(De-)Industrial Heritage: An Introduction

Stefan Berger and Steven High

The radical restructuring of the international division of labor has meant that huge swaths of Europe and North America have experienced painful deindustrialization since the 1960s. In itself, this is nothing new, as capitalist development has always been geographically uneven.[1] It is also a global phenomenon, with newly industrialized areas experiencing decline soon after the initial areas.[2] What differed in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s was the scale of the unfolding crisis in North America and Europe, as industrial heartland areas lost their economic raison d'être. Millions of industrial workers were displaced, leaving once vital economic centers stricken. Across the industrialized world, union density plummeted. For example, the rate of unionization in the United States dropped from 34 percent in 1973 to just 11 percent in the 2000s (or a little over 6 percent in the private sector).[3]

It was in this crisis atmosphere that the cross-disciplinary study of deindustrialization emerged, as did industrial heritage as a preservation impulse and an area of further research. Indeed, the term *deindustrialization* was coined in the 1970s and then taken up by researchers and anti–plant closing activists in France, Germany,

1. Harvey, "From Space to Place," 5. For an early example of regional deindustrialization, see Johnson, *Life and Death*.
2. High, MacKinnon, and Perchard, *Deindustrialized World*, introduction.
3. Cowie, *Stayin' Alive*, 79.

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the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States. The most famous distillation of the "deindustrialization thesis" was offered by radical US economists Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison in their celebrated 1982 book *The Deindustrialization of America*, which saw the conflict as one that pitted "capital" against "community."[4] By contrast, the deindustrialization thesis was tied to an anti-imperialist critique of foreign direct investment (usually American) by Left nationalists in other countries.[5]

Now, looking back nearly forty years later, we see a field that encompasses a huge diversity of studies. An early focus on the political economy of deindustrialization as well as on resistance movements has given way to wider examination of the toxic sociocultural, environmental, health, and political aftermath. The 2003 publication of Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott's celebrated edited volume *Beyond the Ruins: The Meanings of Deindustrialization* was a milestone in this shifting perspective.[6] Sherry Lee Linkon's more recent recognition of the lasting effects of these closings over their "half-life"—first expressed in the 2013 special issue of *International Labor and Working Class History*, "Crumbling Cultures of Deindustrialization" and then expanded upon and refined in her 2018 monograph—reminds us that the devastating consequences of deindustrialization persist long after the mines, mills, and factories are closed and their physical remains demolished or converted to new uses.[7]

Deindustrialization's half-life also helps us understand the political linkages between late twentieth-century deindustrialization and the twenty-first-century rise

4. Bluestone and Harrison, *Deindustrialization of America*, introduction.
5. High, *Industrial Sunset*, chap. 6.
6. Cowie and Heathcott, *Beyond the Ruins*. For a historiographical overview of the field of deindustrialization studies, see High, "'Wounds of Class'"; Strangleman and Rhodes, "'New' Sociology of Deindustrialization?"; and Daumalin and Mioche, "La désindustrialisation au regard de l'histoire."
7. Strangleman, Rhodes, and Linkon, "Introduction to Crumbling Cultures"; Linkon, *Half-Life of Deindustrialization*.

of right-wing populism in North America and Europe. While these links are still fiercely debated, there is little doubt in our minds that the moral and political rage felt by those left behind in deindustrialized areas contributed to the shock election of Donald Trump as president of the United States, the British vote to exit the European Union, and the rise of the Rassemblement National (previously Front National) in France and of the Alternative für Deutschland in Germany, to name just four of the most obvious political aftershocks. In each instance, as will be discussed below, race and immigration were bound up in working-class anger over deindustrialization.

Right from the beginning, one important strand within deindustrialization studies focused on the lived experience of deindustrialization as narrated by displaced workers themselves. Oral history interviewing and participant observation were employed to help us understand what is lost in economic displacement, its cultural meaning, and its far-reaching consequences as the force of the shock wave traveled outward through individual lives, families, and wider working-class communities.[8] In her important 1994 study on Kenosha, Wisconsin, anthropologist Kathryn Marie Dudley notes that plant closings serve as a "status-degradation ritual—a cultural recognition that blue-collar laborers are of a lower social status than they have been pretending to be."[9] She was also one of the first to speak of displaced industrial workers as culturally displaced persons: "People who once stood at the center of things now seem out of place."[10] Since then, many others, including ourselves, have picked up on these early insights. For example, Jackie Clarke, a historian of France, speaks of "new forms of working-class invisibility" that have taken hold that lead us to locate

