



Property, propriety and affect : a study of class (dis)entitlement in neighbourhood spaces.

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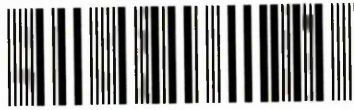
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**'Property, Propriety and Affect': a study of class (dis)entitlement in
neighbourhood spaces**

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Abstract

This thesis applied a relational theory of class to the empirical study of the experience and practices of ten working and six middle-class women living within the fluid networks of a specific place, a neighbourhood in a northern city that I name here as Fenton. The analysis explored the ways in which the women's subjectivities are differently constituted and constrained in their patterns of difference through their respective positioning in relation to the circulation of capital, and differing forms of ('self' and externally imposed) regulation that support its movements. In doing so, it sought to understand their differing relation to processes of apparent 'individualisation' and underlined the ways such processes are reproductive of class division and inequalities.

The analysis provided draws on the scholarship of feminist class analysis and in particular the work of Beverley Skeggs. By exploring her theorisation of class within an empirical frame this thesis concerns itself with understanding the ways in which identities and class relationships can be said to be produced and regulated through 'an economy of personhood' based upon principles of property, propriety and entitlement (Skeggs: 2011).

The methodology and methods used to produce this thesis were ethnographic, based upon participation, observation, and the deployment of qualitative mixed methods during the period of September 2009 to August 2011.

The women in this thesis do not passively reproduce at the local level the constraints of class, gender, and capital. The working-class women, in particular, are embattled within complex and often desperate circumstances within which they actively intervene and seek to modify the forces that work in and through their lives. Those processes are reflected, and in some sense re-enacted, within the analysis that follows. A particular contribution of this thesis, here, is in providing research in relation to the lives and experiences of working-class persons who are rarely heard from within academic spaces.

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Preface

Outline of Thesis

This thesis applied a relational theory of class to the empirical study of the experience and practices of ten working and six middle-class women living within the fluid networks of a specific place, a neighbourhood in a northern city that I name here as Fenton. The analysis explored the ways in which the women's subjectivities are differently constituted and constrained in their patterns of difference through their respective positioning in relation to the circulation of capital, and differing forms of ('self' and externally imposed) regulation that support its movements. In doing so, it sought to understand their differing relation to processes of apparent 'individualisation' and underlined the ways such processes are reproductive of class division and inequalities.

The methodology and methods used to produce this thesis were ethnographic, based upon participation, observation, and the deployment of qualitative mixed methods during the period of September 2009 to August 2011.

Theoretical contexts

This thesis draws on the scholarship of feminist class analysis and in particular the work of Beverley Skeggs and her conception of class as a form of embodied (dis)entitlement that is 'produced as a cultural property figured through difference and moral attribution' and 'embedded (inscribed) in personhood and put to effect in symbolic systems of exchange to generate value' (Skeggs: 2004; 80). By exploring her theorisation of class within an empirical frame I sought to understand the ways in which her analysis offers purchase for understanding the formations of contemporary relations of class as they appear in particular spaces and subjectivities. As such, this thesis concerns itself with understanding the ways in which identities and class relationships can be said to be produced and regulated through 'an economy of personhood' based upon principles of property, propriety and entitlement (Skeggs: 2011).

In addition to exploring and applying the specific concepts and areas of concern found within Skeggs' work my thesis is also placed within the context of three inter-related themes of class analysis. Firstly, the need to understand the differing engendered classed relation the women have to the apparent 'transformations' brought about through processes of 'individualisation' and 'de-tradition', as variously described through differing theorisations of reflexive modernity, and the ways these differences are realised and dependent upon one another (Adkins:2004, McRobbie:2007). The thesis is then, in part, is an empirical exploration of the social divisions of class between the women as I interpreted them through relation to femininity, care, and attachment to place; an exploration of the feminist class thesis of the emergence and the 'widening of class divisions between women (and the increasing articulation of class divisions through the bodies of women)' (Adkins: 2004; 7).

Secondly, the need to understand the ways in which such differences are implicated in, and realised through, forms of cultural and institutional governance that are divided in their logic 'according to the historical depth or shallowness of the selves which they have to deal with' (Skeggs:2004; 176). Here the concern is to provide depth, through the study of working-class experience, to theoretical elaborations of governmentality and modern forms of rationality (Foucault: 2011) that demand and produce 'a particular kind of psychological subject', one who is a 'free' and 'rational' agent who 'bears the burdens of liberty' (Walkerdine: 2001; 2).

Thirdly, my thesis explores the women's lives within the context of a shift in register within theoretical production from narratives of risk and individualisation to that of 'the affective' and the 'precarious'. Such a shift has been concurrent with the move from an epochal pronouncement of 'opportunity' and 'choice' to one of global crisis and precarity, elaborated in Berlant's thesis of 'the situation' of 'crisis ordinariness' (Berlant: 2011). Here I focus upon the experience of class in relation to the affective to 'make space' for an understanding of the material and emotional realities of those who remain silenced within public spheres as the 'squeezed middle' takes up new forms of authorisation.

Contribution of thesis

The proximity of women who are differently located in social space in the material spaces of neighbourhood has provided a crucial dimension to applying and exploring Skeggs' analysis of class. *Class, Self, Culture* (Skeggs: 2004) offers a historically informed and detailed critique and theorisation of the production of class through middle-class conceptions of self and exchange, and through the connections between these and their performative classed valuations of their inscription (through sexuality, ethnicity, femininity, conceptions of market, citizenship and national belonging). It charts the production and institution of middle-class perspectives within the fields of academic theory, media and cultural production, and political rhetoric. What is relatively absent in Skeggs' work is empirical exploration of her thesis in terms of middle-class practices of encounter in everyday lives with working-class persons. My thesis, here, applies and explores the validity of Skeggs' conception of middle-class proprietary evaluation and embodied entitlement (aesthetic, moral, ethical, cultural) by analysing the ways in which working-class bodies and practices are read through middle-class perspectives within a socially mixed neighbourhood space.

Many studies of working-class experience operationalise a comparative and relational framework but fail to 'include substantive empirical work with the middle-class that they characterize' (Flint: 2011; 85). For Flint the 'assumptions (and it is often assumptions) made about middle-class orientations and practices' remain unexplored with the effect that they 'essentialize and generalize middle-class patterns of difference' (ibid; 85). My thesis is attentive to such a critique but places it within the context of understanding the differing relation middle and working-class persons have to the ways in which their subjectivities are constituted and constrained in their patterns of difference through differing forms of ('self' and externally imposed) regulation. That is, it places emphasis upon exploring what Flint refers to as the differing mechanisms and resources working and middle-class women have for realising the 'fiction' of the 'mobile, sovereign individual' and the ways in which these differences are implicated in processes of inequality within class relations (ibid; 85).

