“Slum Life: In 1911, these kids lived in The Ward, a dirty slum where City Hall is today”
City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244 (William James Collection), Item 8028
‘Learning to Labour’ & Learning to Fail: Gender, Urban Space and Intra-Class Conflict among Economically Disadvantaged Male and Female Youth

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Burning Questions

What might a cultural micro-sociology of female/male economic disadvantage look like and account for?

Do we return to theories of cultural production whilst remaining committed to understanding novel mechanisms of reproduction?

How does culture and structure come together to shape the generative, temporal elements of female youth culture in changing times (‘praxeological perspective’)?

How would this framework move beyond divisions between poststructuralist analysis, aesthetic analysis/cultural versus overly deterministic materialist/ideological accounts?

How might an account of social space (e.g., globalizing geographical divisions), premised on a particular set of social, cultural and economic relations, advance this theoretical framework?

How do shared material positions (positions in the political economy of globalization) intensify class-conflict across female youth cultures/groups? What role do these conflicts play in restructuring youth in contemporary global systems?

What role can critical historiography play in reconfiguring this debate?
Radical Historiography (Felman, Arendt, Steedman)

• Radical historiography of marginalized group captured in time/space

• Role of representation in regulation/reproduction of gendered subject

• Role of historical representation in state formation and constitution of subject/citizen over time

• Role of representation in creating ‘world alienation’, ‘mere appearances’, ‘enforced narratives’ of selfhood, and ‘truth cults’ about marginalized youth

• Representation, history and theories of power, epistemic posturing of youth communities over time
Theoretical Framing: Cultural Micro-Sociology/
Cultural Geography as Sociology of Temporal/Spatial Containment

• Youth understood through time/space link in micro-contexts

• Class, subculture, and history linked to geographical arrangements of power in urban space

• micro-’geographies of exclusion’, ‘territoriality’ and containment in reproduction of labour-class/working class youth

• Spatiality of urban life tightly bound to structures

• urban space/identity as structured around ‘classification struggles’

• links between (marketizing) reforms, the reproduction of the labour class and the spatial formation of ‘criminogenic spaces’

• reconsider rules and ‘rituals of territoriality’, place and identity among youth and links to desires for ‘symbolic ownership and control’ (Cohen)
Theoretical Framing: ‘Symbolic Domination and Youth Identity Formation (Bourdieu)

• youth subject formation grounded in symbolic/masculine domination regulating cultural classed forms of masculinity and femininity

• Youth identities are bound by cultural codes of masculine inheritance, ‘repositories of capital accumulation’, vehicles of gendered meaning & desire

• ‘Embodyment of domination’

• Cultural/differentiated elements of discourse in urban space/schools which make symbolic domination possible
Spatial Ethnographies of Exclusion

- Context mapping
- Urban zoning policies
- Characterization of urban space (impact on neighbourhoods)
- Critical/Radical Historiography (e.g. archival analysis, photographic analysis)
- Historiographic analysis of youth representations
- Critical media analysis
- Photo-narratives
- Time lines
- Critical film analysis
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text/Image</th>
<th>Symbol/References</th>
<th>Larger Social Order/Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Gimme love’</td>
<td>‘Give me love’ gendered, insecure private, helpless female.</td>
<td>Public masculinity as rational capable self; Liberal subject as breadwinner, protector, citizen; Conflict of gendered space of homelessness with helpless non-citizen.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jazzie is a tall girl with gorgeous green eyes and the worn look of a much older woman</td>
<td>Symbol/referent as female object to be consumed by reader, not understood as socially positioned inside class structure/social order with ‘good girl narrative’ Failure/success narrative of gendered space inside global, transnational competition; Symbolic domination embedded in structure about what, rather than who, Jazzie is (a ‘failure’) Her sin narratively rather than Arendtian self unfolding, positioned against successful, achieving hegemonic, white masculinity as force over female bodies, reproduction of gendered difference.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mother ‘dying’</td>
<td>Liability/victimisation story, symbolic regulation of female subject responsible for death rather than structure female control over failure, not success. (Agency ‘freeps’ me, ‘meaningful presence’ one’s meaningful relationship in space from on top of Queensland, without risk’ no theatre of appearances, girls dramatic act of interior failed desiring for horrified spectators (disruptive feminities, gendered logic of identity)</td>
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Structural / Cultural Absences in Representation:

Multilocality of diverse groups, diversity of homelessness (its composition, constitutive elements, ontology of self-display, nature of social narrative, classificatory struggles undertaken by youth, social conditions of space and selfhood - metaphysical dilemmas - temporality and spatiality of labor in space).

