

Title

Declining Into Silence:

The Language of the Workingman

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University has given meaning and understanding to my life. The completion of this thesis brings to a conclusion five years of study as a mature-age student. These have been the best five years of my life. Thank you, Ian (Syson), for encouraging me to get an education when I was 40 years of age. Thank you to all my lecturers and tutors for your passion and your care.

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Disclaimer

This thesis is my own work. All academic publications used have been referenced and acknowledged.

PREFACE

In the battle of Culloden in 1745 most of one generation of my male ancestors were either slain during the battle or beheaded afterwards by the British army. This last stand of the Jacobite uprising, (defending independence against England), failed, ending forever the clan system of the Scottish Highlanders. The Scottish clearances followed, making refugees of the remaining people. The Highlanders along with slaves, serfs and itinerant peasants were herded into the lowlands and collared and forced into the emerging workforce that was fuelling the bourgeoning Industrial Revolution. The industrialisation of work and the rise of the capitalist brought a new class of people into existence: the working class. In 1838, two generations after Culloden, Daniel McIntosh survived the Chartist dispute in the Scottish mills. Once again the British Army was involved, shooting at the men on the picket line. The solidarity of the men, formed through work, held firm in the face of extreme danger. This thesis is about the descendants from the original working class. It is also about that bond amongst men at work in the blue-collared working class in contemporary society.

According to E. P. Thompson in *The Making of the English working Class*, 250 years ago employers outlined miners as turbulent, passionate and rude. Mike Donaldson in 1991 in, *Times of Our lives*, says little has changed in employers' views on working-class men since then.

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Hypothesis

In examining working-class masculinity in the industrial novel this thesis discusses the proposition that work is the seminal influence in the structuring of men's feelings and how those feelings are communicated.

Introduction

Working class men experience and express intimacy through work and in relationships with other men at work, using coded silences termed 'paralanguage'. Paralanguage is a linguistic term for non-verbal intonations and gestures. At times, workingmen suffer in a different silence at home. This thesis, through examining selected blue-collar male characters in three industrial narratives, investigates the environments that influence the make up of working-class men. It also shows how workingmen, armed with these influences—their tool kit of social skills—negotiate life.

A brief history of masculinity:

Chapter One explores the social evolution and the personal development of blue-collar working-class men. It covers the historical shifts from the industrial revolution to contemporary society. It also deals with Freud's Oedipal complex in childhood, through the teenage years of school, and into the subjugation of the adult working male. This chapter further looks at the tension between work and capital and the subsequent structure of families and communities in society.

The positional family and the language in the Working Class

Chapter Two covers the use of language based on social groupings within families. I draw heavily on Basil Bernstein's research in *Class Codes and Control*. Social structures formed by the labour market produce two main types of families: the working-class and the middle-class family. The social family structure and the linguistic structures within a family are intimately related. The working-class family has a structure that is termed 'positional' and is identified by, among other markers, a public language that does not have an individual language to express personal feelings. The middle-class family produces a 'person'-orientated structure, identified in part by an individual language that allows the expression of personal feelings.

Mirra Komarovsky in *Blue Collar Marriage* links familial structures to language structures in adult male blue-collar familial relationships. Komarovsky's research is an insight into the positional family social make up. The limited social role the male worker plays outside work; his need for space, his nonverbal communication and the feelings of alienation in working men within the family are evident in her work. Komarovsky's work supports the linguists: Bernstein, Huspek and Labov. Although Labov and Huspek disagree with aspects of Bernstein's linguistic analysis of working-class language, they all agree that the linguistic structures are based on class.

Men go to work

Chapter Three covers the analysis of certain male characters in literary fiction. The literature chosen shows the intimacies shared through coded silences amongst men at work. It also shows how these codes are structured. The silences at work are compared to the silences in the family home. Silences in the home have a very different role, a different meaning and come from a different emotional state. The characters discussed are from Gavin Casey's 'Short Shift Saturday', Mena Calthorpe's *The Dyehouse* and Betty Collins's *The Copper Crucible*.

Gavin Casey grew up around the Kalgoorlie mines in Western Australia. 'Short Shift Saturday', published in 1942, is written out of his personal experiences. Jack Beasley in *Red Letter Days* wrote that Casey had only a quarter of a lung left from the damage done working in the mines. This realist narrative is about the relationships at work (often termed mateship), the hardship and dangers of a miner's life, and the difficulties of married life in a goldmining town. Bill is the main protagonist. It is through his working-class coded expressions that I view his feelings and thoughts, his intimate and alienated relationships at work and at home.

Young Bill's hero worship of his father's project is an example of how linguistic codes and concepts of masculinity are passed on to the next generation. The development from the hero worship scenario to a hopeless outcome for the son in the father/son relationship is graphically portrayed in Mace's relationship with his son. Mace is an old miner who is

dying with emphysema from mine dust. His son, Dick, replaces Mace in the mine when Mace becomes too ill to work.

The Dye'house written in 1961 by Mena Calthorpe is also a realist narrative. The story is about working-class culture and life. Hughie, one of the characters finds his intimacy in his work. He takes pride in the dyeing tradition of the factory. The irony in Hughie's life arises from the coupling of the joy and intimacy he receives from his work with the destructive consequences of his working life on his family and his relationships with other people. Work narrows his experience of life and his ability to express himself. Hughie is retrenched as a result of an ideological shift in industry. The industrial transition represented in the book is from employee responsibility for control over production to a centralised management system. Industry outgrows Hughie's skills and he subsequently kills himself.

After work, men go home

Chapter Four investigates men's silences at home. Betty Collins, part of the realist writers' movement, first published *The Copper Crucible* in 1966 as a social realist novel. The original version was heavily edited on legal advice. The University of Queensland press republished it in 1996. The later edition has restored the book closer to the original manuscript. (I have used the restored 1996 edition in this thesis). The story is set in the North Queensland town of Mt Irene, which is a pseudonym for Mt Isa. Collins's novel, covers issues such as, class, industrial conflict, gender, ethnic differences, and relationships. Julie an 'Australian' marries Nick a Greek immigrant. Nick is the

carpenter's union representative and secretary of the local union council. The mine management blackbanned Nick because of his success as a union representative. His ability to bring disparate groups together, strengthening the men's position in negotiations with the mine, threatens the mine management. Nick like Hughie, is struggling against the humiliation of impending unemployment

Hughie's communication at home is similar to Bill's in 'Short Shift Saturday', limited and frustrating to the people around him. The silences at home, expressed in different ways by Hughie and Bill, show the lack of communication that operates in their family homes.

When men are young

Chapter Five shows how young working class men communicate better than older working class men. In 'Short Shift Saturday' young Bill's family position is an example of how language structure and linguistic grooming takes place around the kitchen table in a working class culture. Later, reproducing an aspect of his father's life, he builds a play mine in the backyard. This idolisation of his father in childhood later becomes a noose around the neck of the young working class male and is an important theme and cycle of masculine production.

The hopeless consequences of Dick's relationship with his father Mace, mentioned earlier, is a caricature of many relationships. Dick, as a character, has no dialogue. We do not know how he thinks and feels.

Oliver is a young itinerant worker who provides resistance to the Dyehouse management's attempts at dominating the workers. His character both represents and offers a socialist critique of working-class culture and politics. Oliver, armed with his insights into capitalism, the poverty trap of marriage, and the futility of factory life without an education, defies his own logic, falls in love, and willingly accepts his bleak future. In my analysis Oliver's character represents Hughie and the other men's youthful past. Oliver also shows that when relationships and love enter the lives of working-class men they transform work and masculinity, through a process of romanticisation.

When men are old

Chapter Six covers the alienation of the main character experience when they get older.

