Review by Courtney Pina Miller

Working-Class Writing: Theory and Practice, edited by Ben Clarke and Nick Hubble, is an ambitious and timely project that carefully considers the state of canonical and non-canonical working-class writing in the age of Trump and Brexit. The collection's title begs the question that nearly every study of working-class writing feels obligated to answer: 'How does one define 'working-class literature'?' It is a question that has troubled scholars of working-class literature since the emergence of the field in the 1970s (see, for example, writings by Paul Lauter, Janet Zandy, Renny Christopher, Carolyn Whitson, William DeGenaro, and Sherry Linkon). These scholars, among others, have identified qualities that make texts working class, and have continued to probe whether working-class literature is best understood as that written *by*, *about*, and/or *for* the working class. If you grab this collection looking for a definitive answer to this enduring question, you may be disappointed. However, others (myself included) see this as the volume's strength—it showcases working-class writing, in theory and in practice, as a dynamic field of study which spans across time, geography, and genre. In fact, the collection seemingly suggests that settling on a clean and tidy definition of working-class writing would cause more harm than good.

Clarke and Hubble are explicit about the intentions of this volume—the purpose is *not* to offer a comprehensive analysis or definitive examination of 'working-class writing viewed from the perspective of 2018' (13). Indeed, this volume looks forward just as much as it looks back. Instead, the collection suggests that 'working-class writing and representation over the decades ahead requires new approaches,' spotlights class-focused analysis as having 'a central role within academic literary study' (13), and persuasively demonstrates the social, cultural, and political reasons why working-class writing is consequential in these uncertain times.

As its subtitle suggests, this volume examines both the theoretical and practical aspects of working-class studies because it 'must continually explore and define the field it analyses' (6). Various thematic and theoretical threads are woven throughout the collection, which begins with two chapters that are particularly self-conscious about the role working-class theory has in literary studies, as well as its complex relationship to the role and identity of working-class academics. Clarke's chapter challenges the long enduring belief that working-class writing is dependent upon conventional realist aesthetic practices. By examining interwar texts like James Hanley's *Men in Darkness*, James Barke's *Major Operation,* and Jack Hilton's *Caliban Shrieks,* Clarke argues for the recognition of neglected working-class writers not merely alongside canonical modernists like Joyce, but instead to contemplate how interwar writers rethink modernist aesthetic and political possibilities without being confined by their conventional realist forms and histories. Cassandra Falke's chapter is dually invested in thinking about working-class writing and scholarship by working-class academics. To focus on the opportunity working-class scholars have to offer to the field of literary studies, Falke blends personal reflection of her own working-class background with commentary on contemporary U.S. and U.K. gaps in income and educational attainment. Among this

collection's many outstanding chapters, Falke's direct engagement with the intellectual, pedagogical, and personal commitments of working-class academics makes it stand out.

Within the first section of the collection, an intriguing debate emerges between Luke Seaber and Natasha Periyan, whose chapters identify and contemplate how early twentieth-century writers participate in different versions of class passing. Seaber examines the phenomenon of 'social passing' in which upper- or middle-class writers, like T.S. Eliot and James Joyce, narratively pass as working- or lower-middle class. Seaber offers the provocative and persuasive suggestion that perhaps canonical modernists were more conservative than their predecessors, since they seemingly disallow working-class voices to speak for themselves. Periyan's chapter subtly challenges this contention by examining two versions of Virginia Woolf's published Introduction to *Life as We Have Known It,* a collection of testimonials by members of the Women's Co-operative Guild in early twentieth-century England. Periyan unpacks Woolf's candid reflection on the Guild's 1913 Congress, the women who spoke there, and the differences between their lives and hers. Periyan argues that Woolf's prefatory material validates these records of working-class experience and offers a distinction between democratic art and working-class writing. Periyan's chapter not only offers interesting contrasts to Seaber's preceding chapter, but also counters the enduring criticism of Woolf's elitism and snobbery.

Another intriguing inter-chapter dialogue that surfaces are two different examinations of mid-century working-class writing as it intersects with race and London. Matti Ron's study of 'Windrush Generation' writers ER Braithwaite, Sam Selvon, and George Lamming uses Bakhtin and Vološinov as theoretical frameworks to analyze the use of Black vernacular. This narrative strategy, Ron asserts, captures the intermingling of race, class, and migrant-status in texts that imagine the experience of the Black British working-class in mid-century Caribbean London. Like Ron, Jason Finch's chapter contemplates race, class, and London and complicates typical assumptions about 1930s and 1960s era East Enders through a focus on Jewish writers who were, in fact, socially mobile. Through a meticulous biographical and literary study of Simon Blumenfeld and Alexander Baron, Finch theorizes the notion of boundary-crossing as cultural, classed, geographic, and artistic. Finch convincingly asserts that to best understand Jewish East End writers of the time is to resist the temptation to merely class them as 'Jews' or as 'British working-class writers.' One needs to unpack the nuances between (and within) these reductive categories, and to do so, Finch suggests, usefully destabilizes the categories themselves.