Strategies:

Trust narrative replaces straightforward policing narrative, conflict in space is repressed, liberal liability rather than social responsibility forms structure of narrative, contesting accounts to social location of speaker, spectator narrative.
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<td>‘Girl who live on the street are not only contributing to the rise in teenage pregnancy’</td>
<td>‘Girls are not women’—childlike symbol; ‘Kids having kids’—Paternalistic reference</td>
<td>Regulation of public/private gender order as classed, suggesting symbolic domination in form of deviant, whitewashed femininity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refusal to have an abortion</td>
<td>Irrational ‘motherhood’; deviant do not say you are a girl when space is viewed as occupied by ‘street girl’. No mention of father.</td>
<td>Production of doxiform of masculinum whithis racialized hidden conflict over who is legitimate, clase &amp; gendered subject.</td>
</tr>
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<td>‘Poorest, youngest, most troubled’ segment</td>
<td>Exclusion of class, race &amp; gender conflict in schooling of gender salience, women assimilated to one class in terms of class privilege &amp; conflict. One middle-class, female embodiment of order as deficits in relation to ‘proper space’.</td>
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Structural Cultural Absences in Representational Form:
- Temporality absent from space of homelessness
- Division between consumer and homelessness, class privilege, and class conflict
- No space to contextualize, embodied in femaleness (or deviant, poor female identity)
- Sexualized order around compulsory heterosexuality as middle-class ideal
- Female youth poverty space as highly criminalized, more regulated than other spaces

Strategies:
- Tactical exclusions, repetitive trauma narrative, ideological subjection to assimilative narrative of progressive female self (who does not want children), strategic/symbolic discourse
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<td>‘Nobody loves them’; ‘Motherhood’; ‘Fancy family’</td>
<td>Deviateness; Other defined black; markers of exclusion (us/them) aligning spectator and hegemonic gaze</td>
<td>Homelessness as if not understood family; individual family one nathologized; reproduction of gendered social order, mid-lower class as en forced statehood; reproduces public/private split.</td>
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<td>Why does she have babies?</td>
<td>Pathologized; moral overtones patriarchal/national female.</td>
<td>Confidant asked symbolic power as question reproduces liberal subject - Who is entitled to appear/ask?</td>
</tr>
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<td>Society may not reject the single mother morally anymore, but she is frequently an economic and social outcast; ‘It is all about poverty. They are the children of poverty having children’</td>
<td>Progress narrativized as symbol of social exclusion.</td>
<td>Source of cycle of poverty located in young women (as mechanism of reproduction absent social order).</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘We have all been shown what to do but we have families to do that, they don’t’, ‘Nurses, counselors and other workers at the shelter are these new fall wisdom in the young woman’</td>
<td>Mother-made-conscious/service workers embodied Mother as virtue; maternal gaze</td>
<td>Reproductive order is gendered order (white middle-class cultural capital).</td>
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<td>‘Finding housing is a difficult task...it’s up to me to find a place and I have to learn from mistakes’</td>
<td>Liberal rational subject hidden social constraints located blame within individual.</td>
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Research Approaches with Youth

