

Craft Capitalism: Labour and the Cultural Narratives of Artisanal Production

by

Benjamin Anderson

MA, Johns Hopkins University, 2012

BA, Lewis & Clark College, 2007

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Declaration of Committee

Name: Benjamin Anderson

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

Title: **Craft Capitalism: Labour and the Cultural Narratives of Artisanal Production**

Committee:

Chair: Siyuan Yin
Assistant Professor, Communication

Enda Brophy
Supervisor
Associate Professor, Communication

Zoë Druick
Committee Member
Professor, Communication

Alberto Toscano
Committee Member
Reader in Critical Theory, Sociology
Goldsmiths, University of London

Mark Leier
Examiner
Professor, History

Mark Banks
External Examiner
Professor, Culture & Creative Arts
University of Glasgow

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Abstract

Recently, considerable attention has been paid to the category of craft. In sociology and art theory, scholars like Richard Sennett, Susan Luckman, and Glenn Adamson have attempted to define, theorize and delineate the history of craft and its influence in contemporary culture. Popularly, books and television shows feature the work of makers and craftspeople, their popularity compounded by online crafting communities like Etsy.

For all of this attention, considerably less has been paid to the labour that creates craft products to begin with. This dissertation interrogates the category of craft from a critical labour studies perspective, first by analyzing its labour process, and, second, by amplifying the voices of workers in order to reflect the conditions they face, their attitudes about craft, and their reflections on class and organizing.

In order to accomplish both, the thesis reports on interviews and critically examines cultural artifacts concerning so-called making (typically understood as amateur or semi-professional small-scale production) and craft industrialism (used to define scalable industries that use craft branding and terminology). Its key case studies are making and craft brewing in the Cascadia region of North America, although it also visits the roasteries, bike shops, and bakeries that make up other sites of the artisanal economy.

This dissertation makes four primary contributions to the critical study of craft. First, it reorients the common approaches to craft, which either prioritize craft objects or individual maker activity. By redirecting attention to the social process of production, it avoids the object-orientation of many approaches as well as the maker-as-virtuoso narratives of popular accounts. By focusing on the social dynamics of craft, the dissertation transcends the singular craftsperson to make its second contribution: the reconceptualization of skill as social category rather than individual attribute. This social approach to skill paves the way toward the dissertation's third contribution: a dialectical consideration of the craftworker as distinct from but intrinsically related to the craftsperson. Analysis of cultural artifacts and discussions with workers highlighted the dependency of craftsmanship and support work. Finally, the dissertation distills maker and worker attitudes into a set of observations regarding the maker movement's narratives of emancipation through self-directed work as well as the potential of solidarity in craft industries.

Keywords: Craft; craft labour; entrepreneurial ideology; making; labour process analysis; workers' inquiry

Dedication

To the workers and their struggle for fairness, equity and collective power.

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Chapter 1. Introduction: Capitalism's Time Machine

In the summer of 2014, a group of making enthusiasts inspired by similar events in California's bay area and elsewhere, hosted an exhibition at Vancouver's Pacific National Exhibition (PNE). Running under the title Vancouver Mini Maker Faire, the event featured a range of small-scale, locally produced products as well as demonstrations, talks, and social events aimed at promoting 'making' (Proctor, 2014; Lopez, 2014). The program, as it turns out, appealed to many in the Vancouver area, tapping into interests in local goods, geek culture and DIY activity. As one of the founders explained to me, there was a general enthusiasm for the kinds of community the event promoted, shared by planners and participants alike. After running the program for a number of years, it became overly large and unwieldy and came to an end due to the resource constraints faced by its organizers. Currently, the void left by the Mini Maker Faire is filled by the Vancouver Maker Faire, a larger event hosted at the Telus Science World by Make, an organization whose events have been sponsored by large corporations including but not limited to Google, Uber, Amazon and Disney. Whereas the maker movement and Vancouver Mini Maker Faire are described as community endeavours animated by personal passion, collective creation, and autonomous organization, the Make organization provides a strong example of just how potentially profitable these values must be.

Indeed, the recent explosion of craft and making has created new and dynamic avenues for accumulation. Along with Make, the online craft marketplace Etsy stands out as both an indication of the popularity of making and a behemoth of its financialized trajectory. Founded in 2005, Etsy has grown from a relatively small start-up into an e-commerce powerhouse, leveraging its appeal to craft desire and maker enthusiasm to post gross profits of \$1.26 billion in 2020 and \$1.68 billion in 2021 (Macrotrends, 2022). With over 800 employees and 5.3 million independent sellers, Etsy seems, at first blush, a strange flagship company for an industrial segment that prides itself on its bespoke, personalized, and small-scale characteristics. Etsy's massive revenue streams and the virtual army of makers upon which they're built suggests that the company's focus on

handmade, bespoke goods appeals to a market segment that taps into a powerful cultural phenomenon: craft.

The size and influence of both Make and Etsy should not, however, take us by surprise. Craft and making have enjoyed a bonanza of interest over the last decade, with makers and consumers alike enthusiastically welcoming what many see as a more organic and ethical approach to capitalism. Making, in this view, can be defined as amateur or small-scale industrial production often characterized by a do-it-yourself (DIY) ethos, a dedication to locally produced goods and an ethic of knowledge sharing and collaboration. Making and the maker movement might also be considered a segment of the culture and industry of craft and artisanry that has recently emerged, especially in the economies of the global north. In recent years, activities like making, small-scale artisanal fabrication of durable commodities like selvedge denim and locally tanned and fabricated leathers, and localized production of consumables like artisan foods and craft beer have begun to shape the ways we understand our relationship to urban communities and our place within the global supply chain alike. Craft capitalism, as we might call it, illustrates the dialectical tensions between mental and manual labour while simultaneously revealing the contradictions of localized production in a globalized political economy. Under craft capitalism, consumers are presented with an image of artisanality, and in the case of scalable craft industries, this image often has a way of masking a fetishization of artisanal labour that actually makes up a rather small segment of their productive activity.

Furthermore, the proliferation of craft and making in northern economies also suggests a simultaneous aspirational movement away from the widely heralded forms of cognitive labour that were projected as the new normal by commentators toward the end of the 20th century (Hardt & Negri, 1999; Drucker, 2000; Drucker, 1992). In the intervening years, countless studies and commentaries have pointed out the concomitant alienation that digital labour seemingly exacerbates (Morgan & Nelligan, 2018; Huws, 2014; Fuchs, 2014). In this sense, the move toward physical fabrication, on one hand, suggests a desire on the part of makers, craftspeople and craftworkers for a more material relationship with their work and leisure. On the other hand, however, it signals a new cultural site for the extraction of value, in this case through the re-fetishization of work in its manual form.

It is here that we observe one of the most critical and least remarked upon dimensions of the rise of the current wave of craft enthusiasm: the valorization process upon which it is built. Craft discourse most commonly declares an entrepreneurial impulse at the heart of making activity without acknowledging the vast number of workers – artisans and non-artisans alike – whose labour generates not only the industry's economic value in the form of artisanally made commodities, but its social legitimacy in the form of industrial mythologies. It is along this axis that this dissertation intervenes: by demonstrating the tensions and dependencies of these twin processes, especially as these are experienced by workers. As such, this dissertation reports on the experiences and attitudes of a range of workers, makers, business owners, and experts in order to highlight the contradictions between craft discourse and the craft labour process, particularly as these are experienced by workers. It considers craft as an arbitrarily applied discursive categorization that valorizes an image of work at the same time that it obscures the actually existing labour of so-called craft industries.

Craft provides us a provocative counterpoint to what Harry Braverman (1974) describes as the separation of conception and execution in the capitalist labour process. Whereas in the centralized industrial processes upon which Braverman bases his analysis craftspeople find themselves increasingly distant from the creative elements of their productive activities; in craft production we see a reassertion of the unity between head and hand that is purported to characterize pre-industrial production generally (Sennett, 2009). This seeming unity might even compel us to conceive of craft as a viable alternative to the forms of alienation promulgated at the advent of industrialism. However, as will become clear, this is very far from the case. The following research reveals that although craft discourse actively promotes this assumption of unified production, it also relies heavily on devalued and deskilled labour, frequently mediated along the lines of race and gender. While craft industries build their allure atop the image of a timeless craftsperson, many workers in these industries find themselves alienated and exploited in much the same manner as they would in other industries.

Although theorists of craft, notably Richard Sennett (2009), paint a picture of craft as a de-alienated form of work, the spectre of alienation still looms over this industrial segment. A common starting place for any discussion of alienation is what Marx (1844) sees as the distinction between human labour and animal labour: purposeful thought and planning. Although this naturalistic characterization of human development is

typically used in Marxian scholarship to set up arguments pertaining to Marx's concept of species-essence, here we use it to zero-in on the central ingredients in the production of value: mental and manual labour. In such a formulation, the mind (or, specifically, the brain) is the physical embodiment of the human capacity for conceptual and creative thought. In the same vein, the thumb (or the hand) stands out as the appendage that affords humans the capacity to physically act upon and change their environment. This dualistic consideration of human labour, while not necessarily reflecting more complex ideas of embodied subjectivity, affective behaviours, or social forces, provides an instructive illustration of the mind/body connection and tension that animates much of our thought about human labour.

It also provides a conceptual window through which we might consider a tension in the 21st century world of work. Since at least the 1950s, labour theorists have monitored the increasing enclosure of mental labour at the hands of capital through new technologies and novel managerial techniques (Braverman, 1974; Bell, 1970; Mills, 1951). The province of the worker, this analysis goes, is increasingly limited to manual labour, the specialized knowledge of craft being siphoned off for control by the professional managerial classes, in turn increasing both alienation and exploitation for the worker.

Conditions today, however, complicate this notion. Since the 1970s, creative capacities and affective energies have been increasingly incorporated into the workplace (Foucault, 2004; Hochschild, 1979; Boltanski & Chiapello, 2007). Today we are interpellated as creative subjects to bring our personalities and passions to work with us as means for innovation and connection (Mould, 2018; Fleming, 2015). One might even go so far as to argue that whereas the characteristic worker of the Fordist period worked in a factory or in the building trades, today, under the conditions and ideology of post-Fordism, they are a service or knowledge worker, expected to parrot company values through customer service or to be their true selves as generators of images or content. In terms of generalized visions of work in the digital age, the pendulum appears to have swung the other way, displacing the hand as the keystone of production and replacing it with the head.

Indeed, over the last few decades, liberal and critical theorists alike have heralded the rise of the knowledge economy (Drucker, 1992), communicative capitalism (Dean, 2009), and immaterial labour (Hardt & Negri, 2000), all of which point, in one way or

another, toward a productive regime that prioritizes mental labour as a central engine for the conditions of contemporary capitalism. To be fair, much of this research is compelling and it takes us a long way toward understanding the complexities of work in a semiotically and symbolically rich consumer society. Of course, these streams of thought vary in the degree to which they acknowledge the material processes at work at the foundations of global capitalism. For every job that is mediated by computers or other digital technologies, there are scores needed in order to furnish those technologies (Dyer-Witthford, 2015; Fuchs, 2014; Brophy & De Peuter, 2014). For every creative professional pursuing their dreams and exhibiting their true self through the content they create, there exists an army of manual labourers who work under severe disciplinary regimes in the overt interests of capital without receiving so much as a nod for their own subjective desires.

It is, of course, relatively easy to point out the manual labour that continues to fabricate the substantive, physical infrastructures and products that form the base for consumer society in the digital age. What doesn't jump immediately to mind is the return of the mental to the manual mediated by ideological narratives of authenticity, naturalness and tradition. If the hallmark of the digital age is, to some degree, the prioritization of the head over the hand, how do we account for the return to the hand as filtered by the head? In a sense, this dynamic is a refraction of the idea of the digital in contemporary work. The term digital labour is typically used to demarcate work that utilizes, is mediated by, or produces digital content or digital platforms (Burston et al., 2010; Fuchs, 2014; Fuchs & Sandoval, 2014). Here, I propose that we turn to another potential use for the term. Although we typically think of the word digital as it pertains to computing technology, another definition relates it to the physical digits of human appendages.¹ Used in this sense, the term digital labour would bring us full circle to our initial illustration of human biology. Does digital labour, as in the work of the hand, under the conditions of production in the technologically digital age, stand out as qualitatively distinct from the same kinds of work taken on in a pre-networked context? The research reported in this dissertation suggests that we should consider certain forms of manual labour in the 21st century as arising as ideological by-products of and reactions to the

¹ After writing this passage, I encountered a very similar assertion in Jack Bratich's (2010) article on craft and immaterial labour. Bratich's use tends more toward the philosophical than my own, but that we both independently gravitated toward this particular linguistic similarity is far from coincidental.

informationalization of work in the post-Fordist period. Many crafters, makers and craftworkers report a generalized ennui toward technologically-mediated and service work, many reporting that they left tech sector jobs to rediscover a more manual way of navigating their working lives. It is along the axes of satisfying/unsatisfying work and manual/mental labour that I propose we probe the meaning and conditions of artisanal and craft labour in the 21st century. Craft is essentially a form of manual labour that is either highly integrated with its mental counterpart in the form of creative planning on the part of the craftsperson, or that carries with it the appearance of such a unity, even if this unity is not reflected in the craft labour process. As we shall see, although craft discourse shouts this unity from the proverbial rafters, it proves elusive for those workers who hold non-artisan positions in craft workplaces. While an artisan baker or craft brewer might report a unified approach to the way they go about their work (and they often do), the same is not as readily reported by a craft beverage retail associate, a temporary brewery server, or a low-paid heritage denim intern – even as each of these can more or less accurately be described as a craftworker.

The intention of this project is to map the contours of the recent renewal of interest in material craft production primarily amongst relatively privileged groups in the global north, a movement that should be conceived of as distinct from traditional handicraft in pre-capitalist and non-capitalist societies as well as those forms of traditional cultural production that have increasingly been subjected to the imperatives of the global market system over the last few centuries (tourist-oriented handicrafts, for example). That is to say that craft, as we are using it here, is meant to demarcate that segment of work in the global north animated by the purported desire to produce high-quality material commodities, often in small-scale, local contexts, and culturally reinforced through narratives of creative autonomy, social distinction, and sustainability. Such a category includes but is not limited to: artisanal food and beverage production; bespoke clothing, tool and furniture manufacture; and the small-scale production of usable aesthetic goods such as jewelry and décor. It is a broad category, the borders of which are porous. As such, the present investigation problematizes two specific sites of this form of craft production in an attempt to solidify some of this conceptual muddiness. First, it considers the labour process of so-called craft brewing, interrogating the cultural mythologies that undergird the industry and condition its workers. This discussion of craft brewing is supplemented with examples of similar industries producing craft consumables,

particularly artisan coffeehouses and bakeries. Second, it explores the ideological narratives and the subjectivities that characterize what has come to be known as the maker movement – that collection of craftspeople united under the moniker “maker” and committed to the production of quality material (and sometimes immaterial) goods, either by hand or with the assistance of high technology tools such as laser cutters and 3D printers. The case studies illustrate two major outlets for the craft impulse. On one hand is the individual and potentially autonomous activity of a self-employed or hobby maker. The other is the scalable activity of a craft firm or industry, a more rationalized approach to craft at the industrial level that I label craft industrialism (Anderson, 2021). As will become apparent, both making and craft industrialism mobilize powerful narratives of community, collaboration, and creative freedom at the same time they are inculcated in the same process of value creation and capture that animates the capitalist system writ large. Taken together craft industrial production and the individual impulses of artisan-makers coalesce into a socio-economic formation that we can call craft capitalism.

Although neither of these case studies provides a comprehensive picture of craft capitalism, taken together they trace the outline of some of its underlying assumptions, cultural logics, and material processes. Craft capitalism, in this sense, might be seen as a composite of these two tendencies: individual (and often entrepreneurial) making activity and rationalized, industrial production. Here, this composite is revealed by collecting the insights and attitudes of several participants involved in the structures of each case, either as workers, amateur makers, business owners or managers, or industrial experts. The interviews reported here are further contextualized through a critical reading of popular cultural texts pertaining both to craft brewing and making, which are intended not only to provide background but to reveal common values and mythologies in each of these social settings. Overall this combination of participant testimony and craft mythology reveals a stark disconnect between the values that craft industries and making boosters espouse and the working realities for those who depend on craft to make their livings. This contradiction is particularly pronounced in craft capitalism’s discursive commitment to inclusion and fairness at the same time that women, people of colour, and gender diverse workers find themselves at the receiving end of some of its most abusive and unequal conditions.

The remainder of this chapter provides a conceptual roadmap that will guide the overall analysis of craft in the 21st century. Each of the following sections introduces a key

problematic or area of inquiry that will catalyze the analysis as a whole. The chapter (and by extension, the dissertation) first problematizes the role and changing nature of skill in the Fordist and post-Fordist periods. Building upon this historical and theoretical overview, it then examines the varying historical definitions ascribed to the category of craft and the ways in which these are mediated by the socio-political contexts against which they are formulated. Next, it follows the various movements that have arisen in support of craft, artisanry and skilled trades from the Victorian period to today. The present movement toward craft is then examined through two targeted case studies grouped under the broad categories of craft industrialism and making. The analysis then moves on to consider how each of these case studies might be understood theoretically when weighed against popular and academic notions of the digital age, immaterial labour, and the gig economy. It then diagnoses the barriers and potentials that each case study presents in relation to working-class consciousness, class solidarity, and worker organizing. The chapter ends with a description of the methodology and procedures that informed the study.

1.1. The Evolution of Skill: Toward a Social Understanding of Making

A critique of craft in both its historical and contemporary usage would almost certainly have to begin, as this one does, with a consideration of the category of skill as mediated by the capitalist division of labour. Typical Marxian narratives of the prehistory and early history of industrialism differentiate between a social and industrial division of labour, particularly as this latter breaks up tasks into their component parts (Lenin, 2000; Mandel, 1962; Braverman, 1974). Arguably chief among these accounts, at least for those who analyze the labour process, is Harry Braverman's (1974) *Labor and Monopoly Capital*. In Braverman's account, whereas all societies tend toward a general division of productive and reproductive tasks, it is under capitalism that tasks themselves begin to be divided into their discrete actions. In such an understanding, capitalist pre-history would be characterized by a social allocation of roles (baker, farmer, etc.), while under capitalism each of these roles would be divided further into specialist designations, each of which would then be divided into its component parts in order to apply more objective managerial standards. Furthermore, according to Braverman's reading of Frederick

Winslow Taylor (1911), this tendency is further exacerbated under so-called 'scientific management' wherein the planning and other thought work of the labour process is siphoned off by management, leaving labour to consist primarily of repetitive kinesthetic actions.

It is this siphoning off of the creative and mental aspects of labour that is important in our account of craft work, for, as we shall see, the category of skill is heavily informed by the creativity and intellectual processes of the craftsperson. The capitalist division between planning and production, between thought and action, in this sense, actually works to undermine the very category of the craftsperson. The skilled hand, according to Richard Sennett's (2008) meditations on the craft ethos, is one that has been honed through reflexive practice, projecting the intellectual discipline of the 'master' into the physical actions of their craft. Moreover, if we consider the social totality under which production takes place, we might conceive of skill as an abstract category that exists somewhat outside the individually held attribute of skill. The centralization of control over the conceptual elements of production under Taylorist principles also discounts and minimizes the need for the latent craft knowledge of the skilled worker, further deteriorating the position of the craftsperson in the labour process overall. Essentially, under a capitalist division of labour, management siphons off as much trade knowledge as possible, leaving the craftsperson as just another input in a largely deskilled labour process.

The advent of scientific management in the 20th century and the subsequent routinization of the labour process was a key catalyst in the removal of thought work, and by extension craft knowledge, from productive labour in capitalist industry (Braverman, 1972). This is not to suggest that skill itself is absent on the shop floor of Fordist industrialism – one still has to have a base level of mechanical skill to operate certain forms of machinery or to work at a rate seen as efficient by management, and, even as new managerial techniques and technological innovations siphon planning tasks from the general worker, new specialized forms of work are created. However, what Braverman's observations suggest is that the embodied knowledge of the pre-industrial craftsperson is extracted and subsequently systematized under Taylorist principles, becoming a means through which management is able to control the labour process and standardize 'human capital.' As Joan Greenbaum (1999) puts it in a review of Braverman's contributions 25 years after the publication of *Labor and Monopoly Capital*,

“Control over skill was, and remains, one of the main mechanisms management uses to decrease wages and increase control, but many readers [of Braverman] or people offering quick commentary have gotten the specifics of so-called deskilling confused with the general tendency toward controlling the labour process” (pg. 29). In this sense, what is at stake under the imposition of a Taylorized division of labour isn’t so much craft knowledge itself; it is the level of autonomy and control over the labour process available to skilled workers that would allow them to exercise that knowledge. This knowledge, and the category of skill more generally, is a crucial element of both labour power and the power of workers over production. Its concentration in the hands of management disempowers workers, and contributes to the elusiveness of their control over the labour process.

It is in this struggle over control of the labour process that we first encounter one of the key imprecisions of craft as a conceptual category. When we reference the figure of the craftsperson is this synonymous with the skilled worker? If there is a distinction between the two, how is this historically informed? According to curator and art theorist Glenn Adamson’s (2013) account, the craftsperson is a modern invention, arising alongside and in opposition to the great factory systems of early capitalist industry. Adamson depicts the craftsperson as an active political subject who, seeing control wrested away by the impersonal systems of industrial management, sets out to solidify the craft ethos apart and against the Taylorist division of labour that threatens its existence. He proposes that although a simple definition of the category of craft might be “making something well through hand skill” (Adamson, 2013, pg. xxiv), that craft is not a category that should be treated neutrally, as “It was invented at a time of conflict between the ranks of the skilled and others involved in production, who recognized the unique potency of skill and therefore wanted to contain and control it” (xxiv). Understood in this sense, the craft ethos is one that carries potentialities for class consciousness and solidarity, even if these remain latent or unrealized.

It is this politically charged conceptualization of craft paired with a conceptualization of craft skill in the abstract (rather than in the singular) that I propose should guide any analysis of its resurgence in the precarious times that we currently inhabit. Building upon Adamson’s ‘invention of craft’ thesis – that is, the assertion that craft as a category arises alongside the maturation of industrial capitalism – Chapter 2 interrogates the evolution and enclosure of skill primarily in the industrial centres of the United States and

the United Kingdom from the late 19th century to the early 20th century in order to theorize craft as a subjective approach to work on the part of the artisan, a social practice of skilled production, and as a collective response to the systemization and automation of production under the Fordist paradigm. This will be accomplished, to some degree, through a critical overview of some of the main currents in craft discourse and scholarship, particularly in light of a general tendency to conceive of craft from the standpoint of the individual craftsman rather than that of craftworkers as a social and industrial segment. Although this interrogation will be historically informed, it will primarily serve as a theoretical and political exposition on the characteristics and limits of craft as a segment of working-class consciousness and the social significance this has in different historio-social contexts. Ideally such a demarcation will provide a theoretical foundation upon which we can interpret the various craft-based movements that have surfaced from the Victorian period to today.

1.2. The Craft Spirit Then and Now

The current wave of interest in craft and artisanal practice is not unique historically (Luckman, 2015; Gauntlett, 2018). In fact, it is simply the latest in a series of craft-based movements commonly seen as following the legacy of the British Arts and Crafts movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Adamson, 2013; Luckman, 2015; Sennett, 2008). Often seen as a reassertion of the value of material skill, the Arts and Crafts movement can also be interpreted as one against alienation and, arguably, against the valorization of exchange value over use value. As Glenn Adamson (2013) suggests in an introduction to an article by William Morris – one of the leaders of the movement – its ethic can be simply encapsulated by Morris’ call that one should “Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful” (pg. 147). The call to arms presented by the Arts and Crafts movement – that is, an active and progressive revival of the craft ethic – is one that has, according to Susan Luckman (2015), been subsequently mobilized in at least two other historical moments, first amongst the counterculture of the 1960s and again in our present scenario, perhaps best illustrated by the contemporary maker movement.

Chapter 3 explores the historical evolution of craft-oriented social movements, beginning by interrogating the utopian socialist foundations of the Arts and Crafts movement,

primarily in the work of John Ruskin and William Morris. It then considers the ways in which the values espoused by these thinkers, and the movement more generally, developed in the middle decades of the 20th century, and how they were adopted and built upon by the move toward both domestic and counter-/subcultural craft activities of the latter half of that same century. Here the analysis will refine Luckman's historical categorization, and the generational gap it leaves between the 1960s counterculture – perhaps most notably amongst the group Fred Turner (2006) calls the “New Communalists” - and the contemporary maker movement, to consider how the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) ethos of the punk movement of the 1970s and 1980s was built upon an anarchistic, anti-corporate approach to the production and distribution of culture and style and how this, in turn, forms some of the ideological foundation for individualistic mythologies that often motivate the craft enterprises of the contemporary urban economies of the global north. It will also consider the various hacker and “craftivist” movements that are currently challenging the corporate cooptation of making activities while simultaneously considering how these have, like the punk movement before them, become sites of that very same cooptation.

1.3. Working Narratives and the Entrepreneurial Subject

In order to demonstrate the ideological and material implications of the renewed interest in craft production, this project interrogates two central case studies. The first of these deals with what I call *craft industrialism* – small but scalable Fordist-style production, specifically in its capitalist form. Artisanal baking, craft distilling, and small-scale fabrication of material goods might all fall into this category, but here we will focus on craft brewing as an archetypal example of this category of industrial production. Craft brewing, as we will see in Chapter 4, is often heralded as a site of production that, due to its purported opposition to the mass brewing practices perfected by the large corporate breweries that have dominated the beer market since the American Prohibition, stands out as a more just, less exploitative industry segment. What is often neglected in these characterizations of craft brewing are the entrepreneurial impulses and the narratives of creativity on which much of its image is built as well as the working conditions and hierarchical division of labour that these impulses almost certainly promote.

Building upon the ideas of entrepreneurial subjectivities and the imperatives of creativity, the second case study introduces the often-tense interaction between amateur creative activity and individual enterprise. It does so by interrogating the discursive tenets of the so-called maker movement and the manner in which these correspond (or fail to correspond) to the experiences and attitudes of self-identified makers. Whether aspiring creative workers or hobbyists, makers today are interpellated as aspiring entrepreneurs, and the circuits and platforms of craft distribution and discourse reinforce this call to the entrepreneurial.

Drawing on Michel Foucault's (2004) reflections on the development of neoliberal thought and its subjective ramifications in the latter half of the 20th century, Chapter 4 provides an overview of the entrepreneurial foundations of each of these case studies and attempts to connect these to narratives of self-reliance, individual discipline and gratification, and the work ethic often cited by celebrants of both. It does so by tracking the progressive centrality of affective, creative, and identity-related dimensions of work. It begins by considering the entrepreneurialization of work in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, and the common narratives of entrepreneurial success that animate many craft capitalist enterprises. Under post-Fordist conditions, the lines between the self and work are blurred, if not erased. As Peter Fleming (2015) argues, today workers are expected to identify with their work as human capital wherein they invest their energies into building proficiencies and distinction within their fields and where jobs become "iJobs" that feed off of and in turn reinforce their identities. When considered against Kathleen Kuehn and Thomas Corrigan's (2013) concept of hope labour – the aspirational forms of work undertaken in the hope of future employment – the idea of a subjective enclosure in the contemporary world of work resonates strongly with the world of craft entrepreneurship.

Under neoliberalism, the entrepreneur has become a standard upon which much of life is organized (Bröckling, 2016). In his analysis of entrepreneurial subjectivities in contemporary capitalism, German sociologist Ulrich Bröckling suggests, following Foucault, that the logic of the enterprise seeps into most of our social lives, convincing us to behave as entrepreneurs of the self. This is a particularly evocative idea when applied to the world of craft production. On one hand, skilled artisans are investing their time and resources into developing a marketable skill, this occurring against the backdrop of high levels of austerity and precarity. On the other hand, entrepreneurs are

constantly seeking out ways to turn artisanal skills into small or scalable enterprises. In this way, entrepreneurial subjectivity informs many stages of the craft labour process, from the ways in which craftspeople approach their work, to the ways they view themselves as workers, entrepreneurs, or creatives, and on to the ways that their productive energies are exploited – internally or externally – in the interest of generating surplus value as well as extra levels of social legitimacy for the craft industries within which they work.

1.4. Cultures of Craft Industrialism

From 1933, when the American prohibition of alcohol was repealed, to at least 1978 when President Jimmy Carter signed into law a bill relaxing the regulation of homebrewing supplies, the brewing of beer in the US was primarily the territory of a handful of large industrial breweries (Murray & O'Neill, 2012; Calka, 2017). In subsequent decades, the small-scale production of beer has grown steadily, eventually exploding in volume and number of firms in the early decades of the 2000s. According to market research firm Small Business Labs (2017), craft beer sales made up 22% of the US beer market in 2016, an increase of 10% from the previous year. In British Columbia, one of the sites of this research, as of October 2017, 65 new breweries had opened in only four years, a 55% increase (Mendes, 2017).

A fairly healthy amount of scholarly attention has been dedicated to the advent of craft brewing, especially in terms of the consumer cultures and urban spaces that have emerged alongside it (Darwin, 2017; Maciel, 2017; Paulsen & Tuller, 2017). While many of these studies have approached craft brewing from a critical stance, most of those have dealt with the industry's tendency to appeal to white male consumers or to reinforce stereotypes through labeling and advertising (Withers, 2017; Calka, 2019). Such analyses are, of course, powerful and depict a problematic beer culture, but they do so mostly on the consumer end. Relations of production, labour, and institutional structures are often neglected in critical studies of craft brewing. A notable exception is the work of J. Nikol Beckham (2017), which argues that in the desperate economic times of the last decade, the distinction between work and leisure has become increasingly blurred, making entrepreneurial activities like the opening of a brewery stand out as a means for escape amongst certain privileged groups. In brewing culture, if we build upon

Beckham's argument, the archetype of the entrepreneur catalyzes interest in and commitment to what might otherwise be considered petit-bourgeois endeavours. This figure, according to Beckham, masks the political context under which it arises and obscures racial, gendered, and classed barriers to a worker's ability to pursue such an escapist course.

Beckham's work sheds light on a dimension of craft brewing that has, to this point, gone under-researched. That is the production-side of beer culture, both in terms of the ideology fueling its industrial culture and the labour process under which it operates. As such, Chapter 5 introduces a cast of brewery owners, brewers, and brewery workers and puts them in dialogue with one another in order to highlight and assess their motivations for pursuing craft brewing, their experiences of work in the brewing industry – or their assumptions about working conditions on the part of owners and management – and their observations about the production and distribution of value within their industries and how this measures up against the common view of brewing as a fun, fair, and socially just industry. In focusing on craft brewing as a case study, the chapter also uncovers a key risk underlying craft industrialism, that is that its operation as capitalist enterprise is obscured and neglected in favour of the ideological discourses and mythologies insulating it from critique. It does so by giving voice to worker concerns, questioning the appropriateness of countercultural, resistant, or environmentally friendly narratives, and illustrating how craft industrialism, despite its artisanal branding, conforms to the organizational and cultural imperatives of capitalism more generally and how these, in turn, inform labour processes, working conditions, and systemic relations of inequality, exclusion, and marginalization.

1.5. Digital vs. Analogue: Material Fabrication and Immaterial Labour

The recent turn toward craft is particularly interesting when considered against the backdrop of the breathless heralding of the information age in the 1990s and early 2000s (Gates, 1995; Toffler, 1980; Drucker, 1992). Although such celebrations have subsequently been discredited, their cultural significance cannot be over-emphasized (Dyer-Witheford, 1999; Huesemann & Huesemann; 2011; Cray, 2022). The trope of the informationalization of everything and eclipsing of material toil so readily meted out in the 1990s, today seems quaint when considered against the backdrop of widespread

insecurity, the casualization of work and the growth of the gig economy (Morgan & Nelligan, 2018; Kalleberg, 2009; Tremblay, 2009; Crary, 2022). In some ways, the “uberization of everything” would seem to have been a predictable outcome of the neoliberal political project that defanged labour, deregulated workplaces, and fabricated a “common sense” animated by self-interest, competition, and cynicism (Hall & O’Shea, 2013; Harvey, 2007). Far from liberating working people from the material conditions of work, new digital technologies actually conditioned them to accept greater levels of exploitation branded as autonomy and prestige (Doogan, 2009; Andrejevic, 2008).

At the same time that “technological utopians” (Dyer-Witheford, 1999) were rolling out the red carpet for the new “friction-free capitalism” (Gates, 1995), some scholars on the left saw the development of networked technologies as presenting new forms of social organization, and, in some cases, a new kind of working class subject (Hardt & Negri, 1999; Lazzarato, 1999). For thinkers associated with post-operaismo, or autonomist Marxism, digital technologies could simultaneously deliver to capital tools for domination and to workers means of resistance (Hardt & Negri, 2000; Dyer-Witheford, 2009). Similarly, other thinkers of the left saw the technological development of this period as something that could be harnessed and set toward the goal of emancipation (Gorz, 1985). Again, the results probably could have been predicted, especially given capitalism’s staggering ability to morph dissent into profit. In a period of informational abundance and unprecedented connectivity, this potential for collective action is frequently channeled instead into individualized pursuits.

According to Matthew B. Crawford (2009), an academic and craftsman, there exists today a cultural imperative for young people in advanced capitalist zones to pursue professions, knowledge work, and other informationalized vocations. If this is the case, it would seem curious that there has been such a renewed interest in material production, especially as these very same zones have outsourced large-scale industry to the periphery. At the same time, when we consider the post-crisis economy and the large-scale informalization and precarization of knowledge work, the turn toward the material starts to make some very sound sense. If the creative jobs promised to young workers are either unavailable or potentially unattractive due to long hours, overzealous management, corporate culture and the like, it would follow that these workers would seek out alternative paths toward the fulfilling work they have come to expect. Chapter 6 examines the premise that the return to traditional, material and artisanal forms of

production corresponds to the increased precarity faced by members of what some scholars have called the ‘precariat’ – that is, that grouping of workers for whom life under contemporary capitalism is characterized first and foremost by conditions of material insecurity (Standing, 2011; Standing, 2014; Foti, 2017). When seen as a response to the false promises of the early information age, this rematerialization of work intimates a rejection of technocratic prognostications while simultaneously emphasizing a desire for autonomy, dignity and security on the part of makers and other craftspeople that, under the right circumstance might also cultivate the seeds of deeper levels of class consciousness and solidarity than have typically characterized the neoliberal period.

1.6. Fragmented Solidarities: Middle Class “Leisure” Work and Craft Organizing

Brewery workers, makers and other craftspeople are frequently purported to be motivated by the desire to pursue meaningful work that is both self-gratifying and socially responsible (Anderson, 2012; Lewis, 2014; Crawford, 2009). They are, in some sense, seen as the materially engaged equivalents to the cultural workers so celebrated in accounts of creative cities and the ‘creative class’ (Florida, 2002; McRobbie, 2016). Contrary to the notion that cultural work exists almost entirely in the cloud or in other virtual spaces, the work of the maker, the craftsperson, and the brewer has a direct and tangible effect on the material environment. It often requires physical strain and faces material constraints in the form of ingredients or components. In recent years, commentators have zeroed in on the individual emancipatory potential of such an intentional physical connection with work and its products (Sennett, 2008; Crawford, 2009). For Richard Sennett (2008), the application of craft skill is a response to and potential corrective of the “corrosion of character” he diagnoses in the dissolution of vocational identity under the conditions of late 20th century capitalism (Sennett, 1998). Craft work, so this argument goes, reinstates a worker’s identification with their trade while simultaneously reasserting that worker’s control over the labour process. In a similar vein, Matthew B. Crawford (2009) argues that a return to material trades offers contemporary workers an alternative to the disillusionment many face in the highly impersonal world of work in the digital age. Like Sennett, Crawford sees the development of manual skill as a path toward self-reliance and personal autonomy.

In some ways, these individualized paths toward worker dignity harken to the cultural values espoused by proponents of the maker movement and celebrants of craft brewing. Making, for someone like Chris Anderson (2012), editor of Wired magazine, represents an entrepreneurial revolution wherein networked social organization, localism, new technologies, and individual passions come together to rectify the excesses and injustices of the global market economy, replacing it with a less exploitative, more self-organized and ultimately edifying mode of production. Similarly, beer commentators like Sean Lewis (2014) characterize the craft brewing industry as a site of collaboration, pursuit of quality, and individual pride in one's work. For Lewis, craft brewing is an industry where the 'do what you love' mantra delivers on its promise of enjoyment and pride in one's work, and where the commitment to a quality product reflects a spirit of individual integrity and community engagement.

We should acknowledge that while Sennett and Crawford's analyses are critical of corporate capitalism and attempt to champion a localized resistance to the status quo, they tend to see such a resistance as more or less taking place at the level of the individual, workshop or industry. This is the same level at which Anderson and Lewis see making and craft brewing intervene respectively. What is missing from such accounts is a consideration of both of these sites' position within the wider global political economy and the ways in which a focus on the skilled artisan or passionate maker obscures the classed nature of both of these sites of production. Making, as will be seen, is generally a middle-class activity, pursued by those with the material security to engage in passion projects in addition to their daily responsibilities. For those who use it as an entrepreneurial endeavour, they typically do so thanks to a certain level of financial security that allows them the flexibility to pursue their craft passions as more than hobbies. For its part, craft brewing is an overwhelmingly white and male industry, owners and brewers often coming from middle-class backgrounds. Craft brewing is especially interesting from a class perspective given the number of non-brewing staff required for its operation. Although brewers themselves do enjoy varying levels of creative gratification, they are often supported by a considerable staff of packagers, servers, media and brand specialists, salespeople, and distributors (not to mention the farmworkers who harvest the hops and grains on which they depend and the transportation workers who deliver both the ingredients and the final products).

What is generally missing in all of these accounts is a sustained consideration of the class implications of craft labour. Chapter 7 accounts for class as both the key to the gratifying work of the manual creative for those with certain levels of privilege and the lock for those who find themselves in the role of support for their creative betters. It also explores the level to which workers in both of these groupings consider class as an active determinant of their interaction with craft production. Building upon this, the chapter culminates in a consideration of worker attitudes about exploitation, solidarity, and organizing, ultimately reviewing unionization efforts in the craft brewing industry specifically. Spoilers: craft brewery workers increasingly see themselves as industrial workers rather than creatives or artisans, and, perhaps as a result, are actively organizing their workplaces or are at least open to the idea. This observation is further contextualized through a comparative case study, that of artisanal coffeehouses. Interestingly, facing similar conditions and holding similar attitudes to their craft brewing counterparts, coffee workers in Vancouver and throughout North America have recently launched several high profile unionization campaigns, many of which have enjoyed unprecedented levels of success. It is my contention, in Chapter 7 and in the Conclusion of this dissertation, that other craftworkers, particularly those working under the conditions of craft industrialism, would be wise to follow the lead demonstrated by North American coffee workers. Building worker-led organizations and fighting collectively for better conditions is, arguably, the strongest way for craftworkers to cut through the façade of craft capitalism.

1.7. Remarks on Method, Participants, and Composition²

This project was executed under the conviction that research into the lives and conditions of workers should, ultimately, serve to advance the class interests of those same workers. As such, the study's approach, though inflected with the procedural approaches of sociology of work, has largely been animated by a commitment to what is commonly called "workers' inquiry." In describing a questionnaire developed by Karl Marx (1880|2022), Asad Haider and Salar Mohandesi (2013) describe workers' inquiry as simply "learning from the working class itself" (pg. 1; emphasis removed). Such an

² A more comprehensive account of the methodology and research design of this study can be found in Appendix A.

investigation should, at its foundation, probe the conditions, interests and subjectivities of working people and situate workers' self-knowledge against the backdrop of critical political economy. The methodology has, according to Jamie Woodcock (2014), undergone a number of politically motivated transformations over the century and a half since Marx's initial inquiry. The promise it holds for researchers today is as a tool through which we might build understandings of new forms of work arising under the conditions of neoliberalism, automation, and precarization (Woodcock, 2014). For Woodcock, when paired with the methodological tools of sociology and ethnography, workers' inquiry can serve as a megaphone for workers' voices that avoids the trappings of the top-down approaches to knowledge generation that have traditionally characterized social research. Ideally the knowledge generated from such an approach should also be useful for organizing along working-class interests (Class Inquiry Group, 2018).

As such, this project was catalyzed by a desire to represent workers in craft industries in their own words and to distill their experiences through a critical framework in order to diagnose emerging forms of exploitation while simultaneously identifying opportunities for collective action and consciousness formation. Although committed to representing workers' interests and involving workers in the research process, the present study does not necessarily reflect an application of co-research. To clarify, the editors of the socialist journal *Notes from Below* differentiate between two approaches to workers' inquiry. The first uses traditional research methods to study working contexts from the outside; they categorize this approach as inquiry from above. The second, and admittedly preferable approach is what they call inquiry from below. This form gives workers more direct control over each step of the knowledge creation process. The present study might best be conceived of as a hybrid of these two. My relative distance from these workplaces and position as a graduate student necessitated a certain formality in the planning stages of the research process. However, given my commitment to worker interests, worker narratives, and the ultimate tactical usefulness of the project, workers were heavily involved in the composition of discussions, the selection of participants, and the framing of insights and findings. A key element to each discussion with non-owners and non-managers was an in-depth discussion of worker organizing, the desirability of unions, and the general position of workers within their workplaces or their industry as a whole. The prioritization of these elements provided rich insights that have delivered

useful information for researcher and worker alike, and I am currently collaborating with some of my participants on additional resources that can be used especially in the brewing sector.

As previously stated, the commitment to worker interests necessarily informed the research procedures under which this project was undertaken. As a whole, the study combines open-format long interviews, non-participant observation, and critical discourse analysis in order to tell workers' stories, paint a picture of workplace procedures, and critically assess cultural mythologies within craft sectors. Worker testimonies are integrated throughout this dissertation, often in the form of lengthy quotes. This integration serves two primary purposes. First, following the commitment in workers' inquiry to recognize workers as the best authorities to discuss their conditions, interview excerpts present this expertise directly. Second, and relatedly, although worker interviews are mostly utilized in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, they also appear elsewhere in the dissertation in order to illustrate theoretical or conceptual points.

The data gathered from these interviews have been collected over a 4 year period, and in a number of contexts. Beginning in May 2018, I had the opportunity to speak with 38 participants including craft brewery workers, craft brewery owners, brewery health and safety experts, amateur and professional makers, craftworkers in adjacent industries, labour organizers and makerspace administrators and volunteers. These interviews were conducted using a questionnaire developed to gauge participants' attitudes and experiences about their work, their industry, the category of craft in a general sense, as well as their understandings of worker organizing and class interests. Interview data was supplemented with systematic critical textual analyses of relevant cultural texts on making and craft brewing. These included a three year run of the quarterly brewing publication Northwest Brewing News, a variety of craft beer guides for the Cascadia region of North America, popular texts on the maker movement, participation in regional brewing conferences and events and journalistic coverage of developments in both craft brewing and making.

Taken together, this collection of firsthand accounts and cultural artifacts provides a sketch of common attitudes, mythologies and experiences that characterize making and craft brewing. In the chapters that follow, these are enriched through the application of

theoretical insights and understandings, all in the goal of generating a conceptually rich and politically useful prognosis for the potentials and strategic inroads for craftworkers.

Chapter 2. Craft and the Evolution of Skill: Toward a Social Understanding of Making

For decades we have heard accounts of how buying locally or directly from the producer presents a radical alternative to the anonymous circuits of consumption that characterize the global value chain (Curtis, 2016; Brenton, 2013). This is a refrain that craft discourse shouts from the proverbial rafters. Consumers, in this view, can use the “ethical market” to push social change at the point of sale. In fact, as Renee Bogin Curtis (2016) argues of craft consumption in Portland, OR, the market is seen by many as a site for social justice advocacy and a means by which makers can refuse the alienating conditions of mass production: “Participants [in the artisan economy] reject Fordist production processes, reclaim ownership over the production of goods and foster integrity” (Curtis, 2016, pg. 236). This celebratory discourse sees the current wave of craft – in both its individual and industrial form – as a tool for revolutionizing the way things are made and consumed. This is the case in accounts such as Wired Magazine editor Chris Anderson’s (2012) evangelistic take on the maker movement as a “new industrial revolution” as well as communication scholar Thomas Thurnell-Read’s (2015) account of craft brewing as a kind of “engaged labour” rather than estranged labour.

This enthusiasm undoubtedly finds its roots in a number of places, not least of which is the alienation experienced by many knowledge workers who, having been promised a fulfilling and secure career, found themselves instead precariously employed or working in industries where they felt estranged from the material world of work. Moreover, as creative workers have opted out of corporate working arrangements and into self-employment or traditional trades, capital has responded by commodifying this very escape hatch. Arguably, the rise of craft is a continuation of capitalism’s extreme adaptability. As workers search for an alternative, capital is all too happy to furnish it: this time in the form of alternative productive relationships, of craft.

But how should we understand the category of craft? The designation of a commodity as “craft” or “artisanal” often brings with it connotations of traditional production processes, locally sourced materials or ingredients, and a small-scale, almost custom labour process. Craft products are commonly lauded as or assumed to be qualitatively superior to the mass produced, their production the culmination of skill and dedication. As a

marketing tool, the branding of a commodity or producer in this way is both evocative and discursively hollow. In some cases, its use might even serve as a kind of floating signifier which is, in turn, filled with our individual visions of what it might connote – local, high-quality, small-scale, and the like. Of course, there are no commonly agreed-upon parameters for such designations, as there are for those of fair-trade or organic, which require institutional verifications through formal certification processes, ultimately reflecting some more objective shared use. By contrast, “craft/artisan” is common-sensical, applied variously to the above-mentioned contexts but also craftily as simple branding buzz. By way of an example, I am reminded of an abandoned can of chili I saw on the Toronto subway; Vietti’s “Artisan Craft Chili,” while as potentially tasty as any other canned chili, seems an unlikely bedfellow with handmade jewelry, locally produced furniture, or even craft beer (although this last example of craft industrial marketing is likely the closest match). As floating signifiers, it seems that artisanality and craft can describe both the unique and the mundane, the singular and the mass-produced. As such, it would seem that an analysis of the category of craft as it is used in the contemporary economy must begin with some consideration of its specific attributes, especially for the current project as these relate to the labour that goes into producing them and, ultimately, to the internal workings of what we’re calling craft capitalism.

A rewarding by-product of defining a category like craft is that its discursive imprecision is pregnant with conceptual opportunity. If we follow Raymond Williams’s (1976) approach to definitions as being rooted in social practice and historical context, the category of craft takes on a decidedly active character, regardless of its marketing uses. Interestingly, in *Keywords*, Williams never provides a specific definition for either craft or artisan. He uses both terms in building out definitions of class and art, the craftsman or artisan serving as an example of a kind of labour aristocracy in the former and as something distinct – a skilled worker – in the latter. Implicit in his usage of both is the characteristic of skill imbued upon the productive practice in question. As a labour aristocrat, the craftsman is someone whose skill has elevated them within the workshop and provided them with some semblance of control over their labour process. As a foil to the artist, the artisan stands out as a skilled manipulator of physical materials, but not necessarily an aesthete in the way one expects of the former.