Considerations of race and geography are nuanced by chapters that perform postcolonial readings of working-class theory and fiction. Jack Windle develops a theoretical framework for examining working-class writing that foregrounds its marginal status in literary studies. Windle examines the 'arrival' of theory in Britain alongside the interwoven histories of the British working-class and (post)colonial peoples to develop a bold and interdisciplinary approach to primary texts that builds upon postcolonial, feminist, and social theories that have refined literary studies since the mid-twentieth century. Sabujkoli Bandopadhyay's chapter argues that continuity exists between the colonial working-class of the subcontinent and the British working classes during the late colonial period. Bandopadhyay offers a compelling postcolonial analysis of Mulk Raj Anand's novel *Coolie* with an argument situated between E.P. Thompson's well-known assertion about the 'making' of the English working-class and Dipesh Chakrabarty's critique of Thompson's exclusion of colonial workers. Bandopadhyay's chapter offers unique insights into how and why expanding the understanding of the working-class subject depends upon key historical and geographic revisions.

While many chapters complicate the relationship between working-class literature and canonization, Simon Lee and Pamela Fox are particularly invested in analyzing working-class form and genre. Lee examines British kitchen sink realism to consider how this movement challenges and expands the norms and conventions of British working-class fiction. Drawing from a familiar body of spatial theorists (e.g., Lefebvre, Foucault, Harvey, and Soja), Lee considers both theatrical forms like John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* and Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey*, as well as the novel, like Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. Paying careful attention to classed spaces, Lee ultimately suggests that kitchen sink realism offers a unique class consciousness that unifies working-class people during a moment of vast and alienating change. Also a meditation on form, Fox discusses former mill worker Ethel Carnie Holdsworth, an important, but oft neglected, working-class writer and journalist whose work offered a feminist recasting of the Gothic conventions of the Brontës. It is Holdsworth's use of melodrama that distinguishes her as a working-class writer because, as Fox demonstrates, this genre has complicated class roots as it was originally affiliated with 'low' (i.e., working-class) venues and performance styles. Fox demonstrates how a melodramatic framework can productively reimagine socialist-feminist aims, thereby making the case for Holdsworth's value in working-class and literary studies alike.

Towards the end of the collection, the focus turns to contemporary literary practices. Phil O'Brien draws from Raymond Williams' well-known concept of *structure of feeling* to illustrate the classed and gendered consequences of deindustrialization. Through careful readings of place and space in Anthony Cartwright's *The Afterglow,* Catherine O'Flynn's *What Was Lost,* and Edward Hogan's *Blackmoor*, O'Brien examines their critiques of capitalism and preoccupation with deindustrialized landscapes, which challenge the 'cultural mythology' of traditional understandings of labor, thereby undermining contemporary notions of gendered working-class identity. Peter Clandfield considers landscapes of a different kind through an analysis of the mythical and representational elements that echo a post-WWII social democratic investment in nationalized railways (i.e., mobility) and public housing (i.e., shelter). Clandfield illustrates how Alan Warner's *The Deadman's Pedal* reminisces on public infrastructure that was created by, and for, the British working-class and how this narrative investment offers contemporary readers, especially critics of neoliberal Britain, a new way to think about the heritage of the welfare state.

In lieu of a conclusion, the collection ends with Hubble's chapter that uses fellow contributor Pamela Fox's discussion of working-class shame (see *Class Fictions,* 1994) as a lens through which to read Pat Barker's *Union Street*, Gordon Burns' *The North of England Home Service*, and Zadie Smith's *NW*. Hubble focuses on the novels' intriguing meditations on gendered responses to working-class shame and nostalgia, arguing that the conventional trope of classed escapism (i.e., 'getting out') might best be thought of instead as 'going beyond.' This does not merely require economic mobility, but instead relies upon the painful processes of self-recognition of class identity. Hubble exemplifies the collection's broader goal of arguing for new intersectional reading practices which focus on the multi-facetedness of working-class identity.

Working-Class Writing: Theory and Practice functions as a useful nexus for what working-class studies as a field currently looks like, and it belongs on working-class studies and literary studies syllabi alike. Assigned as a collection or read on a chapter-by-chapter basis, this text is a timely companion to John Lennon and Magnus Nilsson's *Working-Class Literature(s): Historical and International Perspectives* (2017) and three recently-published histories of American, British, and Irish working-class literature, each published by Cambridge University

Press. This volume contributes to what I hope is a long-lasting scholarly and public investment in historicizing, anthologizing, and theorizing working-class fictional, non-fictional, and poetic writing. Most significantly, its commitment to intersectional class-focused readings offers a vital challenge to the persistent (and problematic) homogenization of working-class identity. Intersectionality, *not* homogeneity, is the best avenue for building and maintaining working-class solidarity and consciousness. For current students and scholars of working-class and literary studies, this collection intervenes and updates the critical conversation about what working-class writing is, who it's for and about, what it looks like, and most importantly, why it matters.

Reviewer Bio

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