

# HAUNTING LOST FUTURES: THE CRISES OF SPACE AND TIME UNDER NEOLIBERALISM IN SUPPORT THE GIRLS

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## Abstract

Andrew Bujalski's film, *Support the Girls*, offers insight into the frayed social bonds shaped by neoliberalist ethos over the last forty years. These frayed bonds are indicative of the spatial-temporal suspension that have come to shape our lives under neoliberalism. Trapped in the precarious yet perpetual present, haunted by the stabilizing dreams of the past, we concurrently mourn for our lost futures. Despite feeling anchored within our ostensibly immovable present, we nonetheless remain affectively bound to the belief that, perhaps, things will change this time as we continue engaging with the very objects and systems perpetuating our malaise, alienation, and precarity. In this article, I argue that *Support the Girls* represents the temporal and spatial disjuncture characterizing post-modernism and the age of neoliberalism. *Support the Girls* reflects the impasse marred by affective relations of cruel optimism as conceptualized by theorist Lauren Berlant that marks our temporal present, while the characters continue occupying the non-places defining Mark Fisher's notion of hauntology and the slow cancellation of the future. As illustrated in *Support the Girls*, this temporal and spatial dispossession defining late capitalism has stripped Lisa (played by Regina Hall), the general manager of a local Hootersesque restaurant and sports bar called Double Whammies, and the cabal of young women she manages, of any material relations of collective solidarity, replacing these collective bonds with empathy as a form of conflict resolution.

**Keywords:** Neoliberalism, Cruel optimism, Hauntology, Dispossession, Precarity, Film

## Introduction

The accelerated implementation of neoliberalist policies since the 1970s, predicated on the adoption of the market as the guiding transactional force defining the flow and form of the quotidian, has resulted in a totalizing transformation of societal institutions, state structures, as well as social relationships. Innovation, competition, individualism, and the illusion of the free market have usurped the politico-economic organizational and institutional values of what David Harvey refers to as embedded liberalism. Embedded liberalism has been commonly referred to as a 'class compromise' between labour and capital, where "market processes and entrepreneurial and corporate activities were surrounded by a web of social and political constraints and a regulatory environment that sometimes restrained but in other instances led the way in economic and industrial strategy" (Harvey 2005, p. 11). In this case, if embedded liberalism is seen as a class-compromise, then neoliberalism assumes the shape of class war. The retrenchment of the state as an organizational force prioritizing the needs of everyday people accompanied by the unconstrained ravages of capital financializing everything has facilitated a massive consolidation of wealth in the hands of the financial and corporate elites leaving the majority of Americans floundering on an unsteady path of insecurity, isolation, and precarity. What happens, then, to the social bonds, the affective relationships, and social attachments of a society premised upon individualism, competitiveness, and the financialization of the self at the expense of collective solidarity?

While American filmmaker Andrew Bujalski may not be overtly asking all of these questions, his film *Support the Girls* (2018) offers insight into the frayed social bonds which have been formed, shaped, and transfigured by rampant neoliberalist ethos over the last forty years. These frayed bonds are indicative of the spatial-temporal suspension that have come to shape our lives under neoliberalism. Trapped in the unstable yet perpetual present, haunted by the stabilizing

dreams of the past, while synchronically mourning our lost futures; we feel constricted to what appears to be an immovable present and yet affectively bound to the belief that, perhaps, things will change *this time* as we continue engaging in the very social relations producing the objects, structures, and systems that continue perpetuating our malaise, alienation, and precarity.

In this article, I argue that *Support the Girls* represents the temporal and spatial disjunctive characterizing post-modernism and the age of neoliberalism. *Support the Girls* reflects the impasse marred by affective relations of cruel optimism as conceptualized by theorist Lauren Berlant that marks our temporal present; and occupies the non-places defining Mark Fisher's notion of hauntology and the slow cancellation of the future. As illustrated in *Support the Girls*, this temporal and spatial dis-possession defining late capitalism has stripped Lisa (played by Regina Hall), the general manager of a local Hooters-esque restaurant and sports bar called Double Whammies, and the cabal of young women she manages, of any material relations of collective solidarity, replacing these collective bonds with empathy as a form of conflict resolution.

