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Wrestling with the Ghost of Deficit: Exploring the Experiences of Trainee English Further Education Teachers

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Abstract

Global education policy discourse is based on an unshakable belief that more and improved skills will promote economic prosperity, global competitiveness and social inclusion (Wheelahan, Moodie and Doughnie 2022). In England, the Further Education sector (FES) has emerged as the vehicle to deliver these skills (Leitch 2006). However, the portrayal of FES as focusing primarily on vocational education for people often adjudged to be 'not academic' (Duckworth and Smith 2018) positions the sector at the bottom of the educational hierarchy, with negative ramifications for those who teach and study in it. This paper applies a case study approach to explore the lived experiences of five trainee FES teachers completing their initial teacher education (ITE). Drawing on contemporary interpretations of Bourdieu's theory of habitus, I develop Morrin's (2016) notion of hauntings to explain the psycho-social, historical and spatial influences on their responses as they re-enter the field of education as teachers.

Keywords: teacher education, vocational education, habitus, skills, inequality, Bourdieu

Introduction

In my experience as a teacher educator, I have found that the FES sector is often an unfathomable mystery to those who have had no direct experience of it. Its diversity in terms of range of provision, the curriculum and the people who work and study in it, makes it both complex and distinct from the school sector. In an attempt to unravel some of this mystery and set the context for what follows, this paper begins with a brief overview of the FES sector, the policies which have shaped it and some of the issues FES teachers face on entering teaching. This is followed by a review of literature applying Bourdieu's theoretical framework to education, including contemporary interpretations of habitus. I then summarise the methodology for the study, leading into discussion of the findings and their implications for trainee FES teachers. The paper concludes with recommendations for FES ITE programmes to help trainees navigate the complex emotions they may experience as they seek to form and adapt to their new teacher skin.

This analysis develops knowledge in two ways. First, I apply contemporary interpretations of Bourdieu's notion of habitus to examine the impact of habitus and academic history on FES trainee teachers' experiences during their ITE programme. Second, I develop Morrin's (2016) concept of social hauntings to include intellectual hauntings. By exploring historical or spatial dimensions of social haunting these concepts provide a useful analysis of the affective aspects of habitus that might have been missed in those accounts of habitus that focus solely or largely on agency and structure (Reay 2015).

FES and the policy landscape

The FES sector in England is where the majority of vocational and adult training and education takes place, as well as academic study (Orr 2012, 51). It is a complex, 'hyper-diverse range of provision' (ETF 2014, 11), comprising colleges of further education, sixth form colleges, offender learning, armed services, adult community learning and workplace learning in public and private sector organisations and charities (Lingfield 2012).

Since 1997, the English FES sector has been described within a political discourse of deficit whereby weaknesses in the UK skills base are to blame for the declining economy (BIS/HM Treasury 2015; DfE 2021b; Manpowergroup 2024) and increased poverty and unemployment (Leitch 2006) for the disadvantaged. In particular, shortages in labour skills such as science, engineering, English and mathematics are currently at an unprecedented high (Manpowergroup 2024). The unwavering belief underpinning education policy, that improved skills will promote economic prosperity, international competitiveness and social mobility is a global phenomenon (Wheelahan et al. 2022). Consequently, reskilling, and economic renewal are a high government priority and in England the FES sector, which has been consistently portrayed as primarily vocational provision (Wolf, 2011; DfE 2021b), is expected to play a central role in this (AoC 2020). However, by conflating 'skills' with disadvantage and social deprivation, the meaning of the term appears to have become strongly influenced by conceptions of social class (Duckworth and Smith 2018), perpetuating the dominant representations of the working-classes as 'inferior, less cultured, less clever than the middle classes' (Reay 2001, 343). Bound up in this is the vocational-academic divide which 'bedevils educational systems throughout the world' (Hyland 2018, 209) by privileging academic over vocational education. In England, this reinforces the portrayal of FES as low status

education that caters for students with limited levels of choice and agency (Duckworth and Smith 2018), which is particularly detrimental to students from working-class backgrounds who predominate on vocational courses (Hyland 2018).

FES teachers

The complexity and diversity of the FES sector is reflected in its teachers, who come from disparate backgrounds (DfE 2018; Lingfield 2012) and may have a wide range of qualifications. Some have a degree, which may or may not be in their teaching subject, some have vocational qualifications; they could be career change teachers with extensive industry experience; or they may be transitioning into teaching following years working in a teaching support role. Although they may also teach ancillary subjects such as communication, they are traditionally employed for their vocational expertise (Avis and Bathmaker 2004) and are characterised as dual professionals. This means they must combine mastery of their teaching subject with pedagogic expertise (CAVTL 2014). Research suggests that the transition into FES teaching is frequently 'not a smooth one' (Gleeson, Davies and Wheeler 2005, 450). It often coincides with lifestyle changes, career breaks or redundancy and for many teachers 'is … less a career choice or pathway than an opportunity at a particular moment in time' (449). As a result, the vocational habitus of those entering FES teaching after a long career in industry may be dominant when they begin ITE. The notion of a 'vocational habitus' describes the practices, values, attitudes and beliefs underpinning occupational identities (Colley et al. 2003). For vocational FES teachers, dual professionalism entails reconciling both their vocational and their teacher dispositions, or as Bourdieu terms it 'habituses'. A Bourdieusian understanding of this process suggests it may have significant implications for vocational teachers and often results in considerable

cognitive and emotional disruption as they renegotiate their originary habitus and reposition themselves in the education field.