8. See, for example, Walley, *Exit Zero*; James, *Dona Maria's Story*; Kerr, *Derelict Paradise*; and Dandeneau, *Flint, Michigan*.
9. Dudley, *End of the Line*, 79.
10. Dudley, *End of the Line*, 161.

industrial workers in the past, not the present, even though sizeable numbers of industrial workers remain in "deindustrialized" countries.[11] One can go further, as historian John Kirk does, noting that the pervasive "de-recognition of class, and class struggle [inside and outside our universities], has the effect of debilitating the working class, both in terms of the politics of cultural recognition and questions of political and economic justice."[12] The ways that industrial heritage counters or reinforces this de-recognition are at the heart of this special issue.

With the cultural turn in the human sciences and the rise of memory studies from the 1980s onward, scholars from different disciplines sought to de-essentialize the category of experience by turning their attention to narratology.[13] They were interested in recovering lived experiences but understood that remembering is a social and political process and that forced forgetting is an integral part of the deindustrialization process. Narratives of deindustrialization are also present in a whole variety of industrial heritage initiatives. These include industrial museums and other heritage tourism sites that present their own narratives of industrialization and deindustrialization—processes that, as Tim Strangleman has pointed out, are tightly connected.[14] The setting up of industrial heritage has been promoted by a wide variety of heritage actors, including former workers, trade unionists, employers, state representatives, politicians, scholars from a variety of different disciplines, museum and heritage professionals, architects, artists, and others. These industrial heritage actors are all studied by the contributors here. Industrial heritage activists have often faced public opposition and some ambivalence from industrial workers themselves,

11. Clarke, "Closing Moulinex," 446.
12. J. Kirk, *Class, Culture, and Social Change*, 100.
13. Linkon and Russo, *Steel Town USA*.
14. Tim Strangleman, "Deindustralisation."

which is why their initiatives have frequently been the subject of controversial debates in the media.[15] The media, in turn, have become a central site for narrating industrial heritage in deindustrializing localities, regions, and nations.

In this introductory essay, we would like to draw out five themes that run like red threads through the articles that follow. First, we recognize that industrial heritage initiatives are bound up in wider deindustrialization and gentrification processes: they are inseparable. We therefore have to approach them critically, in terms of their site interpretation but also in terms of their very existence. As always, context matters. We would like to reflect here on how the stories we tell within the dual frames of "industrial heritage" and "deindustrialization studies" are narrated differently depending on whether we are dealing with industrial heartland areas or outlying places where industries were of secondary economic and cultural importance. Does it make a difference if we are studying or interpreting (de-)industrial history in single-heritage industrial towns, in regions of heavy industry, or in multi-heritage towns, where industrial heritage has never been the only "show" in town? Whose working lives are visible and whose are not? The stories of deindustrialization and industrial heritage are profoundly gendered. How, then, are stories about work related to constructions of both masculinity and femininity? Conversely, to what extent is deindustrialization bound up in a crisis of working-class masculinity?

Second, we would like to reflect further on the interplay between place-based and nonlocalized understandings of industrial heritage during deindustrialization's half-life. To what extent does scale matter? Not only are different spaces—the factory, the neighborhood, the city, the region, the nation, and transnational spaces—

15. On the concept of "memory activism," see Yifat Gutmann, *Memory Activism*; and Wüstenberg, *Civil Society and Memory*.

interrelated, but all spatial narrativizations are interlinked with nonspatial ones, such as narratives of class, race/ethnicity, religion, and gender, to name just the most obvious ones. There has always been a certain tension between class and community in labor history, as they have been sometimes competing modes of identification.[16] But as geographer Doreen Massey reminds us, localities are made from within and without.[17] The "community" versus "capital" paradigm, long prevalent in deindustrialization studies in the United States, has its interpretative limits. As the contributors to this special issue show, deindustrialization is messy business. The extent to which industrial heritage discourse and specific sites acknowledge this messiness—or even locate deindustrialization within the discourse's interpretative framework—is highly relevant to our discussion about class politics.