This experience is supported and well documented in Komarovsky's *Blue Collar Marriage*. The men's own reflections expose the deteriorated communication skills of older men compared to those of younger men. This chapter also looks at the romantic notions of work and relationships in the young characters—Oliver, young Bill and Dick—as representation of the older characters' lost youth. A comparison of the naivety of the older characters when they were young and of the younger characters with the disappointment of their later years suggests the demise of working-class men.

Conclusion

By exploring the literary characters in these working-class narratives I hope to shed some light on the complexity of the emotional life of working men. As a consequence of work shaping men's feelings, and the communication structure that expresses those feelings,

men become progressively alienated and isolated in familial relationships. Workingmen often feel trapped, inadequate and misunderstood. The workplace is the central influence in a workingman's life. It determines the structural nature of his language and his family.

Masculinity: A Brief History

The industrial revolution created a new society based on class and the gendered division of labour. Gender and familial relationships, education and the notions of work were revolutionised and new masculinities emerged in this period.

According to Connell, Freud was the first person to make an in-depth analysis of masculinity. Freud's research theorised that the young male child experienced a psychic division from the mother when difference is recognised by the child. He termed this onset of masculinity the 'Oedipus complex', which according to Connell is 'the emotional tangle of early childhood involving desire for one parent and hatred of the other as the key moment in this development for boys ... rivalry with the father and a fear of castration' (1995 p.8). 'The key point is not the fear of ... mutilation by his father, but the threat of the loss of sexual identity' (1983, p.26). At this point of development the feminine becomes the 'other' in the young male's world.

Freud claimed neurosis is a material phenomenon—a consequence of the social pressure the advance of civilisation puts on the person (Connell 1983). Marcuse on Freud in *Eros and Civilisation* 'pointed out that Freud failed to distinguish the "level" of repression needed to sustain human society *per se*, from the level needed to sustain a system of social domination where one class controls and exploits another' (Connell, 1983 p.11). It is feasible that the physical experiences of a materialist culture, brought on by the industrial revolution, and the psychological responses to that culture are inseparable.

The young working class male identifies socially, culturally and linguistically with his father. Pauly (1984) suggests in *Time of Our Lives*, that 'the family household may also be an institution through which class-consciousness is nurtured and transmitted' (p.22). It is also the time in working-class culture when the self is emotionally wrapped around the construction of blue-collar masculinity. To shift from this rigid structure of imposed masculinity is to shift from a sexual identity, leaving only the unacceptable feminine as the 'other' construction of self. This can give rise to homophobic attitudes and exaggerated masculinities when confronted with those constructed as effeminate men and the softer feelings of love that can arise with girls.

Industrialisation replaced the feudal and clan system of Europe and the village life of England. New masculinities were formed during a period of rapid change. The peasants, villagers and serfs from agriculture and the rural sector, became the new craftsman, tradesmen, unionist and itinerant workers in manufacturing and consequently urban living (Connell 1995, p.190). Global markets dominated production needs, replacing the production levels required for local market forces. The social shifts caused by industrialisation impacted negatively on the subordinate classes. The proletarians, after leaving the land, became the modern wage labourers who, having no means of producing, were reduced to selling their labour power in order to live (Marx and Engels, 1848).

Jane Austen's novels (works such as *Emma* and *Pride and Prejudice*) represent the Gentry's domestic authority over women (Connell 1995, p.190). This period also depicts ruling class masculinity as closely linked to the state through 'administration, which

ordered evictions, the lash, transportation and hangings in a largely agricultural culture. The Gentry also made up the bulk of the military officers' (Connell 1995, p.190). This type of masculinity was transformed into the businessmen and entrepreneurs that Mathew Arnold in *Culture and Anarchy* described as the forces of materialism and American vulgarity.

Emile Zola's *Germinal* offers a contrast to Austen's depiction of gender relations. Written in 1874 *Germinal* depicts life in the French mines, with men and women working together. The young female character, Catherine, works in the mine side by side with the men, as do most of the young women. At home one of the older women cooks and cleans for several families. Gender relationships of shared duties are carried over from their rural culture, differing from the gentry's culture where the division of labour is determined by gender.

Women were part of the original workforce in the textile factories, mining, printing and steel work of the industrial revolution. The expulsion of women from heavy industry was ... a key process in the formation of working class masculinity ... drawing on the bourgeois ideology of separate spheres. (Connell 1995, p.196)

The prevention in the 19th century of women from working in heavy industry or participating in educational pursuits was achieved through the use of a scientific doctrine of innate sex difference (Connell 1983, p.21). The womb and the intelligence of women

were seen to be too delicate to cope with heavy work or the rigors of intellectual pursuits. The expulsion of women from the mines was supported by the male-dominated trade unions. This impacted on gender relations in working-class families by creating power relationships, which gave in most cases, control of the family income to men. The ruling class's gender relations, marked by the division of labour between husband and wife, were imposed onto and mimicked by the working class. Thus masculinity was further isolated and more narrowly and rigidly defined through work.

At the same time, the rise of the Protestant ethic, which included individual wealth creation supported by a new autonomous self, with its unmediated relationship with God (Connell 1995, p.186), suggested prosperity was a sign of godliness. The bourgeoisie, while taking the high moral ground over the 'unruly and provincial working class', had no regard for past traditions and institutions and was accompanied by an emerging materialism. This new order and new cultural practice deeply concerned and distressed the English critic and essayist Matthew Arnold.

Abandoning religion as the traditional process of providing hope and meaning in life, Arnold attempted, through literature and education, to emancipate the working class who he thought were in need of salvation. Despite his considerable efforts at bringing 'the best that has been thought and written' to the working class, real education eluded a substantial number of working-class people. Today the limited achievements in education by the working class are a signifying social code that frames part of the psyche of working-class masculinity.

With masculinity defined as a 'character structure marked by rationality and Western Civilisation defined as the bearer of reason' a cultural link was forged between patriarchy and empire. The rise of the logic of the gendered accumulation of industrial capital and the power relationship of empire (Connell 1995, p.187,191) completed the transformation of a pre-industrial masculinity into the modern construction of masculinities.

'When we were kids we thought the steel mill was it ... we thought they were it, strong men. We couldn't wait to get into there'(Donaldson 1991, p.8). In this extract from an interview with Steve Dubi in Donaldson's book, *Time of Our Lives*, Dubi reminisces about his childhood around the steel mill and his fascination with the men's ethos. Hard, high-production, dirty work is men's work. Donaldson goes on to suggest the toughness of the work and the worker can demonstrate masculinity. Connell claims in *Masculinities*, that work is one of the organised institutions that produce masculinity. The production of a hegemonic masculinity is the result. Cobb & Sennett in *The Hidden Injuries of Class* comment that at work, a thousand men all follow the rules complete the educational requirements, but only one becomes the boss. This practice injures the 999 other men who didn't get the job.

When a group of men build a structure, a feeling of solidarity can occur. However, industries can create a workforce that becomes invisible, to the management, to higher profile workers and to society. The job a man does for several years may only take a few days to learn, leaving the worker thinking and feeling he is unintelligent and only capable

of the menial tasks assigned him. Work under these circumstances is a destructive force in a man's life, affecting his self-perception. The one person selected for the boss's job escapes manual labour and a feeling of failure.

'How does a labouring man face the day, the week, the rest of his working life once in the pit of simple failure' (p.9). This is an extract from an interview in *Time of Our Lives* where Donaldson recalls his own experience of work. Working-class masculinity has as its underbelly a feeling of failure. According to Cobb and Sennett and Donaldson, this feeling of failure is learnt from working-class schools.

The onset of failure for most is perceived early in working-class schools, and with it comes a resistance on the part of some children that provokes the sort of ridicule and discipline by teachers that will become a permanent feature of life at work, where its agents instead will be supervisory staff and middle management. (Donaldson 1991, p.9).