When the participants in this study encountered the field of education as trainee teachers, they found themselves feeling not so much a fish out of water (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), as a fish that was ‘floundering rather than swimming’ (Reay 2015, 13). In their typology of interruptions to the habitus, Ingram and Abrahams (2016) analyse the interactions between habitus and field when an individual seeks to navigate two fields that are not aligned. Where the habitus is unable to assimilate the structuring forces of the new field, it becomes destabilised and oscillates between them. If their destabilised habitus is unable to assimilate the structuring forces of the industry and education fields (Ingram and Abrahams 2016), trainees may withdraw from the course, or from teaching in the early stages of their career. These experiences matter: severe staff shortages represent a significant problem for the FES sector (DfE 2021a) and are impacting negatively on student experience, staff wellbeing and college costs (AoC 2022; ONS 2022).

Bourdieu and beyond

Habitus is an internalised set of structures that determines how we act in and react to the world (Thompson 1991). It is ‘structured and structuring’ (Bourdieu 1994, 170) since it both embodies and reproduces the structures of the social field in which it was originally formed (Bourdieu 1990). Habitus operates as a ‘conductorless orchestration’ (Bourdieu 1990, 59), predisposing us towards certain ways of behaving and away from others (Reay 2004).

According to Bourdieu (2000), whilst habitus can be modified in response to an unfamiliar field, habitus transformations are unlikely, since such changes are primarily determined by the habitus itself (Matthies and Torka 2019). Sweetman (2003) however, posits that habitus is 'inherently reflexive' (529) and Archer (2007; 2012) maintains that habitus constantly aligns self-concepts in response to changing external social or cultural conditions. As the habitus adjusts to a new and contradictory field, a person may experience a sense of being 'out of time' or 'out of place' (Morrin 2016, 124), what Bourdieu (2000) terms the cleft habitus. This is a habitus that is divided against itself (Bourdieu 1999). The cleft habitus is characterised by a sense of dislocation and imposter syndrome, or 'hysteresis'. Bourdieu (1977) defines hysteresis as 'the structural lag between opportunities and the dispositions to grasp them' (83), such as when trainee FES teachers transition into teaching. It is through the process of hysteresis that doxa becomes apparent and can consequently be challenged. Doxa relates to the taken-for-granted assumptions, shared attitudes and practices of agents within a field (Bourdieu 1977) that allow the arbitrariness of the social order to be misrecognised and reproduced, for example the privileging of academic over vocational qualifications that subsequently assigns a market value to individuals (Coffield 1999).

The cleft habitus is experienced as a sense of self 'torn by contradiction and internal division generating suffering' (Bourdieu 2000, 160). Reay (2002) describes this as being 'positioned in an untenable place on the boundaries of two irreconcilable ways of being' (223), while Ingram (2011, 292) introduces the concept of 'habitus tug' where the individual feels pulled between multiple fields as they strive to adapt their habituated dispositions to the structures of the new field. Unlike the cleft habitus, which is often presented as a negative experience, habitus tug may be beneficial because it can

promote reflexivity and enable people to become more adaptable (Abrahams and Ingram 2013). In the tug of habitus, people may shift back and forth between the two misaligned fields, thereby creating a new space that is structurally different from either. It is in this 'third space' (Rutherford 1990) between the two competing fields, that reflexivity can occur, creating awareness of past oppressions and the potential for choice and agency.

Writing about working-class transitions, Reay (2001) challenges dominant discourses of working-class deficit by examining the ways in which policy operates to maintain education systems that 'other' the working-classes and inscribe 'academic failure rather than success' (333). In contrast, Ingram (2011) highlights the difficulties experienced by some working-class grammar schoolboys as they attempt to reconcile the identity of their social background with their identity as an aspiring student. For working-class individuals who progress to university, the stakes are particularly high due to the shame academic failure will bring, which many have already experienced in education (Reay 2018a). Xie and Reay (2020) suggest that individuals from working-class backgrounds at elite universities are more likely to sense a contradiction between their social identity and their academic achievement than their middle or upper-class peers. Whilst they may 'fit' academically, the mismatch between their familial habitus and the university environment means they remain 'cultural outsiders' (26), which often leads to them dropping out (Reay, Crozier and Clayton, 2009). Reay (2015) observes the 'heavy psychic costs' (13) some academically successful working-class males incur in their endeavours to maintain their standing within the culture of their male peers. This can be compared to the emotional costs some vocational teachers experience when they leave industry to become FES teachers. As dual professionals they must integrate the

vocational habitus of their past with the evolving teacher habitus of their present. For this to happen, they must understand not only 'what it means to have an academic mind (but also) what was lost in acquiring it' (Bourdieu 1992, 111).