It is along this nexus – skill and control – that Canadian historian Robert B. Kristofferson (2007) distinguishes the historical figures of the artisan and the crafts worker or

craftsperson. In the 19th century Canadian context of Kristofferson's analysis, artisans can be characterized along the lines of the small entrepreneur. They control their own means of production, likely employ journeymen or apprentices, and generally operate as independent competitors to the large-scale factories we typically think about in relation to early industrialism. The crafts worker, by contrast, is the employee (journeyman) working in the crafts context who does not directly control the means of production, according to Kristofferson's account. It is worth noting, however, that this worker would still rate as a skilled tradesperson, albeit one who does not own means of production. Skill is still the categorical bedrock. For his part, Kristofferson elects to omit the category of 'skilled worker' from his analysis in order to foreground his critique of the dispossession model of industrial change that informs much of the canon of industrial history and labour studies literature. Although such a deliberate omission helps Kristofferson in shedding nuance on the industrial processes of 19th century Canada, and highlights the historical specificity of industrial change (both of which should be lauded and taken on in informing our analyses of historical labour processes), it also blurs the conceptual parameters of craft and craft labour. For a project such as ours, such a blurring is of no great consequence, his focus being on the industrial development of early settler economies and the deficiencies of the dispossession narrative. But it brings us no closer to ironing out the particular attributes of the craft designation.

Indeed, much of the recent scholarly and popular commentary on craft and artisanry has revolved around the psycho-social phenomenon of craftsmanship. From sociologist Richard Sennett's (2008) meditations on 'a good job done well' to philosopher-turned-mechanic Matthew B. Crawford's (2009) commentaries on the character-building potential of hand-work, the practice of a skilled craft is increasingly described as an implicit challenge to the hyper-alienating nature of work in the neoliberal age and one that is taken on through the individual exercise of skilled manipulation of physical materials. Add to these sentiments the widespread enthusiasm for making and other DIY activities and it appears that in the contemporary environment it is the physical act of doing, and doing well through the application of honed skill, that truly captures the essence of what we mean when we say craft. Whether this understanding of the term is actually reflected in the labour processes and cultures of craft industries is another matter altogether.

In the sections that follow, we will define, refine, and redirect the idea of craft along political and economic lines in order to build a critical vantage from which we can appropriately view the concept's arbitrary usage in the 21st century context and the ramifications this has for workers who find themselves employed in craft industries. What this discussion will reveal is that the imprecision of craft terminology serves to obscure the class dimensions of craft capitalism, particularly as craft industries recuperate and create unskilled work in order to valorize the image of the craftsman. Similarly, while craft discourse mobilizes an image of skilled work, craft labour remains waged labour, often sharing more in common with precarious work than it does with the pre-capitalist artisans upon which the craft mythology is built. In order to uncover this process of mystification, we will begin by surveying some of the more pervasive trends in craft discourse, particularly in terms of how contending scholarly and popular streams champion a politics of craft and craft labour. These discursive tendencies fall into two broad categories, distinguished by either a focus on individual craft action or a broader consideration of the political and economic contexts that inform that action. After assessing each tendency, I argue that a critique of craft's usage in contemporary capitalist discourse is best undertaken from a socio-historical orientation. As such, the chapter then begins this socio-historical investigation by, briefly, highlighting craft's relationship to early capitalist industrialism and the development of the mass production economy. This, necessarily, leads us to consider the division of mental and manual labour brought about in the transition from the pre-industrial craft workshop to the factory model's specialized division of labour. This is further refined through an exploration of the distinction in the 20th and 21st centuries of production and design and the particular role of craft skill within this division, especially in relation to the production of art and cultural commodities. The chapter ends with an analysis of the social nature of craft work and the potential this sociality holds for worker organizing in craft industries, particularly in light of the more-or-less arbitrary adoption of craft as a designation for wide-reaching industrial formations that might include anything from artisan coffee to artisan canned chili.

This chapter also refines the concept of skill that undergirds craft discourse. As we will see, skill is a nebulous idea, signifying various things in different contexts. However, it is my contention here that skill, in addition to being an individual's ability to perform a task (its common usage), is, in fact, a social category when used in relation to the

development of the labour process and the conditions of workers under capitalism. Skill in this sense is an element of labour power in that it develops a worker's ability to perform their work. As such, when skilled work is considered in relation to socially necessary labour time, it becomes apparent that it is more than an individual attribute, instead existing as a particular and peculiar input in the totality of commodity production. This is an idea that will be integrated throughout this chapter's discussion of craft, and one that will influence the kinds of conclusions we will draw regarding the particular nature of craft production in the capitalist economy of the 21st century. Let us begin, however, by taking a closer look at tendencies in the study and discourse of craft more generally.

2.1. Tendencies in Craft Discourse

Discourse on craft production generally falls into two broad tendencies. In the first, what I will call the individualist tendency, craft commentators commonly focus on the material work of individual makers or groupings of individually motivated makers. These analyses, celebrations, and even critiques situate the individual maker against the backdrop of industrial or digital production, sometimes characterizing craft production as a line of flight for skilled workers who feel alienated by corporate structures, impersonal and immaterial digital creation, and/or the routines of traditional working life. Also included in this tendency are the various accounts of studio craft and the distinction between arts and crafts practice, which, while they often refer to the institutional norms and structures of craft practice, still prioritize the subjective and procedural aspects of individual craft production. Guides for craft practice or craft entrepreneurialism also generally fall into this category, even if their assessment of the designation of craft might remain implicit.

This tendency is bifurcated into two general political orientations, one celebrating the entrepreneurial potential of craft and making and the other asserting the inherent resistance of individual craft practice. These two sub-tendencies - respectively, the entrepreneurial/individualist and the anarchist/individualist - make up two poles of a discursive spectrum characterized by the value the tendency as a whole puts on individual artistic merit, the edifying nature of "a good job well done" (Sennett, 2008), and the latent potential of craft production vis-à-vis the corporate or industrial status quo.

The second tendency tends to push beyond the individual maker or craftsman to consider the political economic context against which craft production takes place. In this latter tendency – which I will call the craft vocational tendency – craft is seen as an industry segment, particularly in relation to this segment’s vocational boundaries. Scholars and commentators working in this tendency concern themselves with the vocational identities, social policies, and economic outcomes of craft business. The focus of the craft vocational tendency is more on the trends and ramifications of the craft sector than on the individual experiences and motivations of craftspeople themselves (though these still make up part of the backdrop against which this work is situated). Similar to the individualist tendency, the craft vocational focus also falls into two general sub-tendencies. The first of these generally examines the craft sector’s consequences on or relation to worker livelihoods. Often inflected with a Bourdieuan focus on social capital, this discursive category prioritizes vocational identity, social class and social policy. Distinct from but categorically similar to this approach are those commentaries and analyses that track and interpret craft sector developments and trends from a more economic vantage. This sub-tendency assesses the economic impact, industrial development, and market integration of the craft and making sector, often in relation to economic policy and governmental programs.

Although distinct, both tendencies fall short of deeply interrogating the power relations – and, consequently, the class relations – of the craft category. The individualist perspective’s focus on the experiences and skills of the craftsman introduces the working conditions of craft production but typically fails to adequately account for the structural, institutional, and political limits imposed on the promise its devotees see in craft. The craft vocational tendency does a better job of considering these macro-level dynamics and forces but often neglects to put them in relation to the historical development of the capitalist mode of production and the class conflict at its heart. As such, this latter tendency is typically unable to recognize the manner in which the craft sector, in its industrial development, does not necessarily stand in contradistinction to other industrial segments, but instead reproduces many of the same outcomes, especially in terms of exploitation, market expansion, and rationalization.

Consequently, in the pages that follow I survey both of these discursive tendencies in order to propose a third, namely a socio-historical approach that while recognizing the subjective narratives of craft discourse, weighs these against the historical conflict of

industrial production, the rationalization of craft industrialism, and the inherently social nature of craft. In so doing, I will demonstrate the manner in which both the individualist and craft vocational tendencies generally fail to recognize the class relations of craft production, both in terms of the composition of the industrial craft workforce – which, incidentally, is far more numerous and diverse than simply the craftspeople themselves – and, accordingly, the forms of exploitation and alienation that this industrial formation reproduces despite its glowing rhetoric.

In order to accomplish this, I first give a brief account of the key contributions and narratives of both of the dominant tendencies, especially as these relate to the political outcomes or consequences envisioned by each. I then, before unpacking my proposal for a socio-historical approach, interrogate the concept of craft skill as it is mobilized in both of the dominant tendencies. Although this may at first glance seem an odd segue, it will become apparent that as a constitutive ingredient in the category of craft, skill holds the key to a more social and materialist analysis of craft both as a discursive designation and as an industrial sector. In demonstrating the sociality of skill in both craft and industrial production, I set the stage for a refinement in the critical study of craft which recognizes the exploitation that necessarily sits at its foundation as long as it remains an industrial tributary of the capitalist mode of production.

2.1.1. The Individualist Tendency: Entrepreneurial and Individual Approaches

The majority of academic and popular accounts of craft focuses on the figure of the craftsman, an individual who pursues their particular productive activity from an ethic of care or who has taken their productive activity into their own hands (quite literally) in response to the general conditions of the world of work that surrounds them. In this tendency, it is in the rewarding nature of craft work that its social and political power resides. This tends to be a discourse of hero narratives wherein the craftsman is celebrated as a self-actualized, entrepreneurial champion of their own destiny. Although there are variations to this archetype, especially along the political spectrum with more left-leaning portrayals presenting craft as a means to escape a corporately-controlled world of work, this body of literature and discourse sees the individual act of craft as socially relevant simply due to its bucking of more traditional industrial norms.

A particularly prolific subgenre of the individualist stream features craftsperson showcases, often as a way of demonstrating expertise, passion and entrepreneurial acumen. This particular approach is most commonly featured in popular press books and documentary-style or reality television programs. Books and shows like Eric Gorges's (2019) *A Craftsman's Legacy* and Faythe Levine and Cortney Heimerl's (2008) *Handmade Nation* make a fetish of hand production, imparting social value onto the act of individual craft production while reifying the work ethic that motivates craftspeople. The maker profiles, in both the books and shows, strip craft production of its political economic materiality, replacing this with the simple material act of fabrication and symbolic and psychological drives, a subtle but important substitution. Tellingly, for example, in Gorges's intermittent narratives of his own work as a custom motorcycle designer and mechanic he places his work ethic and passion over the livelihoods of his workers. Lamenting his lot as the travelling owner of a successful business, Gorges recounts his attempt to return to a more hands-on approach:

When I stopped traveling, I apologized to my employees but let just about all of them go. I explained that I wanted to get back to working with my hands again, and that's what I did. The business's output slowed down considerably, and it was a difficult time [imagine how difficult it must have been for the workers he dismissed]. But I got back in touch with what I loved about bike building, and I also felt that I was reconnecting with my customers. In the end, I gave myself over to a simple maxim: Respect the customers, respect the work (pgs. 70-71).

Well, we might say, at least he apologized. Here Gorges provides an unwitting glimpse into one of the blind spots of the individualist approach, that individualized craft production still takes place against the backdrop of a global capitalist system. Whether a craftsperson is a self-employed maker or the owner of a large craft-branded business, they still take on their crafting activity within the confines and in keeping with the business practices of the socio-economic system in which it is situated, necessarily resulting in the reproduction of those parameters. This is likely the reason why so much of the academic and popular literature of craft revolves around the figure of the entrepreneur, contributing to the first major theme of the individualist tendency.

The entrepreneurial stream is perhaps best showcased in business memoirs by successful craftspeople or owners of craft businesses. This is notably observable – at

least for the purposes of the present study – in the success narratives on offer from the founders of popular labels in the craft beer ecosystem. Although the ideological function of these founder narratives will be unpacked in more detail in Chapter 4, it is worth noting just how prolific these business booster accounts really are. These accounts range from regional interest targeted at local beer consumers (Hindy, 2014) to mass press success stories (Burkhart, 2022; Koch, 2016) to primers for setting up one’s own business (Watt, 2016; Calagione, 2005). Regardless of the particular focus of the memoir or showcase, what these texts almost unwaveringly have in common is a thematic tunnel vision on determination and passion. Whether the author or subject is a craft brewery owner, a motorcycle mechanic, or a woodworker, they are motivated by a relentless commitment to their craft or trade and a desire to learn and create. A particularly engaging autobiographical account in the stream is Peter Korn’s (2014) *Why We Make Things and Why It Matters*. Korn’s account of his career as a furniture maker and educator is inspiring and humorous, but still asks important questions about life, work, family and fulfillment. However, at its foundations, it is still a blend of passionate descriptions of a “calling,” an entrepreneurial success story, and individual triumph. Korn’s focus is never overtly a how-to on pursuing making as a vocation or enterprise, but the book’s narrative and rhetorical arch is one of entrepreneurial development from middle-class vocational expectancy to a kind of self-actualized vocational eccentricity. Korn’s movement from student, to pseudo-dropout, to carpenter, landing at aspiring and then famous furniture maker is a movement of entrepreneurial success that is grounded firmly in a view of craft as the passionate pursuit of quality for its own sake, contradictorily regardless of the entrepreneurial outcomes.

One might read Korn’s autobiography or Gorges’s craftsperson profiles as applications of Richard Sennett’s conceptualization of craft and the craftsman that we encountered in Chapter 1. Although Sennett does concern himself with some of the structural influences of the movement toward craft and the historical development of the concept, his exposition is catalyzed by a view of craft as a peculiar dedication on the part of the craftsperson to do a good job for its own sake. This is no great surprise given Sennett’s other engagements with the world of work, notably *The Hidden Injuries of Class* (Cobb & Sennett, 1972) and *The Corrosion of Character* (Sennett, 1998), both of which take the individual worker and their changing vocational identity as the primary focus. In fact, with the changing identity of the industrial worker as the analytical foundation, *The Craftsman*

reads as a kind of simultaneous prequel and sequel to Sennett's early books. If the changes brought about by new industrial and then computing technologies have, as Cobb and Sennett (1972) and later Sennett (1998) have argued, transformed and undermined vocational identity, how should one make sense of the sustained passion that seemingly drives some vocations even amidst these changes? The answer, for Sennett (2008), is the historical and cultural tradition of craftsmanship, a category that seemingly transcends the cynical arithmetic of the neoliberalized labour process. In Sennett's analysis, a craftsman is someone who is driven by pride, passion, tradition, and "material consciousness" to produce the best possible product with the tools and knowledge they have at hand.

As a literary history of a personality type, *The Craftsman* stands out as both a deep analysis of a seeming social constant as well as a celebration of those cracks in the capitalist economy where passion and creativity can still flourish. As an intellectual call to love what you do for its own sake, the piece displays an unmistakable resonance with other work in the individualist tendency, particularly hands-on accounts like those offered by Gorges and Korn. Moreover, Sennett positions the craftsman as both inside and against the modern economy, thus giving his analysis additional parallels with more overtly political forms of craft discourse in the individualist tendency. Profiles of makers and maker activists like Levine's *Handmade Nation* take Sennett's commitment to the role of passion and focus and apply it to craftspeople actually working today.

Of course, Sennett's analysis does not focus considerable attention on the entrepreneurial concerns of craft practice, but the academic literature following Sennett's lead fills this gap amply. Sennett's influence is implicit in Amiel Kornel's (2018) *Spinning Into Control*, for example. In Kornel's call for entrepreneurs to adopt a craft ethic in planning and implementing their business ideas, the author argues that business practices ought to be treated as the honing of a craft skill, the resulting business a kind of masterpiece that should be strived for by "venture craftsmen." Focus, failure, and untiring dedication stand out in Kornel's credo as those characteristics that the craftsperson and the adept businessperson share. But not all arguments about the interconnections of craft and entrepreneurship take such a conceptual approach to the figure of the craftsperson. Others, while still following Sennett's individualist influence, analyze or recount the conditions of craft entrepreneurs, makers who have or plan to practice their craft for a living or as a business.

A particularly illuminating example is Richard Ocejo's (2017) *Masters of Craft*, a series of profiles of artisan jobs from cocktail making to whole-animal butchery, and the young urbanites who pursue them. Ocejo's book introduces us to a number of characters in New York City's artisan economy (mostly men) who have opted to work in more authentic and hands-on vocations than many might imagine of the urban creative class. The reader is exposed to a range of seemingly eccentric young workers driven by purported commitments to community, tradition, and tactility. Although the book is framed as an explanation for the changing vocational aspirations of young, middle-class workers, as a whole it reads as an account of individualized pursuits, often along either a cultural or entrepreneurial trajectory.

A key limitation of Ocejo's book and, indeed, of the individualist tendency at a general level, is its lack of a sustained analysis of the political economic conditions that offer contextual hints as to the genesis of the flight to craft. Whereas Ocejo goes to great lengths to explicate the passions and interests that drive his cast of young, urban craftspeople, considerably less attention is paid to the housing crisis and proliferation of precarious and short-term jobs that characterize the 21st century New York City environment they inhabit. Along the same lines, consider the case of Ken Forkish, founder and owner of Ken's Artisan Bakery in Portland, Oregon (Forkish, 2012). Forkish is a prototypical success story in the entrepreneurial stream of the individualist tendency. As a disillusioned corporate worker, Forkish followed his entrepreneurial and craft passions to open a bakery that quickly became a Portland institution, blossoming also into a small publishing powerhouse as he's published three books since 2012, the most recent notably released on the tails of the COVID-19 sourdough craze (Forkish, 2022). Ken's Artisan Bakery is also, arguably, an anchor of gentrification in Portland's Northwest 21st Avenue, a formerly working-class community that is now an amalgamation of artisan food and drink emporia, luxury boutiques, and increasingly expensive bars and restaurants. Even if craftspeople can be generally thought of as coming from a middle-class positionality – which is commonly the case, as we will see in Chapter 5 - they do their work within specific political economic conditions, conditions that the individualist tendency does not adequately account for.

2.1.2. The Craft Vocational Tendency: Livelihoods and Policy

Unlike the individualist tendency, the craft vocational tendency is more heavily represented in the academic literature than it is in the popular press, and, generally, makes a more concerted effort to interrogate the political economic context that informs the development of craft and craft industries. This tendency concerns itself with the livelihoods and social statuses of craftspeople and makers and with the kinds of governmental and industrial policies that influence these. Although work in this tendency still often profiles individual makers and diagnoses their conditions, the predominant focus in this stream is how those makers fit within broader political and economic categories. As such, work in this tendency uses craftspeople and their vocations to ask questions about national craft policy and formal and informal craft markets rather than focusing on individual-level and entrepreneurial aspiration (although much of the business literature still tends toward the latter). However, we should acknowledge that this categorization is a general one, and there is a great deal of overlap between these tendencies, particularly between the craft vocational tendency and the entrepreneurial sub-category of the individualist tendency. Broadly speaking, what distinguishes the two is whether the analysis in question offers solutions or projects at the individual/crafter level or the policy/economy level, the former falling into the individualist tendency, the latter into the craft vocational.

The craft vocational tendency often builds its analysis atop a concern for the opportunities available for makers and the ways in which these opportunities intersect with economic trends at a more general level. So, whereas an individualist commentary might speak to the passions of entrepreneurial makers or the manner in which making empowers makers, studies and commentaries in the craft vocational tendency take a more academic and sociological approach, conceiving of craft on a broader socio-economic scale. The analyses range politically from calls for increased funding for informal economic activities to critical analyses of the gender and racial disparities of making and artisanal production.³ Regardless of the particular political orientation, scholars and commentators following this tendency concern themselves with the manner by which crafters and makers navigate craft economies and, often, the manner by which

³ See, respectively, Mignosa and Kotipalli's (2019) *A Cultural Economic Analysis of Craft* and Angela McRobbie's (2016) *Be Creative* for examples of this range.

government policy might be leveraged to create more opportunity. As a stream, craft vocational literature steps beyond narrow individualized conceptions of making and craft, choosing instead to focus on sociopolitical and economic aspects of craft activity. However, this literature often stops short of recognizing the dialectical relationship of contemporary craft production and the craft labour process. As a consequence, although these studies and commentaries reveal much about the disparities and inequities of craft production in the 21st century, their recommendations fall broadly into a kind of policy- or culture- oriented reformism, rather than a more materialist critique of capitalist political economy. This section will close by suggesting that the latter – a critical analysis of craft’s position within 21st century capitalist accumulation – requires an analysis of the labour process and conditions of craft based in a critical understanding of the valorization process.

However, let’s consider some of the common trends in craft vocational scholarship at the economic level. Anna Mignosa and Priyatej Kotipalli’s (2019) edited collection *A Cultural Economic Analysis of Craft* is an instructive example of an economistic approach to craft vocations. The book collects geographically diverse investigations of the economics of craft following the tradition of cultural economics. In their introduction, the editors define cultural economics simply as “the application of economics to the analysis of the cultural sector” (Mignosa & Kotipalli, 2019, 2). For the editors and their contributors this particular approach holds the potential to isolate those economic factors that are particular to cultural production, “differentiat[ing] cultural objects from industrial products” (2). As a whole, the book attempts to shed light on the economic characteristics of craft beyond a simple focus on profitability. As Kotipalli (2019) explains in a subsequent chapter, such an application of cultural economics can be heterodox in nature, pushing economic analyses beyond the narrow confines of neoclassical economics. Correspondingly, the chapters primarily ask questions concerning contending geographical approaches to craft policies and programs, the outlook of craft markets and industries as a whole, and role that craft vocations might play in creating more sustainable and equitable national and international economies. Taken together, the chapters give an account of the histories and applications of craft policies, most of which are aimed at creating secure craft vocations and economically sustainable craft industries.

This is a common call within the craft vocational tendency, and scholars and commentators see much promise in scaling back barriers to entry, or creating increased capacity for new entrants to the craft sector. The literature on makerspaces, hackerspaces, and community workshops abounds in calls like these. Education and communication scholars have taken up calls to create maker commons in schools and universities (Smay & Walker, 2015; Marsh et al., 2019; Pepler et al., 2016); urbanists have latched onto community workshops as a partial antidote to several urban ills. Moreover, even critical scholars project craft and making as a potential source for a return of manufacturing to the global north, along with the economic benefits that would follow. Others, like Fiona Hackney and her co-authors (Hackney et al., 2019) see craft and making as a means of community self-reliance. In fact, this is a thread that Susan Luckman subsequently picks up with Jane Andrew, recognizing that informal craft activity underpins many informal economies, in both North and South (Luckman & Andrew, 2020). Overall, this tendency tends to recognize both promises and shortcomings of craft and making, often calling on the policy process to boost the former while mitigating the latter. Although Luckman, and later Luckman and Andrew, recognize the inequalities and inequities that mediate entry into craft, they, and other scholars and commentators, often prioritize considerations of the practices of and opportunities for craftspeople over the class dynamics of craft, particularly in terms of how these are shaped by the labour process and craft's historical lineage stemming from early industrial workers' movements. This is not necessarily a shortcoming of the craft vocational tendency, but it does leave the field open for a sustained engagement with the class politics of craft and craft industries. As such, the intervention I propose is a recentering of the class aspects of craft production, particularly at the level of industrial practice and culture, in order to better understand what power craftworkers wield and the ways in which they have attempted to utilize it.

2.1.3. Toward a Socio-Historical Critique of Craft Industrialism

There is, as previously suggested, another approach to the study of craft and craft labour that, while less common, is most typically seen within the historical literature of craft. In this socio-historical approach, craft production is interrogated in relation to the political economic context against which it is undertaken. Historians like Robert B. Kristofferson (2007), Beatrice Craig (2009) and Bruce Laurie (1989) don't limit

themselves to individualist considerations of making practice, and although their analyses consider opportunities for craftspeople and artisans, the historical nature of their work leads them to conclusions beyond those of policy and economy. Of course, a purely historical focus does not provide a complete picture of the politics and political economy of today's wave of craft and craft industrialism, instead serving as a supplement to a critical socio-historical approach to the conditions for craftworkers today. This contemporarily-driven political approach is, perhaps, the rarest in today's craft literature, with scholars like Glenn Adamson (2007, 2013) and Susan Luckman (2015) serving as some of its most consistent contributors, even if both stray into the other approaches from time to time.

Ideally, the socio-historical approach attempts to critically examine craft within a nuanced historical, political and political economic context. Moreover, in the case of the present study, this must consider the contours and labour processes of craft industrialism as an economic sector within a specific moment of capitalist accumulation while basing its conclusions on the valorization process that sits at the foundation of such a productive sector. This necessarily leads one to consider not only the conditions of work within this sector, but the manner by which the collective use-value of craft labour is valorized. Instead of limiting this critical analysis to the individual experiences or benefits of craft or economic considerations of policy, the socio-historical critique of craft industrialism should interpret craft industrialism from a historical materialist vantage while simultaneously examining the intersectional, sociological and cultural phenomena that work to maintain its social capital within a given historical context. As such, the remainder of this chapter is dedicated to laying out the material, social and historical foundations that form the terrain upon which the current wave of craft interest and the appropriation of craft rhetoric for the purposes of craft industrialism has been built. Central to these foundations is the category of skill, its relationship to the historical development of the labour process, and its peculiar social characteristics, particularly in its role as an element of labour power.

2.2. Craft Skill: 10,000 Hours of Definition

A necessary place to start in interrogating the evolving role of craft skill in capitalist production is to further refine what we mean when we refer to each part of that phrase:

craft and skill. As curator and historian Glenn Adamson (2013) explains in the introduction to his book on the history of modern craft, craft is a term that carries with it a number of common-sense meanings, from its designation of a category of studio practice, to its description of traditional and cultural objects, to its categorization of skilled trades. How he refines this varying set of meanings is by focusing on craft as an invention of modern industrialism, designating a productive practice existing outside and against the centralized industrial system. Keeping the adversarial element of such a consideration in mind, we might add this to the definition Adamson (2010) offers in an earlier work: “the application of skill and material-based knowledge to relatively small-scale production” (pg. 2). Although this latter definition does not explicitly relate the antagonistic history of craft production under industrial capitalism, taken together, the two definitions give us a sense of a kind of work characterized by skill, scale, and materiality, distinct from industrial labour.

For his part, however, Adamson approaches his considerable research on craft from the vantage of art history and studio practice – a tendency he shares with other art theorists like Dave Beech (2019; 2020) and Peter Dormer (1994). So, while his work offers a wealth of insight on the historical tension between arts and crafts, the historical processes that shaped this category of production, and the elements of design and creativity that embody this productive paradigm, specific questions of work and labour do not often sit at the heart of his analyses (though they do lurk in the wings). As such, we can benefit by attempting to unpack the specific relationship between craft and labour in order to work toward an overall definition of craft labour.

In his recent meditation on the figure of the craftsman⁴, Richard Sennett (2008) provides an ideal-typical portrait of a skilled artisan whose productive activity is characterized by the subjective satisfaction they garner from the act of production itself. The focus here, for Sennett, is the producer’s personal relationship to both the process and product. As he puts it:

craftsmanship names an enduring, basic human impulse, the desire to do a job well for its own sake. Craftsmanship cuts a far wider swath than skilled manual

⁴ Sennett uses the gendered term craftsman to refer to all craftspeople. In this dissertation, I will use the terms craftsperson and craft worker in order to refer to the working subjects in question. I will delineate the distinction between these two categories later in this chapter.

labor; it serves the computer programmer, the doctor, and the artist; parenting improves when it is practiced as a skilled craft, as does citizenship. In all these domains, craftsmanship focuses on objective standards, on the thing in itself (Sennett, 2008, pg. 9).

Here, Sennett depicts an ideal form of work free of the baggage of considerations of exploitation and alienation – although his characterization of the craft ethos as “the desire to do a job well for its own sake” might be read as a kind of unalienated productive practice unencumbered by political economic realities of inequality, gender and racial oppression, and domination. He also narrows his focus to that producer/actor who is animated by this value of craftsmanship. However, one wonders if a narrow definition of craft labour centred on the ideal-typical ‘craftsman’ is malleable enough to drive a critique of the labour process and conditions of the mass of workers in the craft industries of the 21st century (or even of the 19th or 20th centuries). In this sense, we might ask whether a craftworker is necessarily a craftsman in the way Sennett uses the term. If a ‘craft industry’ is one wherein the values of craftsmanship animate production, it is easy enough to identify the craftspeople – the jeweler, furniture maker, or vintner. However, as we will see, such industries, especially when organized as scalable craft enterprises, often rely heavily on various forms of deskilled wage labour – from packaging to sales. As such, a wider definition of craft labour as encapsulating all workers in craft industries – and not just the craftspeople themselves – provides us a better vantage from which to critique the labour process and working conditions in these industries, as well as the merits of industrial narratives, especially as these relate to values of meaningful work, sustainability and social justice. In a sense, in order to truly understand the nature of skilled craft labour, one must also consider the so-called “unskilled” workers that craftspeople are built up in contrast to. Craft labour, by extension, is a categorization built upon a hierarchical division of labour boosting the skilled trade of the craftspeople through the ‘unskilled’ work of the craftworker. Overall, what Sennett’s analysis often neglects or glosses over is the tendency for craft capitalism to mythologize the craftspeople as a sole producer at the same time that it devalues the essential work of the multitude of waged workers upon which that mythology depends. As such, this contradiction between the mythologies of the craft labour process and its reality as a hierarchy of waged labour, reveals the inherent conflict at its heart: the historical antagonism between labour and capital.

However, craft capitalism places skill at the heart of its industrial mythmaking. Framing the present research in terms of the historical conflict between labour and capital does not reduce the category of skill in craft labour. On the contrary, it provides us a measure by which we can question the stratification of craft workplaces while simultaneously recognizing the central importance of the unification of intellectual and manual labour that sits at their organizational and ideological foundations. Under such a definition, we can think of the skilled artisan as occupying a privileged place within the craft labour process, a relation that we will observe in some detail in later chapters. Where this leaves us for the remainder of this chapter, however, is considering the category of skill and how it has evolved in the intervening years from pre-industrial capitalism to today. We should note that this exploration will have a particularly theoretical character, informed primarily by the stream of labour process theory, an historical materialist tributary, building from Marx (1867) and rejuvenated by Harry Braverman (1974) and adapted for the late 20th and early 21st centuries by the likes of Paul Thompson (2010) and Phil Taylor and Peter Bain (2005), focused on the means by which workers in the industrial and monopolist periods were dispossessed of control over the process of their labour, particularly through managerial and technical means. The expropriation of conceptual and planning work from skilled workers in the 19th and 20th centuries, this stream suggests, led to increasing control of the labour process in the hands of the new managerial classes, while deskilling and stratifying the working class. This historical process of dispossession, deskilling, and proletarianization – even in light of Kristofferson’s counterpoints of parallel formations of craft industry in the 19th century – depicts craft skill as site of struggle, control of which holds the potential for a malleable labour process on the part of capital, and an autonomous productive life on the part of labour and the self-employed.

In his early theorization of the alienation of the worker, Marx (1844) provides us a critical juncture from which we can begin to interpret the category of skill for the craftsperson. Without control of the means of production and being estranged from both the product and process of labour, the worker is faced with a simultaneous separation from the human satisfaction they should garner from the productive activity of work, from their species being. It is the concentration of control over the means of production that estranges the worker from this satisfaction, a compounding process as productivity increases. As Marx (1844) explains:

The more the worker exerts himself, the more powerful becomes the alien objective world which he fashions against himself, the poorer he and his inner world become, the less there is that belongs to him... The worker puts his life into the object; then it no longer belongs to him but to the object (pg. 289-290).

In this sense, as the worker produces commodities not for personal use but for impersonal exchange in the interest of capital, the worker's life energy is actually set against them, further separating them from control not only of the product of labour but of the continued process of production. This is compounded, of course, as the worker's productive energy is concentrated on the fabrication of means of production that can then be adopted by the capitalist to streamline the production process, and further separate control thereof from the worker.

This is perhaps most observable when we consider the worker's role in the production of industrial machinery. The worker's contribution to their own entrapment within the wage relation is, surprisingly, visible in Charles Babbage's (1832) observations on the advent of machinery in early industrial capitalism. Far from a radical figure, Babbage celebrates the additive power of machinery in relation to human labour – machinery, for Babbage, holds the potential to free human time, increase the conversion of raw materials into valuable goods, and increase human power. However, in his estimation, it is the specialized worker in a craft trade who is most likely to innovate the technologies that will make them obsolete. In Babbage's account, the 19th century craftsman was in a particularly strong position to refine their tools, invent new processes and rules-of-thumb for more efficient production, and invent new technologies to increase speed and standardization. Consider, for instance, the seminal case of James Hargreaves, inventor of the spinning jenny in late 18th century England. Hargreaves' invention is one of the first mass production machines of the industrial revolution, exponentially increasing the productive output that could be expected of a single weaver, and simultaneously raising demand for woven goods and, subsequently weavers' wages (Engels, 1845|1969). This single innovation by a skilled artisan familiar with the technical processes of weaving, according to Engels' history of the industrial revolution, led to an explosive migration of workers from cottage industry into factories, solidifying the industrial division of labour and catalyzing its spread from its roots in weaving to virtually all other English industries. Hargreaves' invention was, almost from its inception, a site of dispute, the subject of patent battles and a lightning rod for the anger of displaced and undercut weavers.

Hargreaves' own personal history, in fact, is one of class tension as displaced artisans targeted him and regularly destroyed spinning machines (Aspin & Chapman, 1964; Allen, 2009).

As the development of industrial machinery concentrated production in costly manufacturing facilities large enough to house the machines as well as the considerable workforces needed to operate them, previously valued skilled workers, forced through the processes of enclosure and the development of the wage system, found themselves in Marx's words mere appendages to these machines and increasingly subject to new and direct forms of exploitation specific to industrial capitalism (Thompson, 1966). The wholesale social changes brought about by motive machinery and the factory system, according to historian EP Thompson, led to historically novel forms of exploitation – a new ruling class existing outside of the systems of nobility, opaque relations of servitude, a loss of craft status, and a regimented wage system to name a few – which in turn underpinned a new working class identity and politics. What Thompson's history of the socio-political development of the English working class clearly illustrates is the historical specificity of exploitative technologies:

The exploitative relationship is more than the sum of grievances and mutual antagonisms. It is a relationship which can be seen to take distinct forms in different historical contexts, forms which are related to corresponding forms of ownership and State power. The classic exploitative relationship of the Industrial revolution is depersonalized, in the sense that no lingering obligations of mutuality – of paternalism or deference, or of the interests of 'the Trade' – are admitted. There is no whisper of the 'just' price, or of a wage justified in relation to social or moral sanctions, as opposed to the operation of free market forces. Antagonism is accepted as intrinsic to the relations of production. Managerial or supervisory functions demand the repression of all attributes except those which further the expropriation of the maximum surplus value from labour. This is the political economy which Marx anatomized in *Das Kapital*. The worker has become an 'instrument', or an entry among other items of cost (Thompson, 1966, pg. 203)

In this sense, exploitation under early industrialism was propelled by the expropriation of value from workers through direct and antagonistic means. Under such advanced levels

of exploitation, the worker is reduced to the status of a dehumanized productive input, 'human capital' in today's managerial parlance. From this vantage, Thompson goes on to lay out a key contradiction in capitalist exploitation, one that also sits at the foundation of Harry Braverman's engagement with the capitalist labour process. In order for such an exploitative enterprise to persist, there must be a balance between direct class antagonism in the labour process and the implicit consent of workers, an argument also famously made by Michael Burawoy (1979). Even in their roles as interchangeable 'instruments', workers must, in a sense, be convinced to accept the arrangement. How then can owners extract the greatest amount of value from labour while maintaining worker passivity? Productivity depends on peaceable industrial relations, thus creating the need for new managerial techniques aimed at increasing both surplus and stability, and by extension the centralization of control through the concentration of planning and skill.

It is at this intersection that we truly confront the operative phenomenon at the heart of Braverman's intervention in the labour process in *Labor and Monopoly Capital*. The idea of the so-called deskilling hypothesis, which has come in for a healthy dose of critique since the book's publication in 1974, over-simplifies the imperative of managerial control over the labour process and the concomitant concentration of craft knowledge that comes with it. We will come to the specific Fordist context that Braverman analyzes shortly, but let us first consider the manner in which the contradiction between exploitation and worker passivity might be overcome through managerial means. Management has at its disposal a few key techniques to maximize surplus: lengthening of the working day, increasing of work intensity, application of new technologies, geographical and market expansion, and the streamlining of the labour process. All of these carry with them the potential to incite resistance amongst workers – and as history shows us, this is very often the case. This resistance might be quelled through a variety of means, including the implementation of incentives and the flexibilization and casualization of the workforce. We see examples of the former in cases like Henry Ford's high base wage and his company's car purchase benefit for workers. However, procedural means of control figure a more central role in Braverman's analysis. Through both disciplinary and technical means, management might choose to casualize and 'de-skill' a craft workforce through the concentration of craft knowledge and conceptual work within a professional-managerial class outside of the rank and file. In this sense, the idea

of deskilling, to follow Joan Greenbaum's (1999) application of labour process theory to the software sector, refers more to the administrative coordination of the labour process and control over planning than it does to the transition of productive jobs from high-skill to low-skill. This latter is a by-product of the managerial impulse to impose predictability and control over what we have already observed is an antagonistic productive enterprise.

Although such managerial techniques were certainly utilized in the infancy of industrial capitalism, according to Braverman's analysis, it is with the mass introduction of Taylor's principles of scientific management that they truly catalyzed the degradation of craft work. Just as the advent of concentrated industrialism drove craft producers from the cottage to the factory, the introduction of the mobile assembly line paired with the time- and cost-saving methods of Taylor's principles incrementally degraded the lion's share of jobs available, standardizing both products and processes and limiting the need for and viability of artisan crafts (Braverman, 1974).

But what, finally, do we mean when we speak of skill in relation to labour? If to de-skill a worker is to suggest dispossessing that worker of labour process control through the concentration of craft knowledge in the hands of management, then skill must exist at the nexus of planning and execution of the productive act. Skill as animated by craft knowledge, in this sense, might be considered the medium through which this dialectical conflict is waged. On one hand, a skilled worker possesses a certain amount of specialized knowledge which, when applied, allows for the production of a commodity. This knowledge, however, does not necessarily have to reside solely in the worker, but can be externalized, rationalized and concentrated in the hands of management. Such a process – deskilling in the sense used by Braverman – is one of the ways in which the exploitative class relations of capitalism are reinforced. On the other hand, some quantity of this specialized knowledge exists as an unconscious attribute, something other than the know-how of a skilled designer. This applied knowledge is the stuff of the virtuoso, to borrow an illustration from Sennett.

The acquisition of skilled knowledge, however, is a complex process that occurs in the actual act of labour. That is to say that it is learned through doing. Sennett describes craft skill as a form of tacit knowledge gained through the iterative process of making. In Sennett's account, mastery of a skill comes about through dedicated, repetitive

engagement, driven by dedication and curiosity. Of course, as Sennett acknowledges, skilled maneuvers are not necessarily always engaged in an overtly conscious manner. As he explains:

In the higher stages of skill, there is a constant interplay between tacit knowledge and self-conscious awareness, the tacit knowledge serving as an anchor, the explicit awareness serving as critique and corrective. Craft quality emerges from this higher stage, in judgments made on tacit habits and suppositions (Sennett, 2008, pg. 50).

Sennett goes on to describe the manner in which a craftsperson goes about developing skill, describing skill as trained practice. Here we see a slight distinction, intentional or otherwise, built between “skill” as honed ability and “a skill” as a difficult task or vocation. In recognizing this distinction, we simultaneously stumble upon the key difficulty of the concept of skill writ large. Skill is a nebulous, imprecise, and ultimately flexible term. Famously, British architect David Pye (1968) eschewed skill as hollow and virtually meaningless in discussions of trade and craft. However, for the purposes of the present study, a sustained exploration of the ambiguities of skill will assist us in better understanding the imprecision of the contemporary category of craft as plied in the marketing buzz. It will also provide a bridge allowing us to link the seemingly distinct practices of artisan or amateur making and industrialized craft production. So, let us deviate briefly into a discussion of the complicated meanings of skill in order to build out a more specific, material use that will assist us in delineating the boundaries of what we are calling craft capitalism.

American architecture scholar Malcolm McCullough (1998) defines skill as “the learned ability to do a useful process well” (pg. 3). The process of learning such an ability, according to McCullough, is both iterative and experiential and takes place at the nexus of head and hand. In this sense, on the personal level, skill is something to be achieved and it is an attribute its possessor feels some satisfaction in acquiring. It is, in a sense, enjoyable both as possession and as a process. It is this satisfaction that Richard Sennett suggests in his meditations on the desire of the craftsman to do a good job for its own sake.

However, as we have already seen, skill should not only be considered as an individual attribute. From a social standpoint it is the abstract category of skill that works to isolate the value of the craftsman in both historical and contemporary labour processes. This is not a revelation that McCullough's own analysis allows him to make, but we see some inclination of the connection in his discussion of craft. Building upon Diderot's (1765|1967) definition of craft as the "name given to any profession that requires the use of the hands, and is limited to a certain number of mechanical operations to produce the same piece of work, made over and over again" (463 – also cited in McCullough pg. 12), McCullough goes on to account for the dissolution of skill under the modern industrial system and the ways in which new intellectual paradigms went about understanding this new system. In many ways, one sees echoes of Braverman's so-called deskilling thesis in McCullough's account. According to McCullough:

The engines of industry established new social relations, and gave force to the intellectual discipline of political economy. Amid this broad sweep, artisanry entered full decline in the face of machine-powered industry. Skills became less important, and design disciplines became distinct from handicrafts (14).

This unseating of skilled craft at the hands of new processes and machinery was the impetus for new reactions to industrialism, embodied for McCullough in the backward-looking conservatism of John Ruskin, the liberalism of Ralph Waldo Emerson in the American context, and finally Karl Marx's critique of political economy.

McCullough's discussions of the individual attribute of skill paired with an overview of the social and industrial changes that led to its general decline as a constant in material fabrication, does point us toward a social conceptualization of skill, one that does not start and end with the abilities of the individual craftsman. That McCullough's analysis does not zero in on the particularly social nature of skill's place in the wider political economy of industrial – and by extension, digital – capitalism is of little consequence. When supplemented with a consideration of the declining centrality of skill in Braverman's assessment of the dispossession of the modern industrial worker, we begin to see the ways in which the attribute of skill exists not only in the iterative practice of the individual producer but as a common ingredient in craft production at a broader societal level. In this sense, the theory of dispossession that catalyzes Braverman's analysis

might be seen as one wherein craft is distinguished from industry at the moment of the extraction of skilled knowledge from producers at the hands of management.

2.3. The Sociality of Skill: Beyond the Master

In order to illustrate the distinction between tacit and explicit knowledge, and, by extension, the individual and social aspects of skill and craft, Sennett (2008) takes his readers on a tour of the medieval and pre-modern workshops of Europe, stopping for an extended stay in those of Italian goldsmith Benvenuto Cellini and Italian luthier Antonio Stradivari. In profiling the character and working arrangements of both of these master craftsmen, Sennett attempts to reveal the singular role that the tacit knowledge of the master plays in the production of the most cherished craft goods. What emerges in Sennett's description is an image of the master's workshop as a highly hierarchical productive space with a regimented division of labour and generalized familial culture. Under such hierarchy, it should come as no surprise that both figures are remembered for their singularity and craft genius. For Sennett, this points to both the tight control of craft knowledge in the pre-modern workshop as well as the embodied nature of the individual's development of tacit knowledge. He concludes his discussion of these two masters by asking a rhetorical question:

Much of their [the masters] very authority derives from seeing what others don't see, knowing what they don't know; their authority is made manifest in their silence. Would we then sacrifice Stradivari's cellos and violins for the sake of a more democratic workshop? (Sennett, 2008, pg. 78).

Unfortunately, Sennett's question is not particularly fair to his own analysis. In his description of the workshop, the master is able to maintain his own position and authority by selectively parcelling out craft knowledge. Although the historical record would likely bear this out as the *raison d'être* of the workshop division of labour, the question of workplace democracy is crucial for understanding the ways in which skill in craft production exists as more than an individual attribute. Consider, for instance, what would have happened under Stradivari's tutelage had he fully and equitably shared those aspects of his tacit knowledge that can be relayed through instruction to his various apprentices. With common control over the entirety of the body of craft knowledge,

perhaps our choice is something more than one between Stradivari's instruments and a more democratic labour process. One can rather easily imagine that under these changed conditions, the quality craftsmanship that garnered Stradivari's fame would actually have survived past his own lifetime. To some degree, a consideration of skill as a collectively developed aspect of the labour process holds the key to imagining alternative ways of organizing craft production. Such a proposition, however, should be tempered at this stage of the analysis, as the development of industrial capitalism and its more informational forms poses an even greater barrier to collectively controlled craft production than did the workshop system, its power relations being both more diffuse and wider reaching.

2.4. Design, Management and the Premature Eulogy of Craft

Marx describes human labour as a fundamentally natural process wherein a worker, using their own natural powers, acts upon the natural world and, by doing so, transforms it to meet a human need.⁵ What differentiates human labour from the productive activity of bees, spiders, or, by extension, beavers or eagles, is the idealistic project of imagining an end result. For Marx, the productive activity of the non-human world is governed by instinct, the spider building its web by relying on a kind of latently pre-possessed natural plan. By contrast, the human animal sees a need and responds by planning a way to meet that need.

We can, of course, at our contemporary vantage take some issue with the lack of agency that Marx assigns to non-human actors. We don't actually know whether the eagle has a plan for its nest before it sets out to construct it or whether beavers place their dams' strategically. Of course, the primacy that Marx places on the human worker

⁵ "A spider conducts operations which resemble those of the weaver, and a bee would put many a human architect to shame by the construction of its honeycomb cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is that the architect builds the cell in his mind before he constructs it in wax. At the end of every labour process, a result emerges which had already been conceived by the worker at the beginning, hence already existed ideally" (Marx, 1976, pg. 284).

is in keeping with the humanistic thought of the 19th century and doesn't really have a bearing on the accuracy of his analysis beyond.

The real bedrock of Marx's theorization on the process of valorization is the premeditated way in which workers engage the labour process. As Marx alludes, entering into productive activity arbitrarily, without pursuing a predetermined use-value, will almost certainly produce little of value. The labour process, for Marx, hinges on the purpose of the work, the planned pursuit of a use-value.

Purpose in work, of course, is not limited to the ideal vision of the produced use-value, but is also manifest in the nature of the work itself as dedicated, concentrated human activity. In a sense, the vision of the product instigates the activity, whereas dedication to the process on the part of the worker converts labour power into the end commodity. This latter element, what Marx calls "purposeful will" is descriptive of all labour to varying degrees, but is particularly resonant when considered alongside the figure of the craftsperson.

In a sense, the craftsperson is a worker who both envisions the final product of their work and dedicates their purposeful will to its production. In undertaking both sides of this equation iteratively and over long periods of time, the craftsperson also arguably develops latent and embodied knowledge of technique and materiality. In this sense, in occupying both of these territories of the labour process, the craft producer also has the potential to develop skill, both individually as a worker and socially as part of a category of worker; an individual potter in practice can become skilled in throwing pots, and collectively potters in developing said skill, recompose themselves as a skilled category of worker.