Feelings of failure are a code and part of the development that structures masculinity within working-class culture. 'If you don't like me you can go and get stuffed'. 'The authority structure of the school becomes the antagonist against which one's masculinity is cut' (Connell 1989 in Donaldson 1991 p.9). Smoking, drinking, dope, sex, pornography and truancy define rebellious actions. These demonstrate 'rejection and hostility ... for school' (p.9).

The politics within masculinity are relations of alliances, dominance and subordination constructed through practices that exclude and include that intimidate and exploit (Connell 1995, p.37). In my own work experience I witnessed the gun shearer carry more weight at a union meeting than the poorly skilled shearer. This politics is expressed through subtle nuances and a paralanguage within working-class culture. Gang rapes, gay bashing and misogynistic behaviour are an overt reaction and exhibit the severest elements of rage and anger. This behaviour is not limited to the working class, neither is it common—our justice system provides ample examples of middle class violence.

Matthew Arnold promoted the idea that the working class needed to be emancipated through reading and learning the best that has been thought and known. (Arnold 'Intro'). However as Ian Syson's PhD thesis, 'Tracing the Making of Working Class Literature', points out, there is only a thin body of work concerning blue-collar working lives. The role literature plays in the middle classes—giving people a measured look at themselves from a distance so they can evaluate their lives—is largely missing in blue-collar working lives. Undealt with feelings of frustration often lead to violent and rebellious acts in youth and, in turn, alienation and loneliness in older males.

Physical aggression is, Donaldson writes, a claim to adulthood and masculinity (p.13).

Nathan Hollier also in his essay 'Frank Hardy and Australian Working Class Masculinity' suggest that 'they [workingmen] are more likely to face threats of violence and must therefore develop a personality that is prepared for and able to provide aggression and violence'. But I regard this perceived aggression as part of a rites-of-

passage phase in young working-class boys. This is not a matured, masculine character trait. Workingmen can be caring, belong to volunteer organisations, make love to their partners, care for their nieces and nephews and foster young workers and apprentices, and many are involved in nurturing roles in junior sports programs. A day in the factory leaves many men too tired and oppressed to want to show acts of aggression.

Donaldson goes on to say that foremen may use the threat of violence at work [to achieve work levels] (p.13). This supports Hollier's argument. However, this is an exaggerated, misunderstood point in Donaldson's research. The ruling class imposes on the working class social and cultural acts of violence that are personally removed, indirect, and include the fundamental threat of retrenchments. Threats of aggression among the working classes are codes in the politics within the culture of working-class masculinity. Labourers, tradesmen, leading hands and foremen are in constant conflict at a political level at work. But, simultaneously, they often have solidarity at an emotional level, which is expressed through their language, as this thesis will show.

Many working-class men are part of a conservative, family-orientated culture. This is evident in the structure of the coded paralinguage that comes from 'families and extended families living near and with each other for generations' (Peckham; Gos 1995). Both Geoff Goodfellow, a contemporary working class poet and author of *Poems for a Dead Father* and Gavin Casey, in 'Short- Shift Saturday', display within their dialects, the structure of feeling in this language. Raymond Williams in *Culture and Society* wrote how feelings are structured by their village and schooling life and expressed through their

language. The solidarity of the working class is displayed through its codified language—a code to which Arnold and some middle-class academics and social commentators lack access.

The Positional Family and the Language

The emotional make up of workingmen is complex. Each stage of the working-class male's development shapes how he feels and expresses those feelings. The son's development (be strong and don't show feelings) mimics the father's emotional make up through the need for sexual identity. The father's expression of his feelings and emotions are heavily influenced by his relationships at work, where intimacies are often expressed through silences. The expression of feelings in a working-class family is learnt through linguistic codes. These codes produce a specialised form of communication, which can lead, for young boys, to difficulties in mainstream education. Men's familial relationships in marriage are also structured by these linguistic rules. Men's silences at home are often codes of alienation, the reverse of silences at work.

Different family structures produce different types of communication. The linguistic structures in a family, according to Basil Bernstein in *Class Codes and Control*, are either positional (working-class) or personal (middle-class/professional). A person-orientated language structure teaches the individual to express thoughts and feelings. Conversely, a person from the positional (working-class) family uses language to reinforce allegiance and loyalty and to build inclusive relationships.

Positional families operate as teams with assigned roles, and communicate in more short direct sentences in the form of demands rather than detailed explanations. The non-verbal expression carries most of the meaning in the communication. This use of gesture, facial expression, volume and tone of voice is termed by Bernstein as 'immediate or direct

expression'. The emphasis of the communication in direct expression is on the emotive rather than the logical. Bernstein terms this a 'public language'. He argues that public language uses nonverbal communication to express feelings, limiting the use of verbal expression of feeling to positional families (p.32).

The public language in the positional family contains its own aesthetics and expression but works through, to some extent, undemocratic, hierarchical power relationships between parent and child and older and younger siblings. Public language tends to emphasise 'things rather than processes'. The authority of the statement, 'because I tell you', from a parent to a child, expresses the closed form of the social relationship with the sub text of solidarity non-verbally expressed, rather than in the 'reasoned principles' of middle-class families (Bernstein 1971, p. 44–5).

The connection between language and family is an important consideration when regarding education. Education is centred on middle-class, person-orientated language structures, and school is a central place of socialising. The working-class family with its closed, nonverbal language is not well positioned to benefit from the education system because of the different language structures.

The working class boy is often genuinely puzzled by the need to acquire vocabulary or use words in a way that is, for him, peculiar. It is important to realize that his difficulties in ordering a sentence and connecting sentences ... are alien to the way he perceives and reacts to his immediate

environment ... sensitivity to content rather than structure of objects,
applies equally to the structure of a sentence (Bernstein 1971, p.35).

Bernstein is correct in his assumptions about positional families' language structures not being conducive to mainstream education. However, Bernstein seems to miss some of the finer points within the working-class closed language code. People communicate their thoughts and feelings through their paralanguage, verbally and nonverbally, and through their idioms and colloquialism in writing. William Labov in *Language in the Inner City: A Study of Inner City Black Language* argues that working-class language has planning, structure and variety in its utterances (p.222). The well-documented, high drop-out rate of working-class children from higher education suggests that school is not a positive place for their socialising.

Education 'works hand in hand with the State to produce leaders differentiated from workers' (Campbell 1996). The academic opportunity for working-class children is often lost in the socialising process occurring in the formative years of the family unit and reinforced in the socialising process of school. Michael Huspek in 'Oppositional Versus Reproductive Codes' argues against the suggestion that working-class children do not resist their limited role in the educational process. Huspek argues that there is a 'two-directional flow of power within the social class system' (1995). On the other hand, in 'Codes Oppositional, Reproductive and Deficit: A Case of Red Herrings', Bernstein claims that working-class children are not prepared for resistance and struggle. The options open to children in a position-orientated family are rebellion, withdrawal or

acceptance (p.156). It could be argued that boys are overtly prepared for resistance.

Educating working-class boys is a growing problem, especially when we are in, arguably, a post-industrial society that is marked by diminished employment opportunities. Despite the limited work options for young working-class boys it appears a strong resistance to education remains in many. Yet some working-class boys embrace education as a way out of poverty, powerlessness and manual work.

Working-class children find their public language limits their potential for a full education. They use their language to consolidate relationships, and the authoritarian style of parenting leaves them (arguably) vulnerable to performing work dutifully and conforming willingly to an employer. These emotional strictures limit the options for a child born to a working-class family.

The working-class masculinity that inhibits expressiveness in childhood often develops into flawed expressiveness in adulthood. Childhood and adolescence are times when feelings are not named. Mirra Komarovsky in *Blue Collar Marriage* explains, the inhibited child says 'I shouldn't', and on becoming an adult says, 'I can't—talk about such things' (when trying to express feelings) (p.156). Tough language is often used when expressing the tenderness of love, and about relationships with girlfriends.

Expression of his feelings is regarded as antisocial behaviour that potentially isolates the young working-class male from his mates (Bernstein 1971, p.48). Often boys do not have or are not competent in the language required to express their feelings.