*Support the Girls* follows Lisa Conroy as she navigates the multitude of crises shaping her, what seems to be, regular routine. Lisa cultivates a sense of loyalty amongst her workers through her genuine interest, support, and engagement with these twenty-something year old women's lives. Where she offers aid and assistance throughout their shifts without detecting any suspicion from the insufferable and punitive owner, Cubby (played by James Le Gros). Yet, while Lisa doles out support for her staff she is dangerously teetering on the edge of an emotional and mental breakdown. After one crisis too many, Lisa eventually throws in the towel and resigns, to the chagrin of her staff, as the general manager. The film concludes with Lisa and her two top waiters, Maci (played by Haley Lu Richardson), an energetic and playful waitress, and Danyelle (played by Shayna McHayle), a sarcastic and realistic single mom, interviewing for positions at the soon-to-be open

national franchise (and now Double Whammies local competition), the Mancave.

Although Bujalski is often referred to as one of the leading figures of mumblecore, a subgenre of independent filmmaking prominent in the early 2000s which privileged naturalism, low-budget performers, and emphasized dialogue over plot, *Support the Girls* sits within and yet veers away from Bujalski's oeuvre. His sixth feature film, *Support the Girls* is both realistic and dialogic but uses plot in a way which guides the rhythm and choices of the characters. Premiering at the independent American film festival, South by Southwest (SXSW), in 2018, *Support the Girls* received critical acclaim and was quickly picked up and distributed by Magnolia Pictures. It was nominated for the Independent Spirit Awards and Gotham Independent Film Award, as well as won the New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best Actress, making Regina Hall the first Black woman to receive the award.

### Temporally Dispossessed: The Infinitude of the Impasse

*Support the Girls* opens with a series of shots of cars breezing on the freeway. The bland grey sprawl of highways littered with a chorus of vehicles hurryingly transferring from one place to another, merging and blending together in a concert of anonymous rumbles. This mass movement of cars on the highway, (which have likely been built by the public-private pursuits so cherished under neoliberalism) illustrates the post-modern condition the film is seeking to portray. We sit in our privately owned cars, either on our way to or from our dreary low-income jobs, staring out our windows at the endless stream of people who we likely will never come to know, feeling exhausted and yet anxious about how we will manage the impending weeks, months, and years ahead of us. As we sit in our cars, we wonder about and prepare ourselves for the series of crises that will inevitably shape the rest of our days.

This ordinary experience of precarity and crises echoes Lauren Berlant's claims about cruel optimism and our affective present. Cruel optimism, according to Berlant (2011), is "a relation of attachment to compromised conditions of possibility whose realization is discovered either to be *impossible*, sheer fantasy, or *too possible*, and toxic" (24, emphasis in original). These attachments are cruel because the loss of the object or scene of desire is considered unbearable despite their overarching threat to a person's security. As Berlant poignantly remarks, the form rather than the content of these attachments provides a person with some semblance of continuity in their life which orients "the subject's sense of what it means to keep on living on and looking forward to being in the world" (Berlant 2011, p. 25). We cling to these objects and desires despite the damages and pain they inflict on us fearing we may lose any sense of hope, or worse, our capacity to hope that life could be better.

In *Support the Girls*, these attachments of cruel optimism are expressed in Lisa consistently turning up for work despite her job regularly pushing her to a breaking point. We see the cruelty in her attachment when we, the audience, are first introduced to her. Before work has even begun, Lisa is sitting in her car wiping away her tears searching for some composure before encountering the looming calamities that lay ahead of her. Although we are never told the reasons behind Lisa's tears, throughout the duration of the film, we become rather familiar with her strained expression determinedly stifling the depth of her fatigue, frustration, and displeasure. Yet, simply showing up for work knowing the waiters at Double Whammies will lovingly appreciate her presence makes the job itself endurable. Her restrained composure, unfailingly optimistic tone, and bottomless support for the young women who work at Double Whammies provides Lisa with the hope that tomorrow could be better. Although her attachment to Double Whammies may be imbued with cruelty, for the time being, it is better than having no job at all.

This sentiment becomes clearer as we continue following the complexities of Lisa's life as the day unfolds. Specifically, Bujalski introduces us to Lisa's husband, a depressive and unemployed middle-aged man who appears to have lost his will to continue looking for work. Tensions are ripe between Lisa and her husband, Cameron (played by Lawrence Varnado) when he picks Lisa up from the side of the road after she has had a vocal altercation with Cubby, the owner of Double Whammies. During their exchange, Lisa chastises Cameron for failing to enjoy his life, emphatically stating, "I always know at the end of the day exactly what I'm going to find. I can take fucking up all day, but I cannot take not trying" (Riley & Bujalski, 2018). Here, in this moment, Lisa prefers finding comfort in participating in the prolonged and extensive crises that constitute her everyday rather than the projected emptiness of her husband's life outside of the workforce.