As we have seen, however, production does not take place in a vacuum chamber outside of the social relations of the capitalist mode of production and its imperative to maximize surplus. In theory, a skilled worker and the skilled category of worker to which they belong, will command a higher wage, will, in effect, become a more costly labour commodity, their labour power having the potential to create more value in the same amount of time as another worker's. It is at this juncture that Taylorization takes its toll in its attempt to separate purposeful will from planning activity. As previously elucidated, by drawing upon Braverman's analysis of the 20th century labour process, this process of

separation strips the collective of skilled workers of their privileged ability to use their specialized knowledge to plan their portions of the labour process. The attempt here is to transform the worker's specialized, latent knowledge into systematizable knowledge, concentrated in the minds of management. This does not strip the process of this skilled knowledge, however, simply moving it from the purview of the worker and into the control of the capitalists and their agents. As Braverman explains:

At first glance, the organization of labor according to simplified tasks, conceived and controlled elsewhere, in place of the previous craft forms of labor, have a clearly degrading effect upon the technical capacity of the worker. In its effects upon the working population as a whole, however, this matter is complicated by the rapid growth of specialized administrative and technical staff work, as well as by the rapid growth of production and the shifting of masses to new industries and within industrial processes to new occupations. (pg. 127).

This siphoning off of craft knowledge in the form of the systemization of conception gives management tighter control over the labour process while simultaneously simplifying the form of labour power needed within that process. Often referred to as “de-skilling”, this process is also the central ingredient to what has also come to be known as the dispossession model of industrial development (Kristofferson, 2007). As we saw in earlier in this chapter, this is an historical model that has been critiqued for its generalization, exceptions to the dissolution of craft production being readily apparent historically, especially in 19th and early 20th century settler economies (Kristofferson, 2007)⁶. That the general model of dispossession or de-skilling is limited in its applicability in every labour context is, however, immaterial when considered theoretically through the lens of the sociality of skill. As a social attribute of a particular grouping of workers – in this case, craftspeople – there can be little doubt that latent craft knowledge and skill, by extension, changes hands with the introduction of new regimes of conception. This is, perhaps, nowhere more observable than in the institutionalization of design in traditional craft-oriented industries.

Design, as a step in the production of a useful object, is not in itself degrading of craft work. The craftsperson is often a designer as well as a maker. However, under a

⁶ For more on this, consult Chapter 1.

capitalist mode of production, the designs that makers must follow are commonly passed down from management or from a higher tier of workers whose job it is to conceive of the ideal form of the commodity as well as the process by which it is fabricated. In some sense, this is a product of the industrial division of labour. In a highly rationalized division of labour wherein each worker is designated a particular task, it makes sense that the vision of the final product is determined at a more holistic level; imagine what would occur in the production of, say, a jetliner should each component in its construction be conceived of individually and without an eye to the finished product. It is a silly notion, of course, to imagine the craft production of a high technology commodity. However, the institutionalization of design is not limited only to highly complex products.

Adam Smith's famous pin-factory is a good example of a productive process in which the product can be produced either through a craft or industrial division of labour. Smith obviously demonstrates the efficiency of a rationalized division of labour; mass producing pins is cheaper and faster than depending on an artisan to painstakingly produce each pin from beginning to end. An industrial division of labour, however, is not necessarily the same thing as the intensive Taylorized division of labour discussed by Braverman. In this latter form, the division of the isolated actions at each stage of the process and the routinization of each intensifies the alienation of the worker. In this latter development, decision-making is almost entirely divorced from the worker, the worker being relegated to a motive appendage in production and little more.

The legacy of Taylorism and the Fordist assembly line is the normalization of centralized control and the widespread separation of conception and material fabrication. It is through the imposition of Taylorist principles that the control of craft knowledge reminiscent of the medieval workshop reasserts itself in the modern period. Only this time, it is not the master who maintains a monopoly of knowledge but a professionalized class of planners, designers and experts. From the 19th century to today, the division between making and planning has been generally accomplished through this centralizing process, making the figure of the craftsperson almost anachronistic. As art theorist Howard Risatti (2007) explains, industrial capitalism draws a clear separation between design and workmanship, where the former is the thought work of production, the latter the simple manipulation of materials. For Risatti, craftsmanship exists at the nexus of the two. Building upon Aristotelian divisions of theory, praxis and poiesis, Risatti argues that craftsmanship embodies the latter "because technical skill and creative imagination

come together in craftsmanship to bring the thing into being as a physical-conceptual entity” (pg. 168). Risatti continues, explaining that

Craftsmanship, like poiesis, should be understood as a creative act in which actual physical form is brought together with an idea/concept... In this sense, craftsmanship is a process of formalizing material and materializing form that results in the creation of an original craft object (Risatti, 2007, pg. 168).

This leaves us in an interesting and conceptually complicated territory when we measure this Aristotelian conceptualization of craftsmanship against the actually existing designations of craftsperson and craft in today’s craft industries.

Craftsmanship as it is described by Risatti, is an ideal category marked by this Aristotelian unity. We have already seen how work in craft industries does not always reflect said unity. In fact, as will become apparent as we begin to analyze the working conditions and experiences of craftworkers, this ideal does not typically translate to work in sectors that self-designate as craft. In individual making we might observe something more akin to Risatti’s idealist visualization of this figure, an amateur or self-employed maker who controls their task from conceptualization through to completion, even controlling the fruits of their labour after production is complete. In a craft brewery or artisan bakery, we observe a very different situation, one where the brewer or baker, far from controlling the process from concept to product, often enjoys little autonomy, following directives, procedures and recipes passed down from someone else. One might, at this point, suggest that this latter example is of a business or industry misusing the craft moniker, a simple case of branding buzz. This may be the case, but to simply dismiss this industrial movement as a misappropriation of terms or an aberration of the craft ethos, would be to miss entirely the history of craft as a site of struggle.

This continuum of autonomy and control makes craft a compelling laboratory for teasing out the class conflict waged continuously in the development of the capitalist mode of production. Whether we call it deskilling, dispossession or the concentration of conceptualization, the struggle between the desire for autonomy on the part of workers and of control on the part of management animates the continual resurfacing of craft-based movements, from the 19th century Arts and Crafts movement to more recent incarnations in the form of counter-cultural trends and lifestyle movements. Let us now

look more closely at the thought, history, and lasting influence of these movements and some of their proponents, perhaps most notably the British art critic John Ruskin and designer and socialist William Morris.

Chapter 3. The Craft Spirit, Then and Now

Celebrants of the recent boom in small-scale, localized production often characterize this political economic development as a form of revolution (Anderson, 2012; Hatch, 2017; Willis, 2018). Former *Wired* Magazine editor Chris Anderson (2012) calls the maker movement, in particular, a new industrial revolution, one that is paving the way toward a more sustainable, just, and ultimately enriching world of work unique to the 21st century context. Working for oneself or doing what one loves is the antidote to the alienating nature of the forms of work characteristic of the Fordist period, this perspective seems to promise. In taking production into their own hands, going into business for themselves, and otherwise disrupting the static employment relationships of the 20th century, today's makers and craft entrepreneurs are seen as creating a line of flight that holds the promise to a new, liberating world of work. Echoing the optimism of turn of the century urbanists like Richard Florida (2012) and even radical intellectuals like Antonio Negri and Maurizio Lazzarato, this new generation of entrepreneurship boosters tells us that we, as producers, hold the keys to our own destiny and have the ability and the right to reject the centralized institutions of the global economy by pursuing our passions.

Interestingly, these accounts and their related perspectives rarely consider the long history of counter-production movements that have attempted to challenge centralized mass production since at least the 19th century. A counter-production movement, generally, should be considered any social movement driven by or unified around an opposition to the contemporarily dominant productive process while championing an alternative means of organizing social production. Social movements like the 19th century Arts and Crafts movement, the "New Communalist" stream of the 1960s counterculture, both the household and punk DIY cultures of the 1980s and the hacker movements of the 1990s can all variously be seen as precursors to and common travellers with the crafting and making cultures of today. This historization, the roots of which can be found in Luckman (2015), gives us a window through which we can track the genealogy of today's craft movement as well as the risks they face in light of capitalism's ability to incorporate even the most overt of critiques. Here I am building on Luckman's already robust account by considering, in fuller detail, additional DIY movements that embody similar anti-status quo sentiments to those espoused by today's craft celebrants. I do so in order to draw a more continuous hereditary line

between what might be considered middle-class alternatives to industrial production at various stages of capitalist development as well as the manner by which each, in turn, morphed from an intentional rejection of the contemporary capitalist status quo into yet another market segment. Although it might be difficult to see these historical roots in the everyday practices of making and craft production in the 21st century economy, the historic resonance between these social movements is hardly coincidental and in studying them we observe both the promises and shortcomings of today's craft movement.

In this chapter we explore the various counter-production movements that form the social backdrop of the recent rise of making, paying close attention to the ways in which these movements were contemporaneously seen as alternatives to the dominant forms of doing business that characterized their historical moments. Each movement highlighted here – the Arts and Crafts movement, mid-century consumer and countercultural DIY, and 1980s punk DIY – corresponds with a latent critical response to the dominant mode of production against which it is set. I examine this latent response in order to demonstrate how counter-production movements, consciously or unconsciously, emerge in response to the dominant productive paradigm of a given historical moment as well as the tendency for these movements and their component critical impulses to be absorbed and redirected into new avenues of capitalist expansion. In doing so, I highlight the tensions and contradictions of the most recent wave of craft production, ultimately arguing that the contemporary wave of craft enthusiasm reflects an increasing disaffection with both digital capitalism and the forms of immaterial labour or knowledge work that they encourage, but one that is easily coopted by today's networks of corporate dominance. This argument sets the stage for the following chapters in which I pursue a generative critique of craft labour in 21st century capitalism and build a case for greater levels of worker solidarity and organizing both within craft industries and beyond.

Such an historical project runs the risk, however, of becoming unruly given the almost inexhaustible preponderance of working people's struggles against hegemonic forms of labour in their given historical periods. One could spend entire volumes discussing the role of the diggers and levellers and their experiments with agrarian egalitarianism, the Luddites' and Silesian weavers' organized resistance to the dispossession and exploitation brought about through industrial machinery, or the various working-class and peasant revolts that characterized many of the most tumultuous moments of the early

history of industrial capitalism. Unfortunately, such a sweeping historical lens falls somewhat outside the capacity of the present study and, admittedly, has already been critically and exhaustively studied by historians like EP Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm. As such, the case studies featured in this chapter are selected due to the cultural resonance that they were able to mobilize through their discursive and political efforts. The lasting influence of their cultural production and propaganda is taken as a generalized marker of lasting influence, and one that maps onto the contemporary wave of craft enthusiasm. From the Arts and Crafts' hellbent pursuit of worker dignity and aesthetic care to the punks' simultaneous rejection and coopting of consumer culture, the examples gathered here provide a genealogy of today's craft movement's focus on the pursuit of passion, the primacy of self-activation, and, arguably, the more recent rejection of the high tech in favour of the traditional and authentic (the subject of Chapters 4 & 6). The literature selected to illustrate each of these movements presents a cross-section of the popular and the scholarly, ultimately aiming to map an intersection between the collective consciousness of the movement itself with more intellectual accounts of what this collective consciousness was built upon. The accounts are not exhaustive, serving rather as historical breadcrumbs that when collected suggest common motivations and a shared heritage between these seemingly disparate proposed alternatives to the dominant mode of production.

Recognizing that the history of capitalist development is simultaneously the history of class and working people's capacity to organize is, of course, a necessary jumping off point for the present analysis. Through such a recognition, developing a more focused lens through which to view the particular topic at hand becomes imperative should our goal be to understand the specific interests and vocational identities being espoused by the contemporary movement and where their philosophical and political precursors might be found in previous counter-production movements. As such, in this chapter we will examine, in turn, three historical antecedents to today's craft movement that not only provide historical parallels, but developed their own intellectual, cultural and literary spheres in which their interests were articulated, refined and spread. Our genealogy will begin with the historical and theoretical foundations of the English Arts and Crafts movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, paying particular attention to some of its key thinkers' perspectives on the nature of craft labour as a corrective to the excesses and indignities of industrialism. We will then move on to consider attitudes

toward production and consumption within the counter-cultural movements of the mid-to-late 20th century beginning with the widespread rejection of the Fordist regime amongst young activists and students in the 1960s and the ways in which this rejection was often supplemented by do-it-yourself oriented form of communalism. Next, we will consider the ways in which late 20th century consumer culture also created the necessary ingredients for its contemporary challenger and bedfellow, an individualized DIY movement embraced by both middle-class suburbanites and their rebellious counterparts, particularly the punks. This survey will finally propel us into a discussion of the entrepreneurial narratives upon which today's maker movement is founded – a discussion that will be further fleshed out in Chapter 4.

This will not be an exhaustive history, but, rather, a selective cultural genealogy. To build a true industrial lineage of the craft movement would require, at the very least, a deep political economic and archival analysis of rural, artisanal, workshop and other forms of production standing outside and at least nominally against industrialism. With this said, we should acknowledge that what this collection of historical cases offers us is a kind of Foucaultian genealogy (Foucault, 1977; Garland, 2014, Rose, 1996) in which contemporary discourses of making and craft are set against their historical predecessors, even if these historical antecedents go unacknowledged in that contemporary discourse, as they often do in relation to this most recent wave of craft passion. Acknowledged or not, what these historical selections illustrate is the persistence of counter-production movements that prioritize, in one way or another, the autonomous labour of the individual maker as an alternative and challenge to the centralized industrial system in the particular form it takes in the contemporary political economy. The limitations of such a prioritization of the individual may seem obvious from outside the historical and cultural contexts within which it develops, but in singling out these historical limitations the critical researcher will be better situated to fully assess the culture, political potential and blind spots of this, the most recent wave of interest in craft production. What is at stake, arguably, is a tendency for scholars and activists to prioritize individual entrepreneurialism over collective struggle as the preferred means of resistance to the capitalist capture of counter-production impulses, impulses that could hold the potential to prefigure productive alternatives and working-class solidarity.

3.1. Ruskin, Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement

Experiments with more equitable forms of production and distribution have existed throughout capitalist history, and many of these arose in the period between the first and second industrial revolutions. Given the rapid development of English capitalism in the 18th and 19th centuries and the wholesale changes in social relations and living conditions during this period, it should come as no surprise that many of these attempts at reformation came from England's industrial regions. Toward the end of the 18th century, the cooperative movement, led by reformers like Welsh industrialist and philosopher Robert Owen, attempted to set up alternative productive enterprises where workers and craftspeople enjoyed more control over their working lives at the same time as their material needs were met through the cooperative control of community resources.⁷ Although Owens's experiments in Scotland and the United States ultimately failed to bring about lasting change, the enthusiasm generated by utopian cooperation paved the way for the discourse that would animate the Arts and Crafts movement and set it up as the next major attempt to reform industrial production along more egalitarian lines.

Defined in a general sense, the Arts and Crafts movement was a movement of middle-class artists, artisans, designers, and activists that promoted the small-scale production of high quality goods as a way of challenging the dominant industrial concentration that increasingly characterized production in the late 19th century (Stansky, 1985; Cumming & Kaplan, 1991). Although the movement appealed to the passions and desired autonomy of skilled craftworkers, its champions were, broadly speaking, members of an artistically-inclined middle-class, including notable figures like writer John Ruskin; poet, activist, and businessman William Morris; architect Charles Ashbee; and designer Arthur Mackmurdo (Cumming & Kaplan, 1991). Although these figures and the other primary activists of the movement came to the project from all points on the political spectrum, they shared a common goal of promoting dignifying work in the face of mass alienation,

⁷ Although Owen's writing and attempts at building utopian communities provide a compelling prehistory for the Arts and Crafts movement and the thought of William Morris, his interventions were overtly along industrial rather than craft lines. This is not to suggest that the workers at Owen's mills did not practice a craft, but that the category of craft itself was not central to these political experiments. For more on the links between Owen and key thinkers within the Arts and Crafts see: Morris & Belfort Bax, 1886; Grandi, 2010; Spurrier, 2020.

aesthetic beauty in the face of industrial ugliness, and a unified and harmonious production process in the face of mass produced uniformity.

As briefly discussed in Chapter 2, craft is a productive category that arises alongside industrial capitalism and stands out as both its opponent and innovator (Adamson, 2013). As Glenn Adamson argues, the craft focused industrial reform movements of the late 19th century reflected received wisdom as to the declining social status of the craftsperson under industrial capitalism, leading their champions to elevate the craftsperson as an innovative rebel-by-default even as such an assumption effectively divorces craft from its political potential. In fact, in reading John Ruskin's (1853|1985) *The Nature of Gothic* or William Morris' (1877|1973) *The Lesser Arts* one is struck by their rather backward-looking historicization, with Ruskin's romantic notions of ornamentation and moral aesthetics standing out as particularly conservative. This is not to say that in conceptualizing alternatives to the undignified and alienating conditions of mass industrialism these thinkers were simply romanticizing the socio-economic systems that preceded them, but that in assuming the historical continuity of the craftsperson as opposed to the worker they failed to recognize the ways in which craft and industry were co-constituted.

In fact, one might go so far as to set the craftsperson and the industrial worker in a state of tension. This tension is, arguably, foundational in debates over the aristocracy of labour, famously instigated by Engels in his correspondence with Marx (Strauss, 2004) and later picked up by Lenin (1999) in his theorization of monopoly capitalism. The theory of the labour aristocracy in both of these cases is meant to grapple with the working class's tendency toward conservatism and its willingness to capitulate on or undermine class interests. Although this particular tributary of Marxian theory has come in for considerable criticism over the last century or so (notably, Stedman Jones, 1984), the debate's lasting influence is one that orbits the figure of the skilled worker – what we might be so bold as to call the craftsperson – and the peculiar forms of workplace and working class segmentation that sprout up in the distinction between the skilled and unskilled. Regardless of the concept's empirical basis (and its adequacy, we should add), here we would be best served by following the precedent set by Eric Hobsbawm in a 1984 lecture in which he sidestepped the debate entirely, opting rather to focus his attention on the prosperity, attitudes and organizational formations of skilled workers or artisans in the 19th century (Hobsbawm, 1984). Such a maneuver also assists us in

avoiding definitional difficulties in the adoption of the terminology of craft in the 21st century. The labour aristocrat of the 19th and early 20th centuries, according to Hobsbawm (1964), enjoyed both higher and more regular pay than their coworkers and a general expectation of membership in a union or trades guild, two characteristics that, as we will see, do not describe the conditions of many (if not most) 21st century craftspeople or craftworkers.

However, we should also recognize the role that craft skill plays in this particular historical characterization. The sociality of skill, as we examined in Chapter 2, is a peculiar aspect in the conflict between labour and capital, skill existing both as an element of labour power and, arguably, a discursive and material means by which workers can be differentiated. And, as Hobsbawm (1984) observes, the 19th century skilled worker enjoyed particular distinction in the early industrial economy, especially as their handwork filled the gaps of what could be accomplished by industrial machinery. Of course, this social and material privilege, hinging on the social quality of skill, was continuously and consistently imperilled by the very same technological advancement that bolstered certain skilled trades. In a sense, rather than enjoying a secure place as a labour aristocrat, the artisan was an auto-diminishing category with some rising into the ranks of capital, others finding themselves deskilled and relegated to the rank-and-file. This peril is the political and theoretical bedrock of much of the literature and activism that would come to make up the backbone of the Arts and Crafts movement, particularly in the work of John Ruskin and William Morris and the formation of counter-production organizations like the Art Workers' Guild and the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society (Stansky, 1985; Lambourne, 1980). The artisan or craftsperson was, for these thinkers and activists, a challenger to the primacy of centralized industrial production, and, as such, necessarily needed to build capacity to challenge the primacy of the newly matured system of industrial manufacture. Moreover, in the figure of the craftsperson, the thinkers and activists of the Arts and Crafts movement saw a pre-capitalist exemplar of the unity of thought work and manual labour, one that pointed toward a more dignified alternative to the "dark satanic mills" of Victorian England.

The Arts and Crafts movement, broadly, was an idealist movement in design, architecture and handicraft production that developed in response to the excesses – both material and moral – of the industrial revolution (Cumming & Kaplan, 1991). Inspired by designers, architects and writers like John Ruskin, William Morris, Arthur

Mackmurdo, and Augustus Pugin, the movement promoted an orientation toward the productive arts that valorized the materials, processes, and spiritual attributes of production over the cynical pursuit of surplus that characterized the industrial system it set itself against. Taking shape during the decades-long stagnation of the 1873 financial crisis and the increasing destitution and loss of market share of artisans struggling to keep up with the move toward centralized industrialization, the movement spoke directly to the conditions of workers increasingly treated as disposable and interchangeable by the modern industrial system. Part moral crusade to elevate work, part celebration of artisanry in the decorative arts, the values of the Arts and Crafts movement spread in diverse contexts, rural and urban, initially in England but subsequently in mainland Europe, the United States, and Japan (Adamson, 2013; Cobden-Sanderson, 1905; Stansky, 1985).

The movement found its roots in the observations of Victorian artists, architects and thinkers about the inequality, inhumanity and aesthetic ugliness of life in late 19th century England (Ruskin, 1853|1997; Morris, 1884|1997; Cobden-Sanderson, 1905). For these observers, the centralized production of uniform goods served to separate humans from their innate creative capacities, degrading not only their working lives but social and moral life more generally. The creative capacities of the “workman” were seen by many as holding the key to human dignity, but as industrial manufacture standardized work, this was lost, leading to the depravity and squalor that characterized the conditions for most of the English working class; here we see echoes of the moral concerns elucidated by scholars and commentators across the political spectrum, from Adam Smith’s analyses over a century before to Friedrich Engels’s depiction of the hovels and slums of the Victorian factory towns only decades earlier.

This deep concern led many of these artists – most of whom came from materially privileged, bourgeois backgrounds – to form a progression of organizations and societies aimed at reasserting the importance of handicraft and artisanal production as a corrective against the excesses of industrialism. A variety of groups were formed in quick succession and along a continuum of related motivations. Arthur H. Mackmurdo, Hebert Horne and Selwyn Image formed the Century Guild in 1882 around an aesthetic commitment to a more intentional form of design that would showcase human creativity without necessarily challenging industrialism writ large. Around the same time, in 1884, a group of architects, motivated by the writings of William Morris, formed the Art Workers’

Guild and pushed for a recognition of the unity of art and craft, though ultimately seeing artists as somewhat distinct from workers, a contradiction that put serious limitations on the political efficacy of the Guild. However, in 1887, a related group formed the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, which more closely matched William Morris's concern with the conditions and creativity of workers, and built upon the commitment to showcase artisans' works as a means to promote craft production and the alternative it was believed to present.

These early efforts led to a blossoming of craft activism in a variety of contexts. While most of these formed in the more urban locales where artists and designers congregated, the movement flourished in rural contexts as well, especially as many rural craftspeople maintained higher levels of self-employed artisanal practice (Lambourne, 1980; Greensted & Batkin, 1993; Luckman, 2012). Moreover, the movement spread globally over the intervening years, well into the first few decades of the 20th century. Craft played a central role in many of the utopian philanthropic experiments of late 19th and early 20th century United States, including in boarding houses like Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Star's Hull House in Chicago (Addams, 1981; Star, 2010). The movement was also influential on Yonegi Sôetsu and the Japanese Mingei pottery movement (Sôetsu, 1972). Overall, although the movement began in the parlours of bourgeois English artists and designers, it had a much wider reach as others concerned with the conditions of industrial capitalism began to take matters, and production, into their own hands.

Among the most influential theoretical works on the social role of the craftsman, at least for the Arts and Crafts movement, is English polymath John Ruskin's (1818|1902) celebration of the workmanship of gothic architecture in *The Stones of Venice*. Ruskin is, of course, remembered as an art critic, social commentator and poet, but along with *Fors Clavigera*, *The Stones of Venice* stands out as Ruskin's most sustained commentary on the declining role of craft in the Victorian period. In the section entitled *The Nature of Gothic*, Ruskin laments the soulless conditions of work in the mid-19th century English context in which he wrote. For Ruskin, the production of sameness that stands out as a hallmark of the modern project in architecture reflected the degraded position of the craftsman in the social division of labour. In fact, Ruskin goes so far as to compare the 19th century worker to a slave due to the relegation of the worker to repetition and standardization. In Ruskin's words:

Wherever the workman is utterly enslaved, the parts of the building must of course be absolutely like each other; for the perfection of his execution can only be reached by exercising him in doing one thing, and giving him nothing else to do. The degree in which the workman is degraded may be thus known at a glance, by observing whether the several parts of the building are similar or not... if, as in Gothic work, there is perpetual change both in design and execution, the workman must have been altogether set free (Ruskin, 1853|1997, pg. 93).

In both classical and modern architecture, Ruskin sees the hallmarks of unfree labour where the mark of the maker is removed from the product. In Gothic architecture, according to Ruskin, we see the unique hand of the craftsman in both rustic imperfection and diverse ornamentation. In this sense, for Ruskin, the medieval artisan is seen as enjoying greater levels of autonomy than their modern counterpart. Moreover, this artisan was expected to complete a job in its entirety, the imposed disunity of the division of labour not yet relegating the artisan to soulless, repetitive work. For Ruskin, the distinct lack of polish on display in a Gothic cathedral stands out as evidence of the unity that a renewed craft ethic could present for the English worker, effectively reuniting head and hand and giving the artisan a sense of dignity in their work.

In observing the mark of the individual worker in each of these architectural traditions, Ruskin highlights the social nature of the architectural project more generally. As Clive Wilmer (1997) observes in the introduction to his collection of Ruskin's works:

Ruskin did not see buildings merely as works of art created by individuals for the use of other individuals. They were social artefacts and, as such, expressed the moral condition of the society in which and for which they were built (pg. 16).

Under an industrial division of labour, one might extend the reasoning, the absence of the mark of the individual maker signals a degradation in the autonomy and importance of the skill of the worker as well as that worker's ability to express themselves in their work. Although Ruskin's remarks concern the craftsmanship of building, his critique is one that is relatively easy to apply to the mass production of commodities in the mid- to late-19th century (and, obviously on to today). By the time of Ruskin's writing, the movement of production from the home or small workshop into the fledgling factories of the 18th and early 19th centuries had progressed to such a degree as to be not only

dominant but everyday, bringing with it a visible reduction of the worker to a simple follower of instructions, a near automaton who had no control over their work.

In observing this reduction and its concomitant social ills, Ruskin identified concentrated industrialism as a purveyor of social degradation. Like many of his contemporaries, Ruskin's critique of modern production was, in essence, a moral one. As EP Thompson (1955) explains "...Ruskin sought to treat the arts as the expression of the whole *moral being* of the artist, and – through him – of the quality of life of the society in which the artist lived" (pg. 34). We should, of course, use caution when extending such a moral disposition to the role of art to other arenas of productive practice. Fortunately for the present discussion, Ruskin went to great lengths to demonstrate the artistry and design exhibited by the medieval worker and the Victorian craftsman. Thompson's distillation of Ruskin's *The Stones of Venice* goes on to explain his strong concern with the spiritual development and expression of the individual worker and the ways that modern society inhibited both, particularly as that worker lost control of their work. In fact, Thompson reinforces this interpretation of Ruskin's thought by quoting this passage from the *Stones of Venice*: "we blanch cotton, and strengthen steel, and refine sugar, and shape pottery; but to brighten, to strengthen, to refine, or to form a single living spirit, never enters into our estimate of advantages" (Ruskin, 1853|1997, quoted in Thompson, 1955, pg. 34). For Ruskin, autonomous, dignified work is the manner by which humans are able to shape themselves, their characters, and the society around them. To extend such a view of the craftsperson's role is to see the pursuit of creativity and autonomy as the path toward social change, toward a more enlightened and moral society.

However, as Raymond Williams (1963) cautions, Ruskin's vision of social change is one that is not simply conservative, but borderline authoritarian. In a close read of Ruskin's commentary, Williams demonstrates how Ruskin's application of universal moral principles on social production, when extended to Ruskin's overall critique of Victorian society, leaves us with a vision of the future characterized by the maintenance of social class wherein the upper classes deem what work is worthy and call upon the state to rigidly plan both productive and social life. As such, Ruskin's concern with the ugliness of conditions under the industrial system has less to do with the power imbalances of capitalist production and the manner by which the working class is exploited and alienated through their dispossession and more to do with the inability of the liberal democratic apparatus to bolster that art and production that exemplifies his notions of

true beauty. In a sense, Ruskin's critique is both a moral and aesthetic one and while it identifies one of the major culprits in the degradation of working life, it fails to account for how this degradation contributes to the expansion and maintenance of the system itself.

This tendency notwithstanding, Ruskin's ideas coalesce into a celebration of handicraft and dedication to quality and beauty, a celebration which galvanized a generation of artist-activists. Foremost amongst these was the poet, novelist, designer, and political activist, William Morris. Seeing in Ruskin a dedication to the interests of working people and a path toward collective betterment, Morris dedicated much of his writing and activism to countering social injustice at the point of production, ultimately pushing for a reclaiming of craft practice as a latent alternative to capitalism's destitution and debasement. In his recognition of the conflictual character of class under industrial capitalism, Morris paints a dramatic contrast to Ruskin. For Morris, the degraded conditions of working people in Victorian capitalism were not simply a reflection of moral shortcomings in the social order – ones that might be overcome with a more rigidly hierarchical social organization. Instead, for Morris, such degradation reflected the alienation of the worker from controlling their own labour process and the concentrated control of both production and social life in the upper classes⁸. Whereas Ruskin inspired artists and designers to consider the issues of the moral degradation of society and work, Morris offered a class-based analysis of the cause: capitalism.

It is partly this extension that animated Morris's engagement with Ruskin's ideas and that, eventually, motivated the Arts and Crafts project as a whole. Morris cuts a pretty deep contrast with Ruskin in both theory and politics, his work on handicraft being guided by a commitment to a socialist transformation of Victorian society. Even noting these differences, we should also appreciate the profound influence that Ruskin's work and friendship had on Morris. Like Ruskin, Morris saw a fundamental dehumanising drive at the heart of the industrial division of labour – the forced separation of thought and action, what we now know would develop into the separation of design and craft as industrialism matured. Just as Ruskin's medieval craftsman used their full energies to create something singular in the way they approached their particular architectural task,

⁸ It is well documented that Morris was a follower of Marx's work and arguably applied it in both his political commentaries and organizing activities (Thompson, 1976; Williams, 1963; Meier, 1978). However, Morris did not often directly utilize Marx's terms in his writing, opting for a more productivist assessment of industrial conditions (Hatherley, 2020).

Morris's vision of the craftsman was one wherein they could enjoy the full energies of their labour in the unification of head and hand. As Morris argues in *Useful Work versus Useless Toil*:

Yet I think that to all living things there is a pleasure in the exercise of their energies... But a man at work, making something that he feels will exist because he is working at it and wills it, is exercising the energies of his mind and soul as well as of his body. Memory and imagination help him as he works. Not only his own thoughts, but the thoughts of the men of past ages guide his hands; and as a part of the human race, he creates. If we work thus we shall be men, and our days will be happy and eventful (Morris, 1884|1973, p. 88).

Building on this idealist account, Morris posits that individual creative expression is a central ingredient to a fair, vibrant and sustainable society. Ruskin's influence is clearly visible in this account of the unity of head and hand. In fact, in it, one sees reflections of Ruskin's conviction that such a unity in work is central to what it means to be human. In essence, dignity in work, for Morris, is achieved through the worker's empowerment to plan and execute every aspect of production and to pursue the best possible product by honing both their creative and tactile abilities. Such a unity, however, could not be achieved in the contemporaneously existing mode of production, where control over the activities of the factory were dictated from above and where the worker, instead of practicing a craft, was required to execute rote tasks in the production of a product they had little or no say in designing. Craft, for Morris, presented an antidote to this disunity and a potential for the transformation of work and society.

Morris's was a radical vision of social change, and we might also assume that his position on the unity of head and hand was at least partially influenced by his engagement with Marx's work, especially as this relates to the theory of alienation. Although Morris does not directly engage this particular terminology, we see echoes of the theory in Morris's approach to understanding the life energies of working people and his belief that the transcendent goal of human productive activity, far from the generation of profit, is actually to beautify our surroundings and to enjoy the fruits of our labours. True human fulfilment, in Morris's vision, could only come about if the worker or craftsman was no longer separated from the decision making of the labour process, if they could apply themselves creatively without being subject to wage pressures and

managerial meddling. In a sense, the condition for dignity, for Morris, was workers' control over the means and processes of production. This, in turn, would free the worker to pursue their craft as an art rather than as a rote routine in pursuit of a wage. In contrast to the immiseration and squalor that Morris observed in Victorian England, an unalienated productive life would actually more closely resemble that of the artist than it would that of the industrial worker. This is perhaps most clearly visualized in his utopian novel *News from Nowhere* (Morris, 1890|2003). The novel's narrator, in speaking with an old man whose particular pastime is the study of Victorian history (far distant in the world of the novel), hears that in this utopian age, workers have found themselves free of the tyranny of exchange value and produce now only in pursuit of meeting the needs of themselves and their neighbours. As the fictional historian explains:

The wares which we make are made because they are needed: men make for their neighbours' use as if they were making for themselves, not for a vague market of which they know nothing, and over which they have no control...
(Morris, 1890|2003, pg. 142)

Here we observe the first step in Morris's vision of de-alienating work, the pursuit of utility over exchange. This, in turn, for Morris, frees the craftsperson to pursue quality over quantity and to enjoy both the product and process of their work. The prioritization of use-value over exchange-value in Morris's vision maps inversely onto Marx's notion of commodity fetishism, suggesting that a society based on use-value would rely on the decommodification of daily life, particularly in terms of the ultimate goal of productive work: use and beauty. The character then demonstrates how this reorientation toward the labour process translates to a more autonomous and less alienated world of work:

Now, surely you can see that under these circumstances all the work that we do is an exercise of the mind and body more or less pleasant to be done: so that instead of avoiding work everybody seeks it: and, since people have got defter in doing the work generation after generation, it has become so easy to do, that it seems as if there were less done, though probably more is produced" (Morris, 1890|2003, pg. 142).

Morris's future historian, in this statement, alludes to what Morris describes elsewhere as a socialization of necessary work (Morris, 1890|2003). Collective effort spent toward

less-desirable, yet still necessary tasks, is suggested here as a means by which workers would be freed of this form of toil, using their time instead on more spiritually enriching pursuits. The necessary work would be shared, its time and effort minimized as a result. Taken to its contemporary conclusion, this is a suggestion often repeated by left-wing commentators of automation. In a fully automated society, dirty, dangerous and dull work could be relegated to the machines, the remainder tackled collectively as a form of community service (Bastani, 2018; Jones, 2021).

Of course, Morris's is an idealized account from a utopian novel and not a clear recipe for a revolution (although Morris's fictionalized account of the latter seems remarkably prescient when read against the communist revolutions that would come in the 20th century). However, what *News from Nowhere* demonstrates is Morris's deep empathy for, solidarity with, and conviction to improve conditions for the industrial workers of his own time. Consequently, the convictions so compassionately communicated in the fictionalized account, compose the bedrock of Morris's more overtly political work in his writings and speeches on art, labour and socialism. Arguably, it is Morris's commitment to the de-alienation of work and the reunification of head and hand that drove his championship of craftsmanship and, by extension the Arts and Crafts movement that he helped inspire.

In his study of the historical and lasting influence of Morris on English culture and beyond, British historian Peter Stansky (1985) makes a compelling case for how Morris's work in design and literature embodied an ethos particular to the late 19th century and that helped shape, consciously and otherwise, much of what was to characterize English culture into the 20th century. Morris' influence on his students and followers, according to Stansky, reached far beyond his own personal orbit, creating the conditions for the creation of a niche public focused on modesty, materiality and quality. As Stansky argues "...under Morris's aegis a new public was being created. It might not be considerable in numbers, but it exercised an important influence on how the world looked and how it was looked at toward the end of the century, and ultimately much of the look of the world in the twentieth century" (Stansky, 1985, pg. 8). Stansky's assessment of Morris's influence on English culture generally tends a bit toward hyperbole, but one should acknowledge that Ruskin, Morris, and the Arts and Crafts movement had a profound influence on major public developments including but not limited to: the creation of schools and colleges of art and craft throughout the UK and

beyond; the integration of art and craft in public and private galleries including the Victoria and Albert Museum; and the flourishing of similar social movements in Europe, Asia and the Americas.

The public to which Stansky refers, the practitioners and activists of the Arts and Crafts movement, set about reforming their own productive processes, but, as Stansky's historical survey suggests, often did not share Morris's deeper commitment to social transformation. As these were among the closest adherents to Morris's interventions in handicraft and design, the members of this new public made good on helping to realize Morris's visions within these arenas, while ultimately failing – intentionally or unintentionally – to bring about the political revolution that Morris envisioned.

Indeed, Morris's intervention was markedly socialist both in its diagnosis and its practice. In responding to the destitution of the working class and the dispossession of craftworkers, he had set out to inspire a renewed interest in the trades and in the artisanal design and production of durable goods, explicitly connecting the political economic conditions of Victorian industrialism and rationalization and the organization of industrial production that contributed to them. For Morris, in order to rectify the abysmal conditions brought about by industrial capitalism, it was essential that the power of conception, production and distribution of goods be returned to the purview of the producers. And, given his particular political and literary influence in the later years of the 19th century, this unity of socialist politics and industrial reform found purchase amongst a diversity of socialistic and utopian thinkers at the time and even later into the 20th century. This was the spark that ignited the Arts and Crafts movement in the UK and beyond.

The Arts and Crafts movement, broadly, was a counter-production movement that lasted approximately from the 1880s to the 1920s (Lambourne, 1980; Stansky, 1985; Cumming & Kaplan, 1991). In this movement, artists, writers, craftspeople, and small-business owners attempted to reassert the unity of thought and work, celebrating the unified creation of objects (of beauty) for their own sake and directly and indirectly challenging the industrial division of labour, prioritizing the individual creativity of makers over profit and uniformity. These priorities manifested in new streams of creation in architecture, utilitarian art, décor, and the manufacture of durable goods. From Morris's own designs and furniture creations in the 1880s to Yanagi Sōetsu's mingei pottery in 1920s Japan,

the movement was instrumental in recentering traditional practices in the manufacture of both utilitarian and aesthetic objects globally.

In addition to the revision of industrial production envisioned by Morris, some proponents of the handicraft revival pushed for a kind of rural pastoralism, celebrating regional country arts. In contrast to the direct followers of Morris, those who championed a kind of handcrafted industry, this alternate grouping was predominantly a women's movement, often motivated by moral concerns over the state of modern urbanism as well as the indignity exemplified by them in the working classes. Such a moralism, however, should be understood as a comfortable bedfellow with the industrial reformers, most of the movement being motivated by a paternalistic morality attempting to save workers not only from the low conditions of Victorian England (and modern Europe as a whole) but from their own low depravity. This is a particular moralistic stream that is common amongst industrial reformers, one observable even amongst the staunchest champions of capitalism. Over a century early, Adam Smith, for example, was profoundly concerned with the depravity of working-class culture (Smith, 1759|2010; Smith 1776|2003). Middle-class reactions to the so-called "gin craze" also reflect this sentiment (Nicholls, 2006). The working-class, according to this moral panic, could not be trusted to regulate its behaviour in the face of the first industrially produced spirit. Indeed, so long as there has been a working class, there has been a progression of moral panics custom-built to lament its conditions while discrediting its ability to act or think for itself. Along these same lines, both common threads of the Arts and Crafts movement reacted to perceptions of modern excess from a moralistic footing, the concern for workers more often than not filtered through a bourgeois sentimentality.

This worldview was predictably reproduced in the formal associations formed within the movement, founders and members alike sharing the background and culture of the Victorian bourgeoisie. Morris's own middle-class positionality notwithstanding, the movement formed around his ideas increasingly distanced itself from the more unpalatable aspects of his socialistic vision for systemic reform. As Wendy Kaplan (1995) explains in her history of the Arts and Crafts movement:

While there was some overlap between the country craft revival and Morris's intended commercial revolution, the wide-reaching home industries movement

had no sympathy for the rallying call of Morris's socialism which threatened, in their eyes, a newly found social stability (pg. 21).

She unpacks this sentiment in relation to the newly formed organizations, explaining: "All [of these organizations] were concerned with the welfare of the worker and in particular with redirecting the leisure hours that reformers feared would otherwise be spent in drinking or gambling" (pgs. 21-22). In this characterization we observe two operative drives within the movement. First, it was a movement that, more akin to Adam Smith than Karl Marx, was concerned with the condition of the deskilled worker not from a material vantage but from a concern with that worker's unrefined behaviours. Second, it was a movement that often tended toward conservatism, interested more in reasserting social stability than driving social change. In both drives, we might go so far as to say that Ruskin's influence provided a comfortable harbour from the extreme and purportedly unstable vision asserted by Morris.

This conservative default is observable in Mackmurdo's writings and in the goals of the Century Guild, which he was instrumental in forming (Stansky, 1985; Lambourne, 1983). Whereas Morris saw the path forward in radical political change, Mackmurdo's vision was an essentially individualistic one, locating an undue share of the responsibility for the conditions of the working class, and the correction thereof, at the level of the character of the individual worker. Improving the conditions of Victorian workers, in his view, involved the development of moral character at the point of artisanal/artistic production. As such, what developed with the Century Guild was essentially Morris minus the class politics. This was not, however, a tendency that found its only expression in this one organization. As the Arts and Crafts developed, finding its practitioners and consumers alike amongst the ranks of the bourgeoisie, Morris's radical politics slowly slipped away. Rural English craft organizations tended also to see their role as to promote traditional processes of design and production, but not necessarily holistic social change. Crafts were a tool for enriching life for both the producer and the consumer, and that, it seems was good enough for many members of the movement – a sentiment that one arguably sees at work in today's craft industries, where craft production is a lifestyle calling, even a pastime, and craft consumption is basically conspicuous.

Furthermore, just as Morris observed later in his own life, the movement found itself in a constant contradictory dance between the values of workmanship and autonomy and the capitalist imperative of market demand (Kaplan, 1995). As the movement's influence spread from England to Europe and North America, it consistently manifested in newly founded designer organizations and professional associations, many of which adopted Morris's ethic of quality, virtuosistic production while jettisoning the socialist conviction that drove Morris's intervention in the first place. In the early decades of the 20th century, organizations like the English Design and Industries Association (DIA), building upon the technical innovations of the German Werkbund, set out to modernize English craft, essentially as an attempt to produce high quality goods in a more efficient and affordable manner. Similarly, individual craft producers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries regularly split their time between craft-based and more industrial activities, especially those who, like Morris, owned or ran a craft firm or workshop. Both of these tendencies led, in numerous cases, to a rationalization and routinization of craft practice, especially in the context of larger firms trying to reach larger consumer bases. This should lead one to question the extent to which craft production can adequately challenge centralized production. If a craft enterprise is set up to produce craft commodities by hand, but within the trappings of a capitalist economy, can it self-sustain beyond a role as a luxury goods producer?

In a sense, what we see in the maturation and expansion of the Arts and Crafts movement is a trend of formality and market integration where the ideals of the movement – especially in relation to quality and design – slowly morphed into a kind of homebrewed industrialism rather than the sphere of autonomous small-scale production initially championed by Ruskin and Morris. The particular scalability that emerged with the commercial development of the Arts and Crafts is indicative of two shortcomings of the movement as a whole. It signifies the dilution of Morris's political project and the replacement of its socialist program with an individualistic approach to entrepreneurial production, often as a symbolic resistance to industrial machinery rather than industrialism writ large. As Raymond Williams (1963) explains:

When we stress, in Morris, the attachment to handicrafts, we are, in part, rationalizing an uneasiness generated by the scale and nature of his social criticism. Morris wanted the end of the capitalist system, and the institution of socialism, so that men could decide for themselves how their work should be

arranged, and where machinery was appropriate. It was obviously convenient to many of his readers, and to many of Ruskin's readers, to construe all this as a campaign to end machine-production. Such a campaign could never be more than an affectation, but it is less compromising than Morris's campaign to end capitalism, which lands one directly in the heat and bitterness of political struggle. It is most significant that Morris should have been diluted in this way. The dilution stresses what are really the weaker parts of his work, and neglects what is really strong and alive" (pg. 159).

In essence, what happens when the entrepreneurial champions of the Arts and Crafts omit the socialist underpinnings of Morris's project is they effectively de-socialize it, prioritizing the individualist, aesthetic and quality-oriented elements of craft and opening the movement to capitalist cooptation (insofar as craft production was ever anything other than a petty-capitalist sideline in the first place). This brings us to the second, and related, key shortcoming of the Arts and Crafts in its purported role as an alternative to centralized industrial production: it was always already a product of that same productive paradigm. Although the Arts and Crafts movement valorized the creative work of the individual maker, it could never exist fully outside of the capitalist system writ large. We see this clearly in the manner by which many of the champions of the movement, including Morris himself, had to hedge their aspirations in order to continue competing in an industrially-led capitalist market. In effect, this shortcoming is a precursor to the development and outcomes of subsequent counter-production movements and an indication of the fraught nature of the individualistic impulse implicit in the prioritization of quality and craftsperson autonomy over a more solidaristic, socialist and wide-reaching attempt to reconfigure production in its totality. This is a tendency that transcends the Arts and Crafts movement, informing and delimiting the movements that were to follow it through the 20th century and on to today.

3.2. Domesticity and Counterculture

The 20th century successors to the Arts and Crafts movement were demonstrably fixated on the diffusion of craft knowledge, especially in terms of the attempt to democratise craft activity for amateur and home-based makers (Smith, 2014; Luckman, 2015). We find this home-based, do-it-yourself ethic at the heart of most of the craft currents of the

20th century (and on into our current craft revival). In this section we survey these seemingly disparate counter-production trends – particularly in the form of home-based hobby making and countercultural crafts - in order to track the manner in which craft knowledge was transmogrified from an industrial concern to a domestic one and the ways in which the punk movement in particular challenged the domesticization of amateur production. We will do so by first reviewing Susan Luckman's periodization of craft movements, particularly focusing on the second wave, largely grouped around post-war domesticity and 1960s counterculture. We will then add to this a consideration of the DIY ethic sitting at the heart of punk and its influence on many of punk's later sub-currents (paying particularly close attention to zine-making as an instructive case study). Finally, we will consider the ways in which punk's anarchistic approach to DIY informs much of making and hacking today and the manner by which punk's rebellion was coopted in pursuit of the accumulation of capital and the consequences this has had and could have on those movements that attempt to replicate it.

As mentioned at the outset, Susan Luckman periodizes craft movements into three broad waves. The first of these is comprised of the Arts and Crafts movement and its proximal fellows such as the Mingei movement in 1920s Japan and the German Werkbund. This wave would also include those elements of the Arts and Crafts movement that survived well into the 20th century, which was not uncommon of craft firms in the US and Germany, with examples like the Charles P. Limbert Company (furniture design) lasting well into the 1940s and Stickley furniture surviving to the present day (Cumming & Kaplan, 1991; Stickley, n.d.). The second wave, and general focus of this section, is the DIY elements of the 1960s consumer culture and counterculture. This would also, arguably, include the broad trend of household and hobby DIY activities throughout the mid-20th century. Luckman's consideration of this particular wave is interesting in that it unites the more-or-less utilitarian impulses of domestic making and the more anti-consumeristic elements of making in the counterculture. Luckman captures this tension between the practical and political and its class basis, explaining:

The working class has always been DIY-oriented, and for some, making one's own garments and other items is still indicative of being 'down at heel'. But at a time of profound change in the material tangibility of production, and in a society

swamped with mass-manufactured goods, the handmade offers a reprise, an alternative (Luckman, 2015, pg. 23).

It is at this intersection of domestic need and political potential that we might best locate the contours of the second wave of craft interest as well as its influence on the third wave, that wave that Luckman argues is currently taking place in the 21st century.