In adult males' deficiency in the skills of communication, especially in ... less educated husbands ... hinders the sharing of experience' (Komarovsky 1967, p.156). Rather, men

experience sharing nonverbally. The structure of masculinity continues, from the socialising of the family through coded language, into the behaviour of men in the social roles performed in a marriage and family.

Marriage for young working-class people often means an escape from an unhappy home. Not surprisingly, the highest percentage of unhappy marriages is found in the poorer families (Komarovsky 1967, p.290). For some men, marriage is where he can be the boss. For others, marriage bolsters a low self-esteem (Donaldson 1991). Negative forces often drive the decisions that are made under this duress. In an attempt to escape their own misery they paradoxically recreate the next generation's misery.

Mrs G, in Komarovsky's research, states that when her husband gets upset or depressed she uses a few passive strategies like: 'Leave him alone; let him sweat it out at work; a few beers with his mates when he can afford it' (p.156). Mr G said the best way his wife could help was to 'keep out of my way' (p.129). Men don't want to come home and talk about their boring job with their partners. Home is a sanctuary, a place separate from the oppression of work. Nonverbal communication within marriage is not always negative. Specialised patterns of sharing, which don't require extensive communication (p.177) or perceived close companionship, can create deep emotional ties.

The research by Komarovsky in *Blue Collar Marriage* suggests most workingmen don't find emotional relief in marriage. Rather, they rely on the male friendships outside the family home to fulfil their needs. Over many years, for a variety of reasons, these male

relationships that at one time assisted in sustaining emotional connection disappear.

Blue-collar marriages could be seen as the last place of the traditional male dominance of women; however, the power within a low-status blue-collar marriage is often matriarchal.

The male in his twilight years often descends into isolation within the family. Most fathers are excluded from the politics between the mother and child, and the intimacy in the lives of their married children (p.257).

Men Go to Work

The perception of working class males to people outside the culture is primarily based on physiology (Segal 1990, p.66). Men think with their cocks, will fuck anything, drink too much and are uncouth rednecks. Or they are stable, steady and rock solid, make good fathers—you-know-where-you-stand-with-them types. Both of these interpretations stereotype workingmen. The working-class male remains an enigma emotionally.

Joseph Pleck in *The Myth of Masculinity* makes the revelation :

We are no wiser about the actual demands made on men, and certainly no wiser about the emotional and political dynamics of masculinity—why the majority of men not only endure their dysfunctional roles, but display extraordinary resistance to change (Pleck 1981, p 79).

Work is the missing link in understanding the structuring of a workingman's feelings. Analysis of the coded silences at work helps explain how masculinity is structured. The theory that the structure of men's feelings begins at work takes Marx's argument that our 'consciousness is determined by our social being' one step further. The theme of silences is broken into four parts: men at work; men at home; older men; and young men.

The work site is seminal in structuring a workingman's feelings. The coded silences, the nonverbal communications, of Bernstein's positional family structure become the worker's tools of trade in communicating at work. The coded language between the men

expresses their intimacy with each other. The greater the danger the more reliant workers are on their workmates for survival. Bill, the main character in Gavin Casey's 'Short-Shift Saturday' shows that intimacy in the face of danger is a requirement for survival:

You're on a flimsy platform, with the machine trying to tear your wrists off, and whenever you start bits of ground flake off, and fall on you.

You've got to keep an eye on it, and be out from under at times when the bits weigh a couple of tons or so. Don wasn't in a careful mood and I was concerned Don would be worse than careful.

I worked with an ear cocked ... We [Tom and Bill, who were working in the next hole to Don] looked at each other and we each knew that the other felt curious and afraid (Casey 1942, p. 213–14).

The unfortunate character, Don, failed his last medical examination at the gold mine. He knows that means a life of unemployment with half pay and the likelihood of an early death. Bill and Tom, his work mates, aware of his vulnerable state of mind, work with an 'ear cocked' listening for him. Bill knows intuitively how Don will be feeling and responds sensitively, surrounded by the noise and busyness of work. Bill does not know Don well outside the workplace but he says he is 'one he had a feeling for' (Casey 1942, p.210). Bill's relationship with Don, a good example of the close relationships men can develop at work, bears similarities to the relationship of Mr and Mrs King in Komarovskiy's *Blue Collar Marriage*. Komarovskiy wrote '*what* was shared was more

important for the feeling of intimacy than *how much* of one's life is shared' (p.155). She goes on to say that the emotional satisfaction in their relationship is there despite large segments of the Kings' lives spent apart from one another.(While workers spend a lot of time together, it is impersonal, restricted to the worksite and away from the family home).

The satisfaction with communication and a sense of closeness do not, apparently, require that the totality of one's experience be shared with the mate. Such emotions may co-exist with a very specialised pattern of sharing. (Komarovsky 1967, p.177)

Workingmen have a specialised pattern of sharing exclusive to their workplace. When Bill meets Don at the change of shift in the mine he yells out 'g'day'. Don having just learnt of his fate remains *silent*. He *looks* back at Bill and at the same time the other men are *silent*. Bill *realises* something is wrong and notices the tight skin around Don's face. In this passage of communication at change of shift, no speech takes place. Later, Lofty, another miner, calls Don a 'lucky cow' for getting out of the mine. This is a placeholder, a filler to ease the intense raw feelings experienced by the men. Lofty lightens the mood to a manageable level.

Later, on the 'plat', the men roll smokes, waiting for Don to come out of the mine. When it is Bill and Tom who emerge instead of Don, the other men seem disappointed. Bill seeing the disappointment on their faces says he knows how they feel and what they are

thinking (about Don's demise). So Bill and Tom join the men in rolling smokes. Rather than sharing their feelings about the situation, the men sit together as each other in a ritualistic act, creating shared feelings of solidarity. This form of deeply intimate communication has its origins in working-class positional family structures, where language creates solidarity and builds relationships as opposed to middle-class language structures in person-orientated families, where members learn to express personal feelings and thoughts.

When Don comes out from the mine and into the company of the other men, everyone is relieved and laughs and becomes jovial. This reaction is a linguistic placeholder; the real meaning of the conversation is conveyed through other channels (Gos 1995). Don looks surprised and works out what is going on and 'looks grateful and ... miserable' (Casey 1942, p.214). The coded language is an exclusive language bound up in the mutual experiences of the men. Looks, tone of voice, gestures and bullshit make it a well understood but closed code. The real meaning of these exchanges is hidden from outsiders. The character Hughie from the *Dyehouse* has a similar experience but in a very different way.

To Hughie, dyeing is a noble trade that sets him apart from the other workers in the dyehouse. This sense of identity is important in working class culture. Society often groups working class people together as one identity. Convenience and ignorance are two of the possible reasons for this. However, there is a lot of pride in the subtle differences amongst men and their differences are heavily protected and defended. Men use a variety

of ways to construct difference in their masculinity. Craftsmanship is one way; another is the way the miners in 'Short Shift Saturday' set themselves apart from other men through their dangerous work. Hughie loves his work. He comes from a long line of traditional dyers.

He had an eye for colour, and enjoyed the development of rich purples, of new plumes, greens, crimsons and royal blues ... The understanding seemed to be in his fingertips ... The skill and joy of the job lay in the mixing of the dyes, the weighing-up, the measuring of the chemicals ... Wondered whether the new youngsters being trained would ever feel the way he felt about the colours.(Calthorpe 1961, p.12–13)

Hughie has a historical relationship with the dyers of the past; the men who have gone before him and taught him the trade are part of his daily relationships. 'Tommy Peters and Old Perry', he remembers. 'The night he and Peters had worked back and got into that new yellow' (p. 46). The intense feelings Hughie invests into his work are juxtaposed with the intense bullying to which his boss Renshaw subjects him.