'Institutional habitus' refers to the 'impact of a cultural group or social class on an individual's behaviour as it is mediated through an organization' (Reay 1998, 521, referencing McDonough 1996). Just as individual habitus reflects pre-existing values and understandings of the field through the dispositions it generates, so institutional habitus reflects the wider social context of an institution through its culture and practices (Reay et al. 2001). These in turn shape the opportunities and constraints of its students, so that a working-class student attending a working-class school may fail not only because of their background, but also because their working-class school lacks the resources and processes found in middle-class schools (Thrupp 1999). Despite its 'gaps and rough edges' (Reay, David and Ball 2001, §8.4), institutional habitus is a useful concept for understanding how organisational cultures and practices can directly shape the habitus and dispositions of individuals within them (Burke, Emmerich and Ingram 2013), in turn influencing their learning identities, aspirations (Xie and Reay 2020; Tarabini et al 2017) and educational trajectories (Çelik 2021). In this study, institutional habitus helped explain how issues of social and academic fit (Xie and Reay 2020), compounded by the 'perceived inferiority' (Best Ade-Ojo and McKelvy 2019, 129) of the FES sector, impacted on the trainees' evolving teacher habitus.

Educational status is important here, (Reay et al. 2001) since social networks, confidence, certainty and a sense of entitlement are key elements of institutional habitus (Reay 2006). Forbes and Lingard (2015) find that an institutional habitus that embodies forms of privilege, such as those enacted and reproduced in the institutional setting of

an elite school, can generate an ’assured optimism’ (121) in students, manifested as high levels of confidence and ease regarding educational and professional success (Taylor 2021), that leads to practices likely to ensure future advantage. Conversely, Wang (2021) notes that in many countries, vocational education has become positioned within a discourse of deficit for ‘left-over’ students with ‘less desirable’ academic records (1008). Indeed, this is a global problem, and in many European countries, students are discouraged by the low prestige of vocational education, which is presented as a means to tackle youth unemployment (Hyland 2018). These factors, combined with the positioning in policy and in the media of working-class people as lacking the will and ability to succeed in education (Quinn et al. 2005), have resulted in a tendency for vocational organisations to recruit a higher proportion of students from a working-class background (Doolan, Lukic´and Bukovic 2016).

The ‘unspoken snobbery’ (House of Lords 2016, 49) against vocational qualifications stigmatises FES students and teachers alike. According to Best et al. (2019), the experiences of FES-trained teachers working in schools are often characterised by feelings of rejection and humiliation. They found that FES ITE was undervalued within the school context, leading to a perception by their schoolteacher colleagues that FES-trained teachers were ‘inferior professionals’ (139). Such negative stereotyping of vocational students and teachers maintains and legitimises unequal power relations within the education system (Wang 2021) and is particularly damaging for those whose previous educational experiences may have already engendered low self-esteem and a sense of failure (DfE 2017; Nuffield 2019).

Ghosts and hauntings

Bringing together Bourdieu's habitus, and Gordon's (1997, 125) phenomenological notion of ghosts, Morrin (2016) offers the concept of 'social haunting' to explain how 'unsettledness' stemming from habitus-field disjuncture can lead to feelings of 'unresolvedness' which give rise to strategy and resistance in narrative. Ghosts are signs of past repression that lay dormant in the field (Gordon 2011). In moments of crisis when habitus-field relations rupture, the 'ghost' rises, making past or present repression visible. Hauntings are residues from the past which the field carries with it. They are experienced as feelings of 'unsettledness', (rather than hysteresis), leading to a sense of 'something-to-be-done', explained or defended (Morrin 2016, 136). Heyward and Fitzpatrick (2016, 697) observe that 'as educators we are haunted' through our personal and cultural histories. Haunting therefore, offers a useful metaphor for understanding the 'disturbed feelings' (Gordon 1997, xvi) FES teachers may experience when they enter teaching.

For the trainees in this study, entering teaching represented a moment of crisis. The ghost of their familial and cultural habituses appeared as feelings of unsettledness to remind them of 'what they were' as they sought to adjust their previously limited aspirations and reposition themselves in their workplace and social fields. These hauntings did not emanate solely from repression relating to social class, but also from the perceptions of self-worth and intellectual ability embodied in their cultural habitus constructed during their education. To explore these, I extend Morrin's (2016) notion of social hauntings to include intellectual hauntings. Intellectual haunting is a specific focus of social haunting. It emanates from the educational experiences that informed our perceptions of our intellectual ability and have subsequently shaped constructions of our

future selves. How trainee FES teachers experience these hauntings forms the subject of this paper.