The mid- to late-century uptick in DIY activity in places like the United States and Canada was both a movement of need and one of rejection. In fact, as Cathy Smith (2014) argues, countercultural applications of the DIY ethic, even those that espoused an overtly refusal-inflected politics, were largely informed by the same individualized – if not conservative – social norms one observes in mainstream domestic DIY (and to a degree in the virtuosic goals of the Arts and Crafts). In a certain sense, both aspirational domestic production and its expressional countercultural counterparts serve to distinguish the maker from the passive consumer one expects of post-War North America. In this way, even as mid-century austerity forced many to do for themselves, as the century progressed this form of self-sustaining domesticity increasingly became a form of conspicuous production, wherein the energies of domestic production were channeled away from self-sustenance and toward both communalist prefiguration and active leisure.

The communalist strain in the 1960s counterculture is, perhaps, the most easily recognizable counter-production effort of the second wave. Broadly speaking, this strain of the counterculture is made up of the various attempts in the US East and West coasts to build autonomous communities outside of the dominant consumer culture of the time (Turner, 2006; Farber, 2016). Guided in part by the teachings of Stewart Brand and his colleagues in the Whole Earth Network, so-called “New Communalists” engaged in a number of experiments in building self-sustaining autonomous communities, central to which sat a commitment to the development of technical proficiency that echoed some of the concerns of the Arts and Crafts movement (Farber, 2016). In fact, as David Farber (2016) explains in his cultural history of communal productionist communities in the 1960s and 1970s, countercultural communalists “created communities of inquiry aimed at developing technical mastery that made it possible for individuals to create, maintain and manage the goods and services that made their every day lives rich and productive” (pg. 411). Building one’s own house, maintaining one’s car, and making the necessities

of life were simultaneously exercises in sustaining oneself and creating a living alternative to status quo consumerism, according to this account. However, like the later adherents to the Arts and Crafts movement, Farber argues that these countercultural communards prioritized these kinds of prefigurative experimentation over an active, organized and sustained challenge to the political economic system that undergirded the consumer culture to which they were opposed. Farber succinctly explains that “These men and women were not generally invested in overthrowing capitalism but in reimagining it” (pg. 411).

Although Farber doesn't necessarily identify this as a political limitation of the new communalist movement, the same cannot be said of the account offered by Fred Turner (2006) in his history of the Whole Earth Network. According to Turner, the new communalist tendency was always already enclosed within the circuits of capital, as its key proponents were motivated by an entrepreneurial approach to transforming everyday life. According to Turner, Stewart Brand's *Whole Earth Catalogue*, which provided a number of how-to guides for prospective communalists, brought together a number of proto-entrepreneurs who, through their publishing, event planning, and network building, actually built the foundations for the pseudo-progressive, technocratic ideology that permeates today's tech industry. However, we should acknowledge, following Farber, that this does not necessarily negate the motivations and accomplishments of the communards themselves. In building homes, crafting tools, and fabricating the essentials of daily life, these members of the counterculture were also experimenting with what Farber refers to as “an un-alienated and even redemptive form of work” that resonates with the challenges to the labour process earlier attempted by the designers and makers of the Arts and Crafts (Farber, 2016, pg. 421). Farber goes on to explain that this stream of countercultural activity is distinct from the drop-out culture championed by the likes of Timothy Leary, arguing that:

Advocates for a work-oriented, artisanal-based counterculture insisted that people could and should design, build, and maintain the core durable commodities of life, in particular those costly commodities that chained most people to a regular paycheck: one's home and one's vehicle (pg. 421).

In this assessment, one observes similarities to Morris's call to surround oneself with objects that please them, but with the extra element of a latent critique of mature

consumerism. To craft or maintain one's durable commodities suggests that one should also forego purchasing said commodities, beyond initial necessity. This do-it-yourself orientation is a central focus for the new communalists in both Farber's and Turner's accounts, but one that was, arguably, easily coopted (if it existed outside of the circuits of capital at all, as Turner suggests it did not).

At the same time that certain countercultural communities were experimenting with alternative ways of living and making, the consumer culture developed new avenues for monetizing the do-it-yourself impulse. As conspicuous production, DIY activity during the middle-late 20th century increasingly resided in the realm of the hobby, particularly as it moved from an activity of necessity toward an activity of leisure. What in the early part of the century had been household tasks of necessity – sewing, brewing, mending and the like – were increasingly captured by the circuits of consumer culture as the century progressed. In fact, in the 1970s, Theodor Adorno elucidated his disdain for the very idea of hobby activities, which he reduces to “preoccupations with which I had become mindlessly infatuated merely in order to kill the time” (Adorno, 2001, pg. 188). He goes on to explain that the very category of a hobby depends on a total system of work and consumption wherein life has been subjected to profit-seeking even in those portions of time that according to Marxian and feminist political economy should be reserved for the reproduction of labour power. This enclosure of the rhythms of the household and the subjection of them to the logics of the consumer imperative is, for Adorno, an extension of work, a distraction that better integrates the subject into a cycle of working, consumption, and leisure time production. Active leisure in such an account, becomes a site for compounding levels of profit seeking, whether the hobby in question in building model trains or canning preserves.

Of course, the subjection of household production to the capitalist system is not limited solely to those activities most commonly described as leisure. Feminist scholars since the 1970s (and earlier) have pointed out that the household, after the movement of production from the home to the factory around the time of the first industrial revolution, is a productive space in its own right, dedicated to the production of labour power primarily through women's reproductive labour (Federici, 2021). Theoretical accounts of reproductive labour most commonly focus on the daily work of the home – care, cleaning, cooking, and the like. But several reproductive activities have a foundation in household industry and material making, and many of these, like care and sex, have

been culturally divided along the lines of gender. Knitting, clothing repair, brewing, the production of household remedies, and the like simultaneously stand out as vestiges of the household industries of the mercantile period and as precursors to the DIY movements of the early 20th century. Whereas in their pre-industrial state, these activities formed a part of a holistic household division of labour integrated within a decentralized early capitalist economy, in the early decades of the 20th century they demonstrate a form of reproductive craft that would subsequently, toward the end of the century, be taken from the home and formalized in emerging craft industries. In the interim, home-based making would serve as necessary reproductive work at the same time as it was monetized in consumptive form. The division between essential reproductive craft and consumptive craft, however, maps onto a division between toil and leisure that is not clearly visible in Adorno's critique of hobbies. Whereas amateur household production for Adorno is an indicator of productivity-creep, for women, the exploitation of the household has existed as long as capitalism.

Contrary to the overtly exploitative nature of many reproductive household tasks, the consumptive form of second wave making in the decades between World War 2 and the early 1970s, be it model train building, woodworking and furniture making, or knitting and sewing, might even be seen as a form of proto-playbour wherein home-based production of decorative or functional goods serves both as a consumer pastime and a latent entrepreneurial potential, a potential that by the Internet age finds an outlet in the third wave platforms of Etsy and Ravelry. However, in its mid- to late- twentieth century form, home based making was not as frequently an embryonic form of innovation, as it was a form of active leisure wherein makers filled their free time with activities that required their attention to varying degrees. Consumeristic household DIY, in this sense, might be seen as the bourgeois equivalent to necessary domestic production, even if the two share many common activities. Whereas the working class family may be forced to make their own clothes out of necessity, the middle class family of the 20th century might do so as a form of self-expression or as part of another hobby (making dresses for dolls, for example). Regardless of the motivation, however, both of these forms contrast with the making activities of the Arts and Crafts movement, most of which were undertaken by skilled craftspeople, who were also often hostile to amateur making (Cumming & Kaplan, 1991).

However, although craft making in the first wave was more generally integrated within an institutionalized framework as overtly productive activity in the small workshop, it still tended to be counter-productionist, and, as we shall see, this is a tendency shared by many second-wave makers. A critical addition to Luckman's assessment of the second wave – a wave that as we shall see, should not be limited to only the 1960s counterculture – is the lasting influence that anti-establishment alternative productive activity had in subsequent social movements and formations, especially in the anarchist countercultures of the 1980s. Consequently, the remainder of this chapter is dedicated to discussing the productive elements of these cultures, specifically in the cultural formations surrounding the anarchist currents of punk and zine culture. This focus might seem curious given the chaotic, even amateurish aesthetic style of punk, but as we shall see, punk has had a lasting influence in the craft and maker cultures of today, one that has been mobilized both for the continued resistance to consumer culture and the assimilation of counter-productionism into more mainstream political economic life. Punk aesthetics have been seamlessly integrated as cultural signifiers in industries as varied as craft brewing (Scotland's BrewDog), artisan baking (Burnaby, BC's Punk Rock Pastries), knitting (Ravelry's Punk Knits pattern collection) and beyond.

Furthermore, as a subcultural formation, punk stands out as particularly DIY oriented. Punk culture is built upon the foundational conviction that "anyone can do it," with the it being not only making music or starting a band, but sound design, recording, record pressing, screen printing, and beyond (Dale, 2009; Dale, 2016; Triggs, 2006). This DIY conviction was instilled in the punk culture from quite early, notably in the English punk band Buzzcocks' decision to print the production costs of their 1977 EP *Spiral Scratch* on the record liner notes, a call for other punks to form their own bands and release their own music (Bestley, 2017; Dale, 2009). In a sense, DIY holds a foundational position within punk's subcultural values, characterizing its often amateur musical styles, its fashion (think here of patches, screen-printing, safety pins, and the like) and internal communication. The subculture's tendency to encourage, and subsequently valorize, the creative passion of fans and musicians brings it into craft's orbit of influence through the dissemination of how-to resources, aesthetic standards, and a generalized mistrust of the mass-produced or mainstream.

To this end, fan zine culture presents an instructive case in the craft or DIY orientation of anarchist and punk subcultures. A zine, simply, is a self-produced and distributed

magazine. Its focus could be on a range of topics, but it is commonly considered an offshoot or tributary of punk DIY culture. Matthew Worley (2015) sums up the zine's relationship to punk DIY by asserting: "If the abiding legacy of punk was to provide a cultural process that transformed the passive observer into active participant, then fanzines deserve their place alongside the independent labels and self-released records that so readily embodied the DIY spirit" (10). As Stephen Duncombe (2008) explains in his study of zine culture, zine making is intentionally and dedicatedly amateur, its lack of polish and reflection of handmade processes both a means of expression and of rejection. Duncombe's analysis of zine culture might be read as an extension of Dick Hebdige's (1979) analysis of 1970s subcultures more generally wherein Hebdige also discusses the ideological project of the zine. In Hebdige's description, zines were marked by "the overwhelming impression... of urgency and immediacy, of a paper produced in indecent haste, of memos from the front line" (Hebdige, 1979, pg. 111). Zines present an intersection between DIY production and the reproduction of the DIY ethic of punk more broadly. In creating an aesthetic object by hand, the zinester is enacting punk DIY at the same time that they are potentially giving others the tools to do the same. Zine making is, ultimately, an autonomous productive activity that transcends leisure and functions as a diffuser of subcultural values.

A key difference between Hebdige's and Duncombe's approach to subculture is that Hebdige's is animated by the cultural logics of consumption. For Hebdige, punk is a consumptive subculture, most notably in the form of what he calls bricolage, the assimilation of seemingly disparate stylistic commodities and symbols into what becomes a coherent subcultural system of coding. However, Hebdige does, at times, allude to the active productive elements of punk and its related subcultures. Take, for example, his description of the influence of zine messages on the wider punk subculture as he describes a guitar chord diagram published in *Sideburn* (which he attributes to *Sniffin Glue* – see Mott, 2016) as "the definitive statement of punk's do-it-yourself philosophy" (Hebdige, 1979, pg. 112). One doesn't have to stretch one's imagination very far to see in this example the lasting legacy of the Buzzcocks's EP *Spiral Scratch*, which was self-produced and included how-to information for other aspiring bands (Simpson, 2017; Bestley, 2017).

Although it would likely be a stretch to describe punk as a craft movement, DIY musicianship, music production, clothing alteration and zine composition and compiling

can certainly be seen as work done by hand and often motivated by passion about the product of the culture that houses it, even if the high-quality artisanal aesthetic priorities of other craft movements are not as readily on display. In essence, it is not a purely consumptive set of social activities as Hebdige's analysis often seems to suggest. It is at this juncture that Duncombe's analysis of the composition, production and circulation of zines within punk and other subcultures begins to prefigure the lasting influence that this productive activity had for subsequent alternative cultural formations, particularly, for our purposes, craft and making.

To return to our guiding example, like many other DIY activities, zine making is both community oriented in that it is meant to link members of what is often a niche community, and highly individualistic in that zine expression is often more about the communicator than the audience (Duncombe, 2008). The individual expression of zines can still be political, but in a more-or-less anarchistic form – much the same as punk generally. According to Duncombe:

Zines put a slight twist on the idea that the personal is political. They broach political issues from the state to the bedroom, but they refract all these issues through the eyes and experience of the individual creating the zine. Not satisfied merely to open up the personal realm to political analysis, *they personalize politics*, forcing open even what the *OED* defines as politics with a personalized analysis (pg. 33, emphasis in original).

This personalization of political expression in the making of a cultural object is not dissimilar to the personalized production of the Arts and Crafts. Although the maker-activists of the Arts and Crafts movement were motivated by the moral pursuit of industrial and social change, their interventions often took place at the point of the individual act of aesthetic production. This was not universally the case of course, with Morris's efforts standing out as particularly collective, but we find the same exception within punk DIY. Although the main currents of punk, inasmuch as they are overtly political at all, tend more toward the anarchist than the socialist, its interconnection with anti-racist, anti-authoritarian, and working class anarchist movements is well documented (Moore & Roberts, 2009; Donaghey, 2016; Cross, 2010).⁹ A useful schema

⁹ It is worth noting, of course, that the punk subculture has often also been plagued by openly racist and fascist offshoots, but as this section concerns the intersection between punk's DIY culture, the

for understanding the contending political orientations and commitments of anarcho-punk is offered by Jim Donaghey (2020), whose analysis of the anarchist publications of CrimethInc and Class War illustrate a continuum of political orientations. According to Donaghey, scholarship on punk anarchisms has generally categorized the political orientation into two camps: lifestyle-ism (consumption motivated) and workerism (class motivated). DIY enjoys a peculiar position in relation to this supposed division, often signaling for researchers a group or collective's closer connection with the lifestyle tendency. The dichotomy, however, according to Donaghey serves to obscure the interrelation between these tendencies, and, we might extend, DIY can exist both as a potential lifestyle or workerist activity. To self-produce or make does not necessitate an apolitical or lifestyle orientation, but rather, as zine making suggests, might also serve to reproduce political capacity or serve as a means of collectivity building. This should not suggest that anarchist strategies do not have their limitations, as Rich Cross (2010) points out in his discussion of individualism in British anarcho-punk, but instead that even acts of individual production can contribute to collective forms of organization.

We should note, also, that certain elements of the punk subculture were overtly and unapologetically anti-capitalist. In the *Riot Grrrl Manifesto*, Bikini Kill singer Kathleen Hanna even suggests that DIY is a form of seizing the means of production: "BECAUSE we must take over the means of production in order to create our own meanings." This meaning making, for Hanna and Riot Grrrl, is intended "to create revolution in our own lives every single day by envisioning and creating alternatives to the bullshit Christian capitalist way of doing things" (Riot Grrrl, 2002|1991, pg. 178-179). This is, essentially, a workerist attitude that points beyond a simple lifestyle engagement with resistance, calling for more collective and directly political forms of punk production. Admittedly, Hanna frames it as a collection of everyday acts of resistance, but taken in combination, these can be seen as articulating a wider vision of social change, and one that has, to some degree taken shape – just not precisely in the way that many politically-minded punks would have envisioned or preferred.

Like musical and subcultural currents before and after it, we can say in hindsight that punk's vision of social change was never likely to pose an existential threat to such an

practices of craft production, and ultimately the role of the worker in its politics and collective imagination, we will limit our attention to the subculture's more progressive and egalitarian main current.

adaptable and dynamic system as capitalism (especially given that this wasn't a universal goal of the movement). Punk, of course, still exists, and it is still motivated by a DIY ethos. This said, through the 1980s and 1990s the subculture found itself increasingly enclosed by the corporate interests of the music industry, its aesthetics and musical style emulated in popular culture, often in a form devoid of both overt politics and the community-minded DIY that sat at the foundation of the initial movement. In a sense, the consumerist tendencies of the subculture won out, subjecting punk to what Christina Goulding and Michael Saren (2007) refer to as "subcultural commodification," a three-stage process of rebellion, fragmentation and commodification. For Goulding and Saren, the initial rebellion of subcultures like punk, when separated from their initial collective context, are easily appropriated by consumer culture, that rebellion being made to fit with more general consumer preferences.

Of course, to suggest that punk as a subculture was dead from the start would likely invite critique, given punk's lasting influence. It would also reduce what is a diverse and heterogeneous subculture into a homogenous one wherein adherents never had true agency, or more generously, were just misguided. Such a characterization is not entirely fair, particular since, as Stacy Ray Thompson (2000) explains, punk was and is an overtly self-reflexive subculture:

Punks consciously attempt to resist and negate capitalism in the face of a late capitalism that seems capable of rendering null and commodifying all forms of opposition to itself. What is more, punks seem to realize that their resistance will never be wholly successful; yet, punks remain committed to that resistance (4).

For Thompson, punk's cultural and political intervention is inherently contradictory, but that contradiction is not unrecognized. In her analysis, punks, recognizing the global nature of capitalist domination, nevertheless set out to resist its influence through cultural means. In fact, some scholars have even suggested that this self-conscious resistance has served as a catalyzing agent in punk's evolution, that as the music industry encroached, the subculture responded with new fashions and musical forms (Cartledge, 1999). Arguably, it is this proactive willingness to change and innovate which has granted punk its continued relevance and cultural influence. It might also explain why the DIY ethic that has so animated punk has been so readily appropriated by the maker movement and many champions of craft industrialism. As such, while it would be

hasty to categorize punk as a craft movement in its own right, its valorization of self-activated DIY has been influential well beyond its own subcultural borders.

Indeed, DIY culture in its punk form can be observed quite clearly in the roots of the contemporary maker movement. An interesting illustration of this connection is found in Canadian artist and scholar Garnet Hertz's (2012) book project *Critical Making*. In *Critical Making*, Hertz collects interventions from 70 makers, thinkers and artists meant to critically examine the maker movement's history, culture and projects, published in a series of 10 handmade zines (Hertz, 2012). Hertz's decision to publish the series in zine form was motivated, at least in part, by the legacy of punk zine making and DIY. As Hertz acknowledges in his introduction to the series, the project was intended as an autonomous alternative to the centralized, and often corporately mediated, fora of the mainstream maker movement.

Hertz's intervention, however, was not produced in a vacuum, and its critical, anti-corporate, punk orientation might be seen as making up one point on a continuum with the capitalist capture of punk as its counterpoint. Just as the early hackers and today's critical makers have attempted to build a maker movement outside of and in opposition to mass consumer culture through the mobilization of punk's anti-authority and anarchist impulses, there are numerous examples of the opposite pull, toward appropriation monetization, entrepreneurialism, and corporatization. Take, for instance, the proliferation of "punk" oriented DIY business literature. Books like designer and photographer Caroline Moore's (2016) *Punk Rock Entrepreneur* and brewery owner James Watt's (2015) *Business for Punks*, mobilize punk's DIY ethic and rebellious attitude toward assimilation in entrepreneurial culture while attempting to rationalize the smoothing out of punk-style resistance and its capture in the very consumer culture that it often critiqued. Although the particular entrepreneurial spirit that undergirds great swathes of maker and craft industrial culture will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4, it is worth considering here how the discursive re-orientation of the punk subculture as harmonious with monetization arguably functions as a kind of Barthesian inoculation (Barthes, 1972) wherein the more distasteful elements (anti-consumerism, anarchism, etc.) can be scrubbed away in the interest of a more friction-free appropriation at the hands of capital. Of course, as we've already noted, such a discursive shift is not necessarily an overt or even intentional one on the part of its

proponents and might even be driven by the same kind of utilitarianism that motivated many followers of the Arts and Crafts.

3.3. Past Imperfect: The Trappings of the Craft Ethos

Although these cases arguably share an ideological lineage, what Glenn Adamson (2010) calls “craft idealism,” this common heritage would also suggest that they might all display similar political economic shortcomings. This is most certainly the case in the historical examples we have surveyed in this chapter. The deficiency these movements hold in common is the ability to offer a sustained alternative to the existing imperatives of capitalist accumulation. As Adamson explains:

What all craft idealism seems to have in common, however, is a fundamental disconnection with the capitalist marketplace. No Arts and Crafts project was financially viable for long, unless it transgressed the principles of the movement by resorting to cheap labor or mass production. Similarly, craft countercultures have a way of dropping out of fashion – or worse, becoming all too fashionable, their motifs co-opted by the very marketplace they tried to critique. Even craftspeople content with the seemingly uncontroversial goal of making the world a more beautiful place have had to contend with the marginality of their enterprise... The more extreme forms of artisanal opposition to the profit motive have tended to be even more remote from political reality” (Adamson, 2010, pg. 135).

Indeed, we see this observation reflected in the political development of Morris himself. While Morris’s craft idealism created beautiful objects in arguably improved conditions compared to the typical working conditions of late 19th-century England, these commodities were still the carriers of exchange value, and given their particular conditions of crystallization, commanded luxury prices, putting them at the disposal of only the most wealthy consumers.

According to the designer and commentator David Pye (1968), the Arts and Crafts were marked by an inadequate definition of craft that leads not to a deeply thought out and demarcated craft alternative but a “holier than thou” dogma that pits a particular individualist approach to fabrication against all industrial production, regardless of

conditions or even, ironically, the craft involved in the productive activity. Extending Pye's critique, we can quite reasonably find the roots of such a dogma in a relatively shallow engagement with the material conditions of industrial capitalism on the part of Ruskin – and to a lesser degree of Morris – and his followers. Although hinted at by Pye, the legacy of Ruskin is one that elevates idealism over materialism and that prioritizes an underdeveloped notion of pleasure in work over those very concrete conditions that tie working people to the wage relation. As a result, his project and that of the Arts and Crafts movement could never adequately challenge the exploitation of Victorian and later industrialism because the alternative built was a bourgeois one, an exercise in consumer distinction built upon the fetishization of so-called handicraft (a phrase that Pye dismisses as internally incoherent).

This inability to create a sustainable, material alternative to the capitalist zeitgeist is not unique to the Arts and Crafts and is, arguably, a hallmark of the subsequent craft-based movements that we have explored here. The craft-oriented elements of the 1960s counterculture, while pushing for greater levels of individual autonomy, an alternative to the forms of pre-destined stability that characterized post-War life, and that rejected dominant cultural narratives and rampant consumerism, was similarly hamstrung by its individualism and general lack of a sustainable material alternative. Moreover, as Turner (2006) argues, these idealistic shortcomings and the early mobilization of an individualistic and entrepreneurial impulse within these communities when combined with a sustained effort to integrate these within a systems-based worldview (particularly by the Whole Earth Network), helped integrate the New Communalist tendency into the techno-utopian zeitgeist of the 1980s and 1990s.

Moreover, in the Boomer generation of the US and Canada (and beyond) a cynic might see a metamorphosis of the individual deviant into the suburban consumer in an alarmingly short period of time. The hippie suburbanite, while able to pickle at home or build small structures or crafts, is arguably the continuation of the small craftsperson who is able to grasp some semblance of autonomy and edification while selling her wares to the most materially privileged. This tendency is on full display in the domestic DIY activities of the 20th century, particularly in their consumer-producer form (hobbies, home improvement, etc.). While domestic reproductive labour stands out as a counterpoint to hobbyist crafts, it is not a hallmark of a counter-productionist movement, but instead a continuing form of gendered exploitation whose most monetizable

elements were long ago commodified or appropriated by mainstream – and male-dominated – entrepreneurialism. What is left, largely, are those less glamorous or commodifiable reproductive tasks.

The punk movement is also no stranger to cooptation and mainstreaming. As the preceding discussion of punk DIY suggests, as a subculture built around a rejection of consumerism and commodified aesthetic forms, punk eventually created a readily commodifiable alternative style that, while based on an ethic of DIY activation, could not (and likely had little interest in) build alternative structures that could provide a viable counter-production outside of the forms of cultural production and consumption that punks attempted to reject. As a result, to the degree that punk should be considered counter-productionist in the same vein as other craft movements, its general intervention stopped at the point of the rejection, never culminating in an overall alternative productive formation. Moreover, this rebellious rejection and its lack of a coherent productive alternative, rendered the movement, its aesthetics, and its defiant culture fertile terrain for appropriation.

Punk's rejection of mainstream cultural and material consumption, its language of rebellion, and its commitment to a DIY ethic are all observable in the development of the practices and cultures of today's maker movement as well as in the mythologies of craft industrialism. One might even assert that in its adoption of punk's cultural signifiers, the maker movement and its craft industrial correlates have attempted to build the productive alternative that punk was unable or unwilling to build. Like punk, today's maker movement is built upon a narrative of individual activation, where active leisure activities are seen as fulfilling activities while they also serve to build alternatives in everyday life (Levine & Heimerl, 2008; Davies, 2017). In fact, as Sarah R. Davies (2017) argues, the maker movement actually navigates the same tension between commodification and resistance that plagued punk, but in this case the offered alternative – making – evinces a contradiction that actually fuels the further development of the movement. Constantly rejecting the encroaching commodification of their productive activity, some makers further rebel, innovating new forms of organization, at the same time that others reintegrate their activities into the mainstream economy through entrepreneurialism. In fact, the entrepreneur, whether acknowledged or not, is a central figure of both making and craft industrialism, and it is to this figure we now turn.

Chapter 4. Working Narratives and the Entrepreneurial Subject

J. Nikol Beckham (2017) begins her critical analysis of the neoliberal character of the craft brewing industry by providing an overview of the role that origin narratives play in the shaping of industrial cultures. According to Beckham, one of the major functions of an origin story is the naturalization of the exceptional wherein "...the exceptional is effectively removed from the domain of the uncommon. Exceptional becomes a natural and expected part of life" (pg. 83). This naturalization projects an air of the ordinary onto noteworthy events, allowing for their casual and uncritical repetition. Over time, such a casual approach to understanding the origins of a social formation like an industry can serve to mask the historical and political development of that formation, smoothing its struggles and contradictions. In Beckham's analysis, the hero stories of the micro-brewing revolution serve to obscure the status-quo neoliberalism that has arguably fuelled the movement's continued growth - now as the craft brewing revolution - over the last decade. This history is one commonly mythologized as the work of great entrepreneurial men (and they are almost invariably men) like Anchor Brewing's Fritz Maytag and New Albion Brewing Company's Jack McAuliffe. Driven by passion and commitment to quality and community, these hero figures stand out as the vanguard of a movement of resistance to mass produced mediocrity.

Hiding behind these figures (or embodied within them), however, is the bedrock ideological hero of the neoliberal period: the entrepreneur. Set in contrast to both the worker and the white collar manager, the entrepreneur is commonly heralded as the risk-taking hero of contemporary capitalism, someone who through innovation, grit and industriousness provides opportunities for the rest of us and who helps drive the new economy (Beckham, 2017; Barone, 2004; Doogan, 2009). However, at the same time, the entrepreneur is not limited to the role of the enterprising business owner, as the values of creativity, innovation and strategic self-positioning are increasingly imposed upon the worker or aspiring worker as a means of integrating them in the 21st century world of work (Fleming, 2015; McRobbie, 2016; Banks, 2007). In a political economic regime wherein workers are expected to build marketable skill portfolios, collect qualifications, innovate, and creatively develop, it should come as no surprise that many

young and precarious workers – especially those who aspire to work in creative and cultural industries – gravitate toward making and craft industries.

In this chapter, we interrogate the interconnected evolution of craft/making and the entrepreneurial subject. We begin by exploring the ways in which, as alluded in Chapter 3, the impulse of refusal inherent in countercultural – and by extension counter-productionist – movements is both tamed and mobilized in the interest of capitalist accumulation through industrial mythmaking. By closely examining the dominant mythologies of the current wave of craft enthusiasm – particularly those of cooperation, creative autonomy, inclusion, and rebelliousness - we will identify the means by which capital effectively encloses counter-productionist impulses and disciplines them within the more dominant ideological scheme of entrepreneurialism. Second, we will theorize the manner by which the working subject is interpellated as an entrepreneurial subject through the twin processes of precarization and entrepreneurialization. Here we will consider the notion of entrepreneurial discipline by drawing upon the forms of hope labour and self-branding that routinely characterize work in creative and craft industries, and that find a particularly amateur manifestation in making and maker spaces. The theoretical account of the entrepreneurialization of making will be supplemented with insights and observations offered by maker-participants, some of whom suggest that the entrepreneurial drive in makerspaces is leading makers to see their passionate pursuits as commercial ones. This will lead us, in turn, to consider the alternative practices and economies that find their way into some making spaces and communities, but that are commonly coopted by the more corporate manifestations of the movement. Laudable as the motivations may be, I contend that they are frequently enclosed by the dominance of corporate maker culture. Finally, the chapter closes with an examination of the material limits to the notion of the autonomous creative worker or craftsperson, especially in its entrepreneurial formation, drawing upon the fundamental class contradiction of the worker-entrepreneur, that the worker-entrepreneur's material relation to the means of production and the control of their labour process might allow them to be entrepreneurial in their approach to work while simultaneously masking their own alienation and exploitation. This will, in turn, propel us into our discussion of the culture and labour process of craft industrialism in Chapter 5.

4.1. Narratives of Making: Autonomy and Opportunity

“All Makers who aspire to become entrepreneurs have heroes” writes Chris Anderson (2012) in his ode to making, *Makers: The New Industrial Revolution* (pg. 185). He continues:

These are people we read about who started with little more than a passion and access to tools, and then just didn’t stop. They kept making, building, and taking chances until they had a real business. You can still see the path from the basement workbench to the marketplace, and the consequences of things having been built by hand” (Anderson, 2012, pg. 185).

In what might be considered, following Beckham’s (2017) conception, a tailor-made origin narrative, Anderson then goes on to profile the apparent bootstrapped rise of a variety of makers cum entrepreneurs. Except that he picks some of the most ideologically telling examples: Burt Rutan, engineer and founder of Scaled Composites, which manufactures custom-built experimental aircraft and which is both a corporate and military contractor; Will Chapman, founder of BrickArms which produces reproduction military and war accessories for use with LEGO toys; and tech magnate Jim McKelvey who, along with Twitter’s Jack Dorsey, founded Square, Inc. in 2009. The links of each of these founder narratives to the maker movement are spurious at best. McKelvey, in addition to being a serial tech entrepreneur, is a glass-blowing instructor. Rutan’s previous venture was a home-build aircraft company, but according to Anderson’s own narrative, furnishing the demands of the DIY market was a burden for Rutan, who opted instead to build custom aircraft in a company later to be owned by Northrop Grumman. The only hero narrative that seems to really strike at the image of the maker that Anderson pushes in the book is Will Chapman, who designed and printed his LEGO weapons in his own home and continues to do so to this day.

In fairness, Anderson begins the hero narrative chapter conditionally by referring to makers who wish to be entrepreneurs. What’s telling in Anderson’s account of these three narratives, however, is how he reads each through the lens of industrialism, with an unspoken assumption that the aspiring maker-entrepreneur’s ultimate goal is the level of industrial success exemplified by figures like Rutan and McKelvey (and, by extension, Dorsey). At one point in his Square case study he even goes so far as to put

the full-stop to the company's development with this flourish: "The path from Maker to Industrialist was complete" (Anderson, 2012, pg. 200). For Anderson, the maker-entrepreneur is someone who is driven not only by their passion for their craft or project, but someone who wants to find the next big thing, disrupt markets, and become an industrialist – so, really, an entrepreneur, full stop.

However, there are many in the maker movement who would take umbrage at this characterization. In her study of hacking and making, which includes a number of interviews with self-identified makers and hackers, Sarah R. Davies (2017) expounds upon the history and culture of the maker movement and the hackerspaces that gave rise to it. Davies's account of maker culture builds upon an assertion that their lineage traces back to anarchistic hacker collectives in the 1980s, and that the contemporary maker movement is heavily informed by these political and organizational roots. Values of cooperation, inclusion, and autonomy figure centrally in her account and in the maker testimonies it features (values not dissimilar to some commonly attributed to craft industrialism). Contrary to Anderson's enthusiastic promotion of making as a new industrial revolution, Davies's research suggests that the entrepreneurial motivation is only an aspect of maker culture, and perhaps not even a central one. Although Davies reports that maker community members are not necessarily averse to entrepreneurial activity, she also found that "Innovation and commercial activities were... not as central as we might have expected from public discussion of hacker or makerspaces, and were certainly not a key motivation behind the kinds of projects those we spoke to worked on" (Davies, 2017, pg. 113). Instead, Davies's participants reported taking on their particular projects due to an intellectual or emotional attachment to them, essentially reporting passion, rather than profit, as their driving motivation. Those profiled appear more as self-activated hobbyists and passionate artisans than as the hero maker-entrepreneurs envisioned by Anderson.

This does not discount the overt entrepreneurialism that seems to percolate in popular accounts of making and the influence that this might have in the overall social configuration of the maker movement and its susceptibility to capitalist or corporate influence or capture. While the movement is touted as a site of autonomous activity (Rosa et al., 2018; Dougherty, 2013; Aldrich, 2014), like similar sites, it is easily coopted. Consider, for instance, the evolution of the makerspace over the past two decades or so. According to Davies, most early hacker and makerspaces were made up of informal

collectives of like-minded geeks and tinkerers. Funding often took the form of community contributions and voluntarism. However, as these spaces began to scale, an increasing pressure was levied upon makerspaces to find new channels for funding (Rubenstein et al., 2018). For Molly Rubenstein and her collaborators at Boston metro area makerspace Artisan's Asylum, this quest for funding resulted in an observable loss of autonomy for what began as an informal interest network. This enclosure through funding is a common phenomenon in the maker movement, undercutting the movement's origin narrative as what Thomas Smith (2019) calls an "economic being-in-common." For his part, Smith recognizes the delicate political dance between the makerspace as political economic alternative and as generator of entrepreneurial innovation.

At odds here are an internal narrative of the makerspace as an autonomous alternative to mainstream economic relations and an investment process that is rapidly foreclosing that autonomy. However, this loss of autonomy brings with it a simultaneous promise of a different kind of autonomy along entrepreneurial lines, mapping neatly onto a movement narrative of grit and innovation. As one interview participant who runs a for-profit makerspace in Vancouver explained, what makerspaces provide is centralized access to tools and resources for individual entrepreneurial activity. At this participant's makerspace, paying members are drawn in through access to high-tech tools like laser cutters and 3D printers, traditional machines and tools, and co-working or individual working space. Although the membership isn't composed entirely of entrepreneurs, the participant is clear that the space maintains a certain focus on their business clients:

We get a range of local and globally focused businesses. Some of these will just never scale, but we do get businesses that outgrow the space and graduate to bigger spaces. We are a stepping stone for those businesses. We get the startups that are hoping to grow to VC [venture capital] funded status and we try not to get in their way.

The participant's own history is one of entrepreneurial aspiration which took him from Vancouver, to Silicon Valley and back again. He is far from unique in this regard, with the maker-entrepreneur becoming a mainstay in the maker movement, as makerspaces are added to university libraries, corporate campuses, and luxury condo communities. Indeed, at the same time that maker literature heralds the unalienating, edifying nature of making, a seeping enclosure is taking place, both at the structural and ideological

level. Makerspaces and maker events are increasingly funded or outright owned by venture firms or large corporate entities like Make. The primary outlet for the circulation of handmade goods remains Etsy, an e-commerce company that charges fees for transactions in craft products. Alongside this commercializing process, makers are increasingly called upon to monetize their “side hustles” and to treat their making as a kind of lifestyle entrepreneurialism. Creative passions, in this sense, become a means for the generation of surplus, and given the rent-seeking model of the platform economy, this form of individual production simultaneously becomes a site for self-exploitation.

4.2. The Entrepreneurial Maker

Craft presents a complication in our understanding of work in creative and cultural industries. Whereas in the more readily recognized cultural industries (film, music, journalism, social media, etc.) the cultural producer is more often than not automatically considered a worker or freelancer, the craftsperson is almost automatically considered an independent producer or entrepreneur. This is, of course, far from universally the case, but this assumption of autonomy functions to obscure the true power relations of craft labour and the ideological narratives that help lubricate these relations. It simultaneously invisibilizes workers and the real relations that characterize their work. The image of the craftsperson or maker replaces the actually existing worker and serves to obscure the conditions of their work. This obfuscation of power and exploitation in cultural industries is not unique to craft, however, and before diagnosing the particular ideological trap of entrepreneurial ideology vis-à-vis craft, we should briefly explore the function of the entrepreneurial imperative in the neoliberal world of work more generally, especially as this relates to work in cultural industries.

An appropriate place to start is with some consideration of Michel Foucault’s (2004) theorization of the biopolitical function of entrepreneurialism, which arises from his genealogy of neoclassical economics and their late- 20th century renaissance. In Foucault’s assessment of what we might call post-Fordist capitalism (following the Regulationists and not necessarily Foucault himself), the political and ideological reconstitution of capitalist societies follows a similar pattern to their historical antecedents. In the late 20th-century case, Foucault describes the reorganization of the social totality around the discursive construct of the enterprise. In his words:

It is not a matter of constructing a social fabric in which the individual would be in direct contact with nature, but of constructing a social fabric in which precisely the basic units would have the form of the enterprise, for what is private property if not an enterprise? (Foucault, 2004, pg. 148).

This theorization is not dramatically different from Marx's assessment of the historical dispossession of the peasantry through enclosure and the imposition of the wage relation. What Foucault's notion of the dissemination of the unit of enterprise does is envision the maturation of the process of capitalist dominance wherein all aspects of social life are viewed through the lens of enterprise. Enterprise here comes to stand in for the commodity as the basic unit of social life under mature capitalism with markets serving as the mediator between subjects.

This is obviously a provocative assertion and one that many historical materialists would likely dispute. However, Foucault is clear in his reasoning that this does not negate the capitalist laws of motion initially theorized in *Capital*. Instead, it provides a lens through which we may start to understand the subjective position of the worker under a regime of accumulation dominated by the enterprise¹⁰. For, as Foucault reasons, under such a regime how should we go about understanding the subject? The subjugation of everyday life to the logic of the enterprise, the argument goes, conditions the worker for a life governed by the market.

It is here that Foucault brings us back to some of the observations made in Chapter 2. As you will remember, in that chapter we concerned ourselves with the nature of skill, ultimately zeroing in on its social character and the sense in which it should be considered an element of labour power. In his critique of liberal economics, Foucault zeroes in on the conflation of human labour and capital in the work of Theodore Schultz and Gary Becker, both of whom were among the early proponents of a concept of human capital. Building upon Foucault's characterization of this position we might observe that in a social totality driven by the unit of the enterprise, the capital/labour

¹⁰ The subjective relations of capitalism are an area that, as Mark Banks (2007) argues, are not typically analyzed in the Marxian-inflected tradition of critical cultural industries analysis. This omission of the experience of cultural work from the perspective of the worker and the political subject leaves critical analysts of cultural (and, by extension, craft) work with a limited toolkit for worker-led resistance to currently existing conditions – the same conditions often critiqued through a purely structural analysis.

relation complicates itself on an ideological level. The worker, socialized by and within neoliberal ideology, sees themselves not as the owner of labour power but as the owner of human capital – labour power as enterprise. As Foucault explains it:

Broken down in economic terms, from the worker's point of view, labor comprises a capital, that is to say, it as an ability, a skill; as they say: it is a 'machine'... And on the other side it is an income, a wage, or rather, a set of wages; as they say: an earnings stream... (Foucault, 2004, pg. 224).

It is a curious argument, but one that makes an interesting kind of sense in a social system driven by the unit of the enterprise. For if labour power is seen by the worker as a form of capital, then the worker is an owner of capital – a common assumption within making communities. We know, of course, that materially this is not the case and that ownership of one's own labour power or of the particular skill that contributes thereto does not give one actual material control over production or free one from the labour-capital relationship. But it does begin to explain the contemporary zeitgeist of the entrepreneur and of the entrepreneurial approach to work. It is also in keeping with the reorientation of mainstream economics around considerations of "human capital" rather than labour.

Under such a discursive totality, the worker-capitalist – that is, the worker as owner of labour-capital – is reconfigured as *homo economicus*, for our purposes, as a human enterprise. For Foucault (2004), "*homo economicus* is an entrepreneur, an entrepreneur of himself... being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings" (pg. 226). The reasoning here is, of course, discursive and not material, but its discursive contours are shaped by material political economic determinations.

In fact, as Frédéric Lordon (2014) explains, social structures function to varying degrees as influences on subjective life. This is especially the case, for Lordon, as they relate to desire. In some sense, desire – essentially the pursuit of interest, be that for biological reproduction or economic gain – is a reflection of the dominant structures of social life. In Lordon's analysis, social life under capitalism is influenced by a regime of desire specific to the historical political economic context. In early capitalism this was a simple desire for wages for survival, which in turn gave way to the gratificatory desires of consumption

under Fordism, which is now, arguably, giving way to a new, holistic regime of desire characterized by enclosure of the entire working subject. An example of such a holistic regime might be the highly trained tech worker who, identifying their own interests and desires along with those of their employer, actually internalizes the entrepreneurial risk of the start-up employer for which they work (what Gina Neff (2012) refers to as “venture labor”). In this example, the tech worker’s own desires are made to conform with the holistic recalibration of worker as capital, here also as entrepreneur. Subjectivity under each successive regime of desire, according to Lordon, is influenced, if not determined, by the objective structures of that particular regime.

Predominant among these, in the emerging regime, is the political and economic onslaught of the neoliberal period, over the past half-decade. The re-casting of the dominant work arrangement from the family wage of the Fordist period and the various levels of informality and contingency of the contemporary labour market, paired with the dissolution of social services through austerity and the constant drive to relocate material production in the cheapest productive zones globally, coalesce in a labour market wherein the raw desire for an income (for simple reproduction) meets an imperative for positioning and distinction on the part of the precarious worker (Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013; Dyer-Witheford, 2015). Furthermore, as Ulrich Bröckling (2016) has argued, the financial crisis in 2007-2008 exacerbated conditions for precarious workers globally and accelerated the adoption of the entrepreneurial impulse. These developments have coalesced into a labour market wherein market risk has been effectively outsourced to workers under the auspices that they are, themselves, owners of capital (in the form of their own labour power) (Bröckling, 2016; Lordon, 2014).

In this new political economic and, indeed, ideological formation, workers are reconstituted as what Hans Pongratz and G. Günter Voß (2003) call “entreploees,” workers who, while still dependant on the wage relation, must continuously develop themselves as enterprises by building up new work capacities, abilities, and certifications. In essence, in the discursive shift toward the worker-capitalist and political economic imperative of ‘entreploement’ in response to precarity and austerity we see the development of an entrepreneurship of the self emerge as a new normal, especially amongst workers in the cultural and creative industries (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010a; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010b; De Peuter & Cohen, 2015). This entrepreneurship of the self takes a variety of forms, including but not limited to “hope labour” where

prospective workers are increasingly expected to develop themselves as distinct job market entrants who collect qualifications and skills in order to build employability (Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013; Allan, 2019; Mackenzie & McKinlay, 2020). It also takes the form of a more direct entrepreneurial aspiration, as is often the case with amateur makers and craftworkers.

Commentary on the maker movement is frequently tinged with the discursive hallmarks of entrepreneurial culture. Amateur making activity can be animated by a number of motivations, from disillusionment from corporate or digital working life to a desire for autonomy to the enjoyment of a pastime, but the preponderance of makerspaces in tech incubators, university libraries, and innovation hubs raises some question as to just what the dominant structural motivation for making actually is. In fact, over the past five to ten years, increased scholarly and industry attention has been leveled at just how best to secure the maker movement's place in entrepreneurial culture (Anderson, 2012; Hatch, 2013; Van Holm, 2015; Howard et al., 2014; Greenberg et al., 2020; Langley et al., 2017). For many thinkers and policy makers interested in doing so, making represents a democratization of innovative potential, especially as maker spaces often house a wealth of tools and equipment that previously only would have been available through industrial affiliation (Aldrich, 2014; Van Holm, 2015; Hui & Gerber, 2017; Browder et al. 2019).

In fact, as one maker interviewed for this project, Kevin, explains, although many makers are attracted to the community and collaborative aspects of making, the spaces themselves are a major driver of the proliferation of making, especially in expensive urban areas. According to Kevin:

If more people had more space, if everyone had garages, makerspaces wouldn't be as prevalent. And they're usually quite affordable. If you compare the cost of owning a garage to being a community member at one of these spaces, it's dramatically different. They are more prevalent in denser cities that are more expensive. Vancouver is a case in point. There's probably a strong correlation there. I also feel like if there were more garages, not as much creativity would happen in general. Because it's not only a space that's affordable but it's access to tools and community. When you have your own private space and you're

working by yourself, creativity doesn't thrive as much. It's essential for growth and innovation, is community.

As a maker, woodworker and former makerspace employee, Kevin is quick to celebrate the democratic and cooperative aspects of maker culture. This celebratory disposition is filtered through an entrepreneurial lens, as for Kevin, the ultimate goal in his making activity is to free himself from his day job, transitioning to a fully autonomous making-oriented form of self-employment.

Furthermore, according to Kevin, this is a primary goal for many makers. Although he concedes that some makers are attracted to their crafts due to a desire for community and engagement, he argues that many if not most dream of a day wherein that craft would become their primary or only source of income. This is, of course, a balance, and one that Kevin believes that most makers face. As he puts it:

From the community that I've known, most people would rather be doing their own thing if they could afford to live off of it. I've seen a lot of people do that, turned their business into their main source of income. But not everyone. Some people are just happy and very much enjoy their day job... There are some that are just there to tinker and have fun. They don't necessarily have an agenda or an empire in mind. I feel like the majority of makers would rather be making.

It is in this balance that we see the entrepreneurial ideology at work. Even in the act of weighing crafting activity against the traditional wage relation, the maker is implicitly subjecting that activity to capitalist logic. In this sense, making is not so much a leisure activity as it is an ideological mythology that allows the maker to escape into a dream of autonomous productive activity. As Canadian maker and sociologist Vincci Li (2018) argues, "Crafting is thus offered as a means to escape – to escape a regular corporate nine-to-five job, to escape working for someone else, and more generally, to escape the status quo" (pg. 3).

In her interview for this project, Li paints a less optimistic picture of this balancing act than does Kevin. Li describes entrepreneurial work in the maker fair circuit as a grind, and one that some are better equipped to face than others. As she explains:

Because of things like sitting at a booth for 5 days straight, watching your water intake so you don't have to go to the bathroom, bringing non-perishable foods with you. It's not glamorous, but it's not terrible. For people whose living is on the line its really stressful. Some people are losing money... I think people live in a world where we romanticize that kind of living, but it's not terrible and maybe for a lot of people it's a better option than what their day job was. I don't think people think of the fact that they don't pay themselves for five days, and you're exhausted after. And people travel for these things. People do like the idea, and I think a lot of people, given the chance to make it bigger, would. I think that is the goal for most people. It's hard at the price point and fees, and it's not easy to do it as a side gig. I know a lot of people, they end up selling the business to someone else. For a lot of people I think it can be a pathway, those people can just move on to the next thing.