Hughie felt used ... he felt no joy in getting up ... and felt sick and weak ... he knew he would say nothing to Renshaw when he came in ... meekly accepting his sneers and the lash of his tongue ... he felt shame and misery (Calthorpe 1961, p.10–11).

Like Don in 'Short shift Saturday', Hughie does not have any coping mechanism beyond throwing himself into his work. Hughie is not a talker. Oliver, the rebellious, itinerant character, encourages Hughie to stand up for himself against Renshaw. Oliver asks Hughie why does he 'bust his guts' for the firm when they treat him so badly. Hughie responds by 'grinning weakly'. His answers are short and incomplete. He says, 'I been here a long time.' He pauses, reminisces, and repeats, 'I been here a long time, 'and then says, 'I like the dyein'(p.46). Hughie is a man under siege at work without an expressive language. Komarovsky in *Blue-Collar Marriage* writes about the:

Trained incapacity to share ... about the men's inarticulateness. The ideal of masculinity into which they were socialised inhibits expressiveness both directly, with its emphasis on reserve and, indirectly, by identifying personal interchanges with the feminine role. Childhood ... spent in an environment in which feelings were not named, discussed or explained, strengthens these inhibitions. (Komarovsky 1967, p.156)

Understanding Hughie's experience of work is important to understand his feelings. This 'trained incapacity' to share stems from the same working-class position-oriented family of the miners in 'Short Shift Saturday' with a paralanguage expressiveness. Hughie does not articulate his thoughts or feelings verbally. He thinks only another dyer could understand how he feels (p.65). Hughie finds himself frozen. He wants to talk but everything he wants to say remains unsaid. He thinks there is no need to use the 'words

he had planned to say'(p.70). Casey's miners have each other to exchange glances with; Hughie, on the other hand, is removed from the body of men.

Mayers is one of the workers to whom Hughie talks, albeit cautiously. Their relationship reflects the complexity of working-class politics. It shows how the restricted code used in sharing feelings exists within a politically fragile context. Hughie looks into Mayer's face and he sees in it, 'a combination of shrewdness and kindness. '(p.71) Mayers also 'knew exactly how Hughie felt' by looking at his work. Both men know and understand each other intimately. They have the shared knowledge of the coded silences of working-class culture that operate unconsciously—but they are not close politically. Mayers is close to Renshaw. Hughie asks Mayers if he has heard anything about his (Hughie's) impending demotion or sacking. Mayers says he hasn't heard anything; that answer has a dual significance. Mayers hasn't heard anything because Renshaw knows he might say something to Hughie. Mayers, being close to Renshaw, should hear something of the gossip that seeps out of the office. Mayers hearing nothing from Renshaw is a bad sign for Hughie. This means Renshaw is keeping his plans to deal with Hughie a secret, and the executions of his plans are underhanded. It also means Renshaw, while not privy to the men's code, understands the silent solidarity amongst the men. Solidarity exists between Mayers and Hughie even though they are political enemies. Both implicitly understand and accept the reality of the ruthlessness between men in working-class life. These coded silences that carry the intimacy amongst men within hostile political situations show the different layers in relationships that exist in complex situations within working-class culture.

The miners in *The Copper Crucible* have a similar complexity: 'The desire for a bigger share gave them a rough unity' (p.25). At the same time a dozen men would take *care*, risking the sack to get the *Miners Voice*, a roneoed political sheet, into the crib room for the men to read at lunchtime. On another emotional level, the men look out for each other when they are, drilling and blasting in the dark, with the noise drowning out communication. Intimacy and care for one another in this environment is paramount for survival. This reliance on each other is also evident in the miners in 'Short Shift Saturday'. The more politically motivated men take responsibility to enlighten their workmates despite a silence parading as lack of interest. The political differences within factions of workers like the miners are complex. The men who are responsible for the *Miners Voice* show a deep-seated knowledge of their fellow workers. The shared knowledge workers have of each other transcends the silences in their lives.

Hughie becomes depressed and despondent after he is sacked and he kills himself. The narrowing effect work has on how Hughie expresses himself is a significant contribution to his suicide. The value of the intimacy and expressiveness Hughie receives at work overrides the abuse he is subjected to. Work is a place he feels at ease with his feelings and where he works his problems out by busying himself. As Komarovsky's Mrs King says, the best way for her man to sort out his moods is to 'work it out' or 'have a drink with his mates' (p.176).

Hughie and Don, in their respective narratives, highlight the fear of specifically not working, more than being unemployed. They also help to answer the question Pleck in *The Myth of Masculinity* asks as to why men display an 'extraordinary resistance to change'. A man's dependence on work, it would appear, is not only about money or a purpose but also relationships and shared feelings of intimacy. The forms of communication at work determine the boundaries of the expression of a man's emotional life. Their expressiveness is determined simultaneously with the products of their labour. As work determines class structure, it follows that class-consciousness determines the structure of the family home. When the whistle blows at the end of the shift the man leaves work and goes home to his family.

After Work, Men Go Home

The gendered division of labour masculinises men and feminises women. The distance in this division is mirrored in the differences that exist between the discourses of the kitchen and the crib room. Bill from 'Short Shift Saturday' leaves his mates and a hostile work place and heads for his home and a hostile wife.

Marriage is a 'deal' and can be a stratagem for low self-esteem for the blue-collar working class. Bill provides some of the qualities that constitute 'the deal' in a working class marriage: attain steady work, educate the children, provide a home, and keep free from poverty (Kleinberg 1979, p.126). Annie, Bill's wife, agrees to move to the mining town because it can provide a home and good wages. While the money is good in the mines, the high cost of living nullifies the benefits. Effectively poor wages and unfulfilling work turn the unpaid housework from 'a refuge from the labour market to a prison of unpaid labour' (Donaldson 1991, p.60). Annie finds that Bill's excessive drinking and her lack of social opportunities in the oppressive mining town contribute to the unhappiness in their relationship.

The story starts at the breakfast table on Saturday morning. Bill, like all the men in the mine, works a half shift on Saturdays. Annie says to Bill, 'What time will you be home?' As Bill explains, she is not asking the question; rather she is challenging him on the time he will be home. Bill knowingly infuriates her by responding with passive aggression in saying, 'Oh, about the usual.' Bill and Annie's communication is coded. What is said is

not what is meant. The real questions Annie asks are: 'Are you going to the pub? Will you be drunk when you get home? How drunk will you be when you get home? How long will I have to wait and try to keep your lunch hot?'

Bill's answer, 'Oh, the usual,' said in a casual way to infuriate Annie, is about power and independence. He really means: I'll come home when I want to. No commitments, no restraints and importantly no promises. The aggression and the casualness in their tones conceal their feelings and subjugate these to a covert position. Bill and Annie's language is used to build relationships; personal feelings are not expressed but are instead coded. Bill and Annie communicate at an emotional level through their tone of voice, concomitantly venting their rage while tentatively encroaching on each other's personal space.

'She gets my back up the way she puts it,' Bill says of Annie. When their son, young Bill, asks his dad if they can go into town when he gets home from work, Annie answers for Bill, saying they can go, 'if he's capable'. Bill, hearing this response, is 'aching to smash her'. He waits until young Bill finishes breakfast and leaves the kitchen before talking to her. By that time Bill thinks, 'there didn't seem anyway to start on the matter'. Bill wants to leave the house. He doesn't want an argument or to hit her. Instead he wants to 'get out with other men—cobblers who took you as they found you and didn't want to change you or alter your way of living to suit them' (p.197–98).

Bill later feels guilty and then remorseful about how he acts (or fails to act) toward Annie. This feeling lasts until he sees her, when the same resentful feelings re-emerge and he wants to hurt her again. Bill is under pressure from external and internal forces. The expectations placed upon a blue-collar worker are a burden for Bill. Workingmen think that not showing hurt feelings, and toughing out bad situations for the good of his family is supposed to honour him. But, in practice, repressing such feelings is a burden. The frustrations of his incapacity to express himself leave Bill wanting to smash his wife, walk out of the house and be silent.