Third, we would like to make some observations regarding the place of violence in the deindustrialization process and how it then gets represented or reproduced in industrial heritage. Mine, mill, and factory closures are acts perpetrated against victims. Several contributors thus speak of the structural and symbolic violence that accompanies deindustrialization. But it does not end there. This violence is inscribed in the plant shutdown stories shared by displaced workers years later and can be observed explicitly or implicitly in industrial heritage discourse and site interpretation. One of the consequences has been the silencing of particular narratives and memories, sometimes followed by attempts to recover what has been lost. Here, the concept of "palimpsestic memory" is an important one in understanding both processes: erasure and recovery.[18]

16. Taksa, "Like a Bicycle."
17. Massey, "Places and their Pasts."
18. Huyssen, *Present Pasts*.

Fourth, many of the contributions to this special issue pick up the topic of nostalgia and its role in making sense of deindustrialization and the industrial past. We would like to consider what types of nostalgia may be usefully distinguished. As nostalgia is often connected to a politics of recognition,[19] we shall ask how valuable such a politics is in helping those living through processes of deindustrialization. We shall also investigate who is being nostalgic for what and for which reasons. How are feelings of nostalgia related to the generation of diverse scenarios for the future? And how can we make productive a politics of nostalgia in forms of agonistic memory?[20]

Finally, the production of forms of industrial nostalgia is tightly related to heritage labor. Hence we will think further about the agency of different actors involved in industrial heritage production. Who is doing the remembering and the storytelling? What political impulses stand behind specific forms of memory work? What forms of memory activism do we encounter in the stories that are being told on deindustrialization? Finally, we will conclude with some reflections regarding the future of studies dealing with the unfolding relationship between industrial heritage and deindustrialization.

The Deindustrialized Spaces of Industrial Heritage Making

Almost all of the articles in this issue maintain a focus on industrial heartland areas, where masculinity, race, and class coalesced over time into a dominant regional identity. Mining, steelmaking, auto manufacture, and the railways have long stood at the economic and cultural center of industrial heartland areas in Europe and North

19. Chakrabarty, "History and the Politics of Recognition."
20. For recent attempts to differentiate reactionary from "progressive" nostalgia, see Smith and Campbell, "'Nostalgia for the Future'"; on "agonism," see Mouffe, *Agonistics*; on "agonistic memory," cf. Bull and Hansen, "On Agonistic Memory."

America. As Marion Fontaine shows in her contribution, the "black faces" of the coal miners of France's North Basin, mythologized in Émile Zola's 1885 novel *Germinal*, were central to the proletarian ideal in that country. The same could be said of American autoworkers in the "Motor City" or of the steelworkers and miners of Germany's Ruhr Valley.[21]

But the centrality of these industries to local, regional, and national identities was thrown into question with major mine, mill, and factory closures. The new "postindustrial" economy valued other people and other places. Deindustrialization therefore triggered an economic and cultural crisis for industrial workers, their communities, and industrial heartland regions. It was also a crisis in masculinity, as the male breadwinner ideal was demolished in many working-class families as surely as the pitheads and blast furnaces themselves. A social structure built up over generations was torn asunder. The new postindustrial economic realities often meant that any new job opportunities favored women over men, further contributing to a crisis of masculinity in postindustrial settings.[22]

Even so, the centrality of male industrial work has obscured the significant presence of women in industrial workplaces. Generally, women were located on the periphery of these marquee industries and concentrated in other manufacturing industries deemed of secondary importance. Many "steeltowns," "auto towns," and "mining regions" had their textile and clothing mills or electrical and appliance factories, where women labored in obscurity. These industries were less visible in life and in death.[23]

21. For an interesting recent study along these lines, see Nettleingham, "Beyond the Heartlands."
22. Walkerdine and Jiminez, *Gender, Work, and Community*.
23. For more on gender and industrial heritage, see Clarke, "Afterlives of a Factory." Also see Clarke, "Closing Moulinex," 446.

Naturally, an industry's perceived centrality to regional or national identity helps explain subsequent efforts to preserve its physical remains once that industry is lost. Except for major textile-producing areas such as New England, where female-dominated industries achieved centrality, most industrial museums and heritage sites are focused on male-dominated industries.

