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Title	Retiring Subjectivities: The affective load of becoming 'retired': Shedding, Shredding or Recalibrating?
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Retiring Subjectivities: The Affective Load of Becoming 'Retired'; Shedding, Shredding or Recalibrating?

Introduction

I open up a discussion of what may lie beyond institutional legitimation, status and purpose as an academic for 'ex-working class' feminist academics as they experience retirement. In exploring the affects and effects of *unbecoming* a feminist professor I cast new light on higher education's gender and class relations (Hey and Leathwood, 2009; Hey, in Maxwell, C and Aggleton, 2013). Using a contingent personal account of cultural and political phenomena, I qualify the celebratory narrative of retirement by acknowledging its more ambiguous realities. I ask why is there is so little acknowledgment of the emotional effort and effects of retirement?

Section One provides a brief theoretical account of subjectivity. In Section Two, I comment on banal social encounters to illustrate instances of the 'making up' of a self. Finally, I invite policy makers to deepen and extend their framing of retirement.

Section One

This paper is an exercise in irony. It comments on the process entailed in no longer being a regulated policy subject. My principal argument is that stepping back into

'Civvy Street' paradoxically surfaced the psychic efforts required to 'fit into' higher education in the first place. In un/becoming academic I have had to install or invent a new me. Whilst the ruptures of class and gender were made possible through the a *shared* political formation of the women's movement such that working class women (for example) could *become* academics (Hey, in Zmroczek and Mahony, 1997; Hey, 2013), retiring out is a distinctly singular occasion. But being alert to the 'social' is a sociologist's pre/occupation and you cannot retire from the social. Previous work has sought to view power as crafting granular identifications from structural divisions:

"...it is because I think how class and gender habitually intersect in the everyday banal cultural exchanges that make us up and undo us , ... [that] the emotion laden making up of the social (...) craft[s] the conditionality for people to act or not" (Hey, 2013: 119).

Some of the consequences of being an 'ethnographer without portfolio' in 'the real world', I draw upon below.

Section Two

Narratives from working class women have argued that 'making it' in an elite, male-dominated institution has incurred losses (Lucey, et al 2009), alongside the privilege and power accrued. These losses are usually related to one's family of origin and a sense of alienation felt on both sides. I certainly have acquired economic, social, geographic and cultural mobility not least in being able to afford my own retirement! But I cannot 'go home' and for those without prior or co-existent access to the intelligentsia's cultural and social milieu, leaving a university exposes how much

female professional selfhood as an intellectual is expressed within in its physical entity. This may also conversely explain why many women in particular keep going, refusing to accept the passivity and deficits the word 'retirement' implies. Jane Kenway refers to 'recalibration' (Kenway, 2016). I understand these concerns. Since leaving work I find myself missing my discourse community and outside my customary way of speaking, self-censoring and/or switching codes or sometimes just shutting up. It depends on what company I am in.

It was the violent fascist politicized discourses brought into being by Brexit and the 2017 General Election campaign that took me back in a more systematic way to critical discourse. I needed to process events 'publically' and quickly within critical social justice forms of debate. And against my better judgment I am indebted to *Facebook* in providing a proxy for the habitus of HE. I overcame my digital incompetence, if not all of my reservations about digital narcissism, to access and contribute to emergent understandings in difficult times. Resistance to Trump's border ban and his misogyny along with Theresa May's opportunism in calling a snap election stimulated a need for a new collective – it was beyond urgent to fight back. Interestingly many 'organic intellectuals' came out to play too, providing vivid compelling posts (Jeremy Gilbert is one such) giving interesting analysis that assisted in mobilizing across the class, ethnic, generation and gender divide. Discourse and FB postings were often endless, contested, provocative, and sometimes very funny. Being extra-mural I, I found myself enjoying these discussions tempting me out of the shadow of just reading to interrupting and interrogating ideas. And it's an intriguing 'educational' space (on the whole!) a fractured pedagogic space impelling me and

others to refute the 'common sense' of the younger generation of 'revolutionaries' who travel without feminism.

Section 3

My pre-retirement course obsessed about money and a good thing too but it also could have explored the anxieties and fears, hopes and delights inscribed in the business of retirement. It could have spoken about 'purpose'. If HE represents for me, (and perhaps others), a specific location a sort of 'home', this could be borne in mind if there is a change of policy (Labour Party Manifesto 2017). After all the University has some imaginative social actors within why not hold onto them in some way as they go without?

References

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