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Working-Class Lesbian Life: Classed Outsiders
By Yvette Taylor. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 220 pages.

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Yvette Taylor's *Working-Class Lesbian Life: Classed Outsiders* convinces that class still matters both in the lives of those we study and as a non-essentialized concept of analysis, as evidenced in both the everyday experiences and identifications of the working-class women she interviews.

Working-Class Lesbian Life aims and successfully contributes to the sociological and geographical literatures regarding the everyday lives and formative experiences of working-class lesbians. The book is based on in-depth individual and paired interviews with 53 self-identified working-class lesbians from Scotland and England. The findings culminate in descriptions of key formational experiences and productions (everyday, home, school, post-school transitions into un/employment, citizenship and relationships) and central everyday geographies (emotional maps, scene spaces) that (re)produce the women's identifications and existences as working-class and lesbian. The analysis develops from and adds to theories of performativity, everyday life, and symbolic interactionism, although its most profound theoretical contribution is in extending Bourdieu's concepts of social, cultural, and economic capital in regards to subjectivities of sexuality and gender. The result is a portrayal of subjectivities lived—often embraced and sometimes rejected—in a constant and often stressful awareness of class, sexuality, and the intersections between them.

The book opens directly into a review of the literature including the relevance of bodies, families, and school in class identifications, and the continuing importance of studying queer

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geographies and economies in relation to materialities and commodification. Chapter 2 explores the everyday “recognition of [these women’s] inequalit[ies]” in their subjectivities as working-class individuals amongst each other and against middle-class lifestyles. Taylor works through the “classed expectations” participants face across the lifespan, as women generally, and as lesbians specifically, so as to demonstrate that class structures and experiences mediate “the women’s ‘pasts’ and ‘presents’” (62).

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the production of classed selves in participants’ experiences at home and in school as well as in transitioning in and through un/employment, respectively. Material, subjective, embodied, and emotional consequences abound in occupying a working-class lesbian identity. Expectations assumed upon working-class women at home and in school remained consistently limited, stirring emotions of shame and embarrassment rather than inspiration and possibility. For example, there is an presumption from parents that a women’s best option is to find a man with any steady job to marry, or from teachers that factory work would be their best career option. The discussions around and analysis of moving through un/employment in Chapter 4 respond to the popular presumption of the ‘lesbian lifestyle’ (Dunne 1997), whereby lesbians establish financial security through educational and career success. Bridging these women’s sexuality and materiality, Taylor demonstrates the impossibility of simply ‘accessing’ another lifestyle or class position from their working-class positions. At the same time, homophobia itself is a classed experience of discomfort linked to (im)possible job opportunities.

The most exciting chapters for geographers— Chapters 5 and 6—examine emotional maps and scene spaces. Taylor indicates the empowering way these women claim working-class environments as “positive sites of self-identification” against notions they seek to dis-

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identify with their working-classness. By mapping the participants' emotions in their profound levels of comfort, safety, belonging, or the lack thereof on to the everyday heterosexual spaces they navigate, Taylor demonstrates the connection between the lack of resources and space, as well as those between the "visible and invisible aspects of poverty" such as emotional distress and lack of access (135). In the next chapter, Taylor dissects the role of "scene spaces" in these women's lives, i.e. commercialized, 'friendly' gay and lesbian leisure spaces. The lack of access and entitlement these women feel in these spaces provokes an understanding of socio-economic (and sexist) inequalities taking place within them. These spatialities are often more urban than rural, although the different experiences of these types of spaces prove to be specific to individual experiences.

Chapter 7 concludes by taking up the issue of sexual citizenship, a key topic in gay, lesbian, and queer everyday lives and studies, interweaving her work on spaces and development. She found that working-class lesbians lack the economic and social capital to buy, work, or network their way into "scene spaces" of gay liberation. Furthermore, 'coming out' often or identifying as a lesbian puts them at a disadvantage within their working-class networks.

The strengths of *Working-Class Lesbian Life* lies in its deep and thoughtful consideration of working-class lesbian's everyday lives, and its contribution in demonstrating the importance of class as a key subjectivity for participants. This book offers a unique and important view into the social geographies of working-class lesbians, particularly in its emphasis around foundational everyday experiences over the lifespan rather than focusing merely on present situations or specific "scene spaces" such as bars or neighborhoods. I found that the use of long, well-chosen quotes and exchanges provides a convincing and powerful narrative of everyday working-class lesbian life.

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As someone heavily interested in the possibility of intersectionalities, I felt the book's weakness developed from a repeated prioritization of the classed formation of these women's lives before attending to participants' sexualities, or gender. However, after further consideration, I came to imagine that narrating such processes over the lifespan explains an unfolding of identity whereby, in the lives of these women, individuals would be steeped in class identity before developing their sexuality. Perhaps inadvertently, this project supplies a structure and model of analysis that could be both integral if not momentous to the study of intersectionalities and subjectivities. Overall *Working-Class Lesbian Life*'s contributions are significant. I recommend this book to those in the social sciences, particularly sociology and geography. As such, it would be most useful to those who are studying women, gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, and/or working-class individuals for the valuable insights into the study of everyday space, place, and identity it offers.

WORKS CITED

Dunne, Gillian A. 1997. *Lesbian Lifestyles: Women's Work and the Politics of Sexuality*. New York: MacMillan.