The less educated man 'doesn't find emotional relief in marriage' and will often 'withdraw psychologically or physically by such means as walking out of the house'. (Komarovsky 1967, p.193) Blue-collar husbands fear the feminine. They have a masculinity that inhibits expression. This leaves workingmen ready to accept certain deprivations, take the blame and suffer hurt feelings in silence (Komarovsky 1967,p.200).

Hughie's relationship with his wife is different from Bill's on a number of levels. Hughie has fulfilled the criteria of a successful working-class husband: Alice has some financial security, and they own their house. This gives Hughie and his wife a measure of social capital in their street. Adding to that is the prestige Alice draws from Hughie's stability in his employment. His rise to a leading hand has given the impression to his neighbours' think he might end up running the place one day (p.9).

Hughie 'was living a lie, only Hughie, lying beside Alice in the still dark of the morning, knew the real story of his position at the dyehouse' (p.8). Alice, as opposed to Annie, responds to her husband differently. She takes emotional responsibility for him: 'another mother who will intuit his need, his fear, his loneliness' (Rubin 1985, p.64). When Hughie comes home he seems to hide away from the pressures and oppression of work: 'In here with all the curtains veiling the windows and his armchair drawn up to the fire, he could forget the Dyehouse' (p.9). Hughie finds solace in his home but he cannot be reconciled to the fact he has lost his job. He cannot communicate to his wife how he feels.

She was trying to whip him out of his apathy ... trying to jerk Hughie out of his dark mood ... He sits there looking into space, pretending to read, but usually just sitting ... seems sort of sick ... I need to be left alone ... I want to be left alone to work things out for myself ... (Calthorpe 1961, p. 84–86)

Hughie is trapped in his inability to communicate and his feelings of failure. 'Success for a worker is determined by what he earns, what he owns, where, how and with whom he lives and his ability to control his work environment' (Donaldson 1991, p.9). One of the participants in Komarovsky's research on blue-collar masculine markers says, 'You don't bring your problems from work home.' Hughie's problems are not mechanical or practical. Men usually enjoy fixing things. Hughie's emotional life is expressed in mood swings and unexpressed anger.

The expectation that a man starts full-time work after leaving school and remains a breadwinner until retirement has precipitated rising levels of 'breadwinner suicides' (Donaldson 1991, p. 66; Pleck in Segal 1990, p.293). Segal suggests men cannot abandon the breadwinner role. If they do, they lose one of the few places they are able to feel intimacy. Not only does Hughie have the 'trained incapacity to share' but also he needs to be left alone like the couples researched in *Blue Collar Marriage*:

Leave him alone because if I try to get him to talk he'll get really sore, or he'll go off the deep end and walk out ... He is strictly hands off if something is hurting him (Komarovsky, 1961, p.157).

Hughie is withdrawn from his wife—as cautious men may be in order to avoid the emotional demands put on them. His working and home lives are two separate worlds. Hughie appears to be the type of husband 'who did not find emotional relief in social interaction', which further retards his communication skills. (Komarovsky 1967, p.160–190). When Hughie goes back to the factory to kill himself, he completes the castration began with his being discarded from his job.

An important aspect of *The Copper Crucible* is Julie's relationship with Nick during a time when he cannot gain regular employment. Nick's work circumstances are different from Hughie's or Bill's. Hughie, before being sacked, has thirty-five years in the one job and appears to be an introvert. For Bill survival at work and at home consume his life.

Nick is an extrovert, who revels in union advocacy and struggles against constant unemployment. Hughie and Nick are in similar emotional turmoil as a result of unstable and unfavourable employment prospects. Hughie operates in nonverbal coded silences. Nick's silences, like Bill's in 'Short shift Saturday', come out in his paralanguage. Often what is said is not what is meant.

Nick is silent about the corroding support for him from the men, the struggle to gain employment, the hurt he feels at being sacked regularly and the humiliation of not being a good breadwinner. Nick's feelings of failure, his despondency about his venture to Mt Irene, his marriage problems and the difficulty he has finding his place in his new country are heavy emotional burdens. Despite these difficulties rarely are Nick's feelings expressed—instead we get emotional rhetorical outbursts.

Nick finds himself battling for odd jobs—'eight jobs in quick succession'— and watching the money disappear (p.68). Nick is systematically excluded from employment in Mt Irene because of his union activities. His blacklisting by the mine destroys his hopes of owning his own home and his dream of a happy family in his new country (p.160). The intricate work relationships evident in the discourses of the other narratives are missing in Nick's communication with other workers, despite his finding some solidarity with fellow migrants building his house.

Nick's problems at work put increasing pressure on his relationship to Julie. She comments that Nick has changed since they have been at Mt Irene. She says 'Nick has

reverted to type' (traditional Greek) (p.68). 'He wasn't like this when they met, fell in love and had a baby' (p.109). He starts by demanding her wages and then restricting her spending. If she argues, he savagely pushes her away(p.113). He refuses to help around the house. When she doesn't cope with paid work and child rearing she is forced to resign to care for the family. He tells her that as a consequence of her decision she has to serve him around the house (p.114). Julie says Nick has become arrogant (p.146). He often becomes angry and irritable and at one stage slaps her. Julie feels she is turning into a doormat. She feels that the boss exploits Nick so he in turn exploits her (p.168). Finally they separate after Julie breaks down under the strain.

Understanding what Julie means in saying Nick has 'reverted to type' is complex. Nick is reverting to a stereotype of his masculine gender. The feminine acts as the 'other' in the male's gender construction. This originates from the male child's need for a sexual identity, in the Oedipal separation phase. The 'authoritarian family', Connell explains, 'is the site of where the reproduction of class society and patriarchy is accomplished' (1995, p.17). Bernstein's linguistic positional family and Connell's sociological authoritarian family are the same family viewed from different academic disciplines. Language in this family is used to consolidate relationships rather than express personal feelings. Julie could only fail to meet Nick's irrational and excessive demands. The authoritarian family is controlled by the solidarity required in the language. Julie is disloyal and breaks the solidarity in the family by not conforming to his wishes. Nick and Julie's relationship breakdown shows the intense pressure a working-class family is subjected to when a man, living in a hegemonic culture, finds his working life under constant threat.

Nick's need to dominate Julie is a need to re-establish his masculinity. Nick is under attack as are all the other blue-collar workingmen in all of the stories covered in this thesis. Most of the markers that identify a man as successful within working-class culture are being threatened. These markers include control over his working life, freedom from poverty, security, and home ownership. Home ownership is significant on several levels: it is a defence against predatory landlords, 'a symbol of success, a sign of being a good provider and a good money manager'(Kleinberg 1979, p.124). Nick, importantly, is distant from regular workmates, who could provide much of the intimacy that sustains a man in his life. He cannot show his considerable skill as a worker or his honoured and respected physical abilities at work. Nick's ability to unite both Australians and migrant workers makes him a threat with the mine owners. Subsequently he is a threat to the other men's incomes, and the animosity his presence causes in the other workers undermines his advocacy skills as a union delegate.

Nick's communication at a union level is in a different register from his communication with Julie. At work he communicates in a more formal language, speaking effectively to the group about group experiences and formal negotiations. At home Nick doesn't communicate personal feelings to Julie. There is a void in his communication at home surrounding his problems. Nick never addresses the effects of his black banning by the mine. Instead, he blames Julie for being an unsupportive wife. Nick's lack of expression of personal feelings is consistent with a positional (working-class) family language structure. Nick's constant and insidious blaming of Julie suggests he is lashing out at the

person closest to him, and that he really blames himself for his perceived failure. This attitude of workingmen blaming themselves is a common theme in both Donaldson's and Komarovsky's analysis of working people. (Donaldson 1991, p.9, Komarovsky 1967).

