

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.