In doing so this thesis makes a contribution to meeting the demands made by an increasing number of sociologists and feminist class writers for the study of 'the innocence, the kind of unacknowledged normality of the middle-classes' (Savage: 2003; 537) by making visible and placing at the centre of analysis that which remains 'unmarked and unproblematic' (Lawler: 2005). As Walkerdine observes, 'an understanding of the production of disadvantage requires a corresponding investigation of the production of privilege' (Walkerdine: 2001; 165).

This thesis also responds to the injunction made by Skeggs for a need to shift attention to working-class experience from within a perspective that reaches beyond exotic, pathologic, or deficit models. Whilst the academic retreat from class has been countered by an increasing number of voices across disciplinary fields, it remains true that 'we know relatively little in sociological terms about those who occupy the disadvantaged 'end' of the polar distribution of socio-economic resources. This is particularly the case in relation to the poor white working-class' (Watt: 2006; 777). It is here, in particular, that my thesis aims to contribute towards the empirical work of the existing feminist class research that provides a situated exploration of working-class mothers' lives (Walkerdine: 1989, 2002, Lawler: 2000, Reay: 2004, Gillies: 2005). It is my contention that my ethnographic research has a 'reach' and a 'depth' in relation to the lives and experiences of working-class women who are rarely heard within academic spaces, and that that is a contribution to research in itself.

Flint draws attention to another danger of the comparative relational framework within working-class studies that I sought to avoid; those that realise undifferentiated representations of working-class life through a 'focus on the relative absences, failures, degradations, injuries and defeats of the working-class experience' (Flint: 2011; 87). For Flint, these problems arise from theoretical error, expressed through a faulty methodology 'that transpose(s) specific sites and moments of working and middle-class interaction' onto a wider realisation of working-class life, resulting in a representation of hurt, humiliation, shame and negativity that underestimates the existence of a 'sense of value and esteem' (ibid; 87). I attempted to avoid these pitfalls by carrying out an

intensive ethnographic study, broadening my analysis from direct encounters with classed 'others' to include a focus on the internal relations, practices, experiences and subjectivities of the working-class women's lives.

Limits to the Thesis

It is important to stress that I focus on the lives of a particular and necessarily limited number of individuals - all women. I have designated the women as 'middle' and 'working-class' on the basis of their positioning in social space and their holdings of Bourdieu's capitals. The women included in my study provide an opportunity to understand class as being a generative process and relationship that is expressed 'contingently' in relation to their negotiation of such a positioning in social space as it transpires within specific material realities (chapter 2).

My thesis, here, makes a contribution towards an increased understanding of class within a particular locality, a locality characterised by a 'spatial conjunction of a poor, dispossessed working-class and a knowledge dependent middle-class' (Byrne: 2005; 810). In this sense the working-class women are persons whose experience and negotiation of class is realised within very different material and social conditions to those who are the subject, for example, of Savage's research in Cheadle (2005), or those by Charlesworth (2000) in Rotherham, Collins (2005) in Southwark, Watt (2006) in Camden. These are also studies of class which ostensibly draw upon women's and men's experiences. My thesis, as it attends to working-class relationships, values and practices, has been rather 'narrower.' I have focused upon the ways in which working-class women express a particular, engendered and classed realisation of value and practice within and through locality. Their forms of sociality, practices, values, connections and disconnects are very different from what would emerge from a study of working-class men in Fenton. Reluctantly, I have omitted substantive analysis of such differences, as well as a fuller consideration of the inter-relationships and shared experience of class between working-class women and men.

My thesis, then, does not provide a characterisation of 'Fenton' in terms of its identity as place per se, nor does it provide an overview and delineation of its form and processes of 'spatial socialisation' which could be said to characterise its 'basic sociability' (Shields: 2002). The working and middle-class women are but two of the potentially identifiable groups 'within' Fenton who could be said to provide for its overall 'spatial competence', the apparent cohesion of its social body through the alignment of practice with orthodoxy (Lefebvre: 2007).

A further limit to be acknowledged, here, is my focus upon women who are all white to the exclusion of other ethnicities. Whilst I consider the relationship of class and ethnicity in terms of the racialization of the white working-classes (Haylett: 2001) and the cosmopolitan dispositions of middle-class practice (Skeggs: 2004), I have not drawn upon an analysis of non-white experience. I have not done so because of my expressed aim to explore Skeggs' contention that it is the white working-classes who function as a constitutive limit for middle-class realisations of (self) value. Regretfully I have not found space to highlight the relationships that exist between the working-class women of my study and those they live with, and find relation to, that do not share their ethnicity. These are relationships which counter and provide complexity to pathological representations of the white working-classes as inherently racist. They would reveal, too, the 'shared' experiences of the injustices of class as well as their different realisations through negotiation and experience of differing ethnic 'locations.'

Motivations

My research is informed by my experience of living and working within Fenton. After my studies at a local university, I stayed on and became involved in community work; helping, alongside other local residents, to establish a number of community projects, one of which I went on to manage. The development of the organisation over the next ten years ran alongside the New Labour governments from 1997 onwards. The discourses of 'social inclusion' and 'community cohesion', 'empowerment' and 'regeneration' as well as specific policy interventions such as the New Deal and

Supporting People, gradually came to engulf the experiences of those who were part of its work. Our activities and the project had become 'professionalised.'

During this time I developed increasing awareness of the gaps between the experiences of people I had become friends and colleagues with, and the processes and positioning they were being made to undergo, processes with which I was complicit. These 'experiences of others' experiences' being ignored or silenced, or renegotiated and translated through others' organisational logics, built up a practical and frustrated understanding of the problem of 'good intention' within my own work, and clearer understanding of the ways in which inequalities were both sustained and promoted through un-interrogated perspectives, including my own.

Living and working in Fenton, the process of coming to 'know' some of the working-class women, their daily materiality and their relations to others outside of institutional frameworks, was the process that prepared me to speak, from my perspective, about class not as an identity but as a perspective from which we approach conflict in the value form (Skeggs: 2010a). I say 'prepared' because, at that time, I did not have an adequate language of class through which to understand my experiences of working and living in Fenton. Conflict was central to this experience but it was not understood; it was affective, angry, contradictory, and confused. Central here was my sense of self, and my only half explored 'good intentions'. The conflict I felt was interpreted in terms of 'me' and, to borrow Walkerdine's (2001) psychosocial language of class, was expressed through denial, projection, and transference; but above all it was personalised. This thesis emerged from that dissatisfaction.

My treatment of both middle and working-class women has been guided by the intention to explore and understand social processes and the meanings that lie beneath their practices, and which 'ground their morality (if such be the question), and explain their strategies and trajectories, as one would do for any social category, high or low, noble or ignoble' (Wacquant: 2002; 1470). My research, however, shares Skeggs' motivation 'to provide a space for the articulations and experiences of the marginalised' (Skeggs: 2002; 23). This was the entry point for my study. It is a commitment informed

by my perspective upon what I see as the working-class women's pathologisation within a dominant moral economy. I am therefore making my analysis from a position; what I hope becomes apparent is that such a declared commitment does not equate to a loss of critical perspective and reasoned argument, theoretical elaboration and understanding.

Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1 draws attention to the ethical, political, epistemological and ontological issues that arise from my efforts to hear, interpret, and produce an analytic account of the voices and experiences of 'others'. As Skeggs (2005a) makes clear, performances of class are made, not found, and it is in the relationship that what 'matters' is formed. The matter, in this research context, is both knowledge and the affects and effects of such productions. Chapter 2 details my theoretical framework as it informs the analysis that follows and should be read alongside Chapter 1 as providing the reader with an understanding of my overarching approach to class.

Chapter 3 locates the themes of property, propriety and class (dis)entitlement outlined in Chapter 2 within the contexts of 'Fenton', drawing attention to the differential allocation of capitals the women have for 'self-realisation' within its spaces and beyond. In turn, I begin to mark the ways in which the women are embedded in different networks of sociality and how these are maintained through contrasting forms of social labour.

Chapter 4 considers the insecurities found in middle-class lives as they negotiate their positioning within a 'new economy' and emphasises that these insecurities are crucial to understanding the formation of classed relations. It is here that I explore middle-class encounters with their proximate others, focussing on the ways their 'propinquity' to the 'stranger', and their residence in working-class and 'cosmopolitan' space, is negotiated.

Chapter 5 turns towards the working-class women and their labours for respectability and respect amidst conditions of precarity. I make explicit that the middle-class

perspectives of working-class women found in Chapter 4 'make invisible the restricted access to different forms of capital and they make invisible the labour and social relations that underpin the imperatives and necessity for particular forms of femininity' (Skeggs: 2001a;305).

Chapter 6 narrows the focus to two working-class women's experience of the regulation of their mothering identities and practices by external agencies, and traces the production and circulation of affect that these incur. I underscore the differing historical conditioning and material realities that surround their practice when set beside the conventions of middle-class normativity authorised within institutional spaces.

Chapter 7 places such an understanding back within the broader contexts of working-class women's lives. I provide contrast by drawing attention to the parenting practice of the only middle-class mother in my research. Both Chapters 6 and 7 emphasise that working-class parenting practices and value orientations are not simply to be understood as 'forms of resistance to the imposed norm' in any simple sense; rather 'they are cultural practices that have validity because they make sense in relation to the government of social relations of working-class life' (Walkerdine: 2001;119).

Chapter 8 is a concluding chapter

1. Methodology

1.1 Introduction

Methodology provides the theoretical underpinning for the production of knowledge and guides the practice of research. Methods are the techniques used to produce this knowledge; in this case about how class and gender is embodied and lived within particular spaces. The data produced from research are not pure; interpretation and findings cannot be bracketed off from their point of production, excavation creates the discursive space from which the object of study is both constructed and viewed. The way the research is framed, the choices of who and what to study, and the tools selected (theoretical concepts, choices regarding representation), the ways in which research relationships are constructed, are productive of research findings (Skeggs: 2002). Furthermore, the reflexive researcher, to use Butler's words, is a culturally enmeshed subject who 'negotiates its constructions, even when those constructions are the very predicates of its own identity' (2007; 196). Methodology and methods, and reflection upon them, are therefore, a particular expression of the relations of power within which they do their labour, and ones from which the researcher is not free to extricate themselves.

Rather than being paralysed by these 'limits' a reflexive methodology entails the exploration of the ethical, political, epistemological and ontological dimensions of the research process. Such consideration must be made through practice within the research process as a necessary element in the reflexive production of knowledge and the ethical conduct of the research relationships. That is, research on the situated experience and knowledge of 'others' requires the ongoing consideration of how such knowledge is realised through the research relation, which is a social relation. It must seek to understand, mitigate or prevent not just the 'distortions' which effect the kind of knowledge produced (Bourdieu:2010), but also the harmful and adverse effects that research practices can have on those brought into the research relation during, and after 'fieldwork'.

This chapter provides an account of the processes involved in the production of my thesis. It covers issues of power inherent in any research activity, discusses representational and interpretive choices made in the collection of data and write up, and considers questions of audience and reception, together with the related concerns of responsibility and ethics. I provide a summary of my choice of ethnography and locate my epistemological position by emphasising the use, context, and politics of my research practice (Skeggs: 2010b). I then discuss how I address the complex epistemological and ontological issues that surround my decision as a middle-class man to carry out research 'on' women's classed experience. From here I provide detail of the methods I deployed and the rationale behind their design. I then provide brief reflexive comment upon research relationships and discuss issues of ethics in practice before returning to interpretive processes. This chapter aims to provide a reflexive argument for the work's credibility and validity (Skeggs: 2002).

1.2 Choice of Ethnography

My theoretical approach to class (Chapter 2) departs from positivist and empirical accounts of classification and categorisation (Walkerdine: 2001). In the simplest of terms such approaches do not capture the 'nuances of class relations', they are 'bloodless' and 'hopelessly inadequate' (ibid; 31) because their ostensibly objective criteria and classificatory schemas (their theoretical foundation) 'ignore or disqualify or transcend people's own knowledge and experience' (ibid; 33). Their reluctance to engage in culture and practice, in turn, leaves them a weak perspective from within which to contest the 'end of class' narratives; reinforcing the impression that the lay normative presence of class within the 'everyday' is a vestige, a recalcitrant but insignificant aspect of the functioning of cultural and economic life (Savage: 2005).

Given my research concerns (Preface) the choice of ethnography was a simple one. Ethnography provides a sustained and fine-grained analysis of the practices and formation of subjectivities within the realm of particular 'everyday' realities, making connections to local and extra-local institutional and social processes that inform them (Wacquant: 2002). It is also 'probably the only methodology that is able to take into

account the multifaceted ways in which subjects are produced through historical categories and context in which they are placed and which they precariously inhabit' (Skeggs: 2010b; 433). Exploring the linkages between historical discursive determinants of classed and engendered subjectivities and everyday practice entails examining the differences between defining descriptors and lived experience; giving due weight to the agency of practice and thought in the lives of those it studies. Ethnography, here, has the ability to situate knowledges, opening up the spaces of normative representation, including theoretical models, to show how they do, or do not, 'fit' the particularities of people's lives (Smith: 1997). Whilst a focus on individual practice is important, ethnography offers opportunity to take into account the interdependencies and interaction between other individuals and groups, and explore the ways in which persons engage in, and are immersed in, a broader web of cultural and social practices through which they find meanings and values (Ortner: 2005).

These are the claims upon knowledge that I make for 'ethnography'. As Skeggs observes, however, 'ethnography' is a word given to differing forms of writing but 'it is the use, the politics of the researcher and the context in which interpretation takes place that defines what sort of ethnography we have' (Skeggs: 2010b; 426). It is to these issues that I turn by placing them in relation to my positioning on the wider epistemological debates that have surrounded ethnography. The epistemological assumptions of the researcher must be made explicit, they underpin claims upon knowledge, are inseparable from representational decisions and ethical practice, and are crucial in arguments about validity.