Methodology

This qualitative study investigates the psycho-social, historical and spatial influences on FES trainees' responses as they re-enter the field of education as teachers. Data were generated from ten individual semi-structured interviews lasting approximately one hour, to explore participants' social and educational backgrounds and their experiences as trainee teachers. A more in-depth exploration of the data was necessary to include both social and intellectual hauntings and therefore a small sample was appropriate. A case study approach was useful to explore the complex social phenomenon (Yin 2017) of learning to teach in a FES organisation. Each case comprised the trainee and their mentor, bounded within the timeframe of their ITE course and the context of their workplace setting. Mentors were included because they support trainees to understand the culture, values and practices of the workplace field. Participants were recruited to reflect some of the diversity of the FES sector in terms of organisation type and participant age and gender, and to include a mix of vocational and academic teaching subjects (see table 1). Importantly, the sample included two trainees who had previously spent many years working in the construction industry. This is likely to have had implications for their dispositions, which may be entrenched in their vocational habitus (Colley et al. 2003), and for how they experienced interruptions to the habitus resulting from the structuring forces of the field of education. Two trainees were teaching different subjects to their degree subject. These factors had implications for their evolving teacher habitus, their cultural capitals and how they perceived them.

Case	*Trainee	Gender	Age	Teaching Subject	Highest qualification	Previous employment	*Mentor	Gender	Age
1	Ben	M	41-50	Scaffolding	Level 3 vocational	20 years' industry; 10 years FE teaching	Tom	M	41-50
2	Sophie	F	21-30	ESOL	MA Television Production	4 years HR Retail; 2 years employability officer (FE)	Amanda	F	41-50
3	Amy	F	21-30	Theatrical make-up	BA (Hons) Theatrical	None	Hannah	F	31-40
4	Andy	M	31-40	Maths	BA (Hons) Music	10 years music industry; 1 year library support assistant (FE)	Becky	F	41-50
5	Paul	M	31-40	Construction	BSc (Hons) Surveying	12 years' construction industry	Sally	F	31-40

Table 1: Key characteristics of each case (participant pseudonym)*

Organisation Type and Location
General FE College, Northwest of England
General FE College, East Midlands
** Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) Southeast of England

** A type of school for learners who need more care and support than a mainstream school can provide.

I created naturalised transcripts of the data, which are verbatim accounts that include idiosyncratic elements of speech (Oliver, Serovich and Mason 2005). A naturalised transcript adds rigour to the evidence by offering a more accurate representation of the data (Hammersley 2010), thereby reducing the potential for misinterpreting the inner meanings and logic embodied in language which can occur when researchers write about people from very different social and cultural positions from their own (Duneier 1999). Additionally, speech reveals the symbiotic relationship between individuals and their social world (Reay 2004); accent and dialect are embodied as 'linguistic identity' and signify an individual's positioning in the field (Duckworth, Thomas, and Bland 2016, 265). Since I wanted to gain an honest, detailed account of each trainees' construction of their lifeworld as perceived through their habitus, it was important to capture a complete and accurate representation of what they had said, including paralinguistic features like accent, volume and fluency. Consequently, I ensured transcripts contained details such as false starts, incomplete sentences and sentence stress. I used pseudonyms for each participant to protect their anonymity, whilst maintaining their 'humanness' and keeping them connected to the experiences described in the data.

Data were analysed in three stages, involving multiple readings and categorising, each time at a deeper level of analysis. In stage one, the data were analysed deductively for each participant in an iterative process using Bourdieu's theoretical framework to identify the over-arching themes of habitus, capital and field. As I moved back and forth between transcripts, level 1 sub-themes emerged inductively. In stage 2, I organised trainee contributions next to mentor contributions for each theme, to facilitate in-depth analysis on a case-by-case basis. By comparing the data for each trainee and their

mentor according to theme I was able to inductively identify level 2 sub-themes. Once I had completed the in-depth case analysis of each theme described above, I undertook cross-case analysis to compare and contrast the themes and sub-themes and identify patterns within the data. This involved creating thematic tables containing data from all five cases relating to specific themes. During this process, level 3 sub-themes emerged (stage 3). The sub-themes of habitus presented in this paper are presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Habitus sub-themes

Main theme: Deductive analysis stage 1	**Level 1 sub-themes: Inductive analysis stage 1b**	**Level 2 sub-themes: Inductive analysis stage 2**	**Level 3 sub-themes: Cross-case analysis stage 3**
Habitus	**Familial habitus** **Cultural habitus** **Vocational habitus**	**Teacher habitus** **Hysteresis** **Values**	**Habituated aspiration** **Habitus & shame**

Although the sample in this small-scale study is broadly representative of academic and vocational subjects taught in two contrasting FES contexts, it does not represent the full range of subjects or individuals training to become FES teachers. However, the findings are representationally generalisable (Lewis et al. 2014), insofar as anyone working in FES ITE will recognise the discomfort some trainees experience as they strive to create and assimilate their evolving teacher identity.

