

Cambridge University Press

0521448026 - Democratic Subjects: The Self and the Social in Nineteenth-Century
England - Patrick Joyce

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This history is the story of two men, and of the stories they and others told in order that it might be known who they were. It is a history of identity, 'the self' and social identity, and also the realm of 'the social' itself in which identity is located. It explores critically the nature of class identity by looking at the formation and influence of two men who might be taken as representative of what 'working class' and 'middle class' meant in England in the nineteenth century. Class is seen to have been less significant than the various shapes of demos, and the two studies of individuals are complemented by a further study on narrative in pointing to the great importance of the collective subjects upon which democracy rested.

The book indicates the way forward to a new history of democracy as an imagined entity. It represents a deepening of Patrick Joyce's engagement with 'post-modernist' theory, seeking the relevance of this theory for the writing of history, and in the process offering a critique of the conservatism of much academic history, particularly in Britain.

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For Roisin and Sean, their own book, and for their
uncle, who loved them, Frank Malone, 1953–1993

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