The contributors to this special issue investigate the diverse meanings of preservation attempts, ranging from massive UNESCO World Heritage Sites to failed efforts to create even a local industrial museum. The most ambitious industrial heritage work underway is undoubtedly in Germany's Ruhr Valley, a region that has become an industrial heritage "superpower," according to Stefan Berger. There, the scale of the preservation efforts is staggering. Zeche Zollverein, described by some as an "industrial Versailles," is an immense industrial complex in Essen that now sports museums, galleries, artist workshops, restaurants, and amusement rides such as a Ferris wheel that takes visitors into the bowels of the old coke ovens. In nearby Duisburg, a steel mill has been converted into an industrial landscape park with climbing areas, a diving tank, a cinema, and other arts-based activities. The ruined beauty of these and other sites, accentuated by lighting and careful landscape curation, has generated considerable interest from artists and photographers drawn to the aesthetic charge these sites offer.[24] Some of these sites have even become popular backdrops for wedding photographs or receptions—a cultural phenomenon that extends to North America in places such as Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. As Berger makes clear in his contribution, industrial heritage has established itself as the dominant heritage discourse in the Ruhr.

24. Hilary Orange, "Lighting the Ruhr," February 15, 2017, hilaryorange.wordpress.com/2017/02/15/lighting-the-ruhr/.

A very different story unfolded in France's North Basin. There, according to Marion Fontaine, mining identity lives on, but its political meaning has fragmented as the old Socialist and Communist Parties, once dominant in the area, are challenged by the right-wing populism of the Rassemblement National. As she shows, there were also important differences in how the two left-wing parties approached industrial heritage in the wake of deindustrialization. This fragmentation has resulted in hesitant heritage efforts, with the most important being the Centre historique minier de Lewarde. In the Nord Pas de Calais we also find the argument that heritagization represents an obstacle to redevelopment, as it is allegedly one-sidedly backward-oriented and so cannot serve as the basis for a forward-oriented redevelopment of the devastated region. Similar arguments can also be found in the Ruhr. Behind this political contestation in France, Fontaine finds considerable ambivalence about heritage initiatives among former miners, something that is evident in other regions. Industrial workers want jobs, not a tombstone. Industrial heritage discourse and on-the-ground actions are thus inseparable from the political struggles underway today.

The preservation efforts underway elsewhere are modest in comparison. Lucy Taksa reveals the limits of interpretation at the Eveleigh Railway Workshops in Sydney, Australia. Similarly, Lachlan MacKinnon documents a failed attempt to create a steel museum in deindustrializing Cape Breton. There, calls for memorialization to counter forced forgetting were ignored by upper levels of government, which were focused on the environmental cleanup of the "tar ponds." The implication was that the industrial age was an ugly stain that needed to be scrubbed clean and not memorialized. Eventually, the former industrial lands were transformed into Open Hearth Park, which largely fails to commemorate the city's industrial and labor history. The

continued strong relationship between the physical site and memories of industrial work among erstwhile mill workers does not find expression, leaving workers and their descendants no place of their own to publicly remember. The park for them becomes an emotional wasteland. Why one region emerges as a heritage superpower and another fails to preserve anything is one of the productive lines of investigation that emerge in this special issue.

But even when efforts are successful, and industrial vestiges are preserved, what is then communicated? A consensual history—usually based on a national "birthplace of industry," or what Raphael Samuel memorably calls "object fetishism"—results.[25] Thus industrial heritage preservation can serve to further obscure class struggle and social conflict, silence working-class solidarities, or render invisible the history of anticapitalist movements. Given this challenge, Taksa has provocatively suggested elsewhere that labor and public history may in fact be politically incompatible.[26] Her contribution to this special issue turns our attention to the uncertain place of migrant labor in site interpretation at the Eveleigh Railway Shops—a heritage site that Taksa has studied over many years.

The Interrelationship between Spatial and Nonspatial Narratives of Deindustrialization

Industrialization has strongly shaped local and regional identities. In some parts of the world these regional identities grounded in industry have remained relatively intact despite deindustrialization. In some cases, the symbols of the industrial past, shorn of their conflictual baggage, have become rallying points for regional identity.

25. Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*.
26. Lucy Taksa, "Labor History and Public History in Australia."

The persistence of industrial culture, at least at a symbolic level, Berger believes, has become even more strongly fixed to regional identity in the Ruhr.[27] We also encounter a strong relationship between processes of deindustrialization and regional place making in the north of France. The heritage of the miners of northern France was constructed in terms of their being the truest representation of the French nation—first by the communists in the post–Second World War period and more recently by the right-wing Rassemblement National.

A national embrace of industrialism was also evident in Canada during the 1970s and 1980s, where factory closures were met with nationalist workers singing the national anthem alongside the union anthem "Solidarity Forever."[28] By wrapping themselves in the maple leaf flag, Canadian trade unionists were able to win important legislative actions that significantly softened the blow of job loss and in some cases contributed to the saving of industrial jobs.