Findings and Discussion

According to Lynch and O'Neill (1994), the relationship of the working-classes to education is often 'fraught with dilemmas and contradictions' (318). Failure risks the shame of becoming another of the 'inadequate failing learners' (Reay 2018b, no page) constructed in discourses of deficient working-class culture, but due to the habitus tug

that occurs when academic achievement is linked to notions of social class, success may provoke a sense of lost social identity (Reay 2018b). On gaining their teaching qualification, the trainees in this study were haunted by aspects of their cultural and social histories. These hauntings appeared as a ghost of deficit, which rose to remind them of what was lacking in their past, unsettling their present and inducing ambivalence about their future. The ghost appears in many guises, including social class and intellectual ability, telling them they are not worthy, and they wrestle with it, as they strive to reconcile the non-academic self of their past with the teacher self of their present.

Social Hauntings

Early socialisation in the family and at school functions as a means of social orientation (Reay, David and Ball 2005) by giving us ' a sense of … place' (Bourdieu 1984, 467) in the world. For the trainees in this study, their sense of place, as informed by their familial habitus, had influenced their career choices and their attitude to education. For some, becoming a qualified teacher generated conflicting feelings of enormous pride and a sense of being 'culturally homeless' (Friedman 2012, 469). They had unwittingly summoned a ghost of deficit from their past and it was demanding their attention.

Ben, a scaffolding lecturer who identifies as working class, grew up in a culture where if '... ya dad did it, so you did it' (Ben). For Ben, this meant joining his father in the construction industry. He left after twenty years when the physical demands of scaffolding had become too great. During training to become a construction safety officer, he was offered a teaching role at his local FES college. Research into the

relational aspect of identities (Bourdieu 2002; Sibley 1995) suggests we construct our identity both through a sense of 'what we are not' and notions of how others see us as conceptions of who 'we' are (Reay 2010). Like many working-class people, Ben's self-perception as non-academic was informed by his upbringing, which prioritised work over education, and was reinforced in school:

> *Q1: To what extent do you think your background has affected your experience in the workplace?*
>
> 'With my parents, you see, it was a 'ole different world back then.
> They would push me to find work'.

Whilst middle-class individuals tend to feel 'at home' in education (Reay and Ball 1997, 93), the relationship of the working-classes to education is often characterised by 'fear and a reluctance to invest too much' (ibid: 89) because the risk of failure is too great. Ben's memory of school is that it 'wasn't fa [him]' at the time. He was disengaged and left with 'nuffin ta be proud of' (Ben) and limited aspirations. Like many working-class individuals in education (Reay 2018b), Ben tells me fear of failure caused him to 'dodge' ITE for ten years. ITE meant moving beyond the limits of the 'field of the possibles' (Bourdieu 1984, 110) embodied in his familial habitus. Yet the new-found educational success of gaining his teaching qualification aroused feelings of 'unsettledness' that demanded something be explained (his poor performance at school) and defended (his parents' role in this):

> '(my father would) never ask me how I was doin' at school. I don't
> think it was 'cos 'e wasn't interested, it was jus' them times' (Ben).

Friedman (2016a) suggests that social mobility can have adverse effects on our social relationships and sense of self. Ben's sense of self as a scaffolder is strongly rooted in his class identity. He associates teaching with being academic, which he perceives as being beyond his social and intellectual sphere. Imposter syndrome looms as he grapples with his vocational habitus and the limited habituated aspirations embodied in his familial and cultural habituses. When asked whether he now views himself as a scaffolder, or a lecturer, Ben's words reveal the significant psychic costs he incurs as he battles to accommodate the two facets of his dual profession in a way that allows him to retain both identities:

> 'I'm a tutor-scaffolder an' I'll always be that at 'eart, … I've qualified as a teacher, not as an academic (laughs), … I'm punchin' above me weight, … I'm nowhere near an academic. … , I'm kind of a teacher-scaffolder'.

Ben's description of himself as a 'teacher-scaffolder' encapsulates both his transformation and his 'unsettledness' as he wavers between his past and present selves. Unable to assimilate the structuring forces of the education and industry fields, his destabilised habitus oscillates (Ingram and Abrahams 2016) between his scaffolder and teacher dispositions, and he clings to his vocational habitus. Although 'quite honoured' (Ben) to be a teacher, like the working-class university students in Reay's (2018a) study, he is caught up in the problematic of investing in his academically successful, 'improved' self (339) whilst maintaining a hold on the cohesive self anchored in his scaffolder roots (Reay 2001). As he proudly imagines his graduation ceremony, he sees

the ‘ghost of deficit’ from his past in the field, reminding him he has no business with academia:

> ‘The ole fella died few years ago now. … if ‘e fought I got done, passin' me Cert Ed, ‘e'd be laughin’ ‘is ‘ead off now … an’ some o’ me friends, when they see it on Facebook that I've passed this, an’ like, I put summat on, like cap n gown, they probably think Jesus, what's ‘appened to ‘im?’ (rising intonation, laughs).