Li's depiction of the working life of the entrepreneurial maker provides an interesting counterpoint to the optimistic accounts offered by the likes of Anderson and other entrepreneurial boosters. Although the entrepreneurial maker may own their own tools, set their own schedule, and control their own labour process, when confronted with the long hours, the financial uncertainty, and the self-exploiting conditions experienced by some, one wonders to what degree making, particularly in its entrepreneurial form, actually stands out as an alternative to the dominant world of work.

4.3. Making as Alternative

“In order to attain happiness, it is necessary to introduce it into the labors which engage the greater part of our lives. Life is a long torment to one who pursues occupations without attraction. Morality teaches us to love work: let it know, then, how to render work lovable, and, first of all, let it introduce luxury into husbandry and the workshop. If the arrangements are poor, repulsive, how arouse industrial attraction?”

Charles Fourier, *Attractive Labour*

Making has variously been celebrated as a new industrial revolution (Anderson, 2012), an alternative to shallow consumerism (Gauntlett, 2018), a socially oriented movement of community production (Davies, 2017), and (historically) a latent form of resistance to

centralized mass production (Adamson, 2013). As a do-it-yourself activity it attracts both amateurs and professionals who are interested in the material properties of things or the technical ways they are produced (Levine & Heimerl, 2008; Anderson, 2012; Davies, 2017; Gauntlett, 2018). As David Gauntlett (2018) demonstrates in his recent book on the connections between making and social media, making isn't only concerned with material fabrication but might be better considered a form of homebrewed production, whether the final product is a cable-knit sweater or a bespoke computer application. In this section, we will explore the espoused central values of making and craft (creativity, autonomy, and community) and juxtapose these with the first-hand narratives of self-identified makers (both amateurs and professionals) to consider the maker movement's rise at an historical moment characterized by precarious work arrangements, exploding living costs in the kinds of urban communities where makerspaces are often located, and the cultural gravitation toward the local and handmade more generally.

We should pause briefly, however, to consider how and to what degree making – amateur or waged – should be considered part of this productive trend that we are calling craft capitalism. Making, it should be acknowledged, is commonly described as a leisure activity or an unwaged sideline. Built up around the values espoused by commentators and scholars like Chris Anderson and Richard Sennett as a wresting back of materiality and control in an increasingly depersonalized, digitally mediated social landscape, making and craft activity can be seen as inhabiting (at least) two spheres of social life. On one hand, making can be considered part of the world of work, something a maker does for an income, whether as a small entrepreneur, freelancer, or entrepreneurial hobbyist. In this sense, making is squarely integrated in the world of work and the discursive web of entrepreneurial ideology. On the other hand, making is regularly described as passionate, amateur activity wherein a maker shrugs off the demands and imperatives of their life as a waged worker and dedicates their labour power to uncommodified productive practice. In this latter case, making might even be seen as driven by a resistant ethos and a desire to reclaim production as an activity outside of capitalist accumulation – in a sense, a prefigurative experiment in alternative economies. We should use caution, of course, in too readily assuming this latter impulse, especially as it isn't one that makers are necessarily aware of or committed to and as making is increasingly enclosed by corporate or otherwise capitalist interests in the form of tech industry funded makerspaces, the commodification of craft products by

platforms like Etsy, and the capitalization of maker culture more generally in the form of mass events (maker fairs), social and traditional media (online crafting communities, making literature, etc.) and the spaces and tools of making themselves (corporate makerspaces, crafting supply manufacturers, etc.).

What this tension suggests is that making and the culture that surrounds it holds a dialectical relationship in regards to labour. In the introductory matter of his *Critique of Everyday Life*, Henri Lefebvre (2014|1991) offers an illuminating observation about the role of leisure in capitalist societies. According to Lefebvre (2014|1991):

Finally, on the highest level of all, leisure produces active attitudes, very specialized personal occupations, linked to techniques and consequently involving a technical element independent of any professional specialization (photography, for example). This is a cultivated or cultural leisure (p. 54).

The figure of the maker and their motivations for making seems to map onto Lefebvre's idea of cultivated leisure quite neatly. The unpaid and uncommercialized (non-entrepreneurial) maker or craftsman might be described as taking on a specialized occupation that involves a highly technical specialization. Take, for example, a home-based crafter who knits wool socks following traditional, non-mechanized techniques (an activity enjoyed by one participant in this study). One can pretty safely assume that this is a skill that took a considerable amount of time to master and that is quite specialized, particularly since socks are not typically made in this fashion today. In this sense, the knitter has cultivated a leisure activity that produces a material object, but as it is not brought to market, not necessarily a commodity.

Making something at home (or in a makerspace or hackerspace) is obviously not automatically an emancipatory or revolutionary activity. In fact, as we know from decades of Marxist feminist theory, this form of reproductive labour has been a mainstay in working class life throughout the history of capitalism (Federici, 1995; Dalla Costa, 1988; Dalla Costa & James, 1973; Weeks, 2011). Reproductive labour in the sense articulated by Marxist feminism is that suite of activities that reproduces labour power and capitalist ideology (the hegemonic narratives necessary to socialize future workers). It is this latter function of household reproductive labour that should interest us in considering the complicated position of making vis-à-vis waged work. In some instances,

monetized or amateur making is simply a refraction of the reproductive labour of the home. Clothing production, homebrewing, pickling, and the like all find their roots, in one sense or another in the gendered division of reproductive labour and prior to the advent of the mass consumption society of the 20th century would have been considered part of the everyday routine in a working class household.

How should we go about understanding the function of these kinds of activities when they are not actually undertaken for the reproduction of labour power? Whether hobby or sideline, these activities are commodified in a way that they would not be in a pre-consumerist social formation. They are commonly undertaken not for the utility provided in the meeting of a human need – clothing or feeding oneself or a family member – but are instead engaged either directly as a monetized activity (making something to sell on, as in cottage industry) or a consumeristic hobby. In making macramé jewelry for friends or sourdough breads for home consumption, I may be engaging in an alternative productive practice, replacing the need to purchase use-values, furnishing them for myself instead. Simultaneously, however, this making impulse is often circulated by an ideological imperative of productive leisure (Maciel & Wallendorf, 2012; Gelber, 1999). We are told that our non-work activities should be enriching and productive, and we are called upon to buy the necessary equipment to adequately engage their pursuit. Consider the explosion of sourdough baking in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although this fad resulted in an explosion of home-based production, it was arguably driven by a consumeristic impulse, albeit one that replaced the purchase of a loaf of artisan bread, with that of yeast cultures, flour, baking equipment, Ken Forkish's cookbooks and the like. Does the sourdough trend suggest a yearning beyond consumer relations? Not necessarily, but what of those forms of making that take on a less individualized and more collective form?

A central theme in much of the scholarship and commentary around making and makerspaces is the community that grows from shared passions (Gauntlett, 2011; Davies, 2017; Taylor et al., 2016; Roslund & Puckett Rodgers, 2014). In fact, as Andreas Hepp (2018) observes, maker movement commentary characterizes making as a movement of individuals brought together by shared obsessions but mediated by corporate institutions and interests into what Hepp calls a 'pioneer community.' As Hepp demonstrates in his assessment of maker-focused media, instead of the grassroots gathering of passions often espoused by making boosters, the movement is a multi-

tiered social formation predominantly driven by the business interests of Maker Media but fuelled by the creative and passionate impulses of the communities that gather around it. For Hepp, the creation and dissemination of Make Magazine was instrumental in gathering disparate forms of amateur production together under one umbrella that was subsequently used as a tool for the spread of Maker Media's business model. By publishing magazines and hosting events like Maker Faires, the corporate interests of the movement seemingly enclose and reinforce the community-orientation of the movement.

Sandra Markus (2019) describes craft – and specifically “craftivism”- as a “participatory culture” wherein similarly disposed participants share knowledge and technique in an ethic of mutual support. Popularized by Henry Jenkins et al. (2009), the term is typically used to refer to common forms of digitally mediated cooperation and socialization that are seen as more intentionally active and connection-oriented than what is commonly expected from consumer culture. These cultures are further characterized by the dissemination of knowledge from experienced or knowledgeable community members to the less initiated. Markus's use of the idea is both obvious and provocative. On one hand, craftivist activity is particularly material, often encompassing the production of tangible symbolic goods such as politically motivated textiles (most recently manifested, according to Markus, by the pink knit “pussyhats” worn by many in the 2017 Women's March). On the other hand, however, it is increasingly mediated by online fora like the knitting social platform Ravelry. This mediation of physical fabrication through digital channels is, arguably, a different kind of participatory culture than those described by Jenkins, these latter existing cradle to grave in the digital sphere.

Markus's conceptualization of craftivism as participatory culture that unites these two spheres – material and digital – is equally applicable to the world of making and makerspaces, especially as these latter share common roots and cultural characteristics (Orton-Johnson, 2014; Davies, 2017). Indeed, the maker movement abounds with references to knowledge sharing, collaborative practice and participatory community building (Vullingsh, 2019; Martinez, 2019; Browder et al., 2019). Moreover, like other participatory cultures, the maker movement is regularly heralded as a democratizing force that provides access to resources, skill acquisition, and bases of knowledge that would remain inaccessible to many without these shared depositories and groups (Smith, 2020; Davies, 2017).

For some in the maker movement, this democratization of capacity and production is a driving motivation. Recognizing the separation that most people have from the physical infrastructure of production as well as the know-how of fabrication, these making enthusiasts see makerspaces and the maker movement as radical social phenomena that hold the potential to level the playing field of 21st century economic life (even if this potential is limited by the inequality of the current status quo). As one maker interviewed for this research explained:

This is actually kinda socialist what we're doing, but in a capitalist space it's actually kind of a happy medium. There's something about it – we're in some kind of psychotic capitalist society – it's not even capitalism anymore. I think about it kind of like during the great depression. We even have all of the aesthetics like the jam jars, but with a credit card. I'm seeing some of the values that my grandma had, and they are important just in terms of basic survival. I like to think of it as it's just being practical. You don't have to have a rotating supply of things – the amount of consumption we go through in our society is just absurd and it is killing us. In terms of that we can be more responsible, and not in an oppressive way but in one that will actually empower us.

The empowerment referred to here is a common if nebulous refrain in making discourse. It can be variously read as the ability to learn new skills, to make things for oneself, or to find creative and productive outlets outside of the wage relation. It is a constant purported goal in the maker movement, from early experiments with anarchist hacker spaces to the more corporately controlled makerspaces of today's urban centres. In a sense, this aspiration toward empowerment combined with the parallel striving for community and collaboration reflect some of the ideals posited by Ivan Illich (1973) in his *Tools for Conviviality*. Convivial tools, for Illich, are those tools – social, technological, economic – that are open to the use of all, exist outside of monopolizing institutions, and, ultimately, contribute to the autonomous activity of their user. Like the commonly held (or accessible) tools and spaces of the maker movement, convivial tools in the Illichian sense proffer opportunities for individual empowerment while building alternative collective potentials.

However, in using the term Illich is clear that he does not only mean those tools typically used for material fabrication but also more immaterial technologies of social life. This

perhaps explains the idea's influence on Andre Gorz's thought, especially as this relates to what he variously calls autonomous "non-commodity activities" (Gorz, 1989) and production in "the sphere of individual autonomy" (Gorz, 1982). In fact, Gorz's own vision of convivial society, while directly referencing Illich, strikes one as remarkably similar to Morris's vision of common life reviewed in Chapter 3:

More than upon free time, the expansion of the sphere of autonomy depends upon a freely available supply of convivial tools that allow individuals to do or make anything whose aesthetic or use-value is enhanced by doing it oneself. Repair and do-it-yourself workshops in blocks of flats, neighbourhood centres or rural communities should enable everyone to make or invent things as they wish (Gorz, 1982, pg. 87).

On one hand, viewed from today's vantage and in the particularly hipster-inflected urban spaces of the Pacific Northwest, the idea of common DIY spaces in apartment buildings seems almost quaint in its naiveté, not because it is unrealistic but because it is considered something that the capitalist market wouldn't provide on its own. A simple search of Craigslist or Facebook Marketplace quickly reveals just how common shared hobby and bike workshops are in luxury apartment and condominium communities. These are, of course, amenities reserved for those with means, standing out as anything but convivial.

In some sense, cooperatively run makerspaces and other community workshops manifest Gorz's image of the sphere of autonomy. When run as community resources, makerspaces certainly do provide centralized access to various tools for autonomous productive activity. This is, in essence, one of the central strengths of the maker movement, and when paired with the kinds of community building, collaboration and education for which making is celebrated, this is a powerful aspect indeed.

Unfortunately, as we have seen in this chapter, this impulse for autonomy is very easily enclosed, coopted and commodified. Just as shared hobby workshops have found their way into hip urban housing developments, so too have makerspaces been emulated or simply acquired by corporate interests. It would be overstatement to suggest that this is indicative of the shortcomings of the maker movement writ large, but at the same time, the easy commodification of these autonomous impulses is suggestive of the manner in which capitalism neutralizes and even assimilates its competitors, particularly when

those competitors do not come armed with a political program. Such a political program, however, would very likely prove evasive in a movement so easily coopted by entrepreneurial logics and corporate encroachment.

4.4. The Worker-Entrepreneur: Limits to Making's Promises

Entrepreneurialism is an enduring internal logic in craft culture, and it is easy to see how compelling a fantasy the figure of the worker-capitalist can be within the circuits of making. On one hand, in manifesting the enterprise as an entrepreneurial subject, the assumption of the worker owning capital in the form of their own labour power suggests the transcendence of the class struggle and the unequal control over both the labour process and the labour market. On another, it discursively positions the entrepreneurial worker as always already free and autonomous, thus consequently solely responsible for their own conditions. As alluded in the preceding section, this is a discursive shift that finds its roots not only in the global neoliberal restructuring of the late 20th century and its concomitant regimes of austerity, individualism, and structuralized precarity, but in the simultaneous development of new digital, networked, and automating technologies that transformed the labour process nearly over night during the same period.

Although Susan Luckman's work on craft should be celebrated for its depth, theoretical richness and critical orientation, perhaps the most impressive feat she accomplishes in books like *Craft and the Creative Economy* is a nearly effortless building of connections between seemingly unrelated social phenomena. In Chapters 1 and 3 we encountered Luckman's observation that the contemporary craft revival is heavily dependent on the development and near ubiquity of digital media. It is easy enough to see the importance of digital media in the business processes of making and craft production, and as we have seen, even some craft techniques rely on these same technologies (those that utilize digital tools like design suites, laser cutters, or 3D printers to name just a few). But Luckman's (2015) analysis does not end with the tools and processes available to makers in the 21st century. Instead, she spends considerable time addressing the political economic conditions that have purportedly paved the way for an explosion in small-scale, home-based production. More specifically, in the craftsperson or maker, Luckman sees a particular working subject: someone, usually a woman, who balances their creative aspirations or creative career with home responsibilities and for whom

most of a day's making activity is actually spent managing their personal brand. This neoliberalized subject, according to Luckman, in addition to making their products, must also make themselves. Luckman's analysis consequently uncovers a contradiction within the craft-based marketplace. For a productive regime so discursively dependent on ideas like naturalness and authenticity, craft – especially as it is embodied by Etsy – is an airbrushed simulacrum that “is selling the dream of a perfect life – to both sellers and buyers – as much as, if not more so than, craft items themselves” (Luckman, 2015, pg. 116).

On one hand, as we have seen and as will be repeated, many makers and craftspeople are driven by a desire to do what they love in a manner that they see fit. This is, ostensibly, the same impulse that has driven craft-based movements since the late 19th century. Interestingly, on the other hand, under the precarious and austere conditions of the 21st century, the vast majority of makers and craftspeople follow these passions either in an amateur fashion or as a supplementary source of income. For those who do approach their making as their primary vocation (even if it remains a secondary income), they must navigate an entrepreneurial labyrinth of self-branding, promotion and image management in order both to get their products to consumers, but also to stay visible on platforms like Etsy.

There is nothing particularly novel about the observation that workers today often have to perform unpaid tasks in order to build up their own capacities as workers. Whether we call this “work for labour” (Standing, 2011), “hope labour” (Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013) or something else, it indicates a particular entrepreneurship of the self at work in the cultural economy and beyond. More importantly, however, it indicates a seepage of value extraction from the formal workplace into the domestic sphere. This is not singular to the 21st century, of course, as the work of feminist political economy and social reproduction theory clearly reveals (Dalla Costa & James, 1973; Federici, 1995; Weeks, 2011). It is a continuation of the blurring of the lines between the labour process and social reproduction, however, and when considered alongside the passions that interpellate creative workers, this phenomenon takes on a particularly ideological tenor. As Luckman explains:

All this self-making work represents an emergent form of value and the unfolding of new sites of the extraction of surplus value being brought into being by larger

shifts in the global economy, and one not unique to the craft economy, though arguably particularly pronounced within it (pgs. 126-127).

The maker-entrepreneur and the craftworker share this position, whether or not they recognize the fact. The framing of the maker or craftworker as an owner of capital works overtime in obscuring this shared condition, in redrawing the battle lines of solidarity. Moreover, in craft industrialism and in certain making contexts, this framing serves to manufacture consent within the labour process (Burawoy, 1979). However, contrary to what sociologist Michael Burawoy observed in the 1970s piece-rate machine shop, in making and craft industrialism, this consent is not generated exclusively at the point of production, but at the level of culture – both the internal culture of the workshop and the external culture of craft more generally.

Chapter 5. Cultures of Craft Industrialism

We have spent considerable time at this stage of the analysis in demarcating the conceptual boundaries of craft and by demonstrating the historical evolution of the craft ethos and the social nature of the kinds of skill upon which it is built. In the preceding chapters, we have explored the historical, cultural and ideological characteristics of craft work and small-scale production. However, as alluded at the outset, the designation of craft has taken on a new tenor in the 21st century craft economy wherein, while on one hand it still designates the hand-made or small-scale, on the other it is also used as a seemingly arbitrary qualifier for high-quality mass production (remember, for instance, the example of the abandoned can of ‘craft artisan’ chili). In the 21st century sense, the craft and artisanal labels largely indicate not a designation of the quality of labour but a kind of qualitative branding. The fetishization of craft labour in the form of scalable “craft” industries is perhaps most observable in rationalized industrial sectors like craft brewing, artisanal baking, and craft distilling, though one also sees it in the mass production of the artisanal commodities on offer through outlets like Etsy. In this chapter we will complicate the application of the craft label by analyzing the cultural narratives at play in that grouping of industrial practice that we might call ‘craft industrialism.’ This grouping is distinct from other craft and making activities due to its scalability, reliance on workforces of variable size, and production of consumable or otherwise mass-produced commodities (albeit under the craft moniker). Although the designation of craft industrialism could be applied to a number of industries ranging from locally roasted coffee to single-source produce to selvedge denim, our primary case study here will be the craft beer industry in the Cascadia region of North America (primarily in Vancouver, Seattle, and Portland). Craft beer, as will be demonstrated, provides a particularly interesting point of departure for an analysis of this form of industrial marketing due to its established reputation for localism, collaboration, and quality (Appleton, 2016; Acitelli, 2013; Lewis, 2014; O’Brien, 2006). However, as we will see, these industrial signposts often obscure a highly Taylorized labour process, heavy levels of investor or owner control and influence, and generally exploitative working conditions, even for the craftspeople from which the industry takes its name.

In order to probe this contradiction between the image the craft brewing industry projects and the experiences and reflections of its workers, in the sections that follow we will

critically assess the cultural narratives of craft brewing and measure these against the actual labour process at play in the brewery. In doing so we will first survey the industrial values mobilized in popular accounts of craft brewing's histories, cultures and key figures. We will then weigh these values against the typical labour process dynamics utilized in craft shops, paying particular attention to common roles, procedures, and structures of ownership. In order to better understand what the organization of the labour process means in relation to worker experiences, we will then turn to the division of labour at work in the brewery, especially the stark division between production staff and support staff in both packaging and service roles. Here we will draw a general distinction between the conditions and contractual/wage arrangements for each of these groupings, typically mediated by the level of control they have in the process of their own work as well as the level to which they serve in a public-facing capacity – production staff generally enjoy both relatively higher base wages and greater autonomy than do their packaging or serving counterparts (even if these remain lower than those of their microbrewing counterparts). Finally, to further illuminate the power relations at work in the brewery we will consider the experiences of marginalized workers in what is commonly and accurately characterized as an industry dominated by white men (Pomranz, 2021; Stiernberg, 2021). Women, trans and non-binary workers, Indigenous workers and workers of colour experience much higher levels of workplace harassment, unequal treatment (and pay), and safety concerns than their white male counterparts and must simultaneously endure overt tokenization due to their perceived outsider status within such a homogenous workplace culture. This final set of observations will ultimately point out some of the deep contradictions inherent in craft brewing's branding of itself as a site of collaboration, community, and commitment to causes of fairness and equality. These contradictions, I argue, stem from the fetishization of craft labour, a fetishization that draws legitimacy from the figure of the artisan while simultaneously following the typical process of craft dispossession characteristic of capitalist industrial production generally. The concluding remarks of the chapter will lay bare the ways in which the industrial practices of craft brewing fall short of these values, while simultaneously composing a workforce ready made for the task of organizing itself to demand better conditions, better treatment and a more equitable workplace.

As in the previous chapter, this chapter will be supplemented with the insights offered by participants, particularly as these pertain to their experiences with and observations of

the cultures, processes, and conflicts of their respective workplaces. The interview excerpts included in this chapter are intended to illustrate common attitudes toward work in the craft brewing industry. Although participants offered a range of perspectives and observations, the selection included here intersects with dominant themes of a regimented labour process, a gendered and racialized division of labour, and a disconnect between popular and worker attitudes about the industry and the realities that workers face at work. These themes are further unpacked in relation to the political composition of the craft brewing workforce in Chapter 7.

5.1. Labelling a Craft Industry

If you visit the food and beverage section of almost any bookstore you are likely to find a healthy variety of beer travel and tasting guides (e.g. Wiebe, 2013; Stott, 2011), brewing how-to books (e.g. Papazian, 2003; Miller 1994; Burch, 1992), and commentaries about beer and craft brewing (e.g. Calagione, 2005; Lewis, 2014; Perozzi & Beaune, 2009). Biographies and testimonials written by the pioneers of the turn toward microbrewing are featured heavily with titles often alluding to ‘revolution’ or rebellion (Hindy, 2014; Appleton, 2016; Watt, 2015). The growth in popularity in microbrewing and craft brewing since the 1990s has brought with it narratives of a kind of revolution in production wherein underdogs have valiantly fought the corporate juggernauts of the macrobrewing industry in order to bring consumers a high quality product, often claiming more ethical business practices and values. Commentaries like Sean Lewis’s (2014) *We Make Beer: Inside the Spirit and Artistry of America’s Craft Brewers* praise craft breweries for their collaborative spirit, commitment to local communities, and dedication to producing the highest quality products. In fact, narratives like these form a kind of mythological foundation upon which much of the craft brewing culture is built. In this section we will assess some of these common narratives in relation to the perspectives and experiences offered by brewery workers and owners in order to demarcate the limits and tensions within the craft brewing industry’s discursive positioning.

A useful guide in critically engaging with the ideological narratives of the craft brewing industry is Christopher Mark O’Brien’s (2006) pun-laden, beer drinkers’ manifesto *Fermenting Revolution*. O’Brien’s book oscillates between praise and critique, highlighting the stories that brewers and beer enthusiasts tell themselves about the

industry, especially in terms of localism, environmentalism, collaboration, and resistance. Although the text does not engage deeply with the academic literature on these themes, it is one of the few craft beer commentaries to interrogate them directly in an overtly political manner. As such, when read alongside industry sources like *Northwest Brewing News*¹¹ (the free monthly newsletter of the Cascadia region's craft beer industry) and regional beer guides (in this case Joe Wiebe's (2013) guide to BC breweries and Jon C. Stott's (2011) travel guide of BC and Alberta craft beer) and measured against brewer, owner and worker experiences, O'Brien's book serves as a kind of mythological key allowing one to determine the discursive limits and boundaries to the industry's self-image.

The common – and admittedly accurate - narrative of beer in North America is one that tracks the rise of large corporate breweries after the repeal of the American prohibition. Dominating national markets with very little competition from a regional or local level, corporately brewed beer came to be seen by beer aficionados and home-brewers as bland, uninteresting, and impersonal (O'Brien, 2006). Beer brewed for mass appeal, the reasoning went, ended up embodying the worst qualities of beer, coalescing in a beer market made up almost entirely of boring American-style pilsners. Moreover, in ditching the cultural history and traditional methods of brewing, macro-beer stood out for many as the brewing manifestation of corporatization and impersonal mass production generally. Beer, in this reasoning, was terrain wherein Fordist mass industrialization had won the day. In fact, one might go so far as to map the emergence and dominance of corporate beer as a clear example of the centralizing logic of monopoly capital diagnosed by Baran and Sweezy (1966) nearly 60 years ago: macro-brewing standing out as an over-bloated, wasteful, and anti-competitive behemoth that feeds the market a subpar product regardless of demand.

Luckily for the discerning beer drinker, in the 1970s and 1980s new movements in support of homebrewing and so-called “real ales” began to take shape in the UK, Europe and eventually the US and Canada (Thurnell-Read, 2015; Philliskirk, 2012). In the 1990s

¹¹ *Northwest Brewing News* was a regional publication of Brewing News Publications (BNP). BNP and its regional publications have effectively ceased publication after a controversy that arose in early 2019. In February 2018, the editor of *Great Lakes Brewing News*, Bill Metzger, published what he claims was a piece of satire intended to critique reactionary attitudes in the US. To learn more about the initial publication and the audience response read Brewpublic, 2019.

proponents of these movements began to promote and actively participate in the dramatic rise of microbreweries, especially in places like California, Oregon and British Columbia. The growth of small-scale alternatives to the stranglehold of domestic brewing in the US and Canada continued through the 1990s and into the early decades of the 21st century, eventually culminating in what is currently known as the craft brewing revolution or the craft beer movement (Acitelli, 2013). Drawing enthusiastic beer drinkers interested in trying novel and interesting brews and brewers looking for ways to create beers that they would want to drink, the craft beer movement, initially at least, was driven by narratives of difference, distinction and discernment. This led to a meteoric increase of craft brewing operations through the US and Canada to the extent that most communities either have their own brewery or are in close proximity to one, and with metropolitan centres like Vancouver, Seattle and Portland boasting hundreds of independent breweries.

Although the proliferation of small-scale breweries from the 1980s to the present was initially labelled “micro-brewing,” this terminology has been mostly replaced with the craft label. Breweries still classified as “micro” are those that produce less than 15,000 barrels of beer per year and serve at least a quarter of that output on site (Just Beer, 2019). By contrast, the Brewers Association (n.d.) – which serves as the industrial association for craft breweries in the US – classifies a craft brewery as one that 1) makes beer 2) produces 6 million barrels or less per year and 3) is not owned or controlled by a larger alcohol industry player. While the vast majority of the breweries profiled in this dissertation fall into this latter categorization, one or two might also be designated as micro-breweries. Ultimately, this distinction matters little in the present analysis, apart from in the degree to which the small-scale of microbreweries mediates the size of those breweries’ staff. In fact, as we will see, the porousness of the craft brewery definition actually raises some muddy questions in assessing the shape, scale, and conditions of the industry. For instance, the imprecise nature of the definition means that, hypothetically, a craft brewery could have a workforce in the hundreds but maintain its craft designation and all of the assumptions about quality, localness, and creativity that come with it. Similarly, given that the definition draws the distinction of craft at the point of ownership (particularly in terms of ownership by another alcohol industry firm), craft breweries might also have rigidly corporate or investor-centred structures while still maintaining the designation.

However, even with this industrial definition in hand, what still needs to be gleaned is to what extent brewing can be considered a craft activity in the more traditional sense of the word. Most literature on craft, craftsmanship and craft-based movements seems to draw the borders of craft somewhere along the lines of durable commodities. Furniture, jewelry, ceramics and the like are rather easily discernible as craft objects, all existing somewhere at the nexus of utility, durability and aesthetics. Moreover, each of these examples is produced through the physical manipulation of material resources, whether by hand or with the aid of machine tools. The production of consumable goods like foods and beverages more seldomly figures into theoretical and historical accounts of craft production. This is likely in part due to the historical categorization of the trades as something distinct from vocations like cooking, brewing or distilling. However, if we follow Richard Sennett (2008) in designating craftsmanship as productive activity guided by the desire to do good work for its own sake and in pursuit of a superior product, it would be difficult to exclude the culinary trades and similar productive activities, even if their products are not durable in the same sense as the above examples. In fact, Sennett himself argues that the limits to craftsmanship cannot and should not be limited to the trades and do, in fact, extend to other economic and domestic orbits, such as computer aided design and even child-rearing. For the purposes of the present study we are deliberately limiting our focus to those activities and industries that actively designate themselves as craft or artisanal. In this sense, the master chef, the vintner and even the head brewer would be difficult to exclude from the general craft category, but especially from our specific analytical focus.

To what degree though is the brewer akin to the joiner or potter? The process of brewing does involve the exercise of tacit knowledge in terms of how flavours and aromas work together as well as technical knowledge of the chemistry and procedures of rendering sugars and fermentation. In most cases this is an iterative process developed over the span of years, through observation and experimentation. The brewing process, as we have observed, is rationalized in terms of the overall procedures, but we should acknowledge that it is also a subjective one that does involve creativity and expertise on the part of the brewer. In fact, in reviewing industry sources one is quickly struck by the passion and expertise on display in brewer commentaries and biographies. Time and again brewers cite their passion for producing the best possible product while following their dreams of creation and autonomy (Lewis, 2014; Maguire et al. 2017). In fact, for

many, others' enjoyment of their beer is what convinces them to turn their passion for homebrewing into a profession (Brussat et al. 2016, p. 4-6). As professional artisans, brewers then strive to create the highest quality beers both to distinguish themselves from the ever-growing mass of craft brewers worldwide and to offer a product of which they are proud – beer that they would enjoy drinking and that might educate others on the joys and complexities of beer.

If, returning to Sennett's definition, we consider the development of skill and the production of the highest quality good as central to the craft ethos, the brewer stands out as a ready-made craft figure. It is rare to find a brewer's origin story that does not refer more or less directly to a commitment to perfecting the craft. In nearly every popular brewing text consulted for this study, brewers report their focus on quality and technique (Lewis, 2014; Appleton, 2016; Calagione, 2005). For many the quality of the product should speak for itself. The process of producing it is a pleasure in its own right, but the outcome is also a means by which the brewer can influence the world around them. In the case of Alesong Brewing and Blending's Brian Coombs, the goal in making interesting beers is to shift the broader culture around beer to where it is celebrated for its complexity and refinement to the same degree as wine (McDonald, 2018, p. 4-5). Producing an excellent beer is, in this sense, the brewer's means of influencing the world and of making their mark in a more profound sense.

This said, the limits to this ethos of craftsmanship are harder to pin down. Brewers are quick to highlight the creativity or traditionality of their techniques or to demonstrate the complex processes they utilize to produce their beers, but this focus on artisanry and quality is frequently also steeped in the language of market growth, consumer trends, and business imperatives.

This, of course, should not come as a surprise; we are talking about businesses operating under a capitalist market economy. However, it does raise questions as to what degree the values of quality and technique can coexist with the contradictions and pressures of such an economy. Take, for example, the case of Central City Brewing in Surrey, BC. Central City's brewmaster, Gary Lohin, recounts that throughout his career he has had the opportunity to brew the beer styles he has wanted and in the ways that he has wanted (Stott, 2011). The brewery is well regarded throughout BC, consistently offering new and interesting styles and providing consistent mainstays that sell well

throughout the province. However, on the business end, Central City President Daryll Frost suggests that quality and local success don't seem to be enough. In his words:

We want to make more beer – properly. Some places increase the volume by rushing the process. We want to make sure that we take the necessary time to produce a very good beer. That's what Sierra Nevada and New Belgium did in the United States. They produce a great deal of beer, but they're still craft brewers (Quoted in Stott, 2011, p. 131-132).

Here we can observe this tension in stark contrast. On the one hand, Frost is clear that as Central City expands it plans to avoid a subsequent drop in quality – they are committed to remaining a craft operation. This seems to serve as an extension of Joel Hueston's (2017) thesis at the 2017 BC Craft Brewers conference that craft beer has the potential to dethrone mainstream beer through its producers' commitment to craft processes and more ethical business practices. However, should we not question what happens when this takes place? Ostensibly, the big corporate brewers were once small-scale operations – they didn't emerge as fully formed commercial giants. They grew over time, slowly trading quality and distinction for lean production and a cheaply produced product (O'Brien, 2011). And as they grew and their products homogenized, they also bought out the competition and exerted strong influence on the shape of the brewing industry. Are there characteristics of craft brewing that would suggest that they would take a different route, that as they grew within a global capitalist system, they would refrain from the excesses of mainstream brewing?

At the level of the labour process, the answer to such a question is a resounding “no.” Whereas the industry globally brands itself as artisanal, cooperative and generally progressive, the workflow maps pretty tidily onto that of the macro-brewing industry. That said, working conditions, remuneration, benefits, and the like diverge from macro in that as a whole craft brewery workers can expect generally worse conditions, lower pay, and worse benefits than their often-unionized macro-beer counterparts. Furthermore, even internally in craft brewing there exists a highly regimented and hierarchical division of labour, one that bolsters the position of the brewer (while typically still at a poorly remunerated level) and invisibilizes the work of the support worker, be they a forklift driver, canning-line operator, or server. Whereas the craft brewer's creative labour is celebrated and, in a sense, fetishized by the rhetoric of craft industrialism, this stands in

stark contrast to the underappreciated though similarly essential work of the industry's support workers.

In this sense, we should consider one particularly important distinction between scalable craft industry and traditional handicrafts. This is the role of support workers to the viability of the craft enterprise. Although the medieval or mercantilist workshop would have been marked by a tiered apprentice system, the waged relationship in contemporary craft industrialism is a particularly modern contractual arrangement. The apprentice would have a reasonable expectation to climb the ranks to the point of one day becoming a master. In the waged context, there is no guarantee of this form of mobility or even of the expectation of skill development. In most cases, the non-brewer employee will never even participate in the brewing process (at least in anything but the most rote of ways), the majority of employees in most craft breweries working in service or support capacities. Given the sheer amount of support work necessary for the scalability of these industries, one might even question whether the craftsperson or artisan is really the primary producer of value, especially as their product goes through the processes of packaging, labelling, marketing and distribution. Although this division between production and support will be unpacked more fully later in this chapter, we should acknowledge the primary conceptual contribution its existence makes in the formulation of a concept of craft industrialism: craft industrialism, generally, does not rely on artisanality, but on the image of such.

In craft industrialism, we see at work a process of fetishization whereby the craft commodity is imbued with a sense of authenticity based on the projected artisanry that went into its production. That this skilled work does contribute to the commodity's production is indisputable. However, we should recognize, following Marx (1867, see also Bottomore et al., 1983, pg. 165-166), that the perceptions brought about by commodity fetishism are not necessarily false but work to obscure the social relations of production. In this case, the presentation of the commodity as a craft object obscures the vast amounts of non-artisan labour needed to bring it to the consumer. Curiously, in the case of craft fetishism, it is the ideal image of the craftsperson and of the craft production process that serves as the greatest mask for the industry. In place of the workforce we imagine an artisan; in place of a labour process we imagine a workshop. Furthermore, this image of artisanality – regardless of the level to which it reflects the real relations of production – serves as another means to valorize the craft commodity placing it in direct

counter-distinction to its mass produced counterpart even if, in reality, the labour processes producing each are more similar than they are different. As such, in craft industrialism the figure of the craftsman or artisan distinguishes the craft commodity while erasing from view the actual relations of its production.

Arguably, this is the key relation that sits at the heart of the discursive positioning of craft industrialism. We see it especially at work in the craft brewery. As we have seen, the porous definition of craft in brewing allows for the broad application of the designation to a range of outfits, many of which employ, to a greater or lesser degree, complex divisions of labour that compliment or even enable the work of the craft brewer. In order to better understand the industrial cultural ramifications of this, let us now turn to the working experiences of the craft brewery specifically, as a way of building toward both a more specific understanding of one craft industry as well as a general understanding of craft industrialism as a category.

5.2. Working at the Brewery

In simple terms, brewing involves the conversion of sugars, rendered by steeping malted grains, into alcohol through the use of yeast. The basic beer formula is made up of water, grain, hops, and yeast (although other ingredients are commonly added, ranging from fruits to peppers to, in at least one case, bacon). Generally, any person who goes through these steps is a brewer, any location where they do so, a brewery¹². We will recall that the Brewers' Association (n.d) generally categorizes a *craft* brewery as any brewery that is small, independent and that makes beer. Relative as it is, "small" refers to the number of barrels an operation produces in a year, the cut-off for a craft designation being 6 million barrels or less . This is actually quite a large volume, allowing some pretty massive firms to fall under the craft umbrella. Similarly, the independent status described by the Brewers' Association refers specifically to the percentage of the company owned by a larger alcoholic beverage manufacturer. In essence this means that as long as a corporate actor like Molson-Coors or AB InBev does not own more than

¹² My research has inspired me to try my own hand at homebrewing, and, although the product of my "serious leisure" leaves much to be desired, I can accurately be described as a brewer – a craftsman, not as much.

a quarter of the brewery, it is independent. While this does help us see a distinction between a formally designated independent brewery and a corporate brewery's subsidiary, at times it also masks the financial and organizational realities of so-called independent breweries. To use a bit of a hyperbolic illustration, let's imagine a world wherein Jeff Bezos decides he wants to 'disrupt' the beer industry. There are a number of ways he could go about doing this while maintaining the craft brewery designations of his venture. He could invest substantial sums in a number of small breweries; he could open a small brewery (or a plethora of them). As long as his investment in the pre-existing breweries did not make up more than 25% of the firm, or as long as his individual breweries did not produce more than 6 million barrels of beer each, it is plausible that these would all still maintain a craft brewery designation. Of course, it would be likely that such a coup would force a reconsideration of the craft brewery definition, but this unlikely thought experiment does illustrate the limitations of this definition, especially as this relates to the firm's independent status. Moreover, we might go so far as to suggest that when larger craft breweries begin acting like corporate employers (something we'll observe in this section), this designation becomes all but meaningless in the actual brewery labour process.

It is in the negative spaces of such an imprecise definition that we are able to see some of the contradictions of craft as an industrial categorization, at least in terms of its use in the beer industry. In building out their definition of craft brewing, the Brewers' Association goes on to describe some of the likely characteristics of a craft brewery. These businesses are described as innovative, locally or community focused, and committed to traditional ingredients (yeast, barley/grain, hops, and water). Apart from a vague reference to traditional and innovative techniques, the Brewers' Association description neglects the productive processes of craft brewing entirely. This is understandable if ironic. With a definition that includes such a range of potential enterprises, it is no surprise that it cannot account for the general workforces, procedures, or operations of the industry. The irony is, of course, that the very term craft alludes to the specialized knowledge commanded by producers, as we saw in Chapter 2. The craft brewery valorizes the social character of the craftworker's labour at the same time that it erases them from its discourse. The craft brewer is simply one part of what is a division of labour that relies quite heavily on a range of workers other than the craft brewer, but the figure of the brewer still dominates its industrial mythology.

The labour processes of the macro brewery and craft brewery are actually not as different as one might imagine. In the first order, the general ingredients and procedures of brewing beer have not changed substantially for hundreds of years (O'Brien, 2006). In fact, as Michael A. Elliott (2017) has demonstrated, the contemporary brewery is rationalized along the same lines as those of medieval Europe, calling into question many narratives of the revolutionary character of the recent boom in small-scale craft beer production. In Elliott's analysis, work in today's brewery is heavily professionalized and routinized. The procedures are scientific, meticulous, and increasingly Taylorized. Of course, this is not the case in every facility. In observing the labour process in a mid-to large-scale craft brewery like Two Beers Brewing Company in Seattle, WA or Gigantic Brewing in Portland, OR one will likely be struck with just how coordinated both production and administration are in the facilities. The contemporary regional or larger scale brewery, like the winery, is typically a highly ordered, exceptionally clean place, at times appearing more similar to a lab than a kitchen. At the same time, smaller operations might be marked by a much more slap-dash, free-wheeling character. Moonshrimp Brewing in Portland, OR is a great example of this latter approach. Moonshrimp is owned, operated and staffed by Daniel McIntosh-Tolle, a biochemist by training, whose own approach to brewing appears much more as a kind of esoteric art practice than it does a scientifically organized industrial endeavour (even though McIntosh-Tolle is a trained scientist). The brewery is small, cramped and pieced together out of found, jury-rigged or otherwise improvised equipment. Situated in a small converted office, Moonshrimp's boil kettle, sitting above an open natural gas burner, dominates the tiny reception area, while the former managers' offices now house the mash tuns and fermenters. McIntosh-Tolle's stands out as a particularly artisanal operation, being driven by his own passion and interest to bring a high quality (and gluten-free) product to beer drinkers in the Portland area. Unlike most other breweries, in Portland and elsewhere, McIntosh-Tolle relies on no staff, running the whole process from concept to distribution. This is highly irregular in craft brewing, most breweries depending heavily on ranks of packaging, warehousing, brewing support, sales, and service workers (Anderson, 2021).

The working arrangements and conditions in craft brewing vary considerably. While many front and back of house workers enjoy continuing employment, many breweries also rely heavily on temporary and seasonal contracts. These more footloose workers

often work in canning/bottling, labeling, shipping and cellaring (Infante, 2018; Anderson, 2021). This use of temporary workers seems to be more prevalent at the larger craft brewing operations: in BC, places like Parallel 49 Brewing Company and MOD Beverage (formerly the aptly named Factory Brewing). Just as contracts vary based on the business and kind of work, pay varies considerably in the industry. A more or less constant assumption amongst workers, however, is that craft brewery pay is typically much lower than remuneration at the larger established macro-breweries, like Molson-Coors and Anheuser-Busch InBev. This should come as no great surprise given the difference of scale between a regional craft brewery and a national or international macro-brewery. According to statistics gathered on talent.com, the average pay for a brewer in Canada is a mere \$20.27 per hour. Of course, talent.com does not provide information about how this average was arrived at, but the figure tends to coincide with the salary levels reported in several industry sources (Beer Community, 2019). The low wages in the craft brewing industry are so generally well known that when four Ontario breweries increased pay to conform to the definition formulated by the Ontario Living Wage Network, they earned accolades in both the beer and mainstream press (Mok, 2021; Canadian Beer News, 2021; Wong, 2021). Furthermore, as we will see, the assumption of generally low wages across the industry was shared by many workers interviewed for this research and was not mediated by their role in their workplace: brewers and servers alike agreed that they made less than counterparts in similar industries. Workers at small and large companies who worked roles as various as sales, hospitality, brewing and warehousing consistently reported that they would make higher wages at a macro operation or at other larger scale businesses that require the same skill sets: retail warehousing, mid-tier restaurants, etc. In addition to pay, what is also missing at many craft breweries is a benefits package for employees. This leads, in many cases, to a kind of revolving door in terms of staff as many workers have no choice but to pursue employment where their healthcare needs are met. One can imagine that this is especially the case in the United States where workers typically must rely on employer-provided healthcare. In Canada, even though workers typically enjoy public healthcare, they often must rely on their employers for extended health: dental care, mental health care, and the like. Taken together the relative low pay, frequent lack of benefits, and potential contractual insecurity mean that craft brewing workers find themselves in more precarious conditions than we might expect of workers in self-described community-minded workplaces. In a sense, one might be justified in asserting

that the craft brewing industry's commitment to community and collaboration conspicuously ends at the point of production.

Of course, even in this overview of the conditions of craft brewing work, we see some stark contrasts that manifest at the point of production. There are disparities between continuing and contract staff, full- and part-time staff, and, as the next section explains, front of house, back of house and administrative staff. This last set of disparities, generally those between front and back of house (the relative privilege of administrative staff often paralleling that of production staff), reveal what is arguably a key schism in craft industrialism's projected self-image as an ethical alternative to corporate mass production: craft industries display a marked and hierarchical division of labour, with administrative and production staff enjoying a relatively better working life than their production support, warehousing, hospitality and retail counterparts.

5.3. Front and Back of House: The Workforces of Craft Industrialism

One only need speak to a handful of craft brewery workers to realize some of the dramatic disparities between administrative and production staff and service staff. While brewers, assistant brewers and administrators (sales, marketing, and social media staff) report varying levels of general satisfaction in their work and the autonomy they enjoy therein, warehousing, service and retail sales workers often report the opposite, describing cultures of harassment, hierarchy and belittlement at the hands of ownership, management and customers alike (Anderson, 2020; Jenkinson, 2021; Dzhanova, 2021). The particular challenges faced by craft brewery front-of-house staff came to public attention in summer 2020 in Vancouver, BC with the creation of the @NotOurP49 Instagram account, operated by former employees of Parallel 49 Brewing Company, one of British Columbia's largest and most recognizable craft breweries (Anderson, 2020). Following the example of similar efforts by service workers in coffee shops and restaurants in Vancouver and Winnipeg, the Instagram account profiled testimonials of former workers at the brewery and its associated upscale craft beer bar, St. Augustine's. At the time of writing, the account had posted more than 50 times, featuring the stories of dozens of former workers, stories attesting to rampant sexism, racism, favouritism, homophobia and retaliation at both businesses. This initial social media outpouring was

followed in the summer of 2021 when American brewer Brienne Allen began using her personal Instagram to post anonymous testimonials from workers from all over the US (Nanos, 2021; Infante, 2021). Like those in Vancouver, these workers told a slew of harrowing stories of the rampant sexism, misogyny, harassment, and exclusion in the craft brewing industry. Viewed holistically as a sketch of a popular craft workplace, the stories reveal a rather unsurprising culture, reflecting much of what labour scholars and activists have come to expect of service sector employers. Workers featured in the accounts report feeling unsafe, replaceable, insecure and, ultimately, unvalued in their roles as front and back of house staff.

Although the accounts also include stories from the production side, especially amongst workers in packaging and warehousing, most describe the conditions for an under-recognized segment of the craft workforce: servers. Strangely, much of the media discourse on the Brienne Allan events – what has been called craft brewing’s #MeToo moment (Nanos, 2021) – has focused primarily on women brewers, even though many of the stories came from non-brewing craftworkers, particularly hospitality workers. In the pages that follow we will survey the expectations and experiences of four distinct segments of the craft brewing workforce. First, we will interrogate the attitudes and accounts of production staff, including brewers and brewing assistants. Next, we will consider their “upstairs” counterparts, the administrative staff who also enjoy relative privilege in the craft brewing division of labour. We will then consider back-of-house support workers including bottling, packaging, delivery and warehouse workers. Finally, and importantly, we will address the ways in which front-of-house service and sales staff are frequently omitted from considerations of craft industry and the ways in which their inclusion is crucial in developing a critical understanding of the labour processes and industrial cultures of scalable craft industries.

Production staff who participated in this study reported a range of experiences and attitudes about the craft brewing industry. These ranged from a sense of creative autonomy to one of personal sacrifice to one of perpetual belittlement. Let’s consider some of these positionalities in turn and grapple with the workplace organizations and cultures under which they arose.

Brewers, assistant brewers, and warehouse workers enter craft brewing for a range of reasons. For some, the appeal is a cultural one – it would be cool to work at a brewery.

For others, they have a passion for making things and being creative. Yet for others still, it is a job like any other. Some have training in brewing while many found their way to the brewery through working in adjacent industries, especially food service.