The mine owners marginalize Nick and fragment his work and work places. His masculinity comes under attack and he becomes the 'other' in his environment, an outcast, and a liability to the other men's earning capacity. Capitalism encourages the gendered division of labour and the workplace replicates this division by evaluating men's masculinity. Work gangs do not want weaklings, incompetents, novices, bludgers, troublemakers or the elderly in their team. Men do not want to carry another man on their shift; nor do they want their day to be any harder. Sometimes the better the work-gang the better the bonus money. The resulting hierarchy of masculinity tends to feminise those men perceived as inferior.

Nick's difficulties in getting work are overseered by the employer but the men feminise Nick. Defenceless against the unacceptable, Nick 'reverts to type' at home as a survival skill. He is without the avenue of work as a creative outlet, the shared intimacy through the experience of work, and the action of work where men find relief from stress rather than the use of words (Komarovsky 1967, p.198).

The male protagonists in all of the narratives discussed here avoid speaking about the painful subjects that are at the core of their marital relationships. In a time when these men need emotional support from their partners, their personal relationships are at their

most distant, and the men's feelings of failure retard rather than encourage communication. 'The wider the gulf—segregation of roles, disparity of interest—between the sexes, the more difficult it is to empathize with the daily frustrations of the other.' Workingmen think it takes someone working with them to understand them (Komarovsky 1967, p.171,188, 192, 202). Komarovsky's research found that when the environment was favourable for men to express their emotional needs, the sexes become more alike in the demands they place upon communication

When Men Are Young

Young working-class men communicate outside work better than do older working-class men. Young men are yet to have their feelings and expression structured and restricted by and for work. They are, however, preconditioned to the work environment. The father as role model and the coded language used in the family prepare the young working-class male for the workplace.

Within the warmth of his parents' love, around the security of the kitchen table, young Bill in 'Short-Shift Saturday' is unsuspectingly being made for the factory floor or the mineshaft. His training for work is in his language. Young Bill gets in trouble from his mother at breakfast. He gives his father 'a grin and a look as much to say, "You know, Dad"'. Annie sees the nonverbal interaction between her son and his father but is too busy to try to translate what is going on. Bill says his wife usually, unsuccessfully, tries to translate their 'looks and smiles and winks'(p.196).

Later in the afternoon, young Bill is building a 'little gold mine in the backyard with tobacco-tins for vats and poppets made with his meccano set and dumps and little roads all over the place'. Bill gets caught up in his son's project and helps him with change rooms and a fitting shop. Young Bill says repeatedly to his father, 'Make us underground, too. Make us underground too.' Bill explains how the mechanics of the underground works: the shafts, the winzes and the rise. Getting caught up in young Bill's enthusiasm, Bill draws a map of the mine on the fence (p.223-4). Bill temporarily forgets about

Mace and Don's illnesses and the dangers and futility he faces in his own life in the mine everyday.

An argument develops between Annie and Bill over young Bill's future. Annie suggests teaching him about the mine is regressive. Annie hopes Bill has higher aspirations for their son than for him to be a mineworker. Bill knows a life in the mine is not something he would want for his 'nipper', but he is resigned to knowing that his mother's 'big ideas won't keep him off the end of a banjo [shovel]' if that is what he is suited to (p.224).

Annie complains about her son being adversely influenced by 'playing mines' with his father. The future damage and limited options for her son are already set in linguistic concrete. The paradoxical effect is imposed through emotional grooming. The stricture is in the nonverbal communication between young Bill and his father around the kitchen table. 'Playing mines' in the backyard, the son secures his gender identity and anchors his masculinity to the concept of work. Bill, in a rare moment, has his life validated by his son's emulation of it. In the two small dramas involving young Bill, the inner experience of expressing feelings and communicating nonverbally in the kitchen, and the outer experience of constructing both a 'play mine' and his masculinity occur simultaneously for the child of the blue-collar working class.

Mace and his son, Dick, represent a hopeless outcome that some working-class sons face as a consequence of their relationships with their fathers. Mace's relationship with Dick epitomises the silences and the decline of the relationships between fathers and sons.

Mace, having spent thirty years in the mine, is dying of emphysema. He breathes in 'strangled gasps' and his skin is 'putty coloured'. To Bill, Mace is transparent in places, and Bill is repulsed by Mace's physical presence. He jumps back from Mace as though 'he was a leper'. As Mace approaches death he is forced out of the mine and is replaced by his son, Dick, who 'started bogging on the twelve'(p.204).

Nick Donaldson in *Time of our lives* reflects on his own childhood. His intrigue with the men in the factory is similar to the experience of Mace and Dick, and Bill and young Bill. Emulating the men you look up to and then being betrayed by the empty future that awaits is a knot many working class males spend their lives trying to unravel. For those who want to escape their father's 'factory' experiences, the consequences are often estrangement from the father who withdraws from the son due to perceived disloyalty. Isolation is the price some sons pay for freedom.

Barry Hill captures the destructive nonverbal relationships between fathers and sons in 'Headlocks'. Hill's allegory shows the capacity for father-son relationships to be psychic, physical, emotional, spiritual and destructive. The story begins with the father bringing a fellow recreational fishermen home after fishing. In the family home, the visitor, Ed, starts to playfully wrestle the son, Greg. Suddenly, during the wrestling the father comes in and pins Ed to the floor. Greg, in a sudden shift in the story smashes-in Ed's head with an ashtray, killing him. The first sign of communication by the father to Greg in the fight is when Greg 'knew the old man was watching so there was no need to turn around' (p.13). The intra-personal knowledges shared between the father and son in

this passage operate psychically. Later, the father says to his wife, 'Let them go' (p.15). The tone in his voice is a further sign to Greg—he knew what was going to happen next. The timing of the physical action of the son and the father's interception in the fight is synchronised. The story ends with Greg and his father laughing together as they burn Ed's body in the garage. The power of a father's influence over a son in his formative years is portrayed with graphic detail and macabre consequences.

'Headlocks', as an allegory, shows the willingness of the son to follow the destructive influence of the father. The son's loyalty and eagerness to belong effortlessly subjugates his morality. Hill's story is also young Bill, Dick and Oliver's story. Less graphic though equally poignant is the headlock working for wages and mortgages and debt a bourgeois culture imposes on young working-class men.

The character Oliver in the *Dyehouse* represents a crucial stage in the production of working-class culture. He is articulate, informed, a rebel and in love. He stands on the threshold of manhood and marriage, an angst-ridden period between freedom and a life of bondage for working-class men. He is young. He thinks he is different yet Oliver too may find himself one day 'aching to smash her' (Casey 1942, p.197), or looking 'at her and [feeling] nothing but hatred' (Collins 1966, p.171) as the years of bondage mount.

He is older than young Bill, but he is younger than the other working-class men discussed. Oliver has learnt the same working-class code of communication as young Bill, but he has not been working long enough to become ineffective in communicating

outside the workplace as have Hughie, Nick and Bill. Oliver appears to have the knowledge to prevent the same thing happening to him. Despite this he falls in love with Patty and is prepared to sacrifice his politics for love.

Oliver who looks with pity and disgust at Hughie sees his inevitable future within Hughie. Oliver struggles against Hughie's capitulation to management, his meekness and inability to stand up for himself. Oliver knows that a wife and a mortgage can strangle a man's independence and keep him quiet at work. As he says, 'They won't get me ... I'll take the track first' (p.121) rather than 'end up like Hughie'(p.123).

Oliver philosophises to Patty,

you start taking out some little Sheila, and the next thing you know she's got a mortgage on your future. Head down and arse up for the rest of your days. I'm not going to stay bogged down in this hole all my life ... I'm going to branch out (Calthorpe 1961, pp.53, 104).