This exchange between Lisa and her husband mirrors Berlant's (2011) claims that "the present moment increasingly imposes itself on consciousness as a moment in extended crisis, with one happening piling on another," where crisis is understood as "a process embedded in the ordinary that unfolds in stories about navigating what is overwhelming" (2011, p. 7). For Lisa, the persistent engagement with crisis creates the affective conditions necessary for her to continue believing in a fantastical pursuit of a good life that has yet to come. To disengage from her work, as her husband has, would be admitting that the good life, in how it has been historically constructed, is nothing more than a dissipating mirage, a reverie in retreat.

The ordinariness of Lisa's life as crises in perpetuity resembles the impasse Berlant describes in *Cruel Optimism*. The impasse conceptualizes experiences of temporality under neoliberalism where the precariousness of our standards of living creates a sense of a long durée, an infinite present. The impasse generates a "rhythm that people can enter into while they're dithering, tottering, bargaining, testing, or otherwise being worn out by the promises they have attached to in this

world" (2011, p. 28). Within the impasse, people like Lisa are compelled to discover, develop, and refine new ways of maintaining their grip on a destabilized life as the "institutions and social relations of reciprocity" defining embedded liberalism slip away (2011, p. 197). As the moderate degree of security afforded to everyday people during the period of embedded liberalism continues disappearing, where the fantasy of a good life rooted in stability and comfort becomes an impossibility, we adjust to the rhythms of contingency shaping the impasse as a mode of survival.

Yet, after Lisa returns to the chaos ensuing at Double Whammies, where the cable has been knocked out while the staff scrambles to prepare for the Big Fight scheduled for that night, she finds Danyelle on the phone with Cubby who's instructing her to fill out Lisa's termination forms. Lisa retreats outside to stifle what would be her third potential breakdown of the day. It is here where a situation, as Berlant refers to it, begins to unfold and alter Lisa's attachment to Double Whammies. As Berlant describes it, a

situation is a disturbance, a sense genre of animated suspension – not suspended animation. It has a punctum like a photograph; it forces one to take notice, to become *interested* in political changes to ordinariness. When a situation unfolds, people try to maintain themselves in it until they figure out how to adjust (2011, p. 195, emphasis in original).

Perhaps the beginning of *Support the Girls*, where Lisa attempts to conceal her tears, marks her entry point into this situation. Slowly, throughout the film, Lisa begins to recognize her position as general manager at Double Whammies as untenable.

The unbearableness of the present becomes starkly overwhelming for Lisa as she comes to terms with her resignation from Double Whammies and joins Maci, Jay (played by John Elvis), a patron who works at a nearby theater and entertainment store, and Krista (played by AJ Michalka), a former

Double Whammies waiter who was recently let go for getting a tattoo of Steph Curry, a famous basketball player, on the side of her stomach. Unfortunately, however, as Berlant notes a situation within the impasse does not necessarily lead to life-altering events which threatens the stability of an unbearable present. While a situation may disturb the impasse, it does not necessarily carry the weight to alter or transform it.

Both the precarious position Lisa occupies, where she has shuffled from restaurant to restaurant throughout her career, and the dwindling employment prospects in the town she lives in, sharply determines her next step. The ongoing processes of neoliberalization, including significant cuts to state welfare and infrastructural spending, has led to the deterioration of most American cities and towns as well as a reduction in the quality of life for most Americans (Harvey 2005). Consequently, despite Lisa's yearnings for a change in her daily rhythm, she is left with few choices. Lisa leaves her hectic job at a local small business only to find herself interviewing for a role at the Mancave, a faceless national franchise and the symbolic representation of the forces driving the impasse she remains trapped within. As Berlant states, "the impasse is a cul-de-sac... In a cul-de-sac one keeps moving, but one moves paradoxically, in the *same space*" (2011, p. 199, emphasis in original). Although Lisa may change locations, her shift is marred by the same, if not worse, tempo which caused her immense grief, frustration, and anxiety at Double Whammies. Her location may have changed but she is bound to the same space. The only certainty of *Support the Girls* is that the Mancave will exist while Lisa's future as well as Double Whammies is decidedly ambiguous.