While there is no universal origin story for craft brewery production workers, interview participant Eric seems to share many background experiences with others interviewed. Eric is a brewer at a small brewery in Port Moody, BC, a suburb of Vancouver that is known for its tight cluster of craft breweries. His story seems to be a pretty typical one: he was originally attracted to brewing because it was simply a cool sounding industry and one in which friends had worked. Eric is clear, however, that he was looking for a job and that the consistent pay meant more to him than the social capital of the industry, something that he acknowledges isn't always the case. According to Eric's observations:

There is a weird situation where some breweries, you work for them, don't get paid a lot, and they treat it like it's a favour. For a while breweries were bringing volunteers in. Just working for experience. It's not a favour – you are making them money, that's why people get paid. That was one thing when I was first starting – the brewmaster said they would never do the volunteer thing. You can get experience and still get paid. You gotta pay people for labour. Let's be fair, people working on a bottling line aren't going to get paid much – you can [afford to] pay for it.

Eric's sentiment about the primacy of pay is one seemingly shared by many in the industry, but it is one that is far from universal, the practice of unpaid aspirational labour still common enough to be mentioned repeatedly in my discussions with brewery workers. One Portland brewer and maker told a particularly harrowing tale of her early days in Portland's craft scene, describing the levels of exhaustion she experienced after working a variety of volunteer and temporary roles in order to get her foot in the door:

I got my first gig volunteering at a brewery when I got introduced to the owner. Running their collaborator program and working on the side. I was learning about what commercial brew systems do. The nice thing about that was I felt like I got a handle on how commercial brew systems work. I was able to talk myself up enough where I was able to overcome my lack of knowledge. Every day I would

call my boyfriend to pick me up and he'd have to help me get into the car, work the seatbelt, every muscle screaming. I can't complain, I asked for this.

Although in recounting this story the participant attempts to put a positive spin on it, it is hard not to notice the evocative language of screaming muscles and the purported inability to do even the simplest tasks. In return, she learned the ropes of the industry, but one wonders why she would not also be receiving a wage for such physically exhausting work. Although, like Eric, this brewer recognizes the need for wages, and by extension benefits, in brewing jobs, her particular interest with both craft and making is the craft ethos and the creative allure that seemingly underpins the industry. This leads her to a kind of slippage between the material and ideal aspects of the work. Take for instance what she has to say about benefits:

Benefits? What are those? There is none. Usually small businesses don't have the ability to give you benefits. If you're lucky. I got benefits at the homebrew shop, but that's it. Every other place I didn't, I was part-time. Some people stay at jobs just because they have benefits. If you provide benefits and people can do what they love, they'll put up with a lot. Craft is a passion – people don't do this because they think they're going to make a lot of money. I feel bad for the kids who do a fermentation science degree and think they are going to get out and get a high paying job.

From outside, this perspective is difficult to reconcile. On one hand, the participant acknowledges the appeal of both benefits and higher pay, but in the same statement she deflates the importance of both, prioritizing passion, and, discursively foreclosing the possibility of a more materially stable workplace. In fact, she goes on to say:

Sometimes the paycheck *is* the most important. It's weird because the division of labour isn't so – guys who come into this job say it's all equal – I worked at a job for not even a full year, a kid comes in nine months after me making what I was making now and in a lower position. I wasn't surprised. We just keep track of every single incident and the pertinent conversations with dates and times.

Although her account seems to jump about, it reveals a particularly prevalent assessment of the industry: that the rhetorical factor of craft passion covers for clearly observable inequalities and instances of exploitation throughout the industry. We should

also remember, that this is a perspective offered by a brewer, one of the more stably employed segments of the craft brewing labour force – although her particular level of stability has varied considerably throughout her career.

In keeping with this interpretation, another participant is clearer in his critique of the insulation work performed by the passion discourse. Zach is the assistant brewer at a neighbourhood brewery in North Seattle. He'd been working in brewing for more than four years when we spoke, in addition to more than a decade in the service industry generally. Although Zach was initially attracted to brewing for the purported opportunity to be creative and to do what he loves, four years out he found himself disillusioned. As an assistant brewer, Zach has little control over the beers he makes and the processes by which he makes them:

I just don't get to create recipes here, and it's a bit frustrating because I'm like sous chef but I get no credit, but I'm doing all the work and I did the cellar work and racked it. I didn't write the recipe. It's tough when I don't feel like I'm being appreciated for that. It's tough being the assistant brewer. I really am doing everything. I'm really doing everything but writing down the recipes. It's difficult to take ownership of that. I do try, and I own it in my brain. I'm an artistic guy, I have ideas. You know how people [who] work desk jobs feel like every week is the same – it's kind of like that right now. I have to look at it and say 'you know what? This is a cool thing that I'm doing.' There is one person who is in charge of creation, and it's his way or the highway. It's hard when you have different opinions about how things should be done, especially when you feel like you're the one holding the brewery down – who's actually the head brewer.

For Zach and other assistant brewers, this is a hard revelation to come to: that this purportedly creative work can sometimes be anything but. In Zach's case, the head brewer does all of the creative work (writing mostly German-style recipes), leaving the process of actual production to Zach. Zach went on to tell me that at this stage in his career, he is no longer seduced by what elsewhere I have called the "artisanal allure," the façade of creativity imbued atop the working realities of craft industries (Anderson, 2021). In fact, Zach expressed a willingness to move to a macro-brewery, citing the similar conditions but higher pay and better benefits as the reason. To paraphrase, why

work in a craft brewery with no creative control when one can work in a macro with no creative control but a lot more security and higher pay?

Here we see that even amongst production workers, there are perceived shortcomings to the craft brewing industry's self-image of autonomy and cooperation. This becomes more pronounced as one explores the other segments of its division of labour, particularly on the service and non-production support levels. However, one also sees it to a degree amongst administrative workers.

Administrative staff interviewed for this research varied in the level to which they were satisfied with their jobs. Their position in the craft brewing labour process was an arms-length from production, and their roles involved office work, client visits, outbound calls, and media relations. Those interviewed held the roles of sales director, sales coordinator and communications director. All three participants reported holding generally positive impressions of the industry leading up to their employment in it. The sales director seemed to maintain this positive impression, noting that there is a certain comradery in the craft brewing industry and that he appreciated being a positive part of the Seattle community. Although the sales coordinator also held favourable views of the industry as a whole, they communicated a certain amount of dissatisfaction at their own employment situation, comparing the brewery owner unfavorably to the BBC sitcom character Father Ted.¹³ This administrative worker, although they did not hold any hiring or firing power, reported that many other workers looked to them as the de facto manager of the brewery. As they described their position:

I'm looked to as if I'm in charge – but I'm not. Employees ask me things before they ask the owners. The taproom staff tends to come to me. I've been taking on a lot more ownership roles in moving the company forward – I've had to.

Interestingly, this worker, who enjoyed a higher wage than many of their production and service counterparts, voiced interest and enthusiasm in the prospect of unionizing the craft brewing industry. As a whole, they saw value in the work they did, but felt like they deserved greater levels of respect in the workplace, particularly due to ownership's

¹³ For those who have never seen the show, Father Ted is generally well-meaning but has a penchant for making a mess of even the simplest of tasks, while maintaining a sense of self-importance that only leads to a compounding of this effect.

lackadaisical approach to day-to-day operations. In a similar sense, the communications director at a BC brewery noted a favourable and sustaining enthusiasm for craft brewing and its promises for a different way of doing business. However, this worker, noted an abusive relationship with management, particularly in the form of sexual harassment. Overall, in this grouping of administrative workers, we see a more materially stable segment of the division of labour, but one that still finds much to critique about their place of employment.

In both of these segments, production and administration, we see a range of experience from positive to negative, mediated by worker expectations, managerial structures and levels of autonomy and control in the labour process. However, as both segments are generally secure and at least nominally better paid than other segments, one wonders what the experiences of less secure workers are. While an assistant brewer, a brewer or a sales manager might find much to disparage about their job or their employer, the day-to-day experience of work for those who work in retail, service and support is a different matter altogether. For servers, canners, bartenders and warehouse crew, the artisanal allure and the administrative comfort experienced by others often fades into the background, being replaced with the grind of high paced service, physically taxing keg cleaning and organization, or emotionally-charged interactions with the public. As we shall see in the next section, the bulk of the craft brewing workforce is made up of these segments (varying, of course, with the size of the brewery, with larger breweries depending on large numbers of support workers), and their experience only infrequently reflects the levels of glamour, dignity, and edification described by the craft brewing industry's cheerleaders.

Craft Valorization and Disposable Workers

Of course, popular discourse on craft is dominated by the figure of the craftsperson. In craft brewing this takes the form of the near worship of founding figures like Maytag and McAuliffe (two entrepreneurial heroes of the micro-brewing movement, referenced in Chapter 4). The craft brewer is easily seen in narratives of brewing and one can envision the role that other production staff play in the brewing process. But for an area of commentary and research with an irritating hyper-focus on consumption, very little attention is typically paid to those workers who aid in this consumption. For craft breweries that run a taproom, service staff often make up the majority of the company's

workforce, a workforce effectively invisibilized under the shadows of the brewer and consumer. The number of service workers at any given taproom varies, of course, with small taprooms depending on just one or two servers or bartenders and larger operations a multi-shift rotation of servers, managers, bartenders and kitchen staff. So, although not every brewery has hospitality staff and while some have few, given the preponderance of large taprooms connected to regional breweries, we can estimate the size of this workforce as substantial relative to the number of staff it actually takes to make the beer itself. However, as the @NotOurParallel49 case illustrates, these workers at times face some of the more egregious conditions in the craft brewing industry. Moreover, these conditions are exacerbated by a common internal stratification of the workforce at the level of the individual brewery that renders service and support staff as disposable at the same time that it effectively insulates owners and management from even a semblance of accountability.

As suggested in the previous section, the typical brewery is organized along a hierarchy with owners, managers and brewers enjoying a privileged position within the firm. However, we should note that while owners and managers enjoy material privileges in terms of wages/profits and organizational power, brewers' position in the hierarchy varies. The cultural distinction experienced by non-owner brewers does not necessarily translate to high wages or good benefits, as many participants repeatedly pointed out. In fact, craft brewers regularly report lower wages and worse benefits than their macro-brewing counterparts. Of course, the discursive prioritization of the craft fetish does set brewers apart within the internal hierarchy, their skilled work being valued more highly and overtly than the work of service and support staff. When set against this disparity, the craft fetish invisibilizes this often larger group of so-called unskilled workers.

In recent years this group has repeatedly taken to social media to decry the prevalence of unfair and abusive treatment, sexual harassment, and discrimination within the industry. The @NotOurP49 campaign was only an embryonic example of this and was followed in 2021 and 2022 with a pair of Instagram whistle-blowing campaigns, the first circulated by Brienne Allan in the US, the second by Erin Broadfoot in Canada (Hendry, 2022). Taken together, the campaigns not only reveal a craft industry plagued by abusive behaviour, but one that has been only too willing to turn a blind eye to the habitual prevalence of this behaviour over long periods of time.

Although many of these reports do come from brewers, many more come from the ranks of service and support. Several workers interviewed for this study fall into this latter camp and nearly all of these have either experienced or witnessed abusive or harassing behaviour in their workplace. That harassment is endemic in the industry is practically taken for granted by these workers, and many recognize that it maps onto the stratification of the workforce. According to one anonymous participant from Portland, those who find themselves on the wrong end of harassment are very frequently relegated to service jobs:

We have to talk about harassment. That has never been the case for me [a brewer]. For other people, it has been. Mostly if you're on the sales side. Front of house. I have a friend that used to be a seller and is tiny and says that sometimes it would be weird but their fight was to be heard and then getting their beer sold separately. People don't see you as legitimately part of the industry and the question becomes who stands up for you?

It is in the final sentence that we observe how the craft fetish contributes negatively to the working conditions of non-artisan craftworkers. When an industry is built upon a hero narrative meant to valorize one particular set of skilled workers, it simultaneously erases the essential work of those workers who support those skilled workers' industrial primacy.

This erasure seemingly renders these workers disposable in the eyes of management, particularly since their work is not seen as what is on offer by the industry as a whole. The service workers interviewed for this project relayed a dizzying collection of accounts of workers being dismissed (with and without cause), pushed into quitting (either overtly or due to ill-treatment), and being publicly reprimanded or humiliated. One worker was able to hear a number of these stories from their coworkers as they started the process of organizing a union drive in their brewery:

The first [issue] that jumps to mind is job security in every department. I'll just mention, in front-of-house there had recently been a lot of worry about job security, because in November, right before I started, two servers got fired and people were questioning – they were both outspoken servers. It made a lot of people worry. That was a big issue.

The worker went on to recount how at their particular workplace, outspoken and self-advocating front-of-house workers were regularly either terminated for cause (usually due to alleged lateness or attitude issues that coworkers had not observed), had their shifts cut significantly (or entirely), or were targeted for public castigation. In fact, as this worker and one of their colleagues described it, the brewery's tasting room was basically a revolving door. That management was able to quickly and repeatedly replace the dozens of workers that another of this brewery's employees observed, is a testament both to the industry's attractiveness as well as management's callous disregard for what to an outsider might seem glaring evidence of a toxic workplace.

However, as recent social media revelations have suggested, the industry is also slow to change. This is arguably due to the centrality that such a contingent workforce plays within the industry's institutional structures and discursive mythologies. How, for instance, can a self-branded craft industry continue mythologizing its rugged entrepreneurialism and rebelliousness when it overtly recognizes the traditional divisions of labour that it relies on? Put differently, should the craft brewing industry respond to the invisibilization of service and support workers by making these workers visible, they would simultaneously have to recognize that these workers are deserving of respect and remuneration beyond the social capital often on offer in the brewhouse. In valuing workers and treating them fairly, the industry would, in a general sense, have to come to terms with its position in the broader capitalist political economy, the position of an employer in an industrial sector that does not run solely on the ingenuity and passion of an artisan workforce, but, instead, depends on an army of support, service and retail workers in much the same way as do its macro-brewing counterparts. This genetic-level contradiction in the industry's discursive positioning and business practices might also explain why this industry - and others like it - has been so resistant to workers' self-organization, something that will be addressed in Chapter 7.

5.4. Working in the White Guys' Clubhouse: Race and Gender in Craft Brewing

Until very recently one local craft beer that you could reasonably expect to find on draft at any number of bars and restaurants in the Vancouver metropolitan area was Parallel 49 Brewing Company's "Gypsy Tears" Ruby Ale. Described by one *Toronto.com* blogger

as “a dark, golden-amber ale with caramel notes and hoppy bitterness” (Scarborough Mirror, 2015, n.p.), Gypsy Tears is a known quantity in Vancouver culture not only for its distinctive taste, but also for its branding, which is, to put it generously, tone-deaf. The beer’s label is adorned with a caricatured illustration of what can only be assumed to be a Roma woman wearing a bright red dress, lipstick and flower. Although the brewery has since changed the name from “Gypsy Tears” to “Ruby Tears,” its Roma mascot remains and its previous name has proven to be resilient, with that perpetual font of sensitivity, Ricky Gervais, referring to it as “gypsies’ tears” as recently as the spring of 2020 in a Tweet about his favourite beers (Turvill, 2020). The branding of Gypsy Tears was no stranger to controversy, with people in my own network ordering it by the name “the racist beer” (but somehow still unaccountably ordering it), and the brewery did eventually do the right thing by changing the name. But one questions what kind of corporate culture must exist for such a blatantly offensive name to pass muster in the first place (and for so long).¹⁴

Considering the demographics of craft brewing sheds some light on how such a decision might have been made, ostensibly without any reservations. Predictably, this consideration is a difficult one given the diffuse and emergent nature of craft brewing as an industry. While considerable attention has been paid to the demographics of craft beer consumers (e.g. Murray & O’Neil, 2012; Watson, 2014; Darwin, 2017; Watson, 2018; Sept, 2018), considerably less has been paid to those of the producers and owners themselves. We do know, thanks to the Brewers Association’s Brewery Operations Benchmarking Survey (see Herz, 2019), that men dominate craft brewery ownership and that “brewery employees are disproportionately white relative to both the general U.S. population and where breweries are located” (Watson, 2019, quoted in Herz, 2019). The survey results also indicate that production staff in craft breweries tend to be overwhelmingly male while other staff (presumably front-of-house, sales, and marketing) are more balanced in terms of gender.¹⁵ In much the same vein, preliminary

¹⁴ The Gypsy Tears example is also reminiscent of an encounter I had with a Vancouver brewery owner who made a joke of the “crack whore” who was living in the alley outside his brewery. The casualness with which sex workers, the homeless and the urban poor are dehumanized in this statement is indicative of a culture that would necessarily find its way into the taproom and production facility.

¹⁵ Data for gender categories outside the binary is seemingly unavailable. This is likely a reflection of the metrics used in designing the initial survey.

responses for a nationwide survey of craft brewery workers conducted by the Craft Brewery Workers' Alliance of Canada (or CBWAC – to be addressed in more detail in Chapter 7) show that men make up 66% of the current 82 respondents (CBWAC, 2021).¹⁶ Moreover, in the same survey, for the 77 that answered, 90% self-identify as white or Caucasian.

Until quite recently data on the racial and gender composition of the craft brewing workforce was quite hard to find, if it existed at all (Infante, 2015). In fact, as beer journalist Dave Infante argues, this is a reflection of both the industry's legacy and its priorities. When white people, especially men, make up the majority of craft beer consumers, it stands to reason that the culture of craft beer more generally will reflect their values and consumer preferences. This, in turn, according to Infante's interview participants, acts as a de facto barrier to diversity within the craft brewing workforce. And if the revelations of American Brewer Brienne Allen's 2021 social media blitz on the industry's culture of harassment, exclusion, and exploitation are a guide, we might assume this industrial culture is realized in the daily practices of craft brewing and is felt by those who it most aggressively marginalizes (Brown, 2021).¹⁷ In fact, in the present research, it is at the intersectional nexus for women and gender-diverse workers of colour that this particular form of industrial marginalization is most observable, especially in its relation to the disconnect between the industry's purported values and its practices.

Consider, for instance, the experience of Heather, a transgender Indigenous worker at a medium-scale BC brewery. Although her experience in the industry was generally quite good from the start, it didn't take long before certain toxic behaviours started to sour her otherwise optimistic read of the industry. About six months into her time as an administrative worker in a well-established brewery, Heather and two of her colleagues came forward to report a pattern of harassment and assault at the hands of a member of the brewery's managerial team. As Heather describes it:

¹⁶ This survey is open to all brewery workers in Canada and is currently ongoing. At the time of reading, the results will have almost certainly changed. Given that these data are currently incomplete, caution should be used in drawing conclusions.

¹⁷ In the late spring of 2021, Massachusetts brewer Brienne Allan, posting under the handle @RatMagnet, used her Instagram to signal boost dozens of reports of sexism and racism in the US craft brewing sector. Although the initial campaign focused mostly on instances of sexism, many reports revealed the prevalence of anti-LGBT and racist behaviours within the industry.

He was very bro-esque. He'd tell me stories and I'd not know how to tell him it was gross. It was definitely toward that end of trans-misogyny... Because this was a job for me, occasionally I would try to educate him. "You shouldn't be singing along to a song with the n word". He'd ask my opinions about other types of trans people. I don't have negative things to say about nonbinary people. I started looking for other work because of it. He had separated me off from our GM. He'd made him seem like a bad guy. He always called himself the shit filter. He was just manipulating. [In terms of dressing] If I didn't try he would ignore me, but if I felt more fem he'd look me up and down. It's a conflict when you're a trans woman - who is trying to give you compliments? Ok... I thought maybe he was just trying. The stories he would tell would get worse and worse and he'd try to get me on sales trips with him... At the time I was saying no, but lightly. But then I told him that I was dating and he laid off. He gave me a hug after I got a tattoo and he grabbed my ass. I didn't tell anyone and just went home and went to my room. Then he changed targets as these guys do when they're not successful. The whole time he'd been talking to coworkers about what's "going on downstairs." He'd tell them things like "If I were drunk enough I'd totally do it." And these were his subordinates.

Galling as this pattern of behaviour is, the silver-lining to Heather's story is that the brewery responded immediately to the allegations once she reported the behaviour, terminating the manager's employment nearly overnight. We should, of course, recognize that the manager's behaviour took place over a number of years, and in a brewery where other workers had observed it, even being the recipients of his comments and stories.

Such overtly abusive behaviour over such a long period would hopefully stand out as an exception rather than a rule, but as the Brienne Allan and Erin Broadfoot social media whistle-blowing campaigns have revealed, this is decidedly not the case. In fact, similar long-term patterns of behaviour were observed by other workers interviewed for this project. Two workers at a Vancouver brewery recounted their observations of and experience with a member of managerial staff – in this case, the head chef – who routinely abused and harassed not only their own direct subordinates, but anyone in the brewery who they saw as below them in the workplace pecking order. As one worker put

it, “This head chef is someone who numerous, numerous [people] have been victim of in terms of being talked down to, being yelled at – blatant harassment I would say.” The worker went on to describe that this was a habitual behaviour that was not only tolerated in the brewery, but characterized managerial culture in a more holistic sense.

For this worker, ownership’s and upper-management’s unwillingness to deal with repeated reports of the chef’s behaviour was in-keeping with a “bro-code” within the brewery’s leaders:

[The chef] and the owners were completely in cahoots with each other. They were, because the owners were six bros and [the chef] is a bro – they love him because he just follows what they say. So he has a lot of power. So many staff would agree that he should have been fired long ago, even considering that people have spoken up about him, but that has led to nothing. He’s also a bad chef and a bad manager.

According to the worker, the situation really came to a head, and the cultural priorities of ownership and management were laid bare, when a junior member of the managerial team attempted to speak out against the toxic workplace. According to the worker, this manager was dismissed shortly after, and it is the worker’s view that this was in retaliation for their reporting of the chef. The worker’s account, although not first hand, does mesh with what one might expect in terms of managerial treatment of a whistleblower:

The main event [was] the assistant manager getting fired. That was the cherry on top of the bullshit. It’s a long story, but to sum it up, it was a political firing to be sure. There were some issues to how he managed, but when he was fired those issues weren’t brought up. The main, from his understanding, was that the head chef instigated the firing; and of course, the chef shouldn’t have power over the front-of-house assistant manager. One of the things people were upset about was he was outspoken about the quality of the beer and he tried to call out the chef over how he treated women staff... There was a lot of sketchiness in his account. That day he was in a managers meeting with [the front-of-house manager] and a newly promoted member of management and everything was normal. They had a two hour meeting and after that he was called upstairs to get

fired, and the chef and the general manager were both there, and the chef did all the talking and the general manager just sat by looking awkward. It gets worse. What the chef was saying was that “It seems that your time has come and that you don’t respect the company very much” They gave him a month’s severance. That was that.

This story paints a picture of a workplace characterized by a privileged in-crowd that enjoys cultural and institutional power, even beyond what some members should possess on paper. And, although the most egregious examples of this interaction between preferential treatment and harassment were observed in the hospitality spaces of the brewery, it didn’t go unnoticed by back-of-house support staff. As one brewing assistant recounted, the owners of this particular brewery presided over a “guys’ club” where men were almost automatically accepted into their inner-circle and women, with a few exceptions, were excluded. This was, according to the server, written into the foundations of the industrial culture: “This highlights the culture of this workplace and the industry in general. Where it’s a total boys club, like 100 percent.”

This is a characteristic of craft brewing culture and the craft brewing labour process at a seemingly industrial level, not being limited to individual workplaces. Again, one of the major takeaways of recent social media whistle-blowing campaigns has been the more widespread recognition that craft brewing has a pervasive sexism, racism, and anti-LGBTQ problem. With such pervasive levels of gender-based harassment and abuse and other forms of discrimination, one should consider just what is supposed to make craft brewing, or other craft industries, qualitatively different from more traditional capitalist enterprises. If craft is meant to connote a care for product and process, that care seemingly stops at the level of the worker, their background, and their identity. In this sense, craft isn’t so much an exception but rather a continuation of the coercive, discriminatory, and ultimately regressive labour processes and industrial cultures of capitalism writ large. To put this assertion into perspective, let us close out this section with this reflection from a production support worker at a BC contract brewery:

I’ve definitely seen from my life experiences similar levels of patriarchy and misogyny in other industries, even non-profits which are supposed to be more feminized. It’s so ingrained in our interactions, it’s just going to be there. If there’s more cis men working in a place it’s going to be more overt. It’s just so

normalized in breweries... With how things currently are I feel like the daily violence of capitalism and being a low-wage worker is just accepted as if there's nothing you can do, something you just have to be okay with, and the sense is that the misogyny on top of that is the problem.

5.5. New Marketing, Old Exploitation

The idea of craft industrialism is one that acknowledges the pliability of the concept of craft and how this pliability is mobilized under the expansionary impulses of industrial production. In the case of craft brewing, although small, non-expansionary breweries have existed and continue to exist (Portland's Moonshrimp Brewing is a perfect example of this), the imperatives of surplus value production and capital expansion are still major driving forces for most craft breweries, whether intentionally or simply due to their existence and need to survive in a competitive capitalist economic system. Additionally, as we have seen, the particular form of production is often only nominally craft-oriented, replacing the centrality of a craftsperson's skills with a slew of organizational commitments, orientations, and branding soundbites, supported through the hierarchical control of a complex labour process and variably sized workforces of non-artisan craftworkers. In fact, as we have seen and as we will continue to explore in Chapter 7, the bulk of the craft brewing workforce does not brew or even assist in the brewing process. Instead, most craft brewery workers work in front of house sales and service or in back of house support roles like packaging and warehousing. Furthermore, the industry is simultaneously dependent on a proximal industrial ecosystem of distribution, marketing and retail. Viewed through this lens, one might be forgiven for dismissing the whole craft brewing movement as a cynical reappropriation of the resistant, rebellious attitudes that underpin the craft ethos as a whole. Of course, such a wholesale dismissal would necessarily include dismissing some of the anti-corporate sentiments that animated the micro-brewing movement initially and that, as we will see in Chapter 7, have morphed into a form of working class consciousness in some brewing contexts. This is not to say that we should not recognize craft brewing for what it is: a capitalist industry. Similarly, we should be clear that the craft and localist rhetoric used by this capitalist enterprise often serves to mask the exploitation and hierarchy on which it depends.

What this chapter contributes to the analysis of craft as a category is that although it is easily applied to a certain productive aesthetic, it is less commonly reflected in the labour process, in this case that of craft brewing. Whereas the industry's self-image is built atop the mythical figure of the craft brewer, this figure is both a minority within the craft brewing workforce and, typically, an underpaid counterpart to the macrobrewer. With an army of service and support workers contributing both productive and unproductive labour within the craft brewing labour process, often in the most essential roles (packaging, sales, warehousing, deliveries, hospitality, etc.), the central importance of the craft brewer as innovator and skilled worker seems less assured. As this chapter has argued, the creative and skilled work of the craft brewer can be seen more accurately as a fetish, a means by which the craft brewing industry valorizes a mythical category while applying a more-or-less traditional Fordist labour process. Furthermore, for such a fetish to function at a non-self-conscious level, it is supplemented by a systematic invisibilization of the army of craftworkers upon which it is built. The pervasiveness of harassment, abuse, and discrimination that has come to wide public attention in recent years pays testament to the manner by which craft industrialism's self-mythologizing hides an approach to business that differs little from mainstream industrial formations it purports to oppose. Craft, in a sense, is simply a rebranding of the basic practices and conditions that characterize all capitalist labour processes. It is new marketing for old exploitation.

Chapter 6. Digital vs. Analogue: Material Fabrication and Immaterial Labour

Evangelists of the digital revolution seem much harder to find today than two decades ago. Since the turn of the century the rose-coloured promises of the techno-utopian set have buckled under the realities of the widespread insecurity and casualness of the app economy, as well as the proliferation of misinformation and its concomitant political ramifications. Whereas in the early part of the decade digital media evoked images of informational abundance, new opportunities for work and leisure and new levels of high connectivity, today's 'platform economy' stands out as a stark reassertion of the concentrated control of the means of production more commonly thought to characterize high Fordism, not necessarily because there has been any kind of significant political economic shift but rather because we allowed ourselves to expect something else, something better. In a contemporary context where digital platforms have delivered us increasingly gigified forms of work – from micro-task crowd-working to app-mediated 'disruptions' in food delivery, transportation, and lodging – and where right-wing populists have effectively hacked (technically and culturally) their way to power, the starry-eyed optimism levelled at the early iterations of 'web 2.0' seems, at best, naïve.

Of course, the outcome of the digital revolution was not an instantaneous surprise. The decades-long processes of precarization and informalization that developed alongside the increasingly digital nature of work in places like the United States and Canada were felt realities for countless workers, the gulf between the optimistic predictions and the insecure realities glaring in everyday experience. In fact, in recent years a healthy amount of attention has been paid to the disillusioned young workers who were heralded as the coming 'creative class.' Educated to be productive members of the knowledge economy, in the second decade of the 21st century, many young graduates found themselves facing a receding job market where their creative and digital skills were not as automatically marketable as they had been led to believe (Standing, 2011; Lorusso, 2019; Morgan & Nelligan, 2018; Crawford, 2009). As such, as we will see shortly, many were forced to find alternative means of employment, often along the same middle-class lines as their initial aspirations as creative workers; the proverbial case here being the underemployed creative working as a waitress or retail clerk. Although in the contemporary economy and with the rise of making and entrepreneurial ideology, it is

reasonable to assume that some of these creative workers elect instead to follow a creative pursuit outside of their initial vocational training.

In this chapter we will interrogate the trend among young creative workers toward making and material fabrication, especially as an entrepreneurial activity. Supplemented with observations from participants who see themselves as creatives or who have previously worked in digital and informational industries, the chapter will consider the peculiar parallels between knowledge work and craft work. Key to our exploration will be a critical engagement with the theory of immaterial labour which found some notoriety amongst critical labour scholars around the same time that *Wired Magazine*, Steve Jobs and the like were declaring a brave new digital world (Hardt & Negri, 2000; Lazzarato, 1996). Beginning with an account of Hardt and Negri's (2000) theorization of a new hegemonic form of labour characteristic of 21st century capitalism, we will consider how the rise of craft work in the global north over the last decade complicates the notion of immateriality in the information age, ultimately questioning to what extent this reassertion of the material is both a challenge to and product of the informationalization of economic life in the global north. As such, in the sections that follow we will first question the foundations of the proposition that in the 21st century digitally mediated work makes up a new hegemonic form of labour globally and undergirds a new class formation of the multitude. By probing the limits of the concept of immaterial labour we will then consider the degree to which the recent rise in making and craft reasserts a particular form of materiality informed by the ethics of localized commodity chains, desires for traditional social connectivity, and a motivation among many workers and entrepreneurs to transcend the ubiquity of digital sociality. This will lead us to a key complication in the materiality of craft, specifically that craft industries and the maker movement are highly digitized and ultimately modeled very closely to the digital industries some craftworkers and makers seem so desperate to escape. Finally, to close the chapter, we will examine the ideological imperative of creativity, what Angela McRobbie (2016) calls the "creative dispositif," and track its evolution into a "craft dispositif" as argued by Luckman and Phillipov (2020), ultimately leading us to consider the levels of individualism and fragmentation that such an ideological orientation necessarily reinforces.

6.1. Immaterial Labour and the Fragmented Digital Workforce

In their 2000 book *Empire*, Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt attempt to diagnose the material and subjective dimensions of labour under digital capitalism and the decentralized, borderless global structure of power that they call empire. In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, they argue, labour became increasingly digitally mediated, affective and geared toward the production of immaterial commodities and services. In their estimation, this marks a shift toward a new hegemonic form of labour emerging to replace the Fordist paradigm that characterized the 20th century. This new hegemonic labour, what they call immaterial labour, is conceived as that work that produces immaterial commodities – knowledge, symbolic content, affective services, and the like – or that is marked by an affective or cognitive labour process. Although some scholars, particularly Maurizio Lazzarato, recognize the material distinction between immaterial production and immaterially mediated work, Hardt and Negri characterize immaterially mediated work as increasingly informed by the logics of the computer and the network – even if the end commodity is material, the connective, informational, and affective dimensions of immaterial labour still inform its labour process. In such a conceptualization the app developer and the retail clerk would both, arguably, fall within the realm of immaterial labour, the former directly producing immaterial commodities, the latter engaging in the production of an affective service mediated by a digital machine. In Hardt and Negri's account, this immaterial labour is a key ingredient in the networkization of global production: digital tools administrating global value chains, informational practices and technologies informing the labour process, and capital moving toward a globally dependent but deterritorialized mode of accumulation.

Italian philosopher Maurizio Lazzarato (building upon Negri but writing before the publication of *Empire*) further refines this idea by arguing that the hegemony of immaterial labour is additionally marked by a certain entrepreneurial ethic (Lazzarato, 1996). According to Lazzarato, in the post-Fordist context, the contractual relationship between worker and employer transitions to a more footloose situation where “A polymorphous self-employed autonomous work has emerged as the dominant form, a kind of ‘intellectual worker’ who is him- or herself an entrepreneur” (pg. 139). This is a dialectical tension that is further elucidated by Italian critic Silvio Lorusso (2019), who argues that in the 21st century, cultural workers facing precarious conditions are

simultaneously interpellated as entrepreneurs and expected to organize their lives around entrepreneurial rhythms. As noted in Chapter 4, this entrepreneurial conditioning on the part of contract workers and self-employed creatives is a key characteristic of working life under neoliberalism, which is especially relevant in the case of craft work when considered against the narratives of creativity and autonomy championed by many of its proponents.

By way of example, consider the case of Mike, an alcohol importer and brewery owner in Vancouver. Trained in business administration and working in software development, Mike was dissatisfied with work in the software industry and actively sought out an opportunity to work for himself on a project about which he was passionate. When asked about how he decided on brewing, here is what he had to say:

How did I decide – I don't know that I did decide. I've been a homebrewer for a long period; I decided I wanted to own a brewery and decided that I should know how to make beer and how to sell. This was nine or ten years ago. I started an import agency and that kinda took off and became its own company.

He goes on to explain that while beer had been his hobby, he actually approached it more seriously than he did his software career. In this example Mike stands out as the prototypical immaterial worker, a software designer, who is footloose and entrepreneurially predisposed. His transition to operating an import business falls, likewise, into the immaterial labour paradigm as it is almost certainly mediated by tailored inventory management and sales software while also contributing to what Hardt and Negri refer to as the global “deterritorialization of production.” And, like the creative workers we have encountered so far, Mike's positioning as a relatively privileged knowledge worker also put him in the position to capitalize on his interest in brewing. We should note, however, that in Mike's account, the desire to own the business actually predated his development of the brewing hobby: “I decided I wanted to own a brewery and decided that I should know how to make beer...”

Mike's relative privilege, although common amongst many contemporary craftworkers and entrepreneurs, is far from the rule. The more common condition faced by immaterial labour is that of entrepreneurially leveraged insecurity. In the platform economy as workers dance from gig to gig, they face a situation wherein they must simultaneously

build up their own brand. English labour economist Guy Standing calls this entrepreneurial imperative ‘work for labour,’ the tasks of self-marketing, skill acquisition, and credential seeking standing as a further barrier to employment. This is, of course, similar to the concept of ‘hope labour’ introduced in Chapter 4. Both of these ideas, however, point toward a peculiar dynamic of working life under the conditions of immaterial labour. This entrepreneurial spirit paired with the mediation of digital technology and the increasing precarity of the 21st century leads to a bleeding in the distinction between work and life.

This blurring of boundaries, described by autonomist Marxists as “the social factory” (Tronti, 1962), opens new territories of social life to the processes of valorization. Hope labour, entrepreneurial hobbyism, and flexibility more generally introduce the home and lifeworld as satellites of the exploitative relationship. This is, according to Richard Sennett (1998) an extension of the technical control imposed by Taylorism, this time through a screen rather than a stopwatch. As Sennett explains, in the knowledge economy “Work is physically decentralized, power of the worker is more direct. Working at home is the ultimate island of the new regime” (Sennett, 1998, pg. 59).

We should pause, of course, to account for the degree to which craft work should be considered part of the knowledge economy, particularly as this latter category, like immaterial labour, is often applied to the understanding of vocational and economic interactions mediated by informational commodities. I have argued elsewhere (Anderson, 2019) that considerations of cultural and creative work should account for the movement toward localized materiality that craft represents. If, following Florida (2012), and his critics (for example, McRobbie, 2016), we accept the proposition that the knowledge economy – and by extension immaterial labour - relies heavily on the ingenuity and creativity of workers, the treatment of creativity and of creative labour should not be limited only to those forms of work that produce informational or immaterial commodities. Just as traditional art objects represent the translation of creativity into physical form through productive activity, the same can be said of many craft objects (this is assuming that there is a clear distinction between art and craft, a contentious assumption perhaps best left for art theorists).¹⁸ Under such a view, the

¹⁸ I have strategically sidestepped this debate for the purposes of the present analysis, but it is one that has been present in craft discourse since at least the 19th century. Particularly valuable

production of both art and craft is a creative, cultural activity, and should be considered part of the cognitive enclosure presented by the knowledge economy. Put differently, craft work is a material manifestation of the intellectualization and affective transformation of work under the knowledge economy.

That craft production is something distinct from immaterial labour may strike one as obvious, but this may not necessarily be the case. Although Hardt & Negri (2000) suggest that immaterial labour is both the production of immaterial commodities as well as affective work commonly mediated by these commodities, in the form of digital platforms, this assertion has been challenged by critics who suggest that such a definition places the parameters of this hegemonic labour at the point of the commodity produced rather than the conditions of that production (Camfield, 2007). Craft labour can be conceived as a category that is often immaterially mediated (through design applications, high-tech tools like 3-D printers, or online marketplaces), but that results in a material commodity. Of course, what results is a form of work that puts the inadequacy of the concept of immaterial labour in sharp focus. With craft, particularly in the kinds of making typical of makerspaces, we observe an immaterially mediated form of material production where the digital means of production (high technology tools) are, generally, relegated to a secondary position discursively in order to prop up the material output. Whereas in Hardt and Negri's account of immaterial labour, digital tools are commonly celebrated and fetishized, in craft the material is reasserted in its primacy rendering the act of making a particularly 'real' activity as opposed to those forms of work that one might more commonly associate with immaterial labour or the knowledge economy. Craft, even in its digitally mediated form, symbolically disconnects the maker from the digital world and reconnects them to an image of materiality made up of 'real' work done by 'hand,' physical goods, and a local community.

6.2. Finding Connection through Disconnection

Emily was disillusioned with her day job. A graphic designer by trade, she was dismayed to realize just how much of her working life was spent behind a screen. The creative process of studio work still appealed to her greatly, but she worried that part of life in a

commentaries on the tension between art and craft can be found in the work of Dave Beech (2020) and Peter Dormer (1994), among others.

city like Vancouver was compromising between creative autonomy and financial security. It was during this period of uncertainty that Emily started knitting as a release from her corporate design job and hanging out at the Vancouver Hack Space (a well-known local makerspace), and all of a sudden something clicked: “Oh my god I get it now.’ I need to have the hands on... I started getting into fiber and I got really curious - in the same way that hackers were hacking code, fiber was my source code.”

As this example illustrates, in many ways the material ethic that sits at the foundation of attitudes about making is heavily informed by the digital saturation that many of us feel on a daily basis. The subjective position of perpetual connectivity and the potential always to be reeled back into work or social relationships through social media and other digital communication tools, is, as Canadian journalist Michael Harris (2014) observes, experienced as a kind of loss – of privacy, solitude, and the physical connections of social and working life. The maker movement’s focus on material production and traditional technique is often articulated as a conviction that hands-on productive practice holds the potential to reassert material connection in a world in which social life is increasingly mediated digitally. Emily’s testimony about the isolating nature of corporate design work is instructive in this regard. The maker movement provided Emily not only a connection with a like-minded community but with raw materials and a physical process. As she explains it: “Actually making the thing, even in a primitive way, connected me to the process. It made me see a lot of the exploitation and the commodification of folk art, taking the soul out of this humanistic basic need that we need to connect.” In fact, it was this realization that motivated Emily and some colleagues to start the Vancouver Mini Maker Faire, which was an annual gathering of makers and crafters from the Vancouver metropolitan area and beyond (also discussed in the Introduction to this dissertation). Emily describes the program as a product of community and connection. In her recollection:

It was really a community run thing, in the first year especially. It was amazing to leverage that shared excitement into a kind of show and tell. It was driven by connecting communities and that was really exciting to me. I was excited to do the first year and the excitement kept going.

The event was massively popular in the Vancouver area, eventually becoming unruly due to its immense scale.

This does reflect, however, one of the common refrains of the maker movement, that it brings people together. The connection to the material process that Emily describes is simultaneously a connection with like-minded individuals. At times this interaction with the material actually serves as a reminder of life outside of the immaterial. The maker space, the craft fair, and the brewing conference or festival appear, in this regard, as spaces for material community and connection outside of the digital sphere. The maker ethos in many respects is one not only of material production but of sharing and community building. Although the movement and the spaces are heavily informed by the digital technologies and communities that drive interest and connect people outside of geographical space, the local iterations find their niche in connecting people in the physical world. In fact, later in our interview, Emily went so far as to suggest that voluntary communities like makerspaces are increasingly serving as stand-ins for the interpersonal support networks one likely could have depended on in their local communities even a generation ago. Whereas social media seemingly drives disconnection through connection, for Emily, voluntary communities do the opposite, building connection through disconnection (from the digital world).

This connection is experienced not only as a reconnection to the physical community around the maker, but also to the material world more broadly. As Sarah R. Davies (2017) suggests in her description of the 'hacker spirit': "As a hacker you become engaged with the realities of how such products are created and can therefore understand their value. You lose your disconnection from the stuff around you, the alienation that the majority of people experience..." (pg. 65). This is a critical observation in that it recognizes the material means of value production through physical manipulation. It is also a sentiment reaffirmed by many participants. As Anton, a member of the Vancouver Hack Space explained it: "It makes you realize the effort it takes to make something, and it connects you directly to the thing. If you make something you appreciate it more than if you just purchase it as a commodity and hopefully that will lead you to consume less." In much the same way, Emily agreed that making has the potential to challenge the cultural default of consumerism. As she puts it: "the amount of consumption we go through in our society is just absurd and it is killing us... we can be more responsible, and not in an oppressive way but in one that will actually empower us." In assessments like these, the maker stands out as a physical bulwark against both the disconnection of the digital world and the mass consumption that it helps to fuel. In a

sense, the reconnection to material fabrication is freeing for the maker or artisan. To use a cliché, in getting one's hands dirty, one reaffirms that they are doing "real work."

However, at the heart of such an assessment of the work of the maker or of the artisan is the risk of fetishizing the material labour that seemed to hold a hegemonic position in some age of yore, particularly in post-war North America. Consider, as an example, the case of Brad, a commercial painter and one-time brewery worker. As a tradesperson, Brad isn't someone who would typically get grouped together with makers. However, as a brewery worker, Brad observed first-hand the kinds of aspirational value his co-workers projected onto physical labour processes. In our interview, Brad described this return to the material as a kind of rebellion, especially for university educated workers who, in working with their hands, are bucking expectations:

It's somewhat rebellious because people think it's cool because we're in a post-industrial country. I think returning to actual production has a grimy-ness to it and a realness to it that you won't get in customer service or in most workplaces. I think that's the actual rebelliousness in it: working with your hands, working on a production line. Rebelling against these norms of society, that you're supposed to work at a call centre or whatever... That's a huge appeal, the idea of working with your hands when you're not expected to. I say that as someone with a college degree working in the trades. That keeps me going every day, you get to pretend a little bit.

In a way, Brad's remarks drive at the heart of some of Morgan and Nelligan's (2018) observations about creative life in the 21st century, especially in light of the extreme precarity experienced by creative and cultural workers in post-industrial, northern economies. Why would the alienation of gigification and immateriality not extend to crafters, makers and tradespeople? In a sense, a return to the trades, to the physical experience of making things stands out as a rejection of the neoliberal status quo and of the impersonal political economic forces that have seemingly shunted the "professionalized" dreams of so many university-educated workers. And this rejection, as Brad notes functions as a pressure release and a kind of play-acting where a worker can both pursue a more direct and seemingly honest living while also not feeling uprooted and disembodied.

The cultural cachet of material fabrication as exemplified by craft industries and the maker movement reflects a kind of fetishization of physical work, one where this work is assumed to be more socially valuable, more insulated from the forces of corporatization and neoliberalization that shaped the late-20th and early-21st century economy. This is something that Brad explored in some depth in reflecting on his own post-university vocational journey. As he explains:

I think a lot of it is nostalgia and a desire for something real. But I mean the dominant political trend of neoliberalism is obviously pushing all the industrial work into the rest of the world where you can get much cheaper labour. I think it's something that will continue as a form of nostalgia, but when you look at trade agreements, NAFTA, GM shutting down and having to be lured back, it's like you've got a little cup and you're trying to keep a ship floating. It is just a fetishization of the 1950s or the 1920s or something like that. The current political trends won't allow for it. It's in part trying to negotiate that loss.

The nostalgia that Brad describes is one that easily maps onto Richard Sennett's (1998) critique of working life at the turn of the century. For Sennett, working life in the late 1990s often manifested as a loss of control for working people through the processes of networkization and flexibilization that seem common-sensical today. In the work regime that Sennett observed taking shape, workers were expected to quickly adapt to change, reject the standard routine of the Taylorized workplace and thrive under tumultuous conditions. The worker described by Brad, on the other hand, and the one that we have encountered continuously in the previous chapters – the artisan or craftsperson – seems to act on a desire to wrest control back from the impersonal forces of semio-capitalism, sometimes opting for predictability, routine and materiality. This is, of course, reflective of a key contradiction in the reorganization of work in the neoliberal and digital age: workers are purported to enjoy greater levels of autonomy and flexibility, all the while having their work further and further disciplined by digital routines and interfaces.

This rejection simply reflects a preference for a more squarely material manifestation of the labour process and one where the worker can maintain some illusion of control, regardless of the continuation of the capitalist formations that predetermine their productive activity, be that activity entrepreneurial or amateur making, or artisanal labour in a craft industry. And this, in the end, reveals the political-subjective danger of this line

of flight: that in pursuing an individual respite from the demands and expectations of working life in the digital age, artisans and craftworkers actually reproduce the atomization that the neoliberal restructuring depends on. Just as Fred Turner (2006) observed for the drop-out and back-to-the-land streams of countercultural communalism, a retreat into making and traditional crafting runs the risk of reinforcing individualism and the assumption that we can all only intervene in the political economic sphere through our isolated actions of rejection – cynically, we should not be numbers, unless that number is one. In opting out, in disconnecting, the maker or artisan continues to stand separated from the forms of class power that could be used to challenge these conditions more directly.

6.3. Finding the Material through the Immaterial

“Making reminds us of our agency within the physical world” (Luckman, 2015, pg. 82).