• 1. YOUTH PHOTO- NARRATIVE PROJECTS

In this task, youth participating in the study will be given disposable cameras that they will use to take photos of the spaces they visit and inhabit daily. The youth will be asked to avoid photographing people and will instead be encouraged to photograph the various places they visit regularly or the general surroundings where they live. While participating youth will be encouraged to photograph the sites where they visit and largely inhabit in the city, any photo which exposes the confidentiality of participants or the participating institutions, will not be used in any of the published material. The key purpose in gathering any photographic data at this stage is to illuminate sociologically the social spaces (sites and places in regional or local context) youth inhabit in any given geographical location. As has been the case in other studies using photography or film studies work (such as AKA Don Bonus, by producer Spencer Nakasako), the photographic element of the work is intended to shed light on the youth’s perspectives of their own social conditions through a study of spaces they themselves inhabit. It is also an attempt to allow young people to deploy their own perspectives on the larger issues of social exclusion through the creative practice of photography.
2. CRITICAL MEDIA/FILM LITERACY

What are the main themes of the film?

What did you think of the film? Did you like it? If so, why? If not, why not? Do you relate to the experiences of the young person/people represented in the film? Why or why not?

How are your own experiences different? Why do you think your own experiences are different?

Is there any particular reason for this difference? Geographical location, etc?

Whose best interests are/were served by the film? Do you think your best interests are represented in the film?

What kind of a film would you make if you had the opportunity? Who and/or what would be represented and why? What would be the key ideas or themes you’d represent in your film on a related topic? Describe the main characters and what they would be doing?
Political Economies of Containment and Ambivalence

Home sweet Home

This is my building. I live at 105 West Lodge Ave. I've been living in West Lodge for 2 years. What I like about this place is that it is very quiet and lovely to live here.
we are one small happy family. I love my house and my family.
Thing that I don’t like about my building is that this day got kill in the elevator in April and that scares me.
I live with my mom and my best friend, my two older brothers. I love them both. I have a little sister. I don't have a lot of friends. I don't really like school. I don't want to go. I'm afraid of people that are mean. I don't care if people are mean. I want to be black and white. I don't want to be black and white. I don't want to be black and white. I don't want to be black and white. I don't want to be black and white.

This is what I take to school...
This is the street where I live in. I like this street because I grew up here with my friends and I enjoy staying in my street. I always go outside and chill with my friends. I go outside to the veranda to bike ride outside in my street in the summer. I lived in this street for 11 years and I'm still living in this house. I live in a good community and neighborhood, there is no shooting, no violence, and that I live in a street that is safe and quiet. This street is a good place to live in, and a great place to make good friends. Not too many bad things happen in my street.

By [Student Name]
Past:

when I was 6 years old I was very smart, and cute but shy. I was tall and had brown hair and a bit of blond with blue eyes. I had many friends.
My future...

In the future I wish to have finished hair dressing school. I wish to be engaged and soon to be married. I think in the future I will be very successful in my future and in my business.

me
In the future I'm not yet sure what I will be doing. Like what job I'll be having but I do know that I will be living here because I don't really plan on moving. But I am sure that when I'm married and have children of my own, I will have a good profession so that I can be able to help support my family.

Me in the future...
### Stasis, Sedimentation/Doxa and Change

#### FORMS OF STATIS/CONSTANCY OF STRUCTURE

* working class girls as embodiment of deviance, promiscuity or imagined mothers

* deeply sedimented ideas about femininity still tied to ritualistic and traditional norms (unlike middle class girls) of symbolic control

* masculine/symbolic domination is mechanism through which girls regulate each other/reproduce inequality

* intra-class conflict plays powerful role in regulating marked female bodies, forms of self-surveillance, social divisions, and formations of contemporary youth subcultures

* historical representations resonate with sedimented cultural ideas about female youth poverty

* girls embody such sedimentation and perform elements of it

#### FORMS OF CHANGE

* Desires to break class ranks among girls

* Female embodiment of masculine forms of symbolic control

* Political economy of constraints and ambivalence

* Patterns of work aspiration linked to dreams of freedom from constraint and desires to consume

* Reorganization of urban space and concentration of working poor creates new social divisions which shape deeply contradictory identity positions of female selfhood (ambivalence, Self protection, and social alienation)

* Fragmentation of strongly classed communities undermines resistance mechanisms among working class youth and heightens conflict within class and gender formations