Industrialization resulted in the creation of not only strong local, regional, and national associations but transnational ones. Thus, for example, the Ruhr region in Germany has often been construed as the heart of European industrialization and, after 1945, as the birthplace of the European Coal and Steel Community, today's European Union. All these spatial constructions of industry have been closely interrelated with nonspatial representations of industry. Historically, the most significant were representations of class. Such representations were politically shaped to a significant extent by the labor movement.

27. On the Ruhr, see Berger, Golombek, and Wicke, "Post-industrial Mindscape?"
28. High, *Industrial Sunset*, chap. 5.

Next to the prominence of class narratives, there are also narratives of ethnicity that underpin nonspatial construction of identity in industrial and postindustrial spaces. In most industrial regions of the world, industrialization was accompanied by migration, and migrant labor played a prominent part in the construction of industrial spaces.[29] In many places, this migrant labor came first from within the nation-state and, later, from outside. In the latter case, we encounter construction of "indigenous" and "foreign" ethnicities in industrial spaces. This could produce tensions and conflicts within the working class, as was often the case with Polish-speaking workers in the Ruhr coalfield and in the United States before 1914.[30] But as Taksa points out for the Eveleigh Railway Workshops in Sydney, migrant labor of diverse ethnicities could also develop their own traditions of militancy and often brought with them, from their places of origin, traditions of trade unionism and labor politics that in turn had a major impact on their host country. The transnationalism of diverse forms of labor activism has more recently become the focus of attention in labor history.[31]

That said, more racially bounded and intolerant class narratives are also evident in some of the contributions that follow. For example, Fontaine's essay traces how the north of France shifted from working-class solidarities to working-class xenophobia after the turn of the millennium in 2000. The nationalism of the French Communist Party, referred to above, provided the segue for the Rassemblement

29. On migrant labor more generally, see Lucassen, Lucassen, and Manning, *Migration History in World History.*
30. McCook, *Borders of Integration.*
31. Berger and Scalmer, *Transnational Activist*; Patmore and Stromquist, *Frontiers of Labor*; N. Kirk, *Transnational Radicalism.*

National. When deindustrialization signaled the redundancy of industrial labor, and once the Communists were dethroned and the Socialists had abandoned their working-class clientele, the Front National was ready to fill the political vacuum in the northern French coalfields. The "white Australia" policy also ensured that class solidarities were broken by ethnic and race divisions in Australia's twentieth-century history of labor migration.[32] In the United States and other white settler colonies, issues of race and the afterlife of slavery and indigenous dispossession often limit or even thwart class solidarities.[33]

Disillusionment with deindustrialization and the accompanying weakening of class solidarities led to feelings among workers of having been betrayed or let down by progressive political parties and trade unions alike. As Steven High's contribution to this special issue reveals, centered as it is on the plant shutdown stories recorded with Detroit autoworkers, the feeling of having lost control over one's working life and of not finding strength in the old class solidarities or the labor movement left long-term emotional scars. High's interviews record some of the anger and shame that led so many working-class voters to switch from Barack Obama to Donald Trump in 2016. If nothing else, a vote for a right-wing demagogue like Trump is a giant middle finger to a status quo that is clearly not working for many deindustrialized Americans.

32. Irving, "Labour, State, and Nation-Building in Australia."
33. Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*. For more on the relationship between "mill colonialism" and the racial exclusion of indigenous people, see High, *One Job Town*, esp. introduction and chap. 1.

Cultural Erasure and Persistence

While much of this special issue focuses on tangible heritage, the contribution by High invites us to consider sources of intangible heritage in hard-hit cities and regions. Already, there are probably tens of thousands of archived interviews with displaced industrial workers held by heritage institutions across the industrialized world. In his article, High revisits nine interviews (with five men and four women) that he conducted with Detroit-area autoworkers back in 1998 to consider the emotional fallout of deindustrialization and the meaning of prolonged displacement. From this example, we can see the myriad ways that oral history might help us build a more critical heritage. High has been critical of industrial ruin–gazing, which has emerged as a popular middle-class leisure activity in parts of North America and Europe.[34] How, then, do we go beyond "ruin porn" and engage with the politics of industrial ruination and the people who continue to live in and with this ruination? It is important to remember the symbolic and structural violence of deindustrialization, according to MacKinnon, in this issue: "Symbolic violence exists . . . [in a] combination of objective hardship and the subjective experience of self-doubt, discomfort, and spatial anxiety." Berger likewise speaks of the amnesia that follows deindustrialization.