Even in light of the material connectivity that drives much of the discourse around craft and making, the maker movement embodies a particularly immaterially motivated character in terms of its relationship to digital technology. Historically growing out of European hacker communities (particularly of the anarchist variety), makerspaces and the maker movement have a complex relationship with network technologies and technologically mediated design and fabrication (Davies, 2017). As Derek Gaw¹⁹, co-founder of Maker Labs in Vancouver, recounts the history of the North American maker movement and specifically Maker Faire, “Maker Faire started alongside consumer 3D printing and consumer automation. In the past ten years it has decreased in cost dramatically. All these robotic or computer controlled tools have become more accessible.” In our interview, Gaw recounted his own journey into the maker movement, which started when he was a tech worker in Silicon Valley, working for both Amazon and a gaming start-up. Looking for a change, Gaw returned home to Vancouver, shortly thereafter deciding to take a break from the software sector and engage what he describes as a market experiment by opening the Laser Cutter Café. A laser cutter, it should be noted, is a tool that translates digital designs into carving and etching of

¹⁹ I interviewed Derek Gaw for a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada funded study of the Canadian digital economy organized under the project title “Creating Digital Opportunity.” As a research assistant on this project I was granted permission to use its data and findings in my own PhD work and subsequent publications.

material objects, and the Laser Cutter Café offered patrons two machines for on-demand use. Although the Café only existed as an independent enterprise for a short period, Gaw re-opened it in the Maker Labs makerspace. For Gaw, the services he offers through his enterprises – first in the Laser Cutter Café and later at Maker Labs – provide access to space and, especially, tools that simply would not typically be available to people in expensive urban locales like Vancouver.

Like 3-D printers, laser cutters are common tools in makerspaces and serve to illustrate the deep connection between making and new digital technologies. Although many makers invariably utilize more traditional machine and hand tools in their making activities, in walking through a makerspace one is just as likely to see people designing things on computers that will, at least in the initial stages, be printed or laser cut. However, one wonders whether a printed or laser cut object is a craft object. If, on the one hand, a craft object is necessarily one made exclusively by hand, then one wouldn't count these particular items under such a category. However, if a craft object is one wherein skill, scale, and attention to quality intersect, then we might be able to extend the designation to these digitally assisted fabrications – something that craft commentators like Richard Sennett (2008) and Malcolm McCullough (1996) do readily. More importantly though is the overt craft orientation adopted by the maker movement more generally, theirs being a culture of skill development, collaboration, and attention to process. Regardless of the technical complexity of the tools at hand, it is these latter cultural values that one observes most readily not only in the maker movement literature, but in the daily activities of the makerspaces themselves.

To some degree, these values both transcend and build upon the digital technologies and communities that they emerge out of. Whereas the maker movement has been bolstered by online communities like Make, Ravelry and the like, and while makerspaces are often financially underpinned by the technical apparatuses they furnish for use by amateurs and hobbyists – laser cutters, 3D printers, and so on – it is the pursuit of the best possible material result and the experience of the object's physicality that motivates many members of these communities.

An interesting illustration furnished by Gaw is the carnivalesque moving art pieces of Burning Man. These art installations, assembled in the desert and appreciated in a communal fashion, represent to Gaw the deeper physical appeal of making. So, while in

his spaces he provides the digital tools necessary for users to create complex physical works, this is not the underlying appeal of the movement. Making, for Gaw, is more than design and it goes “beyond just building things digitally.” For many makers, making connects one to their physical surroundings and craft materials. This is easily seen when watching a woodworker, but even those craft processes that are undertaken with the aid of digital tools are reported by makers interviewed for this project as grounding at the level of place and material.

A few months after our initial interview, I visited my previous participant Anton at the makerspace where he volunteers. He kindly offered to give me a tour of the Vancouver Hack Space, a makerspace near Commercial Drive in East Vancouver. Like Maker Labs, which I had visited some months earlier, Vancouver Hack Space is a harmonious mix of computer workstations, community amenities, and more traditional hand and power tools. These last were located near the back of the space, and although I expected to be most interested in these tools and their users (given the focus of the present study), I found myself continually drawn to the communal work table that dominated the front room of the space. Around this table sat about ten makers working independently and in small groups. Some were focused on wiring small electrical devices, others were watching tutorials on their laptops or programming for a project, but what seemed to unite them was a convivial and communal attitude to this thing that they were all doing together: making.

I was particularly struck by an interaction with a pair of makers sitting on either side of Anton and myself. On our right was a young man entering specifications for a component of an artwork he was creating, partially by using the laser cutter. On our left a young woman was watching a video about a 19th or early 20th century knitting machine used for making single socks. She explained that as a knitter, she appreciated the physical manipulation of the yarn, but she chose not to “turn my nose up” to tools and machinery that can result in a better product. The young artist agreed, telling us that the components that he ran through the laser cutter came out more consistently than anything he could make by hand. Both agreed that machines, both of the digital and mechanical variety, could aid craft practice just as much as hinder it. What was important, for both of these makers, was the maker’s approach to their work and their connection to the community more generally.

It is no secret that this dissertation is critical of craft capitalism, but this should not be read as a charge against the profound motivations of makers themselves. On display, both at Vancouver Hack Space and Maker Labs, is a sense of community and cooperation that one does not commonly see in less voluntary associations – like the workplace. Sitting together around the collective work table, makers were connecting with their projects, their community, and the physical space all at the same time. This connection is both laudable and inspirational. It points to the potential of community and collective effort. However, at the same time, this connection is arguably marred by a maker movement and craft wave that, although purportedly motivated by a counter-productionist ethos, is so easily coopted by business imperatives, either at the site of production in the form of corporate maker spaces, practice in the form of entrepreneurial making, or distribution through the corporate enclosure of craft fairs and online craft marketplaces.

6.4. The Creative dispositif and Craft Capitalism

In *The Corrosion of Character*, sociologist Richard Sennett laments the loss of vocational identity as a cultural mainstay of 20th century capitalism. For Sennett, the flexibilization of work in the 1990s paired with the proliferation of new informational and productive technologies, presented an existential challenge to the working subjectivities of the newest stage of accumulation, depriving workers of the satisfaction of immersing themselves in their work and deriving meaning therefrom. In some sense, Sennett lays responsibility for this transformation of the individual experience of work at the feet of the processes of deskilling and the concentration of planning and design described in Chapter 2. However, in this account, the introduction of new flexible routines into the labour process, although offering a potential antidote to the dehumanizing routinization of Fordism, actually risks compounding the alienation introduced by the division of labour. The casualty here being the further separation of the worker from their work, this time in terms of the ways in which the worker views themselves as a productive subject, as a particular kind of worker.

What Sennett could not have recognized from his vantage in the 1990s is how the newest spirit of capital would go about interpellating these newly devotionalized working subjects. As it turns out, part of this process involves convincing workers to identify not with their formal vocation but with their aspirations, much in the way

commonly associated with the always-aspiring actor/waiter. As George Morgan and Pariece Nelligan (2018) demonstrate in their examination of the attitudes and experiences of creative workers in the gig economy, precariously employed workers often relate to their current employment as temporary, opting instead to identify with that vocation they hope to pursue, the creative endeavour about which they are passionate. Finding and keeping creatively satisfying work in a deeply insecure and aggressively competitive labour market requires that workers reflect these conditions in their own vocational development, becoming what Morgan and Nelligan (2018) call “*labile labour*: mobile, spontaneous, malleable and capable of being aroused by new vocational possibilities”(pg. 85, emphasis in original). In contrast to the stability and groundedness of worker characteristics under Fordism, Morgan and Nelligan see *labile labour* as necessarily liquid, the only constants being the creative disposition and passion-oriented goal, rather than the formal working arrangement that would anchor that form of vocational identity described by Sennett.

When applied to the category of the craftsperson, the idea of the kind of hope labour (Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013) involved in *labile labour* has a particularly creative character – the vocational aspirations of craftspeople standing out as markedly individualistic. This individuation is much wider than the craft or maker movements, and the imperative of individual creativity paired with a flexible work ethic might be considered markers of the new spirit of capitalism. As Angela McRobbie (2016) explains:

The flamboyantly auteur relation to creative work, which has long been the mark of being a writer, artist, film director or fashion designer, is now being extended to a much wider section of a highly ‘individuated workforce’ (pg. 18).

Here McRobbie is describing the ways in which creative work is romanticized in popular culture and in our popular imaginaries. For McRobbie, creativity is a means by which today’s workers, be they designers or retail clerks, are disciplined into the workflows of the 21st century economy and whereby they are compelled to sell not only their labour power but their more affective capabilities. In this sense, creativity affords employers the capacity to subjugate previously untouchable portions of workers’ lifeworlds, subjecting their emotions, aspirations, and metaphysical dispositions to the structures of production.

It is this dynamic which drives what McRobbie conceives of as the creative dispositif, that socio-political and cultural logic of creativity by which workers are acclimated to the precarious, flexibilized and more subjectively exploitative rhythms of post-Fordist accumulation. Here McRobbie builds upon the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault, particularly the concept of the dispositif (or apparatus), a nexus of social relations that coalesce into a historically specific discursive and institutional imperative constructed under the guise of a social “need.” As Foucault defines it, a dispositif is “a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic positions – in short, the said as much as the unsaid” (Foucault, 2008, pg. 194). What is distinctive about this Foucaultian concept is the central importance that the social imperative plays in relation to the dominant cultural practices of the context in question. In adopting the terminology and conceptual framework of this Foucaultian approach, McRobbie attempts to diagnose the motivations of creative workers at a social rather than individual level – a difficult task given the highly individualized nature of creative work in the 21st century economy. Furthermore, perhaps the most crucial ingredient in this complex of cultural and political economic relations is the replacement of material remuneration in the form of the wage relation with the more affective and non-monetary reward of creative fulfilment. The creative dispositif in McRobbie’s use, reinforces new forms of working and new job types, while simultaneously

...managing a key sector of the youthful population by turning culture into an instrument of both competition and labour discipline... It is a deployment of power to encourage self-actualization through being creative. It is a matter of putting creativity to work (pg. 38).

This ‘social wage’ is put to work throughout the creative and cultural industries and is often expressed in terms of an aspirational approach to labour, regardless of working conditions, remuneration or potential for security or mobility. The aspiring musician, designer or writer is drawn by their passion into a cycle of precarity, contractual instability, and overwork all the while being paid in the perceived social rewards or doing what they love and expressing themselves. This tendency is extended in craft and artisanry through a purported reconnection to materiality and tradition (Luckman & Phillipov, 2020). According to Susan Luckman and Michelle Phillipov, the artisan or craft

maker stands out as a symbol of a desirable rejection of digital life. At the same time, making and artisanry are celebrated in a variety of popular and alternative cultural texts, and their products circulated and promoted on digital platforms. What results, in Luckman and Phillipov's analysis, is a "fetishization of the traditional" which further integrates makers within the creative, or artisanal, dispositif, compounding the valorization of the creative aspirations and entrepreneurial predisposition that so commonly characterize craft and making. In fact, as Luckman and Phillipov argue and as the present research reaffirms, some makers and craftworkers go so far as to describe their work, whether paid or amateur, in terms of creative passions and aspirations rather than as what it is, that is productive activity (see, labour).

Craft capitalism, broadly defined and encapsulating industries built upon the creative dispositif and the fetishization of skilled labour, is heavily reliant on an image of work as not only creatively edifying but connected, material, and in some way authentic or traditional. It is an industrial and cultural foundation that depends on the circulation of craft messaging and craft commodities through digital platforms at the same time that it pushes an image of authentic working lives in a material world. Organized around a cultural imperative of creative expression, community and material connection, and individualized aspiration, craft capitalism preconditions prospective makers and craftworkers while it disciplines those who are already embedded within its industrial borders. Considered at the level of a overdetermined whole, as a dispositif or industrial cultural code craft capitalism mobilizes worker desire for autonomy and expression at the same time that it forecloses the necessary conditions for their attainment, namely material security (as opposed to immaterial flexibility) and collectivity (as opposed to individual aspiration).

The tension between the promises of craft work and its limitations are expressed poignantly in craft brewing. Makers and independent artisans may be able to navigate the limitations of craft capitalism by treating their practice as a hobby or by leaning full-tilt into an entrepreneurial outlook vis-vis their making. The same is not as commonly possible for craftworkers, particularly those employed in service or support roles within craft industries. As such, to close out our discussion of the contemporary wave of craft enthusiasm, we now turn to the cultures and practices at work in craft brewing and other craft industrial sectors and consider the ways in which these both hinder and assist craftworkers' efforts to organize, build collectivity, and ultimately attempt to realize the

promises that craft capitalist discourse makes concerning expression, dignity, and connection.

Chapter 7. Fragmented Solidarities - Middle Class “Leisure” Work and Craft Organizing

In March 2019, workers at Anchor Brewing Company in San Francisco, CA voted to join the International Longshore & Warehouse Union (ILWU) (Narayan, 2019). Commonly considered the United States’ first craft brewery, Anchor has been in operation since 1849, but began paving the way for small-scale, locally produced, alternative beer production when it was purchased by Fritz Maytag, the heir to the Maytag family fortune, in 1965 (Anchor Brewing, n.d.). The union drive at Anchor stands out as a monumental victory for labour organizing in the craft brewing sector, both due to the size of its workforce and the iconic position the brewery holds in the craft brewing mythology.

Given the craft brewing industry’s self-image as rebellious, revolutionary, locally engaged and community oriented, it may come as some surprise that the effort at Anchor was the first successful union drive in the contemporary US craft brewing industry. However, the industrial culture in craft brewing is far more complicated than the buzzwords and platitudes would lead us to believe. In this chapter we will assess some of the class and cultural dynamics that both drive and hinder interest in worker organizing in craft brewing. We will begin by mapping the typical craft brewing division of labour paying particular attention to the ways in which owners/managers, craftspeople and craftworkers relate to their work and to their coworkers. We will then zero in on shifts in vocational identity that appear to be emerging amongst brewery workers, often in the form of a shift away from the ‘craft brewing as rebellion’ ethos to a more industrially grounded vocational consciousness, a reflection of the workforce’s political composition. In this sense, as workers begin to see themselves as workers rather than as creatives there is a potential for an increase in levels of solidarity amongst them. Alongside this shift in vocational identity, interview participants – workers and owners alike – expressed a generally positive attitude about the prospect of a union within their respective workplaces – whether a sustained effort to actually win such unions will materialize remains to be seen. In the penultimate section of this chapter we will discuss some of the greatest barriers and opportunities for worker organizing within craft brewing and consider these alongside some of the observations we have also made regarding the social changes prompting the increase in making and artisanal production more

generally. In order to accentuate the potential for craftworker organizing in brewing and similar craft-branded industries, the chapter closes with a short case study of two recent union drives at artisan coffee chains in Vancouver, BC. Although there are obvious industrial differences between craft beer and artisan coffee, both are exemplars of the craft capitalist mythology and rely on a more-or-less precarious workforce at the same time that they fetishize the image of craft labour. As such, these two union drives present a compelling roadmap toward worker organizing in craft industries generally. As a whole, this chapter is intended to provide an outlook for craft organizing and to theorize how changes in class consciousness amongst craftworkers and craftspeople might be harnessed to build greater levels of solidarity and prompt organization.

7.1. The Division of Labour and the Division of Workers

Ursula spent a summer working as seasonal help at a contract brewery in east Vancouver, BC²⁰. Contract breweries, we should note, are facilities that contract out to brew beers for other breweries due to lack of capacity or prioritization of other beers (Oliver, 2011). In this case, the brewery effectively outsources production of one or more of their beers but still puts their own label on the resulting products. The labour process of a contract brewery is similar to that of any other craft brewery but as they are not brewing their own recipes, one could assume that the creativity motivation is not as centrally important amongst its brewers. For her part, Ursula worked in the warehousing and packaging division of the brewery. Coming from a background in construction and administration, she was most surprised by the heavy top-down means of management at the brewery paired with management's general disconnection from and relative ignorance of the actual process of production. Her job duties varied from day to day but mostly involved keg stocking, labeling and packaging – keg work standing out as particularly rigorous, a sentiment shared by other participants from other breweries, a set of tasks almost universally reviled in the industry. She had been recruited to work at the brewery by an industry celebrant but quickly recognized a strict and overt hierarchy within the facility wherein owners and managers called all the shots and treated the

²⁰ At the time, the brewery was called Factory Brewing, but shortly after it rebranded as Craft Collective. In 2020, its assets were bought up by MOD Beverage, a new craft beverage conglomerate that manages a number of brands in the Vancouver area market (What's Brewing, 2020).

production and support staff as interchangeable and replaceable. It is worth noting, in fact, that the majority of the staff on the packaging/warehousing team worked in temporary or seasonal arrangements, as was the case for Ursula.

The workplace culture was not particularly conducive to community, but Ursula and some of her coworkers were still able to make the best of things. That is, until the owners hired a new production manager who had previously worked at a large national macrobrewery. The new manager immediately set about transforming the company's labour process, imposing new disciplinary measures on employees, particularly to boost productivity and curb 'abuse' of break-times. As a result of the new manager's policies, breaks were heavily regimented and tracked, forcing many workers to actually skimp on their legally-guaranteed break minimums. What was particularly troubling for Ursula was a simultaneous policy change that banned the use of personal water bottles in production areas and did not replace their use with any form of accessible hydrating station (water cooler, etc.). Under the auspices of reducing workplace alcohol consumption (something that had never been an issue according to Ursula), the ban forced workers to only drink water on breaks. This policy, paired with the regimentation of breaks, led to serious health and safety concerns for workers, especially as it took effect during the summer months when the temperature of the production facility could reach as high as the low- to mid-30s Celsius.

Ursula describes this new managerial regime as a force for cutting down comradery, reinforcing (often gendered) hierarchy, and imposing a clearer division between brewers and support workers. This is not to say that the workplace culture did not already have issues, and Ursula's description of the preferential treatment enjoyed by male workers illustrates this very clearly. In our discussion, she returned to this division frequently, ultimately concluding that it led to a kind of clique culture: "It was really broken down by gender. The dudes would all go on smoke breaks together. There was more of a crew feeling and less of a unified class of workers."

This is a sentiment shared by workers at other breweries. The experience of a gendered hierarchy was echoed by Callum, who worked as warehouse support at Vancouver's Parallel 49 Brewing, a brewery that came under public scrutiny in the summer of 2020 for just these kinds of allegations (Anderson, 2020). According to Callum:

When you're working in the back you're left alone. I didn't experience harassment and I didn't witness it in the warehouse, but I think that played a function with the servers - especially if you're a woman, especially if you're trans. I think it played a role in setting the tone in keeping things moving. The gaslighting and bullying and harassment from owners and from customers (which was never addressed), it was used to keep people in line.

Callum's account echoes that of service staff who were working at the brewery at the same time. According to these accounts, male workers, regardless of their roles, enjoyed preferential treatment in the brewery, where women and gender diverse workers faced greater levels of scrutiny, discipline, and, ultimately abuse.

In Callum's account, the experience for men was generally positive and comradely, creating a kind of clubhouse atmosphere for the in-group. As he describes the situation:

As far as the bro culture, that was definitely the case in the back of house. The drivers, warehouse workers, brewers. If you're a male and not trouble for management, you were immediately in the club. You'd get the invite up to [one of the owners'] office and drink for free. There was a culture of those guys talking shit about the women they work with or taking part in harassment when they were drinking in the bar. It was a way of cutting into any kind of solidarity between the production side and front of house. Making it clear that there is a hierarchy based on gender and what you do.

In both of these examples we observe a division of the workforce along three primary lines. First, there is a clear division between workers along the lines of their role in the brewery. At Parallel 49 and at Factory, workers report a hierarchy with brewing and administrative staff on the top and packaging and other support and service staff at the bottom, a hierarchy that throughout the industry often also reflects a pay disparity with brewers, managers, and administrators working on salary and service and support staff on hourly arrangements.²¹ The pay disparity is tricky, however, as while service staff do not typically enjoy the salary levels of their brewing counterparts, they do collect tips, often resulting in higher take-home pay than many back-of-house workers – and

²¹ It is worth noting that this isn't universally the case. Some brewers do work for an hourly wage, but this was not the case for those interviewed for this research.

standing out as yet another hindrance to solidarity. This division by task or role was also reported by workers at other, similarly sized craft and contract breweries. Dividing workers up by role procedurally and culturally serves as a means by which the craft brewing industry is able to reinforce its artisanal narratives – in an industry that prides itself on the handmade nature of its product, it makes sense that there is an interest in drawing distinct lines of privilege for the celebrated artisan class of workers. Of course, as we will see, this privilege is nominal in an industry that routinely underpays and overworks even its marquee workers, standing out in stark contrast to the unionized brewing environments of the macro-brewing sector.

Secondly, at both of these breweries as well as at others visited for this research, workers report an unspoken but pervasive workplace division along the lines of gender. Of course, this isn't unique to craft brewing, something acknowledged by another former brewery worker. According to this worker:

I've definitely seen from my life experiences similar levels of patriarchy and misogyny in other industries, even non-profits which are supposed to be more feminized. It's so ingrained in our interactions, it's just going to be there. If there's more cis men working in a place it's going to be more overt. It's just so normalized in breweries... With how things currently are I feel like the daily violence of capitalism and being a low-wage worker is just accepted as if there's nothing you can do, something you just have to be okay with, and the sense is that the misogyny on top of that is the problem.

Although there are always exceptions to broad workforce generalizations, it is well documented that craft brewing is a particularly male-dominated industry (Pomranz, 2021; Stiernberg, 2021). Moreover, in the breweries visited (or documented through interviews) for this research (5 in BC, 3 in WA, and 3 in OR), only one was directly co-owned by a woman. The particular investor structures of the remaining 10 are slightly opaque, save that ownership is predominantly held by men. On the next step in the hierarchy, most brewing staff in these breweries were also men, though at this level more women were represented. However, the less privileged and more insecure roles such as production and warehouse support and service demonstrated a gradual reversal of this pattern, with back-of-house support work generally reflecting a greater level of gender parity, and service and front-of-house work falling mostly to women. It is worth

noting also that non-binary, transgender and gender-nonconforming workers, according to interview participants, are broadly relegated to the latter group. In fact, non-binary and transgender workers were reported to experience higher levels of workplace harassment and discrimination than their colleagues, a general observation later confirmed by a transgender worker who had experienced this kind of treatment personally (but who held an administrative role in the brewery).

This is to say nothing of the racial composition of craft brewing, a third primary line of division within the industry. As reported in Chapter 5, craft brewing is also a predominantly white industry, both in terms of ownership and workforce. This particular compositional element is a bit harder to pin down in relation to the data collected for this research, as in the breweries observed, there wasn't a broad diversity on display. Of those interviewed, most were white, workers of colour making up a minority of the sample, and according to their reports, of the workforce generally. Those interviewed reported instances of tokenism and a culture of expected conformity wherein while standing in as tokens, they were also expected not to make waves or be overly sensitive.

Although workers did not report pay discrepancies along these latter two lines of division, the same cannot be said of the front-of-house/upper office, back-of-house split, that of the craftsperson/manager versus the craftworker. Compounded here is the commonly temporary, seasonal or simply part-time nature of craftworker roles. Several workers reported the consistent reliance on seasonal and temporary contracts, particularly during the high-volume, summer months. Furthermore, hospitality and back-of-house support staff are commonly relegated to part-time status, either due to tap room hours or a general effort to limit the proportion of full-time workers on staff. If we assume (likely reasonably) that the latter two lines of division – gender and race – generally map onto craftsperson/craftworker division, it becomes evident that not only is craft brewing a highly hierarchical workforce, but that its division of labour conforms to dominant societal-level trends in discrimination and exclusion.

Whereas craft brewing as an industry commonly heralds itself as a kinder, more responsible and progressive way of bringing consumers a drink they love, this narrative begins to fold under its own weight when measured against the actual practices on display in the workplace. Craft capitalism generally and craft industrialism specifically, as

we have seen, makes a fetish of artisanal work, a fetish which simultaneously valorizes its commodity output while obscuring the labour process at work in the workshop, brewery, roasting house, and so on down the line. This valorization accords the consumer the opportunity to feel good in their consumption, perceiving a closeness to the producer albeit at an abstract distance. As a result, the worst excesses of the craft industry are hidden from view, only the veneer of the handmade remains in the consumer eye. This is perhaps why instances of workplace harassment, overwork and discrimination (such as those reported in the @NotOurP49 and @NotOurCafes Instagram accounts, described in Chapter 5) are so jarring and upsetting to craft consumers – they force one to see beyond the craft fetish and sit in the discomfiting view of the industrial realities of craft. Beyond the perception, the fetish, remains that same combination of exploitation and alienation characteristic of the capitalist labour process, but here it is embossed with the image of a chainwheel, a hop floret, or a charmingly unpolished font – the semiotic markings of labour, nature and handicraft.

7.2. From Creative Rebel to Industrial Worker: The Shifting Vocational Identity of Brewers

The explosion of microbrewing in the 1990s and of craft brewing in the 2000s were both marked by descriptions of brewers and brewery owners as rebels who were challenging the concentration of beer production (Appleton, 2016; Hindy, 2014; Acitelli, 2013; Wiebe, 2013; Lewis, 2014; O'Brien, 2006). Breweries and the movement more generally branded themselves as edgy, punk and innovative, the movement as a whole often referred to as the 'craft beer revolution.' However, as J. Nikol Beckham (2017), has argued, this resistance or rebellion often takes the form of individual attitudes and brand positioning that obscure the profit-oriented, hierarchical and exploitative business processes that actually drive the movement. We might even go so far as to posit that the positioning of craft breweries as rebelling against corporate brewing is a mask for the entrepreneurial ideology that drives enthusiasm for and investment in this sector. As Beckham contends, the resistant ethos "was not expressed as a commitment to an overarching economic philosophy, but rather was performed as a set of individual cultural practices that relied upon a slippage between the meanings of work and leisure" (pg. 82). She goes on to argue that the enactment of this entrepreneurial form of

rebellion works to mask the neoliberal culture of craft brewing, legitimizing managerial practices through its cultural mythology and its smoothing of the material conflicts implicit in what we might consider to be a heavily Taylorized labour process. The conflicting identities and interests of actors in the brewing industry can reveal much about the porous seams of this industrial mythology. What's more is that, as we shall see, while many workers in the brewing sector identify with this mythology of resistance, many others reject it outright, seeing themselves as workers first rather than latent revolutionaries in the fight against corporate beer. For them, brewing or brewery work is not as much about rebellion or even creativity as it is a waged vocation. And, to the degree that the craft workforce can be considered more culturally disposed toward rebellion or progressive politics, this disposition could also serve as a potential threat for the owners of craft businesses who would prefer their workers remain loyal, docile, and deactivated – something that will be echoed in our discussion of the movement to organize artisan coffee shops at the end of this chapter.

This said, the interviews conducted for this study indicate a surprising ambivalence amongst brewery workers regarding craft brewing's early narratives of resistance against the corporate control of beer at the hands of brewing conglomerates. When I speak to early craft brewers or brewery owners who got into the business in the 1990s, they often report a certain pride at being part of a movement that challenged large corporations. They might celebrate the "craft beer revolution" or talk about how craft breweries can exist as a form of autonomous alternative to corporate beer. Interestingly though, this perspective seems only rarely shared by younger brewers and brewery workers.²² In fact, many of these workers, especially those who hold more menial or junior roles, argue that work in craft brewing is just another job and that the craft beer industry isn't inherently resistant or radical. In fact, when asked, most non-owner participants indicated that they would absolutely take a job at a macro-brewery. Most cited the almost certainly higher wage, the increased benefits, or the ability to join or form a union as primary reasons why they would be open to such a switch.

²² This seeming cultural shift away from the political mythology of craft brewing contrasts with certain findings in Chloe Fox Miller's (2019a, 2019b) research into Portland's craft brewing industry, which suggest that some workers still see craft brewing as an avenue toward greater levels of both collectively and autonomy. I address this in Anderson, 2021.

In fact, one worker was adamant that the rebel myth in brewing actually obscures craftworkers' roles as workers. In thinking of themselves as part of a movement, according to this worker, some craftworkers fail to recognize how much they have in common with their macro-beer counterparts. According to this BC brewer:

When I meet brewers who are older they see it as resistance to mass production. I don't think we are changing the world, personally. Some people do. I don't see it as standing up to the man or anything. I make beer but I'm not a hero. To be totally honest, I'm happy to drink a Coors. I have no problem with those companies. Maybe 4 or 5 years ago people thought only one could exist. But I think we can have both.

The worker went on to tell me that he sees himself as a factory worker, not a rebel or a creative. This is, maybe surprisingly, a perspective shared by many of my participants. For younger craftworkers, wages and working conditions matter quite a lot more than do the craft brewing movement's purported values of rebellion and creative autonomy.

Although some industry veterans might see this shift as a concerning de-politicization of the craft brewing workforce, it could also be read as the reverse. The attitudes about the industry voiced by my participants suggests a relatively healthy working class consciousness is being developed within the craft beer industry. Several participants, independent of being asked, voiced their desire to join a union and nearly all of the others reported their interest when asked. Perhaps this is a symptom of a dwindling belief in or loyalty to the resistance narrative so commonly mobilized by the old guard or of the commitment to the social capital mode of remuneration in craft brewing – the coolness of a job is fine, but more material security seems to be the priority for many brewery workers, particularly as they face a world characterized by the rising cost of virtually every material need. It is also likely a product of the sheer growth of the industry, where many new workers actually see themselves as workers in a pretty traditional manufacturing environment and, as such, expect the same rights and benefits enjoyed by other manufacturing workers.

7.3. Craft Organizing: Reasons for Optimism

Tegan had been working as a server at the Parallel 49 Brewing Company's tasting room for about six months when she found out that she "had a target on [her] back." In April 2019, Tegan was 'laid off' without cause, after friends and colleagues had warned her that she was likely being singled-out for her involvement in an attempt to unionize the East Vancouver brewery. Since January of the previous year, Parallel 49 workers had been organizing their coworkers in an attempt to sign cards for membership in the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 2, Brewery General & Professional Workers' Union (BGPWU). The organizing drive came four years after Parallel 49 workers voted against an attempt to join the Brewery Winery & Distillery Workers Union, Local 300 in December 2014, amidst speculation that the drive had been undermined by behind the scenes managerial (owner) influence.

This wasn't the first unionization attempt in the province, and it wasn't the last. In fact, the summer of 2016 seemed like a period of celebration for union supporters when Saltspring Island Ales became the first unionized craft brewery in British Columbia (Zussman, 2016). Coming only 2 years after the first failed drive at Parallel 49, the Saltspring Island Ales victory seemed to signal a turning point in labour's effort to gain a foothold in the craft brewing industry. Unfortunately, according to labour movement sources, it wasn't long before workers at the brewery voted to decertify, returning once again to a union-free workplace. Although information about this particular development is difficult to come by, it would seem that the brewery's small workforce while allowing for a speedy pro-union organizing campaign also enabled the opposite. Saltspring Island Ales' decertification and the failed second attempt at Parallel 49 in 2019, seemed to characterize the craft brewing organizing climate until October, 2020, when another brewery joined labour's ranks as members of SEIU Local 2: Delta, BC's Turning Point Brewing.

There have been many false starts and speed bumps on the road to craft brewery worker organizing in the Pacific Northwest region. The failed efforts at Parallel 49 and the decertification of Saltspring Island Ales mark major setbacks in the fight to organize this industry. Fortunately for those who support workers' desire for collective power through union representation, on October 27, 2020, SEIU Local 2 (Brewery, General and

Professional Workers' Union) announced that workers at Turning Point Brewery in Delta, BC voted 93% in favour of unionization (SEIU Local 2, 2020). Like many in the craft brewing business, workers at Turning Point saw a massive spike in sales at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and while ownership initially offered a pandemic wage bump, this expired after 2 months (workers unionized approximately 8 months into the pandemic, having been neglected pandemic wages for the intervening 6 months). As a whole, workers cited inconsistent pay and lack of managerial transparency as two of their core reasons for needing collective power in the form of a union.

Owned by Labatt, Turning Point isn't a clear example of unionizing in craft brewing, its lack of independent status excluding it from the formal craft designation. However, matters aren't quite so simple, as Turning Point is a contract brewery, brewing beers for a number of craft labels throughout their region. In a sense, this means that Turning Point's workforce of 60+ is made up of craftworkers who are supporting the craft brewing industry but in a capacity that falls outside of the strict identification of being part of that industry. This exclusion would seem to be rather hollow when set alongside the Brewers' Association's definition of a craft brewery, as the very existence of contract breweries might lead one to question the definition as a whole, given that craft breweries increasingly rely on larger facilities, with larger workforces that are owned by large corporate breweries. Can a contract brewery's clients be said to be truly independent? Adequately small-scale? The answers would vary in context, but conceptually they point to deficiencies in the industrial understanding of craft generally.

In unionizing with SEIU Local 2, Turning Point has joined at least two other corporate, craft-adjacent breweries in BC – Granville Island Brewing and Okanagan Springs Brewery – who are already part of the union's ranks.

That Turning Point exists as a corporately-owned brewery that brews beers for a number of smaller "true" craft breweries, opens up a vector for the spread of organizing sentiment and energy. One worker who was intimately involved in the successful campaign at Turning Point had this to say to industry colleagues who are considering having one of their own:

Reach out and talk to other people from other smaller breweries or similar sized breweries, and if the feeling is the same or if it is just their particular company... I

know there is a lot of communication among the craft brewing industry as it is. If they want to do it, reach out to other people, talk about it, talk to a union rep or organizer. If it's the right fit, go for it... And with COVID, a lot of people are feeling on the job security side. Investors and bar groups generally don't care about their workers and think they can hire anyone off the street. Now that these groups own several different breweries, it might be a good idea for all of them to organize together if that's what they're looking for.

The worker went on to explain that breweries today are built to expand and that part of expansion seems to be a corporatization of the workplace, which was one of the key catalysts for the union drive at Turning Point. Of course, the formula "bigger = easier to organize" should not be assumed to be universally applicable. More to this worker's point, the craft brewing industry is changing and small shops built upon a love of the beer and the craft are quickly becoming the exception rather than the norm.

Of course, the commonly referenced view of the brewery as a small family – a view shared by many people interviewed for this study – remains pervasive throughout the industry. What this worker suggests, however, is that when this view is tarnished by a disengaged or overbearing managerial team, an intensification of work, or an unequal or otherwise unfair contractual structure, this betrayal of expectations can blow-up into seemingly spontaneous levels of worker resentment.

In the case of Turning Point, the spark that lit the amassed brush of dissatisfaction was a plant-wide meeting (done in shifts) called by management and promoted as the platform for an exciting announcement. As the worker explains it:

It started not that long ago, maybe about a month ago now, where they brought everybody up by department or by shift for this meeting that they said was an exciting meeting. I went up to it, day shift and night shift together, basically to tell us they were giving us a raise. Everyone was happy about that until they said it was about 1%, and we haven't had any cost-of-living wage increase since they bought us. A lot of people took that 1% as a slap in the face.

The period between that meeting and the successful union vote was under 6 weeks. Workers at Turning Point were justifiably insulted, especially as brewery management

touted record high sales in the COVID period shortly before offering this pittance of a raise.

The speed of this unionization was a surprise to the workers, the organizers and the employer alike. Coming only months after the second failed drive at Parallel 49, the Turning Point success could very well spark a spate of brewery and craft beverage campaigns. The worker summed up the experience and the potential for future drives in the sector in a particularly concise yet poignant way:

With the right determination, people can organize really fast. I was amazed at how fast we organized. Within one month we've got the vote, now we're prepping for bargaining. No one expected the pace or such a positive response. If you have loyal employees who want to remain loyal but who feel they deserve better, organizing is going to happen.

This last observation is a critical one, especially when considered alongside the example of Parallel 49. Turning Point workers, having played a major role in the creation of the brewery and who, largely had spent years working there, had a vested interest in sticking with their jobs and using their collective power to improve conditions. As the participant noted, this was especially the case for recent immigrants who do not enjoy the same levels of labour market flexibility as domestic workers.

By contrast, the labour process at Parallel 49 is arguably built upon the insecurity of its workforce. According to a worker dismissed for their involvement in the more recent attempt to unionize the brewery, Parallel 49 has a revolving door, especially for service and support workers. One of the biggest frustrations that this worker faced as they attempted to organize at the brewery was how breakthroughs with workers would often give way to the worker quitting their job:

The nature of the business is, though, if you're frustrated with your job, you'd just quit. You'd bring someone on board, but then they'd have a blow up and just quit. In three months, I think I saw six or seven people quit. I think that's a common theme with campaigns in places like that.

The trick, it would seem, is for workers to actually want to stay at their jobs, to see through the positive changes. This was the operative difference between the organizing

attempts at Turning Point and Parallel 49. At the first, workers were committed to their jobs, they wanted to stay and they wanted better conditions. At Parallel 49, according to participants, it was easier for many workers to just move on, and who could blame them? How then are those workers who are committed to their vocations, who value craft and working at a small company, to transcend this tendency to ensure positive change actually comes about? How can they do this without necessarily leaving temporary and precarious workers behind? Perhaps there are ways that workers can use their commitment as fuel to change their industries on a more global level.

7.4. New Solidarity Networks: Organizing Beyond the Union

Facing extreme levels of uncertainty and insecurity due to the UK government's early responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, workers in London's hospitality sector began organizing what came to be called the South London Bartenders Network (South London Bartenders Network, 2020). The effort was an experiment in organizing decentralized worker power in a relatively tight-knit and geographically narrow industry. According to workers involved in the Network's creation, the group is meant to serve as a mutual aid network, connecting workers through social media and with the support of – but not necessarily in service to – several London labour unions. Ideally, the solidarity generated by the group can be applied to labour disputes, especially in cases where the involved workers are not officially organized with an existing union.

Although the South London Bartenders Network is the first of its kind in the London hospitality sector, other new solidarity networks have begun to emerge in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. One such network that is closely related to the present study is the group Punks With Purpose (PWP). Created by a group of former BrewDog employees in the UK, PWP formed in order to lend strategic support to efforts to unionize their former employer and to provide resources to other workers hoping to organize in craft brewing and hospitality. Like the South London Bartenders Network, PWP supports formal labour organizing drives, but predominantly attempts to build power outside of the formal circuits of the labour movement. Taken together, these two UK-based networks provide a glimpse into how craft and precarious workers might go about organizing ahead of and in addition to the traditional union drive.

Recently, workers in multiple industries have begun forming similar informal solidarity networks, existing at arms-length from the traditional labour movement and affording workers the opportunity to build collective power and organizational capacity outside the formal processes of unions. This is particularly advantageous in non-unionized workplaces or in the lead-up to a unionization campaign. Closer to home, one such network in the realm of craft industrialism is the recently formed Craft Brewery Workers Alliance of Canada (CBWAC). I have been involved with CBWAC since early 2021, the motivation coming both from this research and my commitment to working class politics and solidarity.²³ In addition to creating a networking platform for craft brewing workers across Canada, CBWAC is committed to “Increas[ing] access to resources to assist in organizing at individual breweries and to develop tools to improve work conditions industry-wide” (CBWAC, 2021).

The group is made up of craft brewery workers from every segment of the labour process (front-of-house, back-of-house, administration/sales, etc.) as well as former brewery workers and a handful of industry and organizing outsiders (myself included). Although current outreach efforts and power building campaigns are mostly centred in Canada’s three major metropolitan areas (Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal), CBWAC is actively building its membership across Canada, with an eye toward wielding a nationwide base of solidarity that can be used in even the smallest local campaigns. At this stage of CBWAC’s existence it has coordinated public events and talks about the conditions faced by workers in Canada’s craft brewing industry, designed and circulated a questionnaire to gauge composition, experiences and contractual arrangements of the craft brewing workforce, and created solidarity resources²⁴ for use in local campaigns. It is quite obviously too soon to gauge the lasting impact of CBWAC, but its formation and relatively quick growth signal a cultural shift in line with those reported above – namely that many craft brewery workers see themselves as workers first and, subsequently, expect the same rights and protections as enjoyed by their counterparts in the macro-brewing industry. In the same vein, the growth of CBWAC corresponds to a more

²³ My capacity with CBWAC is not as a researcher but as an organizer-participant and a kind of industry expert. As such, I do not report here on the internal dynamics, personal testimonials, or strategic goals and efforts of the organization. Instead, in order to maintain operational security, what follows is an account mostly compiled through CBWAC’s public media presence and outbound communication efforts. Member identity has been kept strictly confidential.

²⁴ Term attributed to the author, as quoted in Brophy, Cohen and De Peuter 2015

general rise in scrutiny toward an industry that brands itself as community-minded, accepting, and progressive but often simultaneously displays a callous lack of concern for its most insecure and marginalized workers and their reports of mistreatment, harassment and assault.

We should also recognize that although social media campaigns reported on earlier in this chapter mobilize public scrutiny of industry conditions, sustained solidarity efforts like these new solidarity networks are more likely to build the necessary organizational capacity for a more wholesale systemic change within craft (and other) industries. Whereas the @NotOurP49 and @NotOurMatchstick, as well as the continued revelations circulated by Brienne Allan, have brought attention to industry conditions and have resulted in some substantive changes (the unionization of Matchstick Coffee standing out as a particularly heartening example – a labour victory addressed in more detail in the next section), they often lack a foundational grounding in the strategies, processes and commitments to worker organizing that undergird a robust, class-oriented, organizational approach. In fact, in the wake of Brienne Allan's revelations, while industry as a whole was quick to take symbolic actions of support, particularly on social media, workers continued to come forward to speak up about unsafe and exploitative conditions. As reports continue to surface in abundance, it's difficult for one to expect real material change outside of a more sustained, coordinated and militant effort toward organizing. This is precisely what new solidarity networks promise.

The emergence of groups like CBWAC generally corresponds to the attitudes of many brewery workers interviewed for this research. As suggested previously, many craft brewery workers suggested an openness or interest in unionization prior to being asked, but many expressed reservations about its feasibility in their particular workplace. Furthermore, some suggested a more industry-wide organization that would not be hindered by the small scale of their own workplaces. In a certain sense, solidarity networks hold the potential to serve as just this kind of industry-wide organization, but with the added benefit of serving as a support tool for ongoing and future organizing efforts along formal lines. The broad base of worker power and solidarity that these groups can potentially call on would also serve to further the interests of workers in workplaces that are, at the moment, not likely to be unionizable. Whether focused on issues at a particular workplace, a specific geographical location, or an industry as a national or international whole, solidarity networks – as illustrated by SLBT – are both

flexible and firmly socially bounded. In a sense, the social mediated solidarity network is a 21st century avatar of proletarianization at the point of production. Whereas the factory worker found solidarity in shared circumstance with the people working alongside them on the assembly line, the solidarity network member finds it online or over WhatsApp while trading stories of mistreatment, exhaustion or the like. In certain cases, solidarity building at the level of network activity can result and has resulted in coordinated action, whether in support of a walk out or as a signal boost for worker demands. In a period marked by increased precariousness, even for the precarious, new tactics and tools are essential for fighting back against what is becoming a permanent state of exception for employers. The union and the solidarity network are bulwarks against such a state.

7.5. Post-Script: Café Organizing and the Porousness of Craft Industrialism

On November 16, 2020 workers at Vancouver, BC coffee chain Matchstick Coffee voted to unionize with the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1518 (UFCW, 2020). With five cafes and a mobile cart, Matchstick is part of a recent trend in Vancouver and in other cities toward local chains catering to a hipper clientele than one would typically see at their larger, international competitors. Their spaces are designed around an aesthetic style that blogger Carles (2016) describes as “contemporary conformist,” characterized by exposed brick, reclaimed wood, and general, austere ‘tastefulness.’

The organizing effort at Matchstick came in the months following a social media campaign exposing a culture of harassment and overwork in the café chain, under the Instagram account @NotOurMatchStick (later @NotOurCafes) (Ottenhof, 2020). According to workers present at the cafes between the publication of this social media campaign and the union drive in October and November 2020, conditions had actually improved at the café following the reports. The initial scrutiny brought about by the public nature of the grievances forced one owner to leave the business, resulting in a marked improvement in the workplace culture. As one leader of the union campaign explained:

The company claimed “we’re a family we care about the employees,” and I think that is true to some degree. Even the guy who got called out did care. I think it

has gotten better though. After the old owner essentially gave up the company and the silent partner took over, he started making some positive changes and with bargaining coming up they'll probably implement more.²⁵

There was a sense amongst those workers interviewed for this research, that the company's actions after the social media campaign started the ball rolling toward positive improvement. However, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent move to take-out only operations, many workers observed that their material conditions had changed little – although most did not feel that their jobs at the café were at risk. When taken together, these factors led many to seek a more formal means of addressing their concerns, ultimately culminating in what would become a successful unionization campaign that was to include workers in all of the café's five locations.

As with the other cases of worker organizing in craft industries that we've seen so far, there was a general lack of animosity toward ownership and management at Matchstick. Although workers took issue with their wages, shifts, and lack of benefits, those interviewed reported that most of their colleagues continued to believe in the café's purported values of community and fun, the social media blitz notwithstanding. According to another leader, the union drive was as much about securing workers' jobs and improving their conditions in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic as it was a response to the allegations of harassment circulated by the social media campaign. As that leader explains:

People just wanted a safe workplace, respect in the workplace. Whether people had experienced it [harassment] personally or knew people who had, it was a driver. It felt like we had this big chance to have this fresh start and to start this happening again. And we were facing all this uncertainty with COVID and with the business being up for sale. If we didn't have a union in place, whoever bought it ,we'd be at their whim. If there was ever a time or place for people to be unionizing it was at Matchstick right then.

²⁵ In reference to the social media campaigns, this participant even went so far as to compare the situation at Matchstick with that of Parallel 49: "Parallel 49 made it all seem tame. I felt like we didn't handle it great, but also, though, well at least I don't work there."

This is a critical observation in the face of the popular notion of what a union drive means. The common line is that unionization is an attack on management/ownership, that it flies in the face of the kind of cooperation that we're told we should expect in the contemporary workplace, particularly the craft workplace. Just consider the widely circulated statements from Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz, in response to the massive unionization efforts amongst Starbucks workers throughout the United States in 2022: that union organizers are attempting to sow division and are attacking the corporation's values. The refrain that unionization is an attack against employers, particularly as employers attest that they are creating healthy work environments, seems a mainstay of anti-union strategy today. It seems that this is especially the case in craft industrialism, where employers build credibility and goodwill by emulating progressive values, parroting liberal talking points, and positioning themselves as rebels fighting the corporate monoliths. In fact, it is on the ground of legitimation that we see the major disconnect between management's discursive positioning and the material realities of the craft industrial labour process.

Take, for example, another Vancouver craft chain that organized around the same time as Matchstick: Cartem's Donuts. Workers at Cartem's Donuts, a chain of artisan bakeries/cafes in Vancouver certified with UFCW 1518 in June 2020 (UFCW, 2020b). Like at Matchstick, workers at Cartem's worried about the security of their jobs as COVID-19 pushed the business into a take-out only capacity. Also like their Matchstick counterparts, many workers at Cartem's have a generally favourable opinion of the company and the products it provides, but in this case, the employer's response to the pandemic paired with some changes in ownership resulted in a more overtly militant organizing drive. According to one worker-organizer:

It really got bad when the pandemic hit. We got laid off and they said see you in two weeks. I called UFCW and I figured now it was time to use people's pissed-offness to start a union. Then Cartem's got even nastier by trying to take away healthcare, trying to fire people involved in the union drive. Our bargaining is going into mediation now and not much has changed.

The employer response to the union drive, while in keeping with the anti-union employer handbook, seems to contradict the company's mission, a common contradiction in progressively positioned companies that still, unaccountably, block workers' attempts to

organize. The same worker describes Cartems self-branding in much the same way as the craft breweries we've already encountered:

Off the top of my head, the Cartems' mission was to create a 'boundless legacy of people putting people first.' 'Quality donuts from ingredients to the first bite. 'The values were uniqueness, generosity and something else. They like to see themselves as a community participant.