1.3 Three stuck places

Strathern provides a deceptively simple gloss on the reader and writer of ethnography, and their relation of partial connection and claims upon knowledge;

There is no 'object' that they can both grasp, for the writer cannot 'represent' another society or culture; rather s/he provides the reader with a connection to it. Ethnography makes available what can be conceived but not presented. The connection is perceptible as the reader's realisation of an experience (what the ethnographer has evoked for him or her) (2004; 8).

As she observed of ethnography within anthropology in the 1980's;

There has been a shift... There are no rights and wrongs to weigh up, but something that was right has become wrong, in the sense that what once persuaded no longer can. A form that once worked to create an authentic effect no longer does (ibid; 11).

Lather refers, here, to the predicament of ethnography today as 'the three stuck places of ethics, representation and interpretation' (Lather: 2010; 483). The loss of grand narratives and the crisis of legitimation in the 'postmodern' moment has challenged foundational thought, undermined normative conceptions of the subject, dispelled assumptions of truth as an adequation of thought to its object, and broken with the view that language can be a transparent means of reflection. Under such conditions ethnography fails, for Lather, not at the level of method, but at that of epistemology. Arguments about validity, empirical and evidence-based enquiry, reliability and trustworthiness of interpretation, the ethics of address and appropriation of voice, are thrown in the air for reflexive concern.

In providing me with the last chapter within my copy of *'The handbook of ethnography'*, Lather holds some authority when she urges me to produce a 'text that will work against itself in disavowing prescription, tidy tales and successor regimes' (2010; 322). Her concern, here, is less with advocating a reflexive practice that 'authorises itself by confronting its own processes of interpretation as some sort of cure toward better knowing' than one concerned to 'know through not knowing' (ibid; 486). The task of ethnography, for Lather, is to make the text work to trouble its claims to authority, to problematize the researcher as the one who knows 'others' through a 'refusal to play the expert and explain their lives' (Ibid; 485). It is an ethnographic voice sensitised to its own entanglements with surveillance, one that works to complicate narratives of rescue and empowerment, of giving voice to the voiceless.

For Lather the ethnographer must work within a condition of undecidability by moving 'to some place interrupted, out of balance, extreme, against the levelling process of the dialectic and for the excess, the non-recuperable remainder, the difference, in excess of the logic of non-contradiction' (Lather: 2010; 480). Lather's interest here is 'more in getting us all lost: reader, writer, written about' (ibid; 485). From such positioning, ethnography becomes the practice of a 'post-critical logic of haunting and undecidables'

(ibid. 480) where 'a stuttering knowledge is constructed that elicits *an experience of the object through its very failures of representation*' (ibid; 484, my emphasis).

Lather's own practice, then, is a particular realisation of Strathern's partial connection to an experience. As Strathern observed of ethnography's 'reflexive turn': there is a 'hidden aesthetic form ... and it is that of the deconstructing journey' (2004; 15). It is the oldest story of them all, written anew; one where the author/reader is placed under apparent erasure whilst they set out on an Odyssey, an adventure lost on exciting waters. The danger, however, is that the experience that we are drawn in relation to is not of those places through which the narrator travels or those persons upon whom they momentarily hover. Rather the 'object of concern' is to elicit for the reader the narrator's experience of representational failure (displaced and attributed to the putative object itself) (ibid).

For Strathern, what connects the debates surrounding the problems of ethics, representation and interpretation that Lather highlights are that they have become a question about the 'persuasiveness of form, the elicitation of a sense of appropriateness' and that 'reflexive critique is centrally preoccupied with the character of impact or effect' where the solution still 'appears to be how one writes' (Strathern: 2004; pp 9-10). These are issues, as I will emphasise, of practice and persuasion, of judgement and reception; meaning that they are context-dependent. Questions over their 'appropriateness' and 'impact' (issues of ethics and validity) are to be settled in terms of the relationships established in the field, the audiences one wishes to reach, the messages at stake, and revolve around issues of responsibility and accountability.

I do not intend to make a 'bad-faith dismissal' of the reflexivity that Lather advocates (Marcus: 1998). One of the dangers of her reflexive concern, however, is that 'the truth that experience and meaning are mediated representationally can be over-extended to equate experience and meaning with the formal dimension of representation' (Rabinow: 1986; 257). That is, the post-structuralist move can paradoxically destroy the putative object of study which should be enriched, rather than impoverished, by the act of introducing complexity. It is a practice that, with its 'pervading fear of something

‘outside’ (subject, referent)’ (Alvesson: 2008; 176) can come to tell us ‘little about people’s lives, [whilst] questioning everything about truth and how it can be known’ (Ramazanoglu: 2000; 207).

Whilst the ‘refusal of expertise’ can be an admirable methodological principle, it must extend itself to the methodological praxis of ‘listening’ which is as much about the ability to make partial connection to other experiences (and the knowledge that inheres in them) as it is about recognising the difficulties of doing so. It is my position, too, that evocations of ‘stuttering knowledge’, and their connection to more literary or semiotic approaches to representation and to interpretive processes, find their places and audiences in positions of academic privilege, and that they elide the privileges of positioning that make them ‘realisable’ to those ‘in the know’, and incomprehensible (and irrelevant) to ‘others’ (Bourdieu: 1992a; 39).

Lather would argue that her practice is about complicating reference rather than obliterating it, and her intention is to draw out ‘the instructive complications that knowledge projects engender’ (2010; 483). My own perspective upon encountering the moment of ‘undecidability’ in the 1980’s made me somewhat more circumspect. Within a School of English full of its own canons, feminists and writers from ex-colonies were writing and speaking back at their ‘others’, whilst the latter themselves (typically men) cast suspicion and doubt about all truth claims. Whether it was Lyotard, Derrida or Baudrillard, the authoritative voice became one powerfully claiming no authority. I was conscious, here, that the new norms of cultural production and symbolic legitimation within my ‘school’ had the effect of reasserting a form of hegemony precisely at the time that feminist critiques, and post-colonial accounts of power and ideology attempted to ‘make historical sense of the present object of study’ (Rabinow: 1986; 253).

To be clear, my inherited academic ‘habitus’, my past positioning within the field of education and cultural production predisposes me, through the privileges of access to a variety of theoretical thought, to share Lather’s reflexive concerns. Indeed my methodology draws upon some of the elements of critical, feminist, and post-structural thought that Lather highlights as crucial perspectives from which to pursue the de-

stabilisation of older orthodoxies and certainties. Rejecting epistemological certainty, however, does not 'mean rejecting truth, reason, or standards of judgement' (Rabinow: 1986; 237). It means that research must recognise that these concepts 'are historical and social facts produced (not found) through the emergence of styles of thinking about truth and falsity' (ibid; 237). As Lather observes of post-structuralism, it is about 'looking at the historical, philosophical and cultural construction of frames, that which invests with patterns of belief and habit' (2010; 479). As Chapter 2 emphasises, this is central to the approach to class I take, but it is also co-joined with a focus upon exploring how these 'frames' as 'local narratives of designation and classification' are lived out and experienced as 'particular manifestations of inequality in specific contexts' (Walkerdine: 2001; 26).