### **Spatially Dispossessed: Inhabiting the Non-Place**

Bound to the seemingly inescapable infinitude of the precarious present, the promise of the good life that shepherded and guided those who grew up and lived during the period of embedded liberalism can no longer shield us from the alienation,

grief, and precarity of life under neoliberalism. Instead, as Berlant claims, a new mask has supplanted the old. This mask comes equipped with a 'recession grimace', the tight yet forced smile frequently displayed on Lisa's lips as she navigates the series of crises that have shaped her day (2011, p. 189). Berlant astutely observes,

as more people from more social locations are seen watching their dreams become foreclosed on in material and fantasmatic ways, the grimace produces another layer of face to create a space of delay while the subject and world adjust to how profoundly fantasmatic the good-life dreams were, after all (2011, p. 196).

With the dismantling of the welfare state and the institutions of intimacy that accompanied it, neoliberal subjects are both largely fixed within precarity and forced to contend with the notion that the promise of the good life was never really a promise at all. It was, in the end, a dubious fantasy that likely never came to fruition for preceding generations.

This profound awareness of the hollow promises of the past and the incapacity to believe in any promises that could frame our futures concomitantly keeps us shackled to the present. As British theorist Mark Fisher through Frederic Jameson contends, "perpetual economic instability and the rapid turnover of ephemeral images leads to a breakdown in any coherent sense of temporality" (2014, p. 63). In *Support the Girls*, Bujalski keeps the camera tightly fixed on Lisa, Maci, Danyelle, and the rest of the crew at Double Whammies. Lisa's past remains shrouded in secrecy, while the audience can only speculate about her future. Although she leaves Double Whammies, Lisa never leaves the crises shaping her life. The camera leaves Lisa as it found her: tired, worried, and uncertain about what lays ahead.

The dissolution of the good life is echoed in Franco 'Bifo' Berardi's (2011) notion of the slow cancellation of the future,

where the promises of a future have gradually slipped away over the last forty years. According to Fisher, “what haunts the digital cul-de-sacs of the twenty-first century is not so much the past as all the lost futures that the twentieth-century taught us to anticipate” (2012, p. 16). The promises of the good life under embedded liberalism, then, have come to haunt our neoliberal present.

Significantly, the disappearance of a conceivable future hinders our capacities to collectively envision a radically different world from the one we currently inhabit, despite the utter necessity for such a creative project rooted in solidarity (Fisher, 2014). Although Lisa, Maci, and Danyelle are no longer employed at Double Whammies, they bump into each other while interviewing for positions at the Mancave, the personification of their impersonal futures informed and dictated by the faceless brutality of speculative finance capital. This circuitous loop signifies both the erosion of a future as well as the inability to, not necessarily conceive of, but to act out and participate in something new. Sitting on the roof top of an unmarked commercial building after their interviews, Lisa, in a moment of fear, expresses her regret for leaving Double Whammies. Danyelle, one of the few characters who openly recognizes the futility of their position, retorts, “Don’t you dare feel badly for yourself. Or for us for losing our shitty jobs. There are lots of shitty jobs out there, including this one” (Riley & Bujalski 2018). Here the future is expressed by Danyelle as more of the same as their present.

The disappearance of the good life, then, can be understood as a spectre figuring in Mark Fisher’s concept of hauntology (although originally conceptualized by the French philosopher, Jacques Derrida). Hauntology is concerned with the “forces which act at a distance – that which, to use Žižek’s distinction, insists (has causal effects) without (physically) existing” (2012, p. 20). The figure of the spectre can never “fully be present: it has no being in itself but marks relation to what is no longer or not yet” (Fisher, 2014, p. 17). The spectre of the good life influences our affective attachments to the objects

and desires that are intended to provide meaning to our lives. This spectre maintains our relations of cruel optimism which we seemingly cannot shed, either fearing we will lose our will to continue trudging along if we do or nothing else exists outside of it. Lisa, Danyelle, and Maci continue showing up for their jobs, or looking for one, both to materially reproduce themselves while concurrently hoping, through steady and dedicated work, that the stable future of the good life *could* eventually materialize; that, perhaps, there could be a moment of reprieve, a space for breathing, if they continue confronting the obstacles in their paths.