Yet the culture of industrialism is not so easily extinguished, as we have already seen in the Ruhr Valley. Several of our contributors speak to its local and regional persistence across the generations and the ways that industrial heritage supports some degree of cultural continuity. That said, it is significant that only one of the articles in this special issue focuses on industrial heritage in a metropolitan city

34. For more on this debate, see Strangleman, "'Smokestack Nostalgia,' 'Ruin Porn'"; and High, "Beyond Aesthetics."

that has successfully made the economic transition. Industrial heritage is at its most visible in areas that have largely failed to make the transition. By contrast, postindustrial cities like New York, London, and Montreal have experienced a double erasure. First the mills and factories closed, then the buildings were demolished or recontextualized as something new. Under these circumstances, industrial heritage is often limited to the aesthetic appreciation of industrial facades that are incorporated into new culture-led redevelopment schemes, thus raising questions about the uncertain line between industrial heritage preservation and cultural appropriation.

Complicating these changes further, there is also the issue of changing demographics in former industrial neighborhoods or towns due to immigration. The place of immigrants and immigration in the stories we tell in industrial heritage matter in an era when immigration has become hotly contested. This is the major point offered by Taksa, but it resonates in other contributions. Fontaine finds that older waves of immigration may be acknowledged in heritage interpretations but not more recent waves from outside Europe. Or, as Talja Blokland asks in an earlier study of public remembering in a working-class Rotterdam neighborhood that has experienced concurrent deindustrialization and immigration: how do we remember what was without erasing what is? After all, the old cinema or former factory might be the new mosque or cultural center.[35] Likewise, in her study of Lowell, Massachusetts, Martha Norkunas considered the uncertain place of that city's large Cambodian community in the city's dominant industrial heritage discourse, as that community mainly arrived after the mills had closed.[36] This represents a different—though not unrelated—problem to the one flagged by Leon Fink in North Carolina's Pied-

35. Blokland, "Bricks, Mortar, Memories."
36. Norkunas, *Monuments and Memory.*

mont, where "milltown nostalgia" obscured, or even denied, the history of Jim Crow racism there.[37]

Violence, be it structural, symbolic, or highly specific, leads to painful memories that can have a strong influence on the younger postindustrial generations. Such violence is present in postindustrial regions' population loss, rising unemployment or precarity of work, challenges with an ageing society and associated health problems, and problems with a low-wage economy, rising criminality rates, and drugs. It is an important question whether forms of industrial heritage speak to such forms of violence, remember them, and create out of them a "practical past," as discussed in Berger's article, that is meaningful for social actions in the present.

Industrial Nostalgia and Intergenerational Remembering

Of all the essays in this special issue, the one that is most directly concerned with industrial nostalgia is Berger's on the Ruhr. His juxtaposition of industrial nostalgia as "antiquarianism" with the notion of industrial nostalgia as expression of the "practical past" takes up the challenge of harnessing emotions of nostalgia for a progressive politics connected to forms of industrial heritage. Thus when High encounters fond memories of blue-collar Detroit from white, Latino, and black workers alike, many of whom then contrast it to the contemporary "ghetto," we can ask ourselves how future-oriented such nostalgic memories can be. Much has happened since these interviews were conducted in 1998; one wonders how the changing present might have altered this juxtaposition. A practical past constructed through forms of industrial heritage should be able to contribute to a politics of recognition that gives value

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37. Fink, "When Community Comes Home to Roost."

to workers' lives without romanticizing them while still avoiding the homogenizing tendencies of much heritage work.[38]

In many parts of the English-speaking world we can observe how industrial pasts are constructed with reference to working-class communities that appear, in a normative way, as expressions of working-class solidarities. In the plant shutdown stories that stand at the center of High's chapter, the workplace is construed by some workers as a tight-knit and solidaristic community destroyed by plant shutdowns and deindustrialization. As the community narratives in France and Germany are much less connected to a democratic humanism, we do not find the same reference to community, but the sense of home-place is much the same.[39] Where the mantra of community has taken hold, particularly in the United States, there is a danger of romanticizing the industrial past. Conversely, as MacKinnon shows, the industrial past can also be endowed with purely negative meanings. Even while the steel mill continued to operate, environmental concerns led some townspeople in Sydney, Nova Scotia, to demand that it shut down, while others were adamant that it gave them, first and foremost, a job. Internal political fragmentation also characterized the mining communities in northern France. While the Communist Party and its followers initially opposed any moves toward heritagization and instead favored keeping the mines open and maintaining living mining communities, the Socialist Party adopted the language of modernization. It was only from the 1990s onward that heritage initiatives in the North Basin have been related to the promise of tourism. A less

38. There is a vast literature on the contested concept of community in industrial heritage studies. See Walsh and High, "Rethinking the Concept of Community"; and Faue, "Community, Class and Comparison."