It is unclear whether Ben thinks his friends and family would be laughing in surprise that he had a degree or ridiculing the (strange) ceremony of wearing a cap and gown at his graduation. Ben’s self-deprecatory musings may be an attempt to silence the ghost by projecting his own feelings onto the imagined reactions of his friends and family. What is interesting here, is that despite his fear of failure, Ben still undertook ITE, and despite his fear of ridicule, he looks forward to his graduation ceremony. His words reveal the contradictions and tensions of achieving educational success in a system that positions him ‘at the bottom of a hierarchy of value and respect’ (Reay 2018b no page). Perhaps he is attempting to defend himself by pre-empting their ridicule. However, in so doing, he is both resisting and perpetuating a doxa of working-class culture as deficient (Ingram 2011; Loveday 2015).

In his study of intra-occupational disadvantage, Friedman (2016b) observes that upwardly mobile working-class people who become professionals may continue to face powerful barriers within their destination class. He uses the term ‘class ceiling’ (110) to describe the limitations on the career trajectories of these individuals *within* elite occupations because they lack the same stocks of capitals as those from privileged backgrounds. Even

when the trainees recognised that their cultural capitals had afforded them a degree of professional success, their familial habitus continued to carry with it the ghost of their social past, unearthing feelings of unworthiness to inhabit their new position in the field. For Sophie and Andy, this manifested itself as a drive to gain further qualifications, perhaps in an attempt to expel the ghost of 'working-class academic failure' (Reay and Ball 1997, 95).

Sophie's career started in retail, in the Human Resources department, but she felt this offered limited opportunities for career progression, so moved into teaching. She initially worked as an employability officer in a FES college, before transitioning into teaching English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) as long-term sick cover. She explained she was from a 'working-class' background and grew up in a 'deprived area'. Sophie has an MA in TV Production and, consistent with Reay et al.'s (2009) study on working-class people at university, she places great value on degree level qualifications. Despite having a masters, Sophie is beset with feelings that she is 'not good enough' to be a teacher and tries to resolve the resultant 'unsettledness' by gaining more qualifications. Before completing her post-graduate certificate in education (PGCE) she was already planning to take level 5 qualifications in English and maths.

Similarly, even though he does not need it, Andy, who is training to teach maths, seems to be overshadowed by not having an A-level maths qualification. As a student, Andy worked in the college library in a learning support role and in addition to his teaching job, he writes music for television. Andy has a first-class degree in music, which includes a significant maths element, and for this reason he was able to train as a FES

maths teacher. Yet he tells me he spends ‘hours on past (maths) papers at the weekend’ because:

> ‘You need the qualification … people need to see erm … evidence of, (laughs) what you're actually doin’ and what you know’.

His mentor also notices his compulsion to gain A-level maths, as if to exorcise his feelings of inadequacy:

> ‘It's almost like [Andy’s] tryin’ to fill in his maths gaps, with him being a musician’.

It is not possible to say whether Sophie and Andy’s relentless drive for qualifications is an attempt to prove their social worth and demonstrate that it is possible to be ‘working-class and perceived as clever’ (Ingram 2011, 287) or whether, like the teachers in Tully’s (2023) study of professionalism in FES, they felt they needed further qualifications in their teaching subject to demonstrate subject expertise. What is clear however, is that as they inhabit the reflexive space between their social and professional fields, they adjudge themselves to be lacking.

For Ben, gaining his teaching qualification exposed a lack of what he believes to be essential cultural capitals for an academic. His inability to ‘talk proper’ (Ben) marks him out as a poor ‘social fit’ (Xie and Reay 2020) for the teaching world, putting him at risk of ‘being found out’ (Reay 2001, 334) and made to look stupid:

> 'If you just put a row of academics in front of me … an' we was talkin' seriously, then I'd 'ave ta speak posh meself … you gotta paint in yourself that picture and not make yourself look a wally'.

Ben's words reflect the 'unsettledness' generated by the habitus-field disjuncture of 'what he was' and his new status as a qualified teacher. The 'dialectical confrontation' (Bourdieu 2002, 31) that takes place in the space created by habitus tug (Ingram 2011) prompts him to evaluate his stocks of cultural capitals in relation to the field and in this moment of reflexivity, he realises that his accent exposes the mismatch between his teacher status and the distinctions of class embodied in his habitus. Understanding follows and he sees that although he has a qualification that confers teacher status, he lacks some essential cultural capitals to 'wholly embody a more socially 'acceptable' identity' (Ingram 2011, 289). There is something-to-be-done.