As a "community participant," according to this worker, Cartems positioned itself as a safe place for visible minorities and gender diverse community members to congregate. This inclusivity, however, was arguably built upon a labour process that mobilized worker identity as a legitimation of the company image – effectively putting identity to work. To be a marginalized hospitality worker in Vancouver, according to this participant, is to recognize the rarity of an employer that accepts you. Unfortunately, the participant also asserts that at Cartems this openness was a means of brand-building:

Cartems brands itself as hip off the backs of the queer folks and people of colour who work there. It was novel to find a café that didn't treat you like garbage and a lot of people figured if you can't fix this I'm going to end up back in the job market of bad cafes.

Another Cartems worker agreed with this assessment of the company's use of workers for brand-building:

They see it as artisanal – every donut is made by hand. We only use locally sourced ingredients and organic when possible, that hipster concept. One of the reasons they saw so much success is they made really smart hiring choices. They hired all these young hip queer people even though the owners are these two straight cis dudes. These young people, I'm one of the older ones. You're supporting this business made up of people from all walks of life. They try to make that the focus, you're not coming for a donut, you're coming for an experience...

The building of credibility at the point of hiring was not limited to frontline workers, however. The same worker explained that this also seemed to seep into managerial and administrative hiring decisions:

I could rattle on for a while about the hypocrisy of the inclusivity they put at the center of the company. There would be these admin jobs and they would all be women, young women. And I thought that was cool. One of the managers was a woman, one was a queer man, one was nonbinary. But then you find out that there were issues of unequal pay from upper management so it was all quite hypocritical.

Central to both of these, and related campaigns at a handful of Vancouver restaurants and breweries (and arguably in the current wave of organizing drives at Starbucks stores in the US), is a perspective shared by many frontline workers that these hip, artisanal employers consistently and cynically build their brands on the identities and stylistic expressions of the same workers they exploit on a daily basis.

Although Matchstick and Cartems both produce artisanal goods in the form of locally roasted coffee and handmade donuts respectively, their labour process also involves hospitality and the production of a social space. As the worker testimonials above indicate, this is an important aspect of both brands and one that is, at least in part, produced by workers, especially along the nexus of identity. At Matchstick this took the form of edginess, with one worker claiming that the café goes out of its way to employ workers who look countercultural, alternative or punk. At Cartems, ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation were all, arguably, wrapped up in the production of an open, inviting, and safe place – even if that safety was intended to serve the customer more than the worker.

This appropriation of worker identity and style serves as an implicit, but powerful, input in the valorization process of craft firms while simultaneously fuelling disaffection, resentment, and militancy amongst marginalized workers. By building their social capital and community image around the diversity and stylistic edginess of their staff, craft enterprises attempt to extract value from workers not only at the point of production and service, but aesthetically and politically. For their part, however, workers see this process at work and seem prepared to translate this into collective action. For although these workers are pulled into the valorization process by means of their identities, appearances, and affective attributes many reported that this is, at the same time, a strategic opportunity. According to these workers the subjective qualities they bring to the job, those that are reified into the cultural cachet of their workplaces, are the same

qualities that, in the case of Cartems and Matchstick at least, oriented them if not toward collective action then toward a pursuit of fairness, undergirding their successful unionization campaigns.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

On September 16, 2020, the Alliance of Beverage Licensees of BC (ABLE BC) hosted an online seminar for its members entitled “Positive Employee Relations & Responding to Organizing Activity: The Keys to Remaining Union Free²⁶,” presented by two attorneys at Canadian HR law firm Mathews Dinsdale & Clark. Leaked to the labour movement (and subsequently to this researcher), the video of the presentation focused on practices and actions management can take to keep employees satisfied and, as a result, keep their workplaces free of union interference. The seminar was held in the weeks following the successful unionization of Jak’s Beer, Wine, Spirits in Maple Ridge, BC (one of a chain of Jak’s locations). The organizing drive, led by workers and supported by union organizers, was part of what the Mathews Dinsdale & Clark lawyers described as a targeted campaign in the liquor and hospitality industries on the part of SEIU Local 2 (the union local we met in Chapter 7 due to its involvement in organizing at Parallel 49 Brewing and Turning Point Brewing). Although the seminar focused on best practices to avoid unionization – the Q&A after demonstrating just how worried business owners are about this eventuality – the presenters seemed to have something right: there is currently a concerted effort in British Columbia and beyond to organize in small, local shops like breweries and cafes. As we saw in Chapter 7, in the Vancouver area alone, the last three years have shown union campaigns at: craft and corporate breweries, specialty liquor stores, a donut chain, and a café chain (at the very least). Most of these were concentrated at the end of 2020 and beginning of 2021 and all indications are that this trend will continue, especially as worker security continues to flag in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Taken together and weighed against the backdrop of the pandemic, these efforts suggest that craftworkers and workers in craft adjacent industries are building both capacity and interest in collective organization, and given the changing culture of their industries, it is likely that this will continue.

And, as the case of the organized workers at Cartems Donuts and Matchstick Coffee suggests, this is due, at least in part to the discursive positioning of craft and craft adjacent industries generally and the manner by which they conceive of and valorize

²⁶ The word “free” in the presentation title was underlined and offset in red text, contrasting with the black text of the rest of the title.

their workers. Repeatedly throughout this dissertation I have suggested that an ambivalence sits at the heart of craft capitalism and its industrial mythologies. This is an ambivalence that mobilizes the image of the timeless artisan as a defender of quality and community in order to position craft as something that is inherently alternative, desirable, sustainable, and just. Of course, as we have seen, this is very typically not the case, as workers in craft branded industries consistently report the same kinds of exploitation, abuse, harassment and alienation that we've come to expect from the Fordist-style industries from which craft rhetoric attempts to distance itself. Consider, for example, the case of Naked and Famous Denim, a Canadian heritage denim company whose workers produce "selvedge" denim. These small-batch, traditionally made jeans and jackets are marketed as traditional, high quality, and the product of "passion and attention to detail" (Naked & Famous, N.D.). However, according to a former worker interviewed for this project, the company's labour process maps neatly onto a Fordist division of labour, with administrative and sales staff enjoying relatively autonomous working lives while the warehouse and production staff is generally neglected the benefits and privileges of the administrative staff. Moreover, the seamstresses of the company, those who actually produce those commodities the company produces in house (which according to my participant is the minority of their products), are generally separated from the rest of staff and are infrequently featured in company promotions. According to the participant, the company positions itself as an artisanal producer at the same time that it outsources a large proportion of its products and while generally valuing administrative and managerial work over the artisanal labour that actually produces its signature products.

This should come as no surprise, as craft industries and the monetized circuits of the maker movement exist within the confines of the capitalist system under which they do business. These enterprises are not structurally different from the corporate behemoths from which they distinguish themselves, size notwithstanding. Instead, craft capitalism masks this genetic similarity by propagating a fetish of craft work, a fetish that superimposes a discursive assumption atop a very real labour process. Whereas this assumption leads consumers and workers to view craft industries as generators of quality and artisanry, the underlying labour process remains one wherein workers' labour – highly skilled or systematically deskilled – is mobilized by capitalist imperatives, not in pursuit of some lofty craft aspiration, but in pursuit of profit. Although craft capitalism

appeals to us with an image of a kinder and higher quality alternative to 20th century monopoly capitalism, it is an image that fades when one sees the conditions upon which it is built. And this is, once again, reflected in the wages of craftworkers – artisans and support workers alike. That workers in craft brewing consistently report making lower wages and enjoying worse benefits than their corporate counterparts, should compel us to question just how much this industry and its craft industrial fellows actually value the labour upon which they build their institutional credibility.

This said, craft capitalism's very ambivalence is simultaneously an opportunity for the development of class consciousness and worker action. As we saw in Chapter 7, many young craftworkers see through the fetishization of craft work, identifying less as craftspeople or creatives, and more as workers first and foremost. This corresponds with a general uptick in enthusiasm for worker action and unionization globally, and as craft breweries have begun organizing in the US, it's likely only a matter of time before these trends coalesce into some worker victories in the regions studied (particularly in BC).²⁷ Moreover, even if some workers in craft industries still ascribe to the artisan allure or the rebellious ethos of craft industries like craft brewing, this still suggests an attitude toward work and working life that transcends the kinds of passivity that one might assume of other industrial sectors, and could also be a further catalyst for worker action.

In the postscript to Chapter 7, we observed the manner by which artisanal cafes in Vancouver have made a practice of valorizing worker identity in order to reinforce their image as hip, edgy, community-oriented spaces. Interview participants suggested that this appropriation and valorization of their identities and aesthetics actually contributed to a workforce composition that was almost ready-made for unionization. As one Cartems worker explained, in selectively hiring workers that were more likely to be progressive or at least to understand oppression, the owners actually contributed to building a politically savvy team. This would also, arguably, be the case for other craft industries in urban environments. In urban contexts, craft capitalism's reliance on workers who either conform to preconceived ideas of alterity or who openly prescribe to craft's purported anti-corporate values has created an unwitting, self-imposed Trojan horse for those employers who run their businesses like (or, perhaps more accurately, worse than) their

²⁷ As I composed the final draft of this conclusion, I learned that hospitality and kitchen workers at Bend, OR's Crux Fermentation Project have filed to unionize at their brewpub, and I'm fairly confident in projecting that this is far from the last (McGee, 2022).

corporate counterparts. This is, admittedly, an optimistic projection, and one that maps onto some of Hardt and Negri's (2004) overly hopeful prognostications for the multitude. However, to say that craft capitalism's general political ambivalence when paired with its penchant for attracting more socially minded workers does not, necessarily, overstate the strategic value that this combination presents. To the contrary, with rising levels of class consciousness among craftworkers, a generally union-friendly political moment, and rampant reports of owner and management misconduct, one can very reasonably expect that the time is ripe for mass worker organizing for both craftspeople and craftworkers. If the status quo for owners of craft enterprises must be to follow the imperatives and logic of capital, workers would be wise to follow the interests and histories of labour. Craft capitalists have claimed to value community, collaboration, and skilled work for long enough; it is my humble recommendation that workers hold them to their word by organizing and changing their workplaces from the bottom up.

Limitations, Missed Opportunities and the Road Ahead

The idea of craft capitalism – that craft is actually an interdependent system of accumulation far deeper than the skilled work of the individual craftsperson – is one that constantly drives toward expansion. It's not just brewers, it's packagers and servers (and drivers, retail staff, and farmworkers, and...). It's not just the maker of leather goods, it's the sales staff, and the tanners, and the ranchers. When one thinks long enough about craft in this way, one must inevitably face the category's porousness and its position within the global division of labour. This is both a challenge and an opportunity. For even though the discursive category of craft is one that is always incomplete and that could always be expanded to consider another link in the value chain, it is also one that gives us a new angle through which to view particular labour processes along that chain. Consequently, there are innumerable paths and tributaries that this analysis might have taken and that it could yet take in future iterations. The current iteration, its form taking that of a doctoral dissertation, necessitated a narrow scope and a locally accessible sample of participants. This limitation should not limit where I or others can take this analysis.

There are three primary extensions that I see as potentially powerful follow-ups to this project. The first concerns the strategic forms that worker organizing in craft industries have taken. I alluded to this work in Chapter 7 when I referenced the tendency for craft

and hospitality workers to organize within autonomous solidarity networks. This is a strategy that is already being used by craft brewery workers, bicycle mechanics, bar staff, precarious retail and hospitality workers, and others. Given that it is an approach already being used by workers in craft and craft adjacent industries, it is one that I will be tracking closely, particularly through an ethnographic exploration of workers' attitudes about its strengths and shortcomings, and as it maps onto the more formal tactics of the traditional labour movement. In fact, I am already collaborating with a brewing industry worker on this project, and our initial report is currently under review and is likely to be published in 2023.

Second, I hope that future extensions of this project can begin to unpack other links in the craft value chain. As referenced above, the work of farmworkers and delivery staff would be a logical first step. This is not to say that there is not already compelling scholarly investigation of these nodes in the global production network, but that future explorations of craft capitalism must contend with how craft production, in addition to relying on service and support work, also relies heavily on extractive, agricultural, and logistical work (Bauer, 2015 is an excellent example in this regard).

Finally, a comprehensive account of craft capitalism must also contend with craft's intersections with the extractive logics of colonialism and settler colonialism. As above, scholars have already begun this work, particularly in Indian and Indigenous North American contexts (Ramaswamy, 2002; Ballengee-Morris, 2015). Based on my own interests and political commitments, such explorations of the intersections of colonial logics and legacies and emergent craft forms should also consider the material conditions of craftspeople who increasingly find their traditional craft practices subjected to the imperatives of capitalism, particularly as they are integrated within the circuits of the tourism industrial complex. As such, a sustained worker/crafter led inquiry on the manner by which craft capitalism mobilizes images of both Indigenous "authenticity" and exoticism to sell the handmade and the mass produced alike would also be an appropriate and politically expedient extension of the present research.

As a closing remark, I would like to appeal to craftworkers directly. It is both regrettable and obvious that the trappings of the academic publishing process result in the knowledge generated by scholarly inquiry getting lost in inaccessible repositories and impenetrable prose. It has been my goal to avoid the latter, and I hope that I have

accomplished this. If I have not, the good news is that I have also attempted to publish and present my findings in other, more accessible formats (articles, podcasts, radio and news appearances). This is a commitment I will maintain moving forward, and I am humbled by the number of connections with workers I have made not only through the research process, but through the dissemination of these findings.

To workers in craft industries: the power is ultimately in your hands to transform your industries, but this means organizing. This can seem a daunting task, but with solidarity workers can accomplish anything. As such, if you are a worker in one of the industries referenced in this dissertation, consider reaching out to an organizer with the Service Employees' International Union (SEIU), United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), or whichever union seems to work most closely with workers in your sector in your geographical context. It is my hope that this dissertation, if you've been able to access it, has provided useful and encouraging suggestions from other workers and artisans who work in your industry or a related one. Perhaps it is time for craftworkers to unite and call the owners' bluff: if the value of craft resides in the activity of the craftworker, the proceeds of that activity should also be enjoyed by the craftworker.

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Appendix A. Methodology and Research Design

In perhaps the most quoted passage of all his works, in the 11th of the *Theses on Feuerbach*, Marx (1888) condemns one-dimensional non-materialist intellectual inquiry while providing us a powerful provocation: “The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is, to *change* it” (pg. 402). For Marx, the pursuit of objective truth is “not a question of theory but a *practical* question” (pg. 401). It is, in effect, in the unity of theory and practice that a materialist orientation is founded and upon which it can build an objective view of the social totality. Importantly, such an orientation parallels the necessary unification of the head and the hand, of conception and execution, at the heart of the craft ethic. For this reason, this study is driven by a historical materialist impulse manifesting in a radical workers’ inquiry (WI) wherein craftworkers’ participation in the research process is meant to inform the shape of the product and where the researcher and participants work collaboratively toward the visualization of some kind of practical change, in this case, developing tools and understandings of the potential for worker organizing in craft industries, particularly in craft brewing. In the sections that follow, I will outline my methodology and the ways that it informs my research design and procedures. I will begin by considering the role of what Antonio Gramsci (1971) calls the ‘organic intellectual,’ that is the intellectual orientation of class-based analysis, in this case fuelled by a commitment to praxis. It is this commitment to praxis that informs the trajectory of the present research, refined through what Andy Merryfield (2017), building upon Edward Said (1996), calls amateurism – an idea that describes a normative approach to non-professionalized work and social activity that, when considered against the backdrop of both craft production and social inquiry, brings into focus the unity of theory and practice characteristic of each. This is further developed in its political character through Max Haiven and Alex Khasnabish’s (2014) conceptualization of the ‘radical imagination’ as an incubator for radical theory and political praxis through the direct creation of alternative social formations. Taken together and applied to WI, these orientations and commitments make up a worker-centered, practical methodology based in a materialist unification of theory and practice at the levels of research, craft production/labour, and worker organizing simultaneously.

The Organic Intellectual in Social Research

In the first section of his *Prison Notebooks*, Antonio Gramsci (1971) ruminates on the nature of the intellectual in modern capitalist societies. Building upon Marx's earlier quoted refrain about the shortcomings of philosophy vis-à-vis praxis, Gramsci interrogates the social mythology surrounding professional intellectualism, demonstrating the particularly classed nature of the 'traditional' intellectual and the 'organic' intellectuals serving as functionaries under the existing political economic system. Instead of existing as an "autonomous and independent social group" (pg. 5), as portrayed in common notions and professional narratives, especially as social theory has morphed into social science, the thought of the professionalized intellectual carries with it the legacy of the historical ascendancy of the capitalist class as, in Gramsci's view, this tradition is built upon the institutional and ideological legitimation of capitalist accumulation. This is not to say that this intellectual tradition is uninformed by currents that predate the maturation of the capitalist system – in fact, the traditional intellectual is one that sees themselves as an objective disciplinarian set apart from socio-economic forces - but that increasingly the dominant currents are subjugated to dominant class relations. Through the process of social domination, the reasoning goes, specialized intellectual categories are created and gain influence in order to reinforce the existing order. As Gramsci explains it:

One of the most important characteristics of any group that is developing towards dominance is its struggle to assimilate and to conquer 'ideologically' the traditional intellectuals, but this assimilation and conquest is made quicker and more efficacious the more the group in question succeeds in simultaneously elaborating its own organic intellectuals (pg. 10).

Whereas in the Gramscian sense the traditional intellectual projects an objective aloofness and considers themselves somehow outside of power relations, the organic intellectuals of the ruling class charge themselves with the maintenance and reproduction of capitalism and its co-constitutive class divisions.

However, given the inherently conflictual nature of class in the Marxist tradition, the intellectual counter-current to these dominant categories would ideally emanate from the working-class, in the form of working-class organic intellectuals. As the Gramscian notion of the organic intellectual is grounded in his theory of hegemony, one can consider the organic intellectual of the bourgeoisie as a producer of hegemonic capacity.

This leaves us the question of whether a similar counter-hegemonic organic intellectual of the proletariat is possible, and what conditions are necessary for them to create capacity for counter-hegemonic, working-class struggle and organizing.

It is just such a project of class consciousness that has concerned left-wing scholars and working-class intellectuals since the development of industrial capitalism, marked specifically by Marx's influence at the end of the 19th century. In Gramsci's view, the organic generation of intellectuals directly from within each class holds the potential for just such a category of counter-hegemonic intellectual. Of course, given trends in contemporary intellectual institutions and cultures (professionalization, specialization, corporatization, etc.), one observes the imposed barriers placed on such formations. As such, in today's climate, one wonders where the counter-hegemonic intellectual might be found and what activities they would be engaged in. Outside of the academy, such intellectual operators are, perhaps, easier to identify: the community or labour organizer, the radical artist, the alternative media writer or producer, etc. Each of these figures arguably contributes to a unification of theory and practice within their respective intellectual activities. Conversely, the academic is often encumbered by the multitudinous trappings of the institution and the imperatives of professionalization – grant seeking, publishing in quantity, and the like. Moreover, the academy as an institution is not, by most accounting, an organ of the working-class, but rather a bastion of bourgeois influence.

This is a critical revelation for scholars who envision their work as something more than a professional activity, who desire to generate knowledge in the interest of emancipation, justice, and solidarity. For this reason, such scholars must intentionally adopt a position outside the professionalized routines of the academy and commit to subordinating their intellectual activities to the advancement of these values. In a sense, scholarly activity meant to advance the interests of the poor and working classes, must be effectively deprofessionalized in order to mitigate the undue influence that bourgeois intellectual institutions hold in relation to the generation and circulation of knowledge.

The Amateur Intellectual

Gramsci's description of the bourgeois intellectual seems almost obvious in the current formation of academe wherein knowledge is increasingly siloed in myriad disciplinary

distinctions, qualifications and credentials eclipse committed contribution, and funding is funnelled to those scholarly projects expected to yield 'deliverables' to universities and funding bodies alike. Furthermore, with knowledge creation centralized in universities and think tanks, the notion that only specialists and academics are intellectual is taken as common sense. In his recent book *The Amateur*, urban theorist Andy Merrifield (2017) launches a polemic against professional expertise, arguing in favour of a return to amateur principles in intellectual and social life. The amateur, for Merrifield, "is a normative construct, a person who's lying latent in society, waiting to flourish..." (pg. 1). He goes on to describe this construct as one that rejects the mythologies of professional expertise while simultaneously maintaining a commitment to socially valuable work.

Although most of Merrifield's book consists of a sustained critique of professionalism, he builds this upon a foundation derived from Edward Said's (1996) Reith Lectures. For Said, the 20th century intellectual is obstructed from reaching their social potential due to the influence of professionalism, particularly due to the imperatives of specialization, credentialed expertise – what Said calls the 'cult of the certified expert' (pg. 77) – and the influence of and aspirations to institutionalized power. Seeing these influences as impediments to social justice oriented knowledge production, Said proposes the ethic of amateurism as a corrective of and rival to the professional consensus that currently presides in knowledge producing institutions. Amateurism, for Said, can be conceptualized as "an activity that is fueled by care and affection rather than by profit and selfish, narrow specialization" (pg. 82). The amateur intellectual, under this definition, is one who is concerned with asking moral questions and intervening in social and political affairs. A positionality of amateurism on the part of the intellectual, can also challenge the dominance of professionalism by rejecting specialization, complacency and aloofness. In this sense, the amateur intellectual functions as a change agent socially and institutionally.

Of course, such a positionality does not completely mitigate the institutional imperatives of scholarly production in the neoliberal epoch. The amateur intellectual, inasmuch as they are situated within the edu-factory (Edu-Factory Collective, 2009), is still beholden to and complicit in the governing values and policies of that institution. However, in taking on this positionality and committing their intellectual production to the socially just values elucidated by Said, the so-called amateur intellectual is in a unique position to funnel attention and resources to working class and counter-hegemonic struggles.

There is, of course, a particular irony in adopting such a stance in a study of craft capitalism, an industrial categorization built upon discourses of quality and the mastery of skill. However, Said's use of the professional-amateur binary does not reflect a disregard in terms of commitment to quality on the part of the amateur. In fact, for Said, care is a central element of the amateur approach. This prioritization of care reflects, in a certain light, craft's orientation toward the pursuit of mastery for the sake of creation (as discussed in Chapter 3). The application of the craft of research (in the form of method) paired with an approach meant to direct knowledge resources beyond the professionalized world of the academy, might suggest that the overtly amateur intellectual is a craftsman of a sort. As such, the fruits of this research have the potential to transcend the directives, values and imperatives of the academy, working instead to resource and prioritize movements beyond that institution and the institutions it supports, latently or otherwise.

The Radical Imagination in Knowledge Production

What remains to be seen, however, is the manner in which amateur, counter-hegemonic knowledge production can be used to magnify class interests and build capacity for working-class organizing and solidarity. Max Haiven and Alex Khasnabish (2014) provide a partial answer to this challenge in their research with progressive social movements in Nova Scotia. Building from workers' inquiry (which will be treated in more detail in the following section), Haiven and Khasnabish envision an orientation toward co-research wherein the researcher puts their institutional position and vocational strengths at the service of social movements. This is, it would seem, a logical extension of Said's and Merryfield's vision of the work of the amateur intellectual.

In Haiven and Khasnabish's view, "solidarity research" necessarily requires that the researcher strategically navigates between institutional imperatives and movement needs. As noted above, this is a challenging strategic dance in an institutional context wherein universities and funding entities prioritize deliverables over the kinds of movement-building capacities that radical research tries to produce. Like Said, they elucidate the risk of a vocational approach to research wherein overly professional strategies may stray into a paternalistic relationship between researchers and the movement or community they are attempting to support. For this reason, the authors

conceive of the vocation as a call to voice. What they mean here is that more traditional solidarity research is often used to amplify marginalized voices and to validate them.

Although this is an important step toward supporting working class struggles and building movement capacity, Haiven and Khasnabish also describe a form of co-research in which researchers put their skills “directly at the disposal of social movements themselves” (pg. 57). Researchers adopting such a conviction of directly activist research would, as a result, attempt to involve themselves directly in the movement at hand, prioritizing activist work over the objectivity paradigm that characterizes most social science. Building upon these two strategic approaches, Haiven and Khasnabish visualize a third approach that uses the institutional positioning of university-based researchers to build additional capacities for movements, beyond what they can already produce while simultaneously advancing radical inquiry. Under this third strategy, research would give movements a voice, provide strategic resources, and promote and build the movements’ causes in the world of radical theory.

In this latter sense, the goal of projects under this paradigm is to help build and theorize the radical imagination as embodied in the movement studied. Radical imagination, in their usage, is the prefigurative vision collectively constituted in radical political movements. As Haiven (2014) explains elsewhere, our horizons of the possible, our imaginations of novel social formations are necessarily limited by our lived experiences. Under capitalism, this means that our visualizations of social change are inflected with the experiences of exploitation and oppression imposed by dominant social structures. However, in social movements alternative imaginaries are built prefiguratively, and according to Haiven and Khasnabish, the radical imagination is a product of this prefigurative practice. In building alternatives through collective action we simultaneously recalibrate our imaginations.

Therefore, research intended to build organizational capacity must put an eye to collective action, ideally redirecting this to highlight, interpret and mobilize the radical imagination developed through this action.

At first glance, such a stance vis-à-vis working-class research, might appear overly optimistic, especially as academic research grows more solidly professionalized and organic to neoliberal capitalism. For some scholars interested in advancing working-

class interests, the value of academic expertise has plummeted in an age marked by mass education and informational abundance (see, for instance, Wellbrook, 2014). In a sense today's worker is in a unique position to conduct their own prefigurative research through their own organizational activities. As Christopher Wellbrook (2014) explains:

The kind of qualities that are identified with traditional worker-organisers are not just practical and useful for advancing social change but are tied to the socialist values that animated them. They can be characterised as prefigurative, as building (as the IWW puts it) the values of the new world in the shell of the old (372).

Of course, here Wellbrook is referring to the worker-organizer of the late 19th and early 20th century labour movements. What is important to note, however, is the manner in which Wellbrook connects the organic generation of knowledge in movements to the history of worker organizing more generally. In this sense, Wellbrook affirms the general approach posited by Haiven and Khasnabish, essentially projecting the means for a renewal of the new left as the worker in action. As alluded previously, workers are in the best position to diagnose their own conditions and to imagine alternatives and strategies for change.

This might lead us to dismiss the role of the university researcher as one that is unduly influenced by the power relations of the neoliberal university. But for a formally associated university researcher to engage in such a dismissal would actually be to reaffirm these same power relations by not attempting to probe through the complex web of institutional power and ideology that characterizes academic work today. Instead, following the lead of Haiven and Khasnabish, in this project I hope to “accept the fact that we are all in the thick of (and participants in) a maelstrom of power that leaves no one immune or innocent, and explore what tactics and strategies are possible in our volatile moment” (66). In order to do this, in this research I utilize a co-constituted interview method wherein those issues of interest to worker-participants are prioritized and help to inform similar interviews with business owners and industry experts. Consequently, my approach to this workers' inquiry is one wherein the researcher serves as a conduit for worker interests and voices while simultaneously using his institutional authority or power to conduct interviews that might serve as a kind of

strategic reconnaissance for future organizing efforts amongst worker-participants and workers more generally (this will be further addressed in the research design).

Workers' Inquiry: Methodology and Conviction

Since its formulation by Marx in 1880, the methodology called workers' inquiry (WI) has been a powerful tool in the documentation and support of workers' movements around the world in labour contexts as various as call centre work (Brophy, 2017; Woodcock 2016), software and video game development (Woodcock, 2019; Woodcock 2020), stock photography (Grayer, 2019), food delivery (Cant, 2020), transportation (Bursztyn, 2020), and education (Cuninghame, 2020). Marx's own intervention was the development of a questionnaire intended to gauge the experiences and perceptions of working people in the industrial formations of the late 19th century (Marx, 1880; McCallister, 2022; Haider & Mohandesi, 2013). Since that time the method has emerged as a strong unifier of theory and practice wherein the intellectual – in this case the radical amateur intellectual previously discussed – is able to use their vocational and class positions in order to intervene within working class struggles (Figiel, et al., 2014). Ideally this would likely resemble the researcher's use of institutional resources – grants and the like – to support those research initiatives identified by workers as particularly advantageous or strategically useful in their efforts to mobilize. Of course, this ideal arrangement is not always realizable, especially as those researchers with the most access to resources are often of the more professionalized classes of the academy and those who are committed to such radically amateur activities are just as often representatives of under-resourced segments of the scholarly community, whether due to intersecting exclusions along the lines of race, gender, orientation or ability or simply due to the struggles radical scholars have in securing and maintaining formal institutional posts.

For this reason, studies that utilize WI vary quite considerably in their specific research designs. However, as Brown and Quan-Haase (2016) demonstrate in their formulation of a WI approach to understanding digital media production, WI, historically and contemporarily, is marked by a particularly participatory and iterative approach, whether in the form of participatory observation, open-ended interviews, or even industrial espionage. Whereas Marx's initial questionnaire was intended to guide worker self-reflections about their industries (and subsequent revelations of their conditions and

class interests), more contemporary applications of WI since the 1950s have taken the form of co-research and action research, where research participants have a more direct role in shaping the substance and goals of the research. Although co-research, especially in the Italian context, regularly involves the researcher's direct participation in the workplace, this is not always the case for action research (Brown & Quan-Haase, 2016).

In his workers' inquiry amongst food delivery workers in the UK, Callum Cant (2020) offers a succinct explanation of the primary streams of the WI method. In this short overview Cant focuses mainly on the American Johnson-Forest Tendency, the French *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, and the Italian *Operaismo* movements, ultimately asserting that what united all of these historic applications of WI was an attempt to "relaunch socialist politics in a period where the working class looked increasingly detached from the trade unions and political parties that historically represented it" (Cant, 2020, pg. 8). In essence, what drives WI research is a conviction that working people are the best sources in understanding working conditions and working class interests. The application of this conviction in social research is, according to Figiel, Shukaitis and Walker (2014) "the practice of turning the tools of the social sciences into weapons of class struggle" (pg. 307).

In actual practice, according to Robert Ovetz (2020), WI intervenes in the present class composition from three simultaneous directions. First, it assesses and gauges deficiencies in the current technical composition of capital (the labour process), particularly as this relates to the organization of the workplace, the managerial processes on display, and the ways in which the workplace fits within the greater industrial (or global) division of labour. Second, according to Ovetz's overview, WI theorizes workers' existing capacity and opportunities for disrupting the technical composition of capital, essentially the tools at workers' disposal to fight their current conditions. Finally, the WI should consider the manner in which capital, in following the cycle of struggle (Cleaver, 2012; Dyer-Witheford, 1999), would go about launching a counter-offensive against militant worker action.

In assessing each of these aspects of class composition – which Ovetz (2020) defines succinctly as "a dance between the current technical composition of capital, workers' capacity to recompose their power [political composition], and capital's counter-attack

intended to decompose workers' power and impose a new technical composition" (pg. 13) – the WI would ideally provide workers a means by which they can respond to the ever changing nature of working life under capitalism and build new tactics and capacities for action. WI, in this sense, serves "to identify current forms of cooperation and ongoing relationships among workers that can develop into powerful organizational forms to circulate the workers' struggle and confront the existing technical composition of capital..." (Ovetz, 2020, pg. 16).

The particular manner by which WI researchers go about this task, however, can vary considerably. Although the particular procedures and design of the present research will be detailed later in this chapter, there are three key ways that this study conforms to the overview of WI provided above. First and foremost, this study is animated by the partisan conviction that working-class interests are routinely ignored or discounted in formal academic and industry research and that to centre these interests provides recourse for the development of new paths toward worker solidarity and working-class consciousness, a reorientation of the political composition of the working class. Consequently, the present study is grounded in critical theory, working-class labour theory and critical political economy in order to prioritize worker and working-class knowledge, especially as these are reflected in both the technical and political composition of the labour-capital struggle. In essence, the meta-goal of the project is to leverage workers' knowledge of the labour process to reinforce political composition. Secondly, the study utilizes the stream of labour process analysis, and particularly the notion of dispossession and deskilling found in Braverman's (1974) study of the conditions and processes of Fordist workplaces to assess and critique the technical composition of capital in 21st century craft industries and to track the influence of the social category of skill on the ways in which these industries conceive of and organize themselves. Finally, the present study centres the voices of workers in craft and craft adjacent industries in order to assess their attitudes about class and their work as well as to mobilize these attitudes toward collective action. Furthermore, in doing so, this research reports on the current and emerging political composition, especially in relation to emergent workers' struggles in craft industries.

We should note, in relation to the present research, that it should be characterized as a kind of WI "from above" (Ovetz, 2020) in that it was designed and conducted by an academic and with the institutional affiliation with a public university. This is not,

necessarily, the kind of organic ‘workers studying themselves’ kind of design that would ideally drive a WI. However, this study was designed to give craftworkers a say in the direction and use of interviews. It also responded directly to worker actions as they occurred, particularly as craftworkers attempted to unionize or staged public displays against their employers. In speaking with workers involved in these actions – specifically the social media campaigns @NotOurP49 and @NotOurCafes (discussed in Chapter 5), the failed union drive at Parallel 49 Brewing (discussed in Chapter 7), and the successful union drives at Matchstick Coffee, Turning Point Brewing and Cartems Donuts (discussed in Chapter 7 and the Conclusion) – the researcher gauged their interest in collaborating on additional public-facing actions and commentaries as well as connections between struggles, ultimately resulting in many cross-workplace collaborations (not reported here due to privacy and strategy concerns) as well as at least two public commentaries (Anderson, 2020 and Anderson, 2021). At the time of composition, many workers involved in the various actions reported were actively circulating tactical information and lessons learned to other interested workers in similar workplaces and industries.

Workers’ Inquiry and Amateur Production in the Social Factory

In designing the present research, I faced a slight quandary in terms of the position held by makers vis-à-vis capitalist production. On one hand, makers are generally amateur producers of material goods that may or may not be intended for sale, their activity paralleling the hobbyist tinkerer more than the worker. On the other hand, makers typically hold jobs outside of their making activities and many intend to use their making either as a path to a future vocation or as a means of supplemental income. In both senses, making is a form of active leisure that is usually either dependent on or at risk of becoming an input in broader capitalist business cycles (Davies, 2017). As Sarah R. Davies explains in her recent study of hacking and making, the proliferation of digital platforms for the exchange of handmade goods increasingly pulls the products of making activities into the consumer market. While not all do-it-yourself production is directly commodified, the pressures for commodification and commercialization make up much of the background of this form of amateur fabrication. As such, makers might be considered a kind of latent entrepreneurial workforce, one that pays makerspace owners for access to the tools of their craft. Voluntary as this association is, the makerspace is a kind of laboratory for the social factory where all activity holds the potential of both

commodification and self-exploitation. It is also a space where the artisanal *dispositif* (Luckman & Phillipov, 2020; see Chapter 6) is mobilized and reinforced while simultaneously feeding into the commodification of making activity more generally.

Moreover, as often-amateur craft producers, makers provide a contrasting case-study to formal (if often precarious) employees in craft industries. As a result, they serve as a lens through which we can view the deeper cultural practices and narratives of the current wave of craft activity. The potential for any making endeavour to transcend the sphere of amateurism to that of entrepreneurialism is similarly instructive as it allows the critical analyst to understand passion-driven work at nearly every level of formality from formal employee to hobbyist to entrepreneur (absent here, of course, are those forms of craft production that increasingly characterize work in informal sectors – something addressed briefly in the Conclusion).

Research Design and Procedures

The present research reports on 38 interviews conducted over a 24-month period in Vancouver, BC, Seattle, WA and Portland, OR (and their metropolitan areas). The interviews ranged in length from 60 to 120 minutes, and were composed of 24 prepared questions, supplemented by an open format in which participants could direct the discussion beyond the prepared topics. The goal of the project as a whole was to highlight working conditions and worker experiences in the craft sector – namely craft brewing and amateur or semi-vocational making – in order to better understand workers' and owners' understanding of craft, class and labour organizing. A total of 38 people participated in this research, a sample composed of brewery workers, brewery and makerspace owners, self-described makers, industrially adjacent workers (specialty liquor store retail staff, artisanal café staff, etc.) as well as external experts in making and brewing. Worker and maker interviews were conducted in the early stages in order to better tailor questions for owners and industry experts that would reflect the interests and experiences of workers. Interviews were mostly conducted in person in a location of the participant's choice, most usually in the brewery or makerspace or in a nearby coffee shop. Nine interviews were conducted after the outbreak of COVID-19. These were conducted either via Zoom or telephone based on the participant's preference.

Participants were selected based on their involvement in craft brewing, making or related productive activities. The initial sample of brewery workers and makers was gathered by drawing upon the researcher's own social networks in Vancouver and Portland (both cities where the researcher has lived for considerable periods of time). This initial sample was composed of: 4 brewery workers, 2 makers, and 3 brewery owners. Using this sample, the researcher then recruited the remaining sample through a combination of snowball sampling and cold calling. The latter was the primary procedure in Seattle due to the researcher's lack of contacts in that metropolitan area. The additional sample included: 1 makerspace owner, 4 makers, 3 brewery owners, 2 occupational health and safety experts, and 5 brewery workers. Participants involved in craft brewing were prioritized as the bulk of the research concerned their particular industrial context, the focus on makerspaces making up a supplemental case study (as reflected in the body of this dissertation). A second supplementary sample was composed in response to industrially adjacent organizing activities in the Vancouver metropolitan area. This sample was made up of: 5 café workers, 2 former brewery workers, 1 craft beverage retail employee (and organizer), 1 bicycle shop worker, 2 bicycle mechanics, 1 heritage denim worker, and 1 contract brewery worker. Short profiles of the participants can be viewed in Appendix B.

The decision to conduct interviews with participants in these three disparate urban contexts was informed by the regional similarities and differences between the three. Each city is popularly appreciated as a hub for craft activities in relation to their region, stands out as a major population centre for its state or province, and shares a similar "west coast" culture. However, Vancouver's craft sector is burgeoning compared to its mature counterparts in Portland and Seattle. Furthermore, as a Canadian city, Vancouver is a potential contrast to the other two in terms of national culture, labour laws and union activity and density. Consequently, the research reported in this dissertation uses Vancouver as its primary labour laboratory, with Seattle and Portland serving as both contrasts and projections for craft and craft organizing on a more general level.

The majority of interviews were conducted in a 3-month period in 2019, including during two one-week field trips to Portland and Seattle, respectively. On these two research trips, interviews were scheduled in advance, arranged through the aforementioned use of the researcher's network and select cold-calling. A smaller number of these site

interviews (3) happened spontaneously based on the recommendation of other participants. One site interview was conducted while the participant actively brewed, while the remainder followed a more traditional interview format.

A smaller number of interviews (8) were conducted in October and November 2020 when news of the successful unionization drives at Turning Point Brewing, Matchstick Coffee, and Cartems Donuts was released. These interviews focused primarily on these drives and their significance for craft industries in British Columbia. As previously mentioned, these interviews coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic and were conducted via phone or Zoom.

The researcher transcribed interviews synchronously, also recording selected interviews for later transcription when the interview setting was not conducive to live note-taking. The transcripts were later coded by hand, and categorized along the lines of emergent themes. In keeping with the collaborative and generative nature of workers' inquiry, the coding scheme accounted for the relative weight and emphasis that participants' narratives placed on the various elements of their answers. Although the researcher did not attempt to have follow-up discussions with every participant, he did consult with several workers about the relative accuracy and descriptive merit of many of his thematic categorizations. Overall, the coding scheme used here was an iterative one that attempted to gauge collective attitudes, shared experiences, and political priorities without losing the granularity of individual experiences of craft work.

As part of the consent process, all participants were given the option to be identified by name in resulting publications. Given the sensitivity of some of the revelations of the interviews, the researcher opted to give each participant a pseudonym unless revealing their identity was deemed somehow necessary to lend credibility or authority to their reports. This was only done in cases where participants had given their consent, and was followed by a post-report check-in with the participant wherein they could review how they were portrayed and offer feedback and/or revisions as necessary. In most cases, identifying participants by name was unnecessary. However, in some cases reporting on specific workplaces and roles therein was deemed essential for accuracy and empirical depth. In these cases, all efforts were made to keep participant identities confidential, and reporting of potentially identifying details were checked with participants

prior to publication. A table profiling each participant by pseudonym, position/specialization, workplace and location is included in Appendix B.²⁸

Interview Analysis and Supplemental Sources

Throughout the planning and data collection stages of this dissertation, the researcher read numerous industry sources and popular accounts of craft brewing and making. These included a number of books and pamphlets on each, three years' worth of the *Northwest Brewing News*, as well as news stories about developments in making and brewing both within the Pacific Northwest context and internationally. Sources were selected based on three primary criteria. The first of these was regional focus. Although not every popular or industry source consulted focuses exclusively on craft beer in Cascadia, the majority do. This is particularly the case for the selections from *Northwest Brewing News* as well as Pacific Northwest brewery guidebooks. Second, sources were included based on the level to which they focused on the actual process of brewing in a craft context. This second focus is reflected in books like Sean Lewis' (2014) *We Make Beer* and articles including but not limited to *Northwest Brewing News*' brewer profiles. Finally, supplemental texts concerning the business processes of craft and the industrial narratives of those processes were selected in order to provide a discursive foundation upon which to build a genealogical mythology for the industry. This last focus included sources as varied as James Watt's (2016) *Business for Punks*, Christopher Mark O'Brien's *Fermenting Revolution*, and Tony Magee's (2014) *So You Want to Start a Brewery*. Taken together, these three criteria create a platform upon which one can build a simultaneous critique of craft brewing entrepreneurial ideology, its business practices and its labour process.

These supplemental sources provided a contextual and cultural framework upon which the researcher was able to analyze and interpret participant testimonials. As such, in reviewing and categorizing the interview transcripts, the researcher used thematic content from popular and industry sources to map participant experiences onto the

²⁸ A further element of this research came about in the form of the author's own activist activities with craft brewing workers. As a member of the Craft Brewery Workers' Alliance of Canada, the author was able to bring this research directly to workers to help envision campaigns, design solidarity resources (Brophy, Cohen & De Peuter, 2015) and generally promote the interests of craft brewery workers in Canada.

typical narratives of both craft brewing and making. These themes were intentionally general, simply mapping onto pervasive narratives repeatedly integrated in the popular literature. They included: tradition, place/locality, collaboration/cooperation, passion/skill, and community-mindedness. Other themes within this literature helped frame some of the arguments and observations of the dissertation (environmentalism, for example), but these were not prevalent enough to warrant integration into the data analysis scheme. The tracking of these themes involved a continuously maintained thematic journal that tracked the frequency, relative rhetorical weight, and prominence of terms and ideas within the industry/popular literature. This journal was then used to thematically group these ideas in such a way that the generalized thematic categorization could be used to aid in the formulation of follow-up questions and, ultimately, assist the researcher in reviewing the transcripts. Approaching data analysis in this way provided the researcher with a wealth of additional rhetorical content upon which to interpret participant's stories and to weigh these against the ways the industry and popular culture more generally view these productive contexts. This latter aspect was also reinforced through the intentional interviewing of owners and managers within those industries studied.

Given that the interviews were motivated by a workers' inquiry orientation, worker testimonials were taken at face value, their expertise and lived experience treated as authoritative. Consequently, worker reports were also used as analytical tools in interpreting industrial narratives and developments. This is particularly the case in worker reports of managerial practices, their own opinions of their work or making activities, and their views of worker solidarity and class. This approach also shaped the conclusions drawn and the recommendations made about craft work more generally, as the authoritativeness of worker experiences was the analytical bedrock of the entire analysis.

Interviews conducted with owners, managers and industry experts, as a result, are used throughout this work to provide additional context for industry narratives and to illustrate industry cultures. These data are generally used contextually, but are also analyzed when owner/manager accounts differ from those of workers. Similarly, these data are illustrative of the general or dominant views of their respective industries and are often used alongside industry commentary to reflect and critique these views.

We should note, of course, that such an approach to research design and data analysis does not feign objectivity. The analysis presented in this research and the conclusions and recommendations drawn from that analysis is subjectively informed and politically motivated. The subsequent project does not, as a result, strive for replicability, impartiality, or objectivity. Instead, the resulting project intends to amplify the voices of workers and makers and to theorize the links between their experiences, their class positions, and the potential for greater levels of class consciousness and solidarity within their industries, all in the interest of intervening in craft discourse and ideology to build greater capacity for worker action in related industrial and social formations. In a sense, the project shaped by this data and its analysis is one that takes a firm side in the class struggle, that side being that of workers.

Appendix B. Participant profiles

Name/Pseudonym ²⁹	Position/Job	Employer	Location
Jerry	Retail associate	Private liquor store	Maple Ridge, BC
Callum	Former production support	Parallel 49 Brewing Co.	Vancouver, BC
Abe	Owner/Cider Maker	Cider Riot!	Portland, OR
Amal	Sales/operations	Neighbourhood brewery	Portland, OR
Zach	Assistant brewer	Craft brewery	Seattle, WA
Adam	Sales director	Mid-sized regional brewery	Seattle, WA
Jack	Owner	Hellbent Brewing	Seattle, WA
Lisa	Owner/brewer	Tin Dog Brewing	Seattle, WA
Ben	Owner/brewer	Gigantic Brewing	Portland, OR
Brad	Occupational Health and Safety Consultant	Total Safety Service	Vancouver, BC
Tegan	Former server	Parallel 49 Brewing Co.	Vancouver, BC
Eric	Brewer	Craft brewery	Port Moody, BC
Abby	Maker/distiller/brewer	Self-employed	Portland, OR
Yoshio	Production support	Turning Point Brewing	Delta, BC
John	Beer importer/Owner	Importer and brewery	Vancouver, BC
Kevin	Head brewer	Flying Bike Cooperative Brewery	Seattle, WA
Anton	Maker	Vancouver Hack Space	Vancouver, BC

²⁹ All participants in this study, apart from business owners and public facing employees, have been assigned pseudonyms. Where appropriate I have included the names and locations of employers, but have withheld some of this information to protect the privacy of easily identifiable participants.

Emily	Maker	Self-employed/Vancouver Maker Faire	Vancouver, BC
Jose	Industry specialist (beer and wine)	Worksafe, BC	Richmond, BC
Ursula	Former production support	Factory Brewing	Vancouver, BC
Derek ³⁰	Maker/Owner	Maker Labs	Vancouver, BC
Daniel	Owner/Brewer	Moonshrimp Brewing	Portland, OR
Isabel	Former server	Parallel 49 Brewing Co.	Vancouver, BC
Maria	Barista/Supervisor	Matchstick Coffee	Vancouver, BC
Terry	Former barista	Matchstick Coffee	Vancouver, BC
Marcus	Barista/Supervisor	Matchstick Coffee	Vancouver, BC
Elenor	Former manager	Cartems Donuts	Vancouver, BC
Vinnci	Maker	Self-employed	Vancouver, BC
Jade	Front-of-house/Barista	Cartems Donuts	Vancouver, BC
Tyler	Bike Mechanic	Small bike shop	Vancouver, BC
Kevin	Maker/Designer	Self-employed	Vancouver, BC
Derek	Former intern	Naked & Famous Denim	Montreal, QC

³⁰ As noted in the text, the interview data used here was gathered in a previous project conducted for the SSHRC-funded Creating Digital Opportunity national research on the Canadian digital economy.

Heather	Admin	Regional brewery	BC
George	Brewing assistant	MOD Beverage	Vancouver, BC
Pamela	Labour organizer	Worker Solidarity Network	Victoria, BC
Elizabeth	Driver	Craft brewery	Vancouver, BC
Rachel	Bike mechanic	Bike shop	Vancouver, BC
Brad	Painter/Former brewery worker	Craft brewery	Vancouver, BC