39. Stefan Berger, Bella Dicks, and Marion Fontaine, "Community—A Useful Concept in Heritage Studies?," paper submitted to the *International Journal of Heritage Studies* in 2018.

antagonistic and more cosmopolitan memory of the mining past began to emerge, which was then successfully challenged by the Rassemblement National.

By contrast, the Ruhr's cosmopolitan memory framework is legitimating the particular form of structural transformation that has taken place in the region over the last sixty years. It is celebrating a transformation that did not leave an equivalent trail of destruction and social misery behind it. However, the German model renders invisible the alienation and displacement that occurred on the ground.

Elsewhere, industrial heritage is much more concerned with keeping the wounds of deindustrialization in view and keeping history hot, invariably in an antagonistic rather than an agonistic way.[40] In much of the United States and the United Kingdom, the nonrecognition of workers and industrial work and the stronger vilification of the regimes of industrial work have led to antagonism in industrial heritage itself, where employers and the state, on one hand, and the labor movement and critical heritage scholars on the other are locked in battle over working-class memory. It is surely no coincidence that we find such polarized viewpoints in the heritage projects examined by MacKinnon in Canada and by Taksa in Australia. As we can observe in the plant shutdown stories in Detroit, the devastating experience of deindustrialization can lead to resignation and a belief in the inevitability of a dehumanizing capitalism. Agonistic forms of memory in industrial heritage might be able to show a way out of such pessimism by focusing on aspects that run counter to teleological narratives confirming the triumphalism of capitalism at every turn.

40. Lorenz, "Blurred Lines."

Heritage Labor: Memory Activism and Agency

We have already encountered many heritage activists and professionals in our exploration of the issues so far. This raises pertinent questions about who is involved in heritage labor and how their work and class position may have changed over time. Different heritage actors have been able to develop diverse forms of agency. In her contribution, which focuses mainly on the United States, Cathy Stanton offers a unique overview on the evolution of heritage labor over the past century. She distinguishes between various actors, including volunteers, unpaid enthusiasts, local preservationists, and highly professionalized paid workers, all of whom are cultural workers with highly divergent class positions. According to Stanton, protoprofessional cultural workers emerged in the nineteenth century. During the twentieth century, universities produced a great variety of cultural workers for diverse creative economies. They tend to operate in a commodity-producing field, for which tourism and profit are key indicators of success. This in turn, Stanton argues, has led to a good deal of opportunism whereby heritage workers have tried to please the hand that feeds them. Hence in capitalist societies, heritage labor often fulfills a compensatory function.

It is perhaps not surprising that business interests are strongly represented among heritage actors. Business representatives have been playing a key role in the making of industrial heritage in the Ruhr, in the north of France, and in Sydney, Nova Scotia. Some of the earliest heritage initiatives, going back to the nineteenth century, can be traced back to industrialists and engineers. As Stanton points out in her article, the first industrial museums in the United States were set up by industrialists in the 1920s. While they were usually proud to display the technological and

economic achievements of their industries, they have shied away from representing conditions of work, class conflict, or the structural or symbolic violence of deindustrialization itself. More tourist-friendly narratives are offered instead, ones that are compatible with heritage's role in culture-led redevelopment and gentrification.

Another key heritage actor is the state. The postindustrial heritage landscape of the Ruhr would be unthinkable without the massive financial support and administrative capacity of the towns and municipalities of the Ruhr, the regional administrative body, the Regionalverband Ruhr, the federal Land of North Rhine Westphalia and the German national government. State actors necessarily face the decision of what to do with the deindustrialized remnants of a now-defunct industry. They have been vital in establishing museums and other industrial heritage sites across Europe. And even in the United Sates, at least during the Great Depression, the state became more proactive in harnessing various forms of heritage labor to the cause of combatting the economic crisis. That said, ascendant neoliberalism tends to be less amenable to promoting industrial heritage (unless it can be made profitable and turned into a vibrant heritage industry), while corporatist and social democratic political models are far more likely to invest public funds in industrial heritage initiatives.

