



British Working-Class Fiction: Narratives of Refusal and the Struggle Against Work

Roberto del Valle Alcalá

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British Fiction and the Struggle Against Work offers an account of British literary responses to work from the 1950s to the onset of the financial crisis of 2008/9. Roberto del Valle Alcalá argues that throughout this period, working-class writing developed new strategies of resistance against the social discipline imposed by capitalist work. As the latter becomes an increasingly pervasive and inescapable form of control and as its nature grows abstract, diffuse, and precarious, writing about it acquires a new antagonistic quality, producing new forms of subjective autonomy and new imaginaries of a possible life beyond its purview. By tracing a genealogy of working-class authors and texts that in various ways defined themselves against the social discipline imposed by post-war capitalism, this book analyses the strategies adopted by workers in their attempts to identify and combat the source of their oppression. Drawing on the work of a wide range of theorists including Deleuze and Guattari, Giorgio Agamben and Antonio Negri, Alcalá offers a systematic and innovative account of British literary treatments of work. The book includes close readings of fiction by Alan Sillitoe, David Storey, Nell Dunn, Pat Barker, James Kelman, Irvine Welsh, Monica Ali, and Joanna Kavenna.

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