Intellectual Hauntings

Intellectual haunting is a specific focus of social haunting that arises from an individual's lived experiences of education and relates to the impact of the cultural habitus. For many working-class people, past educational experiences evoke 'powerful memories and images of personal failure' (Reay and Ball 1997, 89). I argue that these memories become internalised within the cultural habitus as markers of intellectual ability, shaping our habituated aspirations by informing us what is 'reasonable to expect' (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977, 226). Transcending the boundaries imbued from previous negative educational experiences, awakens the ghost of past failure, who unsettles us, leading us to undermine or question our success.

The trainees in this study demonstrated a complex and frequently ambiguous relationship with qualifications and education that appeared to emanate from their cultural habitus. Like the working-class parents in Reay and Ball's (1997) study, this often resulted in 'repeated self-deprecation and a ready assumption of the mantle of stupidity' (93) which trickled down to their students, as reported by Ben's mentor:

> '… the first thing out of their mouths (is) 'I'm thick, I'm a scaffolder, that's why I'm doing scaffolding'.

This sense of intellectual inferiority is echoed by another mentor, as they reflect on the educational histories of their colleagues at the PRU:

> 'all of us … have got that similar story that they've come from a place of failure, or feelin' like they're not good enough. Everyone'.

None of the trainees in this study had actively *chosen* to become teachers, instead 'sliding into' (Gleeson et al. 2005, 450) FES when a chance opportunity presented itself that coincided with lifestyle changes. Consistent with findings from studies of working-class people in higher education (Reay 2015; Reay et al 2005), the trainees' experience of educational success in achieving their teaching qualification induced conflicting emotions of pride, disbelief and sometimes anxiety. In laying one ghost to rest, they had summoned another.

All the trainees recognised the cultural capital of qualifications as 'summink to distinguish you above others' (Paul). Yet not all qualifications are created equal, and as

they talked, a qualifications hierarchy emerged from the data, reflecting a doxa whereby young people are perceived to be either ‘academic’ or ‘vocational’ (Payne, 2010) and those undertaking vocational education are frequently aware that they have lower status in the hierarchy of ‘student worth’ (Ball, Macrae and Maguire 1999, 32). No matter how much they had achieved, the trainees were plagued by feelings of inferiority which led them to discount their ‘non-academic’ qualifications as a legitimate form of capital in an educational context. I argue this shows the ’unsettledness’ of intellectual, rather than social forms of symbolic violence.

Amy, whose first degree is in theatrical make-up, works in a large FES college in the northwest of England, where she was previously a student. On completing her degree, the college offered her a job teaching on the 2-year Foundation Degree in Special Effects Makeup and Artistry. In contrast to the majority of students on her degree course, Amy had A-levels, rather than vocational qualifications such as BTECs or NVQs. Amy’s mentor is proud of Amy’s ‘superior’ academic ability, reinforced by the fact that she has been nominated as ‘student of excellence’ on her PGCE course. Yet we see the decades-long ‘bias against vocational education’ (Hyland 2018, 210) as Amy speaks disparagingly of her degree because it is in a vocational, rather than an academic subject:

> ‘If I was to redo my degree… I DON'T (original emphasis) know whether I would do it in makeup. (sighs) … I kind of feel … that ... my degree should have been something more … academic’.

Paul is head of the construction department in a PRU. He previously worked in industry as a surveying operations manager for several years, before gaining experience in the

practical side of construction as an electrician and then roofer. Following a bad accident on-site, he started training as a teaching assistant, before transitioning into teaching. Like Ben, Paul was disengaged at school, but unlike Ben, he understood the importance of qualifications for improving an individual's life chances. Consequently, although he frequently truanted from school, he was careful to submit his coursework and progressed to university where he gained a degree in surveying. Paul's degree and significant industry experience were instrumental in his rapid rise to management at the PRU, yet like Amy, he is similarly haunted by a sense that his qualifications lack value because they are not academic. The ghost rises, telling him that vocational teachers are not 'proper teachers'(Paul) because they do not teach English or maths:

> (vocational teachers) … just … teach (students) 'ow ta build fings, an' use yer 'ands, like, it's not real, it's not proper. They're not gettin' 'em a qualification in English or maths'.

Ben's sense of self is dominated by what he lacks academically. He has over twenty years' industry experience and holds an advanced scaffolding qualification, without which he would not have been able to move into teaching. Yet because it is not an academic qualification, he discounts it as a legitimate form of capital in an educational context:

> 'No matter 'ow qualified I am, it's just that little bit in me that thinks, no, …, you're just a rough old scaffolder, just come in to teach and that's all you'll ever be'.