A third important actor is the labor movement in its various guises. Labor activists came to the forefront of initiating heritage projects in deindustrializing places once the fight for a "living industry" was lost. As is clear in the articles that follow, their motivations varied widely. On one hand, we can be proud of the contributions of the labor movement in the emergence of the Ruhr as an industrial heritage superpower. On the other, we can understand the failings of some industrial heri-

tage projects to connect with former workers. This is something that MacKinnon emphasizes for the case of Sydney, Nova Scotia. In Britain, former labor activists have played prominent roles in the heritage of former coal regions out of a desire to bolster a counterculture to the dominant neoliberal political framework.[41]

Heritage scholarship is, of course, also a form of heritage labor. Industrial heritage and deindustrialization scholars, many of them the sons and daughters of the displaced workers of the late twentieth century, are not neutral or distant observers or analysts. For the most part, they strongly identify with their working-class subjects while still adhering to professional standards of scholarship. Many, like MacKinnon here, have pleaded a special responsibility on the part of the scholar for shifting attention to the voices of working people. Taksa similarly emphasizes the importance of an alliance of heritage scholars with workers, area residents, and the labor movement itself to counter neoliberal politics and business interests. How these scholars define their own labor often depends on how deindustrialization unfolded in their home countries, communities, or their own families. Where economic change was relatively consensual and successful, as in Germany, scholars may be less likely to adopt the language of class and advocate instead binary constructions of "good" critical heritage and "bad" legitimatory heritage. The more brutal and uncompromising deindustrialization was, the more binary the constructions of opposing notions of industrial heritage become. We can see this tension not only within the articles that follow but within this coauthored introduction itself. While Berger, from Germany (although he lived in the United Kingdom between 1987 and 2012), believes that

41. One example among many is the Labour Party MP Hywel Francis, who was instrumental in developing a framework for the heritage of the South Wales coalfield, including the opening of the Rhondda Heritage Park and the Miners' Library in Swansea. Together with Dai Smith, he also shaped public historical understanding of the role of mining in South Wales. See Francis and Smith, *The Fed*.

we need to be careful not to be too binary in our scholarship or heritage practices, High, a Canadian, believes that industrial heritage workers cannot avoid picking sides, as there is little middle ground. Clearly, contestation and agonistic memory are happening not only between but also among different social groups. We encounter complex alliances and adversarial constellations in different industrial heritage contexts. Deindustrialization "changed everything," writes Fontaine. The contributors to this special issue explore the politics of industrial heritage in the aftermath of still ongoing deindustrialization. From the shifting class position of heritage professionals under capitalism to the consensual politics of industrial heritage discourse itself, the contributors shine a critical light on the subject at hand. As Stanton notes here, there is an urgent need to understand better what industrial heritage is actually doing in practice and on the ground. By widening the interpretative frame beyond the confines of the heritage site, the contributors move away from the physical remains of lost industry and narrow issues of representation and consider the socioeconomic legacies, consequences, and inheritances of lost industry for those left behind. Increasingly, industrial heritage is caught up in wider culture-led redevelopment schemes tied to gentrification, which often have a detrimental effect on the very communities that once worked at these sites.[42] We need to know more about the ongoing relationship between industrial heritage sites and these "source" or "originating" communities. Likewise, we need to continue to expand the frame to consider the place of industrial heritage discourse and sites in the socioeconomic and cultural "half-life" of deindustrialization. To do so, we need to go beyond single-site studies. We also need to consider how race and class get knotted together in the aftermath of deindustrialization,

42. Polyák, "Recycling the Industrial between West and East," 172.

including the ways that industrial heritage can be tied to a single ethno-racial stream. Gender, too, demands more attention.

The articles in this special issue also invite us to make cross-regional or cross-national comparisons, scaling up our analysis from the single site to consider industrial heritage in its regional, national, and transnational contexts. It would be interesting to consider how political insurgents on the Left and on the Right approach industrial heritage. Clearly, the populist Right in North America and Europe has been appropriating the wounds of deindustrialization for its own politics. This makes it urgent to study the politics of deindustralization in a transnational frame, which we hope this special issue begins to do. ◢

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