However, Oliver does not follow his own advice. He is all talk. The nexus for transformation in Oliver from rebel to willing worker is through his love and relationship with Patty. Work is romanticised as a symbol of love. Oliver wants to settle down with Patty. He says:

‘You love me, Patty?’ His arms tighten around her. He says, ‘When can we get married. I’d like to have a lot to give you, Patty. A new house in one of the outer suburbs. Lovely clothes. We haven’t got much. All our lives we’ll be working and just trying to hang on to what we have. Blokes with money will make more and more. People like us will make it for them. And all the time we’ll be lucky if we can hang on. “We’ll have each other,” Patty said. Oliver bent over and kissed her (pp.196, 201).

Oliver is articulate and can express his feelings of love for Patty. His eyes are open and he can speak of the bleak future marriage and a mortgage can create to a workingman should he get married. He expresses his insightful thoughts and feelings about bourgeois society. But Oliver is in love. This is a time when the masculine is reunited with the feminine after they separated in the oedipal phase of childhood. The anima and the animus *get it on*. Love causes a workingmen to romanticise in his perception of work. Oliver has someone to work for. His willingness to work in oppression becomes a symbol of his love and his masculinity. This is a battle he wants to engage in.

When Men Are Old

Bill, Hughie, Nick, Mace and the other men have had a lifetime in the battle of work.

Oliver, in romanticising the purpose of work, uses it to express his love and masculinity, as the other men once did. Their romanticising has long disappeared, although Bill briefly revisits this illusion through helping his son build a 'play gold mine' in the backyard.

The young men and the older men differ in their communication. Oliver is articulate, as were Bill and Hughie in their younger days. Nick, before he arrived in Mt Irene, was articulate about his thoughts and feelings. Bill concedes that in the early part of the marriage they 'talked half the night and let each other know things you could never find words for in the daytime ... we'd say what was inside us' (p.238). Hughie, reminiscing about his early years of marriage, says, 'I used to go home and tell Alice about how I worked out a new colour. And old Mr Thompson used to stop and ask questions about the lab' (p.71). Nick, Julie said, 'was different'. His working life in Mount Irene has changed him. When the men in the different narratives are young as Oliver is, they are articulate. With the intervening years of work these same men, who are now older, by their own admission are, less communicative, frustrated and often silent. When men start their working life they can communicate. By the time they finish their working life they can't. Work shapes, makes and breaks things—language is one of them. Men's language is structured around the noise, the danger, the lighting, and rules of not talking during working hours. Men's intimacy is shaped and moulded around these strictures. The effective nonverbal communication used at work is ineffective outside of work.

The stories, working as allegories, highlight the effect work has on men. Mace's life and his relationship with his son, Dick, best reveal the dead end aspects of working-class culture. Bill reflects that 'in the ensuing years ... there was so much time between now and last time I'd spoken that I knew I could never fill it in. I'd grown new ways of thinking and so had she' (p.238). Hughie couldn't talk at home or at work. His wife instinctively knew to press her lips together (p.86), knowing communication didn't work. Nick oppressed and rejected his wife in the face of his unemployment and personal demise. Hughie, also faced with unemployment, kills himself. Nick can't communicate his feelings and frustrations and his life becomes tormented. Bill says the words are not in him to talk anymore, and loneliness causes him to suffer a living death.

Komarovsky's research show that a number of factors contribute to the isolation of the older working-class male. Few older blue-collar workingmen appear intimately involved in their married children's lives, and there is a relatively high frequency of hostile sons and daughters (p.256). The more-common unsatisfactory relationships in the extended families in working-class cultures are between the husband and his father (p.257).

Compounding this are the dual occurrences of the non-involvement of fathers in child rearing and the difficulty experienced by less-educated men in communication, both of which hinder the development of close personal relationships (p.258). Work can and does play a major role for many men in breaking the communication cycle between work and home. The intimacies shared at work by men are vital survival relationships, a rich source of life but a formula for alienation outside work.

The shaping of the unsuspecting, young Bill and the romantic notions of Oliver come to a halt in the more mature characters Bill, Hughie and Nick. The demise of Mace and Hughie, and the loneliness of Bill and Nick make the end of their lives irreconcilable with their beginnings. Although not all workingmen have this ending, a considerable percentage of men find, in their twilight years, alienation and loneliness.

The experiences of the working-class characters in these fictional narratives are reflected in sociological research, validating, in varying degrees, the legitimate struggle of blue-collar workingmen's lives. The stories of working people in literature have the potential to create a more reflective working-class culture if they were read.

CONCLUSION

Through exploring the literary characters in these working-class narratives, I hope to have shed light on the complexity of the emotional life of workingmen. Work structures feelings and communication through noise, danger, lighting, isolation, and not being allowed or able to talk effectively at work. The successful paralanguage practiced at work breaks down when it is duplicated at home. Even though the family's language and communication are a reflection, linguistically and hierarchically, of work the family is in the embryo stage compared to the fathers development and the siblings and wife still have considerable interaction outside of the home.

Work is seminal in structuring a workingman's feelings. The solidarity and intimacy of mateship is a key component of work. The experience shared at work by men can range from the fear of death to the fear of obscurity. This experience of fear is shared and the unity in the oppression creates a depth of feeling experienced instinctively.

The feelings that compensate men's fear are a conditional love and caring for each other. In qualifying that statement I would add the following two points. Firstly, at times a corresponding hatred may flare up among men, with aggressive and abusive behaviour being perpetrated on the more vulnerable men and the apprentices in the work place. Secondly using the word love to describe the relationship between workingmen is a term men would reject in our culture. Mateship best describes the conditional relationship between men at work. However, 'mates' seems an inadequate term for men who risk their health and wellbeing for each other. Clearly, they are more than acquaintances, more than

pub mates. The similarities between work and the family can be found in the binary relationship of love and hate. Work, like a family, can be a man's strength and poison. The mateship at work is a self-serving, though not selfish, conditional love, created through the need to survive.

Workingmen think that only someone working with them can understand them. A consequence of work shaping men's feelings, and the communication structure that expresses those feelings, is that men become progressively alienated and isolated in familial relationships. They often feel trapped, inadequate and misunderstood. It follows that working-class children, growing up with a specific dialect, have more difficulty communicating outside their culture than middle-class children. The language of educational institutions is that of the middle-class and is not working class friendly, academically or socially.

Despite the postmodern view of classlessness and fragmentation, there exists a strong working-class culture in our society today. It is found in the language and in the structure of feelings. Norman Mailer said, 'Being a man is the continuing battle of one's life'. The struggle against self is a middle-class luxury. A worker aims to achieve security in his employment and earn enough money to survive. The odds are stacked heavily against him having a fair fight against employers and a demonising media. However, many workingmen are resilient and know the battle of life more intimately than they know the bourgeois battle of self.

Arnold tried to emancipate the working class; my father (a boilermaker) told me repeatedly, 'the working class doesn't want to be saved'. His sweeping statement is as flawed as Arnold's was ignorant. This analysis is not about changing the creativity and the solidarity of the working class, but rather, providing the tools for reflection needed to alleviate the deeper feelings of alienation and loneliness that can occur. The solutions for a better world for all must include the often-alienated older working class male. A broader perception of working-class masculinity can maintain sensitivity to this rich, deeply felt culture. Willing or not, blue-collar working-class culture is overdue for a life-giving shift in how it sees itself. For many workingman, the other is still the feminine and education is not an option. There is little room to move in the perception workers have of working-class masculinity. Few walk willingly into the unknown.

There are, although sparse, examples for workingmen to learn how to redefine themselves. Redefining a working-class culture does not mean a media/image make over or imitating middle-class sensitive new age men. Meaningful shifts need to be made in the perception and the feelings of how and what it means to be a man. E.P. Thompson said, the working class were present and participated in their making. Remaking the working class is in our hands.

I hope this thesis has identified some of the problems and the richness in the relationships in working-class culture, and can inform, give insights, and help better understand ourselves.

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