The designation of vocational education as most suited to the 'unprivileged classes' (Lewis 1991, 97) creates an institutional habitus that reinforces and is reinforced by the

inferior status of vocational qualifications (Duckworth and Smith 2018) and those who hold them. Furthermore, this stigma extends to FES teaching qualifications with the result that they are perceived to be inferior to school teaching qualifications (Best et al. 2019). This in turn fuels the low self-esteem of some FES teachers and perpetuates the cycles of inequality the sector has been charged with addressing. Bourdieu (2000, 78) writes that 'in each of us, in varying proportions, there is part of yesterday's man'. For the trainees in this study, yesterday's man embodied all they lacked, not only socially, but also intellectually.

Conclusion: The Ghost of many Guises

For Bourdieu, theoretical and practical knowledge are complementary to each other (Bourdieu 1994). Arguably, in referring to his framework as 'a temporary construct which takes shape for and by empirical work' (Wacquant 1989, 50), Bourdieu is inviting us to develop his theory by applying it as a method. This empirical study applies the concept of hauntings as a valuable addition to Bourdieu's theory of habitus that enables us to move beyond the existing concepts of hysteresis, cleft habitus and habitus tug. Importantly, the concept offers a complementary reading of habitus-field relations that includes a phenomenological exploration of the role of human consciousness in our feelings, motivations and actions, creating a 'space' to initiate change (Spivak 1988) as we wrestle with the ghost of deficit in all its guises.

Writing about the changing notions of habitus, Reay (2004) refers to the 'complex messiness of the real world' (438). This 'messiness' was reflected in the process of becoming a teacher presented here, as trainees wrestled with the feelings of 'ambivalence, insecurity and uncertainty' (Reay et al. 2009, 1105) evoked by their

repositioning as teachers in the field of education. A central claim of this paper is that habitus and academic history have significant effects on FES trainees' perceptions of themselves as teachers. Since our social, economic and cultural contexts are powerful influences on educational success and failure (Tarabini et al. 2017), it is inevitable that there will be some overlap between social and intellectual haunting. I suggest that intellectual haunting is an aspect of social haunting that emanates from the cultural habitus. However, whilst social haunting reveals forms of symbolic violence relating to social class, intellectual haunting exposes symbolic violence emanating from previous negative experiences of education.

The trainees' familial and cultural habituses, had given them a strong sense of their social place in the world and they all identified as working-class, which for them, as for many working-class individuals, was synonymous with 'not academic' (Duckworth and Smith 2018; Wang 2021). Moving beyond the boundaries of their social worlds by becoming qualified teachers, created a habitus tug experienced as imposter syndrome and displacement, leaving them feeling pulled between the worlds of their non-academic past and their teacher present. It also exposed their lack of 'essential' cultural capitals for the new field, such as 'the correct' accent or qualifications. I argue therefore, that due to the push and pull of habitus that occurs when academic achievement is linked to notions of social class, for some FES teachers, ITE is a double-edged sword; failure will bring humiliation, but success may provoke a sense of being torn between the worlds of the 'academic' and that of their social roots. Even as the trainees in this study took pride in their new-found educational success, they saw the ghost of deficit from their familial and cultural habituses in the field, reminding them of 'what they were' and where they had come from. The ghost evoked 'unsettledness'

experienced as bad feelings (Morrin 2016, 136), which through a reflexive process moved to 'unresolvedness' and a call for action.

Trainees experienced social haunting as feelings of being 'not *good* enough' to become teachers, while intellectual haunting was characterised by feeling 'not *clever* enough'. This was reinforced by the binary classification of qualifications as either vocational or academic, combined with the low status portrayal of FES as primarily vocational education for the less academically able (Duckworth and Smith 2018). Trainees' beliefs about themselves as non-academic stemmed from their previous educational experiences which had generated a disposition with limited aspirations and low levels of confidence. As they sought to reposition themselves in the field of education as teachers, they experienced feelings of 'unsettledness' that led them to one of two responses. They either avoided further study for as long as possible, or felt compelled to gain further qualifications, believing this would validate them as teachers by redressing what they perceived to be the imbalance of their 'vocational' cultural capitals. Yet no matter how much they achieved, the trainees continued to be haunted by a sense of inferiority, revealing a doxa whereby their 'non-academic' qualifications were undervalued.

The vocational expertise of vocational FES teachers is an important cultural capital in the field of education and frequently a significant factor in them gaining employment (Avis and Bathmaker 2004). This means that trainee FES teachers must learn how to reconcile their habitus to the education field and construct a teacher habitus that embodies and is enhanced by their vocational habitus. For this to happen, trainee FES teachers need support during their training to understand the complex layers of who

they are and what has shaped them. FES ITE programmes, therefore, should include guidance for trainees to manage the conflicting emotions and insecurities that might haunt them as they integrate their vocational and teacher habituses, so that they can feel proud of their vocational roots and utilise their vocational habitus to complement their teacher habitus.

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