

Examining Crowd Work and Gig Work Through the Historical Lens of Piecework

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Introduction

- Ongoing threads in crowdsourcing and gig work
 - Complexity
 - Decomposition
 - Worker Relationships

Piecework Primer

Payment for *time*



Payment for *results*

narrative should be something like “the payment structure we typically see these days is for *time* — that is, you work 4 hours and you get 4 times your hourly wage (give or take). piecework pays instead for each unit of output. If your task is to pick apples in the field, you can earn ten times as much as your peers if you work ten times as fast.

“Labor experts hypothesized that this would shift motivations for workers directly toward production, getting rid of the tension between managers and workers [obviously this didn’t work out but I’m foreshadowing here]”

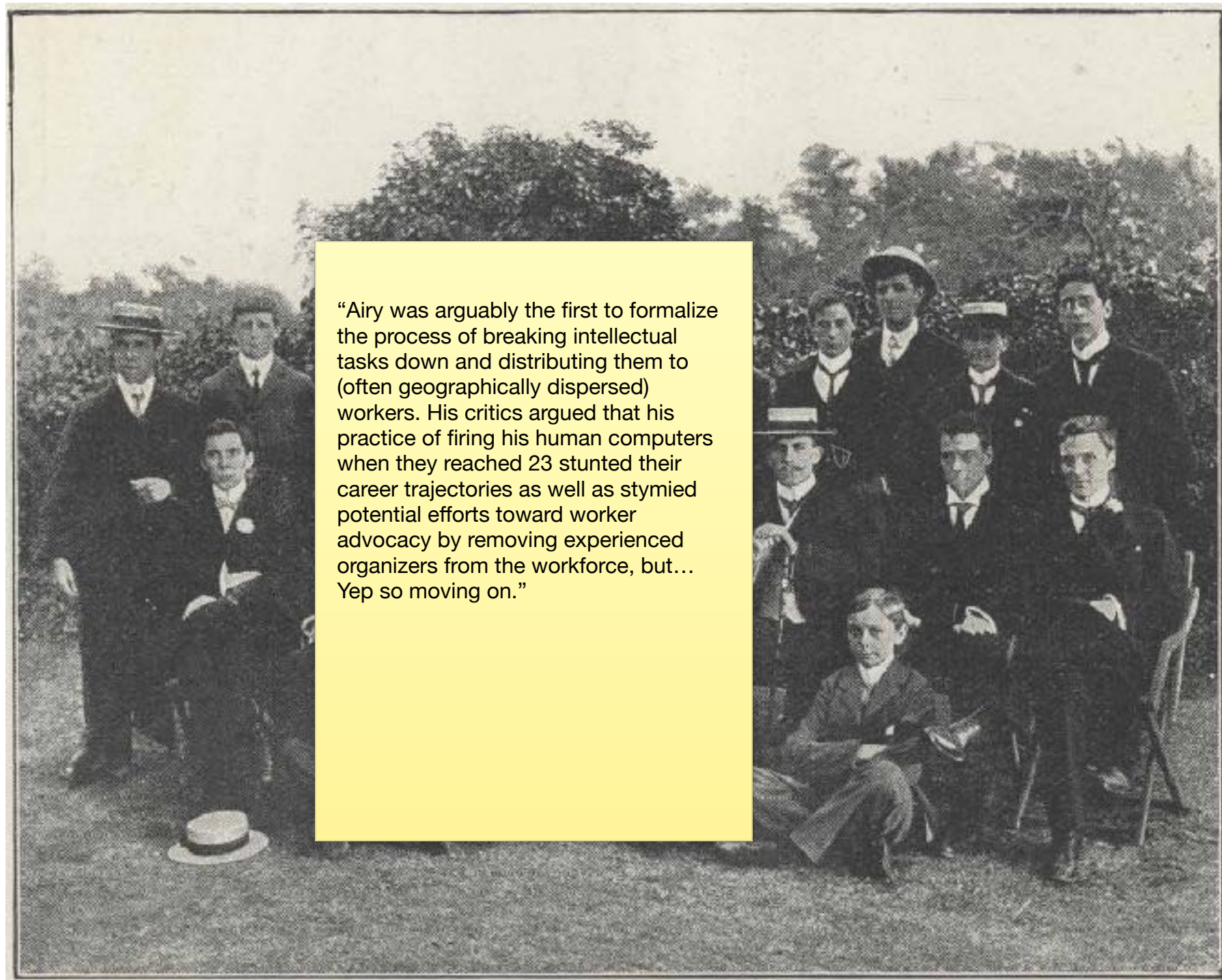


Case Studies

roadmapping

- Airy's Computers
- Domestic and Farm labor
- Match girls
- Industrial Workers

Airy's Computers



"Airy was arguably the first to formalize the process of breaking intellectual tasks down and distributing them to (often geographically dispersed) workers. His critics argued that his practice of firing his human computers when they reached 23 stunted their career trajectories as well as stymied potential efforts toward worker advocacy by removing experienced organizers from the workforce, but... Yep so moving on."

Farm Workers

Not sure what to put here. I couldn't find good pictures within 10 seconds of googling. Now's a good time to ask if I should find and include massive hand-made spreadsheets to illustrate the computational nature of even the work that wasn't computing astronomical stuff

Matchstick Girls

I want to get uplifting here because the last two were pretty grim



Industrial Workers



a new age in empowerment begins! A (very) brief bit about how World War II brought women into the workforce, forced innovation, etc...



Complexity

Is the transition to research threads too abrupt?

Complexity — What did crowd work say?

Complexity — What did piecework say?

Complexity — Comparisons

Complexity — Implications

Decomposition

Decomposition — What did crowd work say?

Decomposition — What did piecework say?

Decomposition — Comparisons

Decomposition — Implications

Worker Relationships

Workers — What did crowd work say?

Workers — What did piecework say?

Workers — Comparisons

Workers — Implications

Discussion
