

## **MIND BODY AND ESTATE.**

### **OUTER ESTATE MINISTRY AND WORKING CLASS CULTURE**

**Joe Hasler. [NECN 2000}**

“Working Class” definitions usually based on work-place (Marx or Registrar General’s occupations]

Instead see class through eyes of mother, relational, lived culture: how they speak, dress, live, socialise, use public and private space.

#### **1. Working Class Culture**

##### **A: Language**

###### **LANGUAGE USE:**

Working class is a sub-culture, so not different but distinctive language.

Social accents – glottal stops and leaving off h.

Social dialects – word order, double negatives etc.

Berstein: reduced qualifying clauses, more metaphor and simile, more direct.

Called it a ‘restricted’ code against ‘elaborated’ code as if it were inferior.

###### **STORIES AND YARNS:**

Capture the feelings not just the data – apt to exaggeration. Often only the seniors allowed to tell a yarn authoritatively.

A ‘custodian’ of the story can hold the history/story for the community or group.

The ‘gossip’ determines the group’s feelings about what is right and wrong.

“So stories indicate the focus of power, the medium of exercising control and the means of gaining information.” p5

##### **B Physicality**

Men dress to accentuate strength, women their sexuality (and propensity to motherhood). Becoming an adult indicated by working boots.

###### **THE BODY AND SELF IDENTITY:**

‘mind over matter’ is anti-w.c. Management minds supervise bodies.

Whereas Manual work gives value!

###### **FUNERALS:**

Corpse strongly represents the person so all the trimmings, esp artefacts that represent the life. Friends want bodily involvement – who will carry coffin?  
W.C. die earlier so solidarity of youngsters is clear at funerals.

**MIND AND BODY:**

Cartesian dualism not evident

### **C Mothers and Daughters**

Being mum is central to real woman. Much written by feminists alien (1986)  
Barbara Harrison: i. Family women, ii. Marginalised women, iii. Women discovering themselves.

**MATRIARCHAL NETWORKS:** Three sisters agree between them which gas cooker to pay for first. Men called in to reinforce the decisions sometimes.

### **D, The Home ~ Private life**

Women with right of tenure can refuse to share with male partner and have her name on rent book. Men often do little work in the home. “He’s as good as gold” means not under her feet and he withdraws for her friends.

### **E. Our Street [our block] ~ Public life**

A place where identities are formed, issues resolved and power exhibited.

Women deal with conflict there . While they argue they calculate how many men they can muster – bringing men on street can mean trouble.

“You don’t own this street” shows shared ownership

“Our street” but not “our estate”. Not always possible to feel community in the flats – it rather depends on their design and where you live, top or ground.

**GOOD NEIGHBOURS**

“Neighbours have eyes like walls have ears.” Borrowing and lending favours are called in. Being indebted does not enhance respect.

Dignity and Face are long term considerations. Family key to security – stick up for one another against trouble. Street cred, street wise, is important.

### **F. Work**

Men expected to work full time and women part time (a little job), but all changing. To be well-connected can offer casual work for friends. Pubs key to

finding such connections. Seldom does poverty lead to law breaking just not declaring a little extra.

Loss of work – how much will this effect working class identity since it concerns physicality and gender roles? What if men have to do ‘women’s work’? What will woman’s expectation now be of partner?

Market-trader self employment continues, but large-scale employers rarer now. This means less socialisation for youngsters (boys becoming men) and loss of solidarity and voice.

In competitive atmosphere, a few models prevail: -

Worker-Foreman model: Boy Scouts, martial arts clubs, football.

Matriarchal self-provisioning: “woman who runs street” like a family.

I won’t stab you in the back if you don’t stab me.

Trades Union style: All have our say but then follow majority decision

### **G The Symbolic Network [sub-culture]**

Resistant to outside influences – solidarity.

Joe tells story of women’s group discussing if to take a job when husband out of work and resenting wife’s job. All OK they said unless it was male-type work.

#### **CHANGE AND RECESSION**

Women’s roles strengthening and men’s weakening. Separation papers filed so that woman can claim as single parent (even though he is still about). Woman now has greater control over home altogether.

### **A WORKING CLASS THEOLOGY?**

Faith is part and parcel of lived sociology. Language of poverty, justice, solidarity is not part of language for Joe’s people [it was in east end].

#### **WHAT IS CHURCH?**

Church as seen as God’s family, sanctuary and safety. A sacramental understanding. “It’s like Jesus’ body, you can touch it and feel it.”

It transforms the bleak.

#### **HUMANITY OF JESUS AND FATHERHOOD OF GOD**

God as the perfect man for women. God as light or force. Think about Jesus more than God. [?] Difficult to imagine a person who has no gender.

God is the foreman who gets his hands dirty.

Fellow worker with Christ. Strong association with Bible stories. Single mum Mary, disciples misunderstand, suffering Jesus, Sharing bread, pestered Judge, Peter's denial, birth in poverty.

#### SUNDAY WORSHIP

Most important were i. receiving communion, ii. Saying sorry/forgiveness iii. Joining in the prayers. – transformation by God seems to be the key. Notion of family has powerful influence – process of instruction comes later.

#### **SOME IMPLICATIONS**

Church buildings can be alien since they are on the public street so a public event. Going into a church is to make a public statement about belief.

Then the church stops being street and becomes home. So vicar can sometimes be treated as honorary family member indoors.

Church building should be cosier but not be reduced to 'the congregation's home.

Church is God's house but not God's home – that's heaven. Needs to have rooms – sanctuary, baptistery, etc so that movement can occur between. Don't like multi-purpose design.

Faith is incarnational and local here.

Liverpool's GUMML is for leadership 'teams'.

Church plants can recognise different groups.