The directionality of hauntology, between the no longer and the not yet points to the collapsing of both space and time which has come to define neoliberalism. This flattening of time and space into a long *durée* of the present is compounded by what Marc Augé refers to as the rise of the “non-place”. Non-places are “airports, retail parks, and chain stores which resemble one another more than they resemble the particular spaces in which they are located, and whose ominous proliferation is the most visible sign of the implacable spread of capitalist globalization” (Fisher 2012, 20). *Support the Girls* shuffles back and forth between non-places, moving from one non-place to another. None of the locations in the film are decidedly recognizable. From Double Whammies, which, as David Fear (2018) writes for the *Rolling Stone*, “...could be any of a thousand generic restaurants on the side of any of a thousand interchangeable interstates,” to the banal suburbs Cubby drives Lisa to, to the undescriptive commercial building where the Mancave interviews are held, *Support the Girls* exists within the impasse at the non-place. Lisa, Maci, Danyelle, as well as the rest of the patrons and waiters at Double Whammies are both temporally and spatially dispossessed. Their lives hovering within a non-time at a non-place. Yet, following Fisher, perhaps the spectre of the good life, the haunting of the lost futures of the twentieth century we had come to anticipate, can resist the impasse – these locations marred by a time out of joint.



### The Deterioration of Collective Solidarity: Surviving in the Impasse at the Non-Place

The temporal and spatial dispossession shaping the possibilities, affective relationships, and daily rhythms under neoliberalism has fundamentally altered our perceptions of collective solidarity. Through the proliferation of rampant individualism, the financialization of everything, and the eroding support of communal and societal institutions, collective bonds are in tatters. Individuals are loosely stitched together threaded by increasingly fragile and brittle relationships. As the former Prime Minister of Britain, Margaret Thatcher, boasts, under neoliberalism, “there is no such thing as society but only individuals” (Harvey, 2005, p. 82).

As seen in *Support the Girls*, relationships predicated on empathy have replaced notions of collective solidarity. This shift is represented in two events in the film: the carwash held to raise funds for Shaina (played by Jana Kramer), one of the waitresses at Double Whammies who, in an attempt to protect herself, hit her good-for-nothing boyfriend with a car; as well as Arturo’s (played by Steve Zapata) quiet dismissal after his cousin was found sleeping in the vents at Double Whammies.

Upon arriving to work, Lisa decides to hold an impromptu and unofficial car wash to financially support Shaina who will likely become embroiled in a legal battle with her boyfriend. Lisa intentionally keeps the carwash off the record to ensure the money goes to Shaina despite knowing problems would likely arise if Cubby found out. Unfortunately, as Lisa arrives to work, she hears a loud thud coming from the ceiling. Lisa quickly discovers that Arturo, a line-cook at Double Whammies, let his cousin, who is presumably homeless or temporarily unhoused, sleep in the vents. Obligated to inform the police, Lisa attempts to handle both crises simultaneously. That is, until a third crisis begins to emerge, with Cubby showing up after receiving a call about the police visiting Double Whammies.

Lisa tries to keep Cubby at bay as she conceals the identity of Arturo’s cousin from both Cubby and the police.

These related crises illustrate the empathetic nature of Lisa’s character, where individual and isolated solutions rooted in empathy to larger social and material issues are underway. Although Lisa’s termination is linked with her spur-of-the-moment car wash, she nevertheless manages to collect a significant sum of money for Shaina. Yet, when Lisa ventures home, she finds Shaina consorting with the very boyfriend who initiated the problems to begin with. Lisa emphatically urges for the money to be returned. Insulted, Shaina lashes out at Lisa, angrily asserting, “we are not at work. You are not my manager anymore,” as she leaves with her boyfriend (Riley & Bujalski 2018). Lisa, who now sits alone in her apartment, realizes her efforts were fruitless.

The atomization of individuals under neoliberalism is glaringly apparent in these scenes. Lisa is soon to be without a job. Shaina and her boyfriend will have to face mounting health-care and legal fees alone. Arturo’s cousin remains without a home, and now, Arturo joins the growing list of former employees at Double Whammies (in total, five people lost their jobs at Double Whammies in one day). Despite Lisa’s efforts, despite her sincere care and empathy for the precariousness of both her and her staff’s lives, their material realities have worsened. This confirms Maurizio Lazzarato’s claims that “the construction of the precarious worker, of the poor, the unemployed and low-income worker, the multiplication of ‘cases’ and ‘situations’ is part of the amplification and deepening of individualization and aims to weaken both individuals, and differently, the overall job situation” (2009, p. 119). All of the characters made further precarious over the course of *Support the Girls* will inevitably reinvest “in the normative promises of capital and intimacy under capital” (Berlant, 2011, p. 170). This reinvestment is rooted in a desire for normalcy regardless of how catastrophic and inherently ephemeral or unfounded and illusory this normalcy is.

Empathy in lieu of collective solidarity regrettably leads to the maintenance and perpetuation of precarity under neoliberalism. The discrepancy in tactics and strategies employed by waitresses (a common occupation for working class women) at *Double Whammies* versus the efforts of waitresses in the twentieth century, signals the deep impact of neoliberalist ethos on social bonds (Robinson 1996). In her book, *Dishing It Out: Waitresses and Their Unions in the Twentieth Century*, Dorothy Sue Cobble tracks the collective organizing efforts of waitresses to both maintain and improve their quality of lives during the twentieth century, including the development of cross-workplace unions amongst other strategies. Significantly, the strength of waitressing unions was comparable to the unions of garment and seamstress workers at their height in the twentieth century. As Cobble remarks,

the emphasis on building solidarity through craft identity, on upgrading the status of the trade by monitoring entrance standards and workplace job performance, and on providing benefits and services that would travel with workers from jobsite to jobsite all created sources of loyalty among workers that allowed unions to sustain themselves and exert power over multiple small worksites (1991, p. 8).

Importantly, in *Support the Girls*, the waitresses at *Double Whammies* are loyal to Lisa, the general manager, rather than with each other. Lisa mitigates the relationships between the girls at *Double Whammies*. Without her, the comradery they have come to appreciate and enjoy seems to vanish. Maci echoes this sentiment when she eagerly states, "it makes such a big difference when your boss cares about you" (Riley & Bujalski, 2018)! Collective solidarity, at this point, seems improbable; it has yet to even emerge as a possibility.

The impotency and powerlessness that inevitably exists alongside the atomization of individuals leads to a deeper entrenchment of hopelessness, alienation, frustration, and a sense of futility. At no point in *Support the Girls* are the

imminent issues affecting each character discussed in concert with one another. Each crisis was dealt with individually. Regardless of the friendliness and compassion between Lisa and the *Double Whammies* waitresses, a creeping distance between the characters remains palpable. The insurmountable precarity confronting their lives creates an ostensibly indestructible barrier preventing Maci, Danyelle, and Lisa from recognizing their mutual plight. In the end, their only source of solace, their only form of release, is collectively and unguardedly screaming at the top of their lungs on the rooftop after their interviews at the *Mancave*. And yet, the pain and the urgency of their screams are nonetheless drowned out by the relentless roar of the highway, of accelerated neoliberalist development. In a moment of unflinching yearning for recognition, Maci, Danyelle, and Lisa remain anonymous, alone, and unprotected. Their futures have become increasingly more insecure.

*Support the Girls*, then, sits in contradistinction to the silent films Steven J. Ross discusses in *Working-Class Hollywood: Silent Film and the Shaping of Class in America*, where class issues and alternative socialist futures were frequently visualized on the screen (2000). The representations, images, and stories conveyed on screen have the capacity to carry with them a longing for change. As Lillian Robinson observes, "what is remarkable is that a fictional representation should turn out to be one of the places we can look for truths about how to proceed to make sense out of women's [and workers] stories and, out of making sense, to make change" (1996, p. 189-190). Here, in witnessing the grim and restrictive choices available to the *Double Whammies* workers, where Maci, Danyelle, Lisa, Arturo, Arturo's Cousin, Krista, as well as the rest of the staff have to pick between remaining at a localized or nationalized iteration of the same kind of low-paying and precarious job, it becomes clear that these are not substantive choices at all. In this case, repeatedly engaging in relations of cruel optimism appear as the only way to survive.

## Conclusion

Although *Support the Girls* offers a tender portrayal of precarious and marginalized female workers attempting to find connection, empathy, and compassion in an environment utterly hostile to their existence, the bleakness of Bujalski's vision tacitly affirms Mark Fishers claims that we cannot conceive of an alternative to capitalism. Lamentably, while *Support the Girls* finds truth in its depictions of the tattered social bonds of the temporally and spatially dispossessed, Bujalski fails to surmount the enclosures of the prevailing neoliberalist ethos. *Support the Girls* remains contained within the impasse at the non-place haunted by the lost futures of the twentieth century. Or, perhaps, *Support the Girls* offers us the possibility to see the urgency and necessity of finding commonality through our mutual and shared struggles. Struggles which can only be broached and challenged through collective solidarity as evinced by the waiters, seamstresses, and garment workers who fought for each other and alongside each other throughout the last century. Through these struggles, new visions and dreams for the future could emerge.

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