That is the present object of my study - class, and the lived experience of those who occupy, precariously, a marginal positioning in social space. It is my value judgement, here, and within these contexts, that the social injustice that working-class women face, the widening forms of material inequality they experience, the misrepresentation of their practices and persons through wider circuits of misrecognition, as well as their 'dumping overboard by many ambiguous academics' (Haylett: 2001; 353) makes the dangers of choosing and approaching my 'object' of research in the manner I outline a risk worth taking. The real concerns over the ethics of appropriation and the dangers of authorising knowledge claims (Visweswaran: 1997) must be held in tension 'not just with the desire to know, but the need to tell' (Skeggs: 2004; 130).

There is an unavoidable element of 'self-appointment' about a declared interest in finding out and speaking about others (Murphy: 2010; 347). Good intentions are a subject of concern and critique within my analysis, and they do not remove or solve the problems of practice, appropriation, or interpretation. Learning to see from below 'is neither easily learned nor unproblematic' and must be critically aware of the dangers 'of romanticising and/or appropriating the vision of the less powerful while claiming to see from their position' (Haraway: 1991; 191).

I return to these issues as this chapter progresses but before moving on I want to be clear: I do not invoke the 'realist trope of a heroic empathetic ethnographer on a knowledge quest' who plays the expert and who can explain the women's lives by 'establishing and settling' the facts (Lather: 2010). My research practice has, however, been engaged in discovering, explaining, and giving a 'deep reading' of my research experience of other lives from my perspective. 'Objectivity' (accountability, responsibility, reflexivity, rigour of analysis, and declared and interrogated political and personal investments) are practices that have been intrinsic to the process of that work.

1.4 'Telling and doing'

I have chosen not to mark the analysis that follows as a site for self-reflexive critique that works through the confessional form or as the site for 'a kind of self-wounding laboratory' that can be used to express the equivocality and 'exquisitely tormented' predicament of claims to represent by the de-centring of voice (Lather: 2010; 482). The reader will not be taken through multiple and shifting perspectives upon the object of study; nor will I be employing confessional tales, auto-ethnographic techniques or polyphonic texts to problematize my authority. Here, I concur with Strathern; the view that 'truth' is not transparent and free from power, or that representation is viewed as 'an insufficiency', and the anguish that this produces in terms of the ethics of appropriation and interpretation, 'can never be adequate to the power relations involved, any more than a confused text is equal to the confusions of life' (2004; 10).

Skeggs distinguishes between reflexivity as a methodological technique of classed self-possession and form of self-authorising, and reflexivity as practice; as a doing within the differing stages of the research (2004; 119). The centring or de-centring the 'self' runs the risk that 'the experience of the research is one of the researcher's story, based on their identity (2004; 128). She argues that reflexivity is not about

Re-authorising ourselves through telling and confession but, I would argue, through practice. This is practice that understands the relations of production and is aware of the possibilities for appropriation; a practice with an awareness of the constraints of disciplinary techniques and the power relations of location and position. A practice aware that self-constitution is about access to resources (ibid; 131).

Marcus refers to the Bourdieusian reflexive practice as a 'limited' form of reflexivity; 'valuable only in methodological terms as a research tool' (1998; 194). The objective is the critical treatment of the contexts which produce objectifying modes of thought, 'making an object of that which shapes one's own knowledge' (ibid; 196). My own practice has been to take up this form of reflexivity but to temper its delusions of mastery with the understandings of feminist thought. Haraway, in stressing the limited, embodied, and partial perspective of all knowledge production understands the 'strong objectivity' Bourdieu strives for 'to be about particular and specific embodiment'; for Haraway 'the only way to kind a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular'; where

A commitment to mobile positioning and to passionate detachment is dependent on the impossibility of entertaining innocent 'identity' politics and epistemologies as strategies for seeing from the standpoints of the subjugated in order to see well ... [and where] one cannot relocate in any possible vantage point without being accountable for that movement (Haraway: 1991; 192)

1.5 'Women are bodies of knowledge'¹

Kulick offers hope that 'empathy' will allow me to overcome the problems of 'access' bound up in the differences between myself and the women in my research;

Can we ever actually be someone else? Then the answer, it seems equally obvious, is clearly no. Can a male anthropologist empathize with and insightfully analyse the life experiences of women in his field? Of course. Can he (or anyone else) ever fully know ... the thoughts and experiences of any other person? No (2008; 189).

It is true that attempts to understand, interpret, and know others' experience must entail a degree of failure. What is important to emphasise, though, is that the experience of class and gender is not to be expressed in terms of 'mere difference' (Hackett: 2008). The researcher, like the researched, has relation to particular social, cultural and economic trajectories and inheritances and these shape analysis and interaction with the 'researched' within a complex and performative process. My 'thrown relation' to the world (the subject positions that I inhabit, refuse, negotiate, the perspective that informs my knowledge) is established through my social positioning and is structured through my relationship to the discursive work of class, gender,

¹ (Davies: 1994; 340)

ethnicity and so on. The women in my research realise themselves, are positioned, and position themselves in relation to these processes in radically different ways; these are 'differences' that produce markedly different forms of phenomenological experience and ways of being, seeing and knowing and entail forms of material and symbolic subordination and differentiation that I have no experience of. Kulick's 'empathy' is not enough.

The work of gender, ethnicity, and sexuality (for example) cannot be mapped onto class in any simple way. They are inscriptions that work through and against each other; they are not easily separable, and they are realised and embodied differently in different spaces, times, and relationships (Brown: 2002; 427). Whilst not ignoring these difficulties, this thesis explores subject positions (categories of identity) and the formation of subjectivities produced in relation to them and to wider discursive structures, through the intricacies and specificities of their articulation through class, highlighting the women's differing relationship, negotiation, and take up (and refusal) of what these subject positions are supposed or imputed to be through their positioning in social space. Here

Social positions are based on structural organisation of class, race and gender which conscribe and allow access and movement into certain subject positions. These structurally organised social positions enable and limit our access to cultural, economic, social and symbolic capital and thus the ability to recognise ourselves as the subject positions we occupy (Skeggs: 2002; 12).

Experience then is particular, and it is interpreted through access to differing types of resources, conditioned within particular material realities and through the establishment of differing types of social relationships: 'how do we deal with and know that which we have not experienced?' (Skeggs; 2002; 28).

A starting place for my practice is that research requires acknowledgment of tacit and conscious knowledges and experiences that I can only know 'second-hand', that my interpretation can only ever be partial; that it should listen to others with care. I have attempted to be attentive to the (mediated) particularities and importance of the women's experiences in practice and to the understandings that 'feminisms' within academic spaces can throw on them. Electing to study the lives of women within the

research has meant paying careful attention to the 'politics of citation' where 'feminists have had to know about non-feminist research [but where] the reverse is rarely the case' (Skeggs: 2010; 429). I have drawn upon the contributions of feminist class analysis in particular to help 'mind the gap', acknowledging that 'feminist scholars pointed out early on that the study of women would not only add new subject matter but would also force a critical re-examination of the premises and standards of existing scholarly work' (Kratz: 2008; 195).

Whether this brokers 'alliances' or agreements over the validity of my research, or the 'ethics of its address', within differing forms of feminism, or with the women in the study, is a matter for their evaluation and for the processes of ongoing argument; "taking' a standpoint does not necessarily involve overcoming the problems of authorisation. The political effects of different claims to knowledge are always dependent on the contexts in which they are made' (Ahmed: 2000; 17). I acknowledge, too, that when it is a male researcher who draws upon feminist research, and who engages in research upon women's experience, that 'connections cannot always be made, or that, when they are made, they remain fragile and precarious' (ibid; 3). The political stakes and sensitivities of a man doing research across gender entail recognising that 'the meanings and consequences of 'crossing over' are different for men and women, owing to the social organisation of gender' (Schilt: 2008: 223). When class is added to the frame these sensitivities are even greater, though often less publicly questioned and scrutinised.

Feminist scholarship has moved away from any 'standpoint' that posits experience as a given and self-explanatory concept (McNay: 2004; 178). The repeated and habitual inequalities the women within my research experience through the work of class and gender, however, are ones that I have never experienced 'first hand'. It is plain to me that whilst experience does not necessarily guarantee critical knowledge, 'there is a difference between having an experience and not having it ... and a very large and significant difference between having the same experience over and over again and never having that experience at all' (Scholes: 1987; 211). It is here that if 'experiencing

power relations ... is not the same as producing general knowledge of these relations, theorising such relations is not wholly separable from people's experiences of them' (Ramazanoglu: 2000; 209).

The conception of 'woman' as constituted through experience, however, came under increasing scrutiny and critique. Post-colonial and black American feminists challenged many of the assumptions made by standpoint theories developed in the white Anglo-American academe, pointing out that their own experiences of gender oppression could not be divorced from their differing relationships and positioning within other forms of oppression and inequality (Haraway: 1991). These critiques highlighted the exclusion of those whose experience of class, sexuality and ethnicity differed to those who expounded upon 'women' from white middle-class, heterosexual and institutionally authoritative positions (Young: 2005). Experience, in these critiques, still carried authority but the point was made forcibly that there was nothing inherently stable or uniform about the experience of gendered identity that could be used as a basis of uniform understanding and knowledge. Like Haraway, here, I believe there 'is good reason to believe vision is better from below' (1991; 191) but that within these spaces of 'subjugation' there is 'no immediate vision from the standpoints of the subjugated. Identity, including self-identity, does not produce science, critical positioning does, that is objectivity' (ibid; 193).

Skeggs (2004) draws attention to the ways in which early standpoint feminism, and many of the newer critiques based upon forms of fractured foundationalism, whilst exposing power were bound problematically to identitarian claims made through the technologies (methodologies) of telling the self. Whilst not neglecting the advances and gains made in realising claims free of an interlocutor, the perspective of class highlights that claims upon experience (and their connection to 'self' realisation and recognition by symbolically authorised 'others') are dependent upon acquiring and accessing the cultural resources to generate the categories and identifiable identities that enable political claims to be made. As Skeggs emphasises, and my analysis reiterates, it is those

who are trapped within individualised forms of class pathology today that cannot make their claims upon experience 'count';

Only from the position of, and with access to, the resources of the middle-class, can a presumption be made that there is a possibility first, to tell a story, second, to assume the power to re-define and, third, to assume a significance to the story (2004; 126)²

1.6 From the personal to the social

Foucault's work has been influential for exploring 'how the idea of experience is linked as a legitimating principle to the construction of truth and knowledge effects' (McNay 2004; 179). Rather than being taken as something that one owns as a property of the self, experience is seen to be connected to power through the wider discursive and non-discursive practices that inform the production of subjects and subjectivity.³ Whilst Foucault's focus was upon the 'legislative and strategic which are at a socio-political level' (Shields: 2002; 59) he was careful to preserve the socially transformative quality of experience through interpretive and reflexive process; the subject's position in relation to truth always involves it in points of resistance. Experience becomes a proponent of subjectivity:

Experience is neither true nor false. An experience is always a fiction: it's something that one fabricates oneself, that doesn't exist before and will exist afterward. That is the difficult relationship with truth, the way in which the latter is bound up with an experience that is not bounded to it and, in some degree destroys it. (Foucault: 2000; 243)

As Chapter 2 emphasises, Foucauldian thought needs strengthening. There is a need to hold onto both 'a social constructionist/discursive approach to social differences ... coupled with a materialist concern with the role of power and what Fricker (1994) has

² Feminist thinkers have also emphasised that claims to identity based on 'claims to injury' have had a tendency to produce a 'hierarchy of misery' which restricts politics to claims upon identity made through the register of the personal (Grosz: 2011;105). The dangers include a shift in register from a politics of redistribution to recognition, ones 'invariably tied into a neo-liberal discourse of rights and assimilation' (Skeggs: 2002; 58)

³ Shields contends that Foucault shifts attention away from 'practice as an encounter with reality where learning and innovation takes place' (2002; 59). The subject is viewed as the mere expression of power relationships, without a recursive or mediating relationship to them.

termed baseline realities, regarding the 'reality' of inequalities and injustices' (Archer: 2004; 461). Feminist thought, in particular, has sought to 'think with' post-structuralist theory whilst also retaining a hold upon the importance and centrality of 'experience' as the medium through which 'the determining force of economic and cultural relations upon daily life can be made visible' and the 'issue of identity can be connected to that of social structure' (McNay: 2004; 177).

The researcher must pay attention, here, *to both* the interpretive frameworks they use to analyse the experience of others and to seek to understand the ways the researched draw upon their own differing frameworks and resources (Skeggs: 2002; 27). Without doing so it becomes impossible to access the knowledges that these perspectives supply and the link between these articulations and the structures of power and oppression from within which they are made (McNay: 2004). It is here that feminist ethnographic practice, exemplified by Skeggs in *'Formations'*, moves from 'unadulterated experience of culture to exploring how power and structure set limits on what can be known as experience and ...

Rather than using these categories 'race' 'class' 'gender' they have interrogated for whom they were produced. Rather than focus on individual experience, they have drawn attention to process. Rather than focus on identity they have drawn attention to positioning. (Skeggs: 2010; 433)

These are methodological principles that I have attempted to reflexively incorporate into my research practice.

With regard to the reproduction of 'categories', Davies makes a distinction between two senses of the meaning suggested by the word 'other' in relation to the category 'Woman' that I have drawn on in my methodology and have applied within my approach to class (Chapter 2). The first of these is a determining abstraction that delimits a 'property' (of bodies, of objects of knowledge), a sense that feminist thought has sought through diverse theoretical and political traditions to interrogate, overturn, reformulate; that is 'the first sense of other: Women as other, where man is the dominant term, i.e. woman is man's other, an abstraction, category, an appropriation, not other but object' (Davies: 1994; 369). The essentializing difference of approaching the women in my study as other, as 'Woman', runs counter to the possibilities of a

critical ethical practice, difficult to achieve and offering no pragmatics, which approaches the 'other', not as an object, but as 'irreducible'.

It is in the second of these senses of 'other' that Davies uses the term 'difference' (Davies: 1994). Within my research I do not attempt to realise this difference, rather my focus is upon the 'narrower' concern to understand how the particular experiences of class and gender for the women are never simply occupied as categories but entail a continual process of negotiating, translating, and metamorphosing the determinations of dominant forms of power that make them 'other' (Ibid). What is important in relation to a reflexive methodology is how 'they' are being defined 'through the responses and power of others' (Skeggs: 2005a; 976), which includes the researcher. The researcher must refuse to re-instate normative categories and conceptions that work to produce, for example, 'woman' and 'class' but also understand that they cannot simply stand outside the social relations of power that have produced them. They must be analysed as 'a dimension of social interaction' to be considered throughout the research process; just as they should be in the analysis of wider social relationships and subjectivities in the broader context of the research (Kratz: 2008; 196). To reiterate;

Categories can only be the site for transformation through analysing the social relationships which their fetishization conceals, rather than repeating the concealment by assuming we can overcome the categories themselves. (Ahmed: 2000; 16)

I return to these issues within the practice of my research. First it is necessary to provide the reader with the specific details of my research framework to give context to the discussion. The next section introduces the 'researched', detail of the neighbourhood in which they lived, and the specific methods I used. I then move on to comment upon the rationale behind the methods' design and consider their deployment in relation to classed legacies.

1.7 Research Framework

The reductive outline of the women I provide is made on pragmatic grounds to give an indication of the women's different positioning in social space and is not intended to stand in for the persons themselves. I hope, also, that in giving these sparse details, the

reader will see that my selection for their involvement complements the broader theoretical contexts that I outlined in the preface.

The ten working-class women were aged between 18 and 47 and were all white. Most had lived locally in 'Fenton' for all or most of their lives and had extended family living in the area. They had family histories with no recognised educational achievement and nine had left the school system with little or no qualification. All lived in social housing except for Gwen, who privately rented after moving from her home town to study as a mature student at the adjacent university. Aside from her, all had children at the outset of the research or became mothers within its duration; two had grandchildren. The women were, with the exception of Gwen, in receipt of benefits and experienced the financial precarity of bringing up a family on a low income; seven as the sole adults in the household. One of the women was married. All of the women's employment histories were characterised by part-time, temporary, insecure, manual, and low-paid work.

The working-class women's involvement was gained through my personal social networks, established during my time as a resident in 'Fenton'. Their prior knowledge of me, and mine of them, allowed for access that was based on a level of trust and familiarity. It is unlikely that they would have engaged with an 'outsider' in qualitative social research in any meaningful form; let alone one which required intensive participation and intrusion into their daily and personal lives. In contrast, the middle-class women were not part of my social network. I secured their involvement by approaching relevant staff in community organisations in Fenton.

The middle-class women varied in age between 20 and 46 and were holders of high levels of educational capital, either being publicly educated or attending grammar schools in their 'home' towns. Each possessed, or was near to completing, a degree at the adjacent 'red-brick' university. Two had master's degrees, whilst another was finalising her doctorate. The women were in employment during the research, either part-time whilst they studied or full-time as managers in community organisations or, in

one case, as a professional in the financial service sector. All six were unmarried, and one was a single parent.

Each of the middle-class women's prior family residences and upbringing was relatively affluent and 'suburban' which was at some remove from their present residence in Fenton. In this sense they were 'elective believers' (Savage: 2010). They had arrived in Fenton to pursue further education, or had put down roots to pursue careers and vocations in the field of social care and/or community regeneration. All six participated in paid or voluntary work within the charitable field. These roles ranged from helping within youth inclusion projects, to managing social enterprises and environmental projects, or holding positions on charitable boards at community centres.

The neighbourhood

In providing a summary description of Fenton I concur that it is 'more difficult to uncover prevalent social relationships within a population than it is to create indices of external facts, mistaking measurement for explanation' (Byrne: 2005; 810). Like De Certeau, therefore, I describe the 'objective matter of neighbourhood' 'only to the point where it becomes the terrain of choice for a setting and staging of everyday life' (1988; 7). Such 'choices', as the analysis will show, are constrained and produced in relationship to the social relations and material realities of the women within Fenton, and those that condition it from 'the outside'.

Fenton was a working-class settlement built to house labour immigrants in the tailoring and engineering industries during the mid-nineteenth century. Despite the successive 'slum' clearances between the 1930s and 1960s, the housing remains dominated by Victorian red-brick terraced and back-to-back housing. From the 1950s many working-class residents moved out of the area with the 'promise' of better housing in outlying estates. Changes and re-structuring of the manufacturing industries too, had their effects of displacement and these were combined with a larger re-structuring of global and colonial space. The forced displacement and outward migration resulting from agrarian revolution abroad, the political and social turmoil of Partition and the re-

positioning of Empire saw the inward flow of immigrant populations from the Punjab, Kashmir, Pakistan and the Caribbean.

Despite this influx of new peoples, Fenton was characterised through the 1950s to the 1990s by a process of population decline marked by the forces of residualism. The effects of another form of migration brought about through the expansion of the adjacent universities, however, have been profound. Today, the area within which Fenton sits has a higher population density than Tower Hamlets, a demographic profile that exhibits a dramatic level of transience with over three quarters of its population of young adults leaving every year to be replaced by newcomers.

Fenton has been the site for physical regeneration and community 'improvement' schemes since the 1960s, themselves contributing to, and telling a particular story about the changing spatialisation of class. The indicators of the persistence of poverty despite these interventions goes some way to explaining the level of voluntary, faith, and community activity in its spaces. Indeed once students are taken out of the statistical profile, it is categorically (at ward level) one of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the city. It would seem, however, that Fenton has those elements that Amin (2005) identifies as crucial to the workings of a successful 'social enterprise' economy. It has a heterogeneous and diverse social structure with a mix of classes, is adjacent and connected to the city centre, and has the presence of high numbers of 'intermediaries' who engage in forms of civic responsibility. The work of welfare and community organisations is also backed by support from the local authority, state agencies, and universities, and receives significant income from philanthropic trusts; in these terms it cannot be easily described as a 'penalised space' (Wacquant: 2008).

1.8 Methods

I spent considerable time participating with the working-class women in activities such as walking, shopping, cooking and eating, talking with friends, neighbours and family. I accompanied them as they walked through Fenton, and as they engaged in their 'everyday' activities outside and inside the home. In 'going along' with the women, I gained insight into the ways they related to and interacted with their friends and family,

and with wider networks of sociality outside of their homes. I was also able to observe their encounters with authorities and institutions (home visits from probation workers, health visitors, interactions with school, the courts, use of welfare and leisure services). Such engagement must consider the precise nature of the access apparently 'freely given' as being anything but 'transparent' or 'unlimited'. It must also consider my existing knowledge of some of the women before the research started (below).

The middle-class women's involvement was mostly limited to the deployment of the set of mixed qualitative methods I describe below. I did not spend anywhere near as much time with them in their daily routines and practices as I did with the working-class women. This restricted time may be seen to be a 'short-changing' of their perspectives and lives in terms of my intended ethnographic orientation; I could be criticised for deploying the 'snatch and grab' ethnographic methods that Skeggs is critical of in the context of working-class lives. This restriction of time and method must however be placed within my declared emphasis on the experience of working-class women. The methods outlined, in addition, were layered in texture and extended over time to a much greater degree than the standard qualitative interview approach. The exercises were intensive; each single method taking between one to three hours. There were also opportunities for less formal contact through visits to home, workplace, and so on.

It must be made plain, however, that other factors were at play in my restricted access to middle-class lives. Whilst the middle-class women were happy to carry out the specific exercises, they were less willing for me to 'go along' with them; they were confident and adept at constructing the boundaries of privacy, at having possession and control of their own lives. This didn't mean they were uninterested in the research and didn't commit to it, because they did, but with more ability to organise the conditions and terms of access. There were also 'external' restrictions from the time-tabling of their lives within the regulative patterns of a 'nine-to-five life'. I am not suggesting here that the working-class women were not busy and did not work. The work of caring and providing for families, elderly neighbours, and of maintaining support within wider networks of sociality, however, had no easily identifiable or 'official' authority that could say no to my intrusion.

Map-making and guided tours

These methods were used to explore the women's spatial practices, social networks and representations of Fenton. The first asked the women to create a map of their 'everyday' practices and movements in and out of Fenton. The 'maps' were made on large sheets of paper, using pens and pencils and the process was audio-taped. The second method involved a recorded walking tour where the women were asked simply to 'show me your neighbourhood'.

Both exercises helped give insight into the women's social networks and their connectivity with other population groups, friends, family and institution; providing opportunity, for example, to explore classed relationships to conceptions of 'community' and networked individualism. They helped to elucidate the personal geographies of the women, revealing places of familiarity and belonging, places of security and exclusion. In doing so, they helped to reveal how the women understood their own positioning within social relationships, and the means by which they created, renewed and reassembled those relations (Blokland: 2007). In particular they provided information about the construction of boundaries, and the creation of socio-spatial divisions within 'neighbourhood'.

Handbags: A portable habitus

In this exercise I asked the women to empty out the contents of the bag they were currently using for 'daily life' and talk around the objects as they were brought out. The central concern of this exercise was to explore the interlinked relationships between property, propriety and affect. Handbags are a private and personal space carried by their holders into the public domain. The creation of this interior space secures private belongings, providing a feeling of security for negotiating the contingencies of everyday life: things are at hand should they be needed. Totemic, anthropological objects (tokens of affection, personal photographs) speak of differing economies and relationships when set beside the objects that lie next to them - the cash and token meter card, the dissertation notebook, the letter from the debt agency.

Bags are prosthetic attachments whose contents can help to explore the performative production of identity. But the contents of bags - in their varying evidence of access to resources, the expectations of where they are going - also evidence the limits to theoretical conceptualisations of elective, extended, performative selves. Here the linkages between identification, individualisation, and control can be explored. A handbag not as an expression of a unique personality, revealing an inner self, but instead a self externally realised (from within the bag as well as elsewhere) and connected to open circuits of control and exclusion.

Handbags vary in function, design, and content, but they always travel within a discursive space modified by gender and class. A kind of portable 'habitus' to use Bourdieu's term, they carry things deemed as appropriate to the needs and the trajectory of the person through neighbourhood and beyond; varying according to the differing social spaces that their holders and carriers travel through, and the institutional and social spaces they arrive in. Their contents, and the narratives that accompanied them are, in this sense, a means to exploring everyday practice; they contain a 'fluid assemblage of elements that are concrete and everyday ... or ideological (religious, political) ... at once from a tradition (that of family or social group) and re-actualised from day to day across behaviours, translating fragments of this cultural device into social visibility' (de Certeau: 1988; 9). As such, the exercise was one from which the researcher can explore the 'price to pay' that its user makes in particular spaces to become a 'partner in a social contract that he or she consents to respect so that everyday life is possible' (ibid; 8).

Interviews

I conducted semi-structured interviews with all the women; usually after the other methods had been completed. The number of interviews varied between persons from one to four. They were structured around discussions of femininity, place/community and class and lasted between one and two hours. The previous data collection and unfolding relationship with the women allowed me to tailor them to personal biography and focus the discussion on specific areas of their lives.

All the methods were recorded on a digital device which was switched off whenever friends, family and neighbours entered the research context without prior knowledge. Permissions for recording were always requested. I spent time with each respondent to explain the general nature and objectives of the research, including a description of specific methods, a discussion of confidentiality and the processes involved in preserving anonymity. I also alerted them to their rights to withdraw from the research, or from a particular aspect of it. I made every effort to let them know that the research may be felt, seen, and taken as being intrusive, that sensitive issues and painful subjects may be broached. In doing so I explained the reasoning behind such intrusions and that they should feel confident in establishing where their own boundaries lay in discussing aspects of their lives. After the research began I returned to these issues from time to time to underscore that they had the right to stop a particular exercise, not answer a question, or tell me that 'today' was inconvenient.

Rationale

Silence can be a plan/ rigorously executed/ the blueprint to a life/ it is a presence/ it has a history of form/ do not confuse it with any kind of absence. (Rich cited Visweswaran: 1997; 31)

As 'social products' the narratives that emerged from the methods are 'related to the experience that people have of their lives, but they are not transparent carriers of that experience' (Lawler: 2000; 242). That is, they are both personal and cultural productions; grounded in different material realities, and produced from within differing social spaces and historical trajectories. As such, they help reveal the ways in which experience is interpreted and presented through access to 'structures of conceivability' and these were 'saturated with classed meanings' (ibid; 253). Methods, however, do not capture, discover, nor reveal in any simple sense: 'they generate the conditions of possibility that frame the object of analysis' (Skeggs: 2008; 20). In this sense they can be seen to pre-figure what 'type of subject' can be authorised and heard, and for Skeggs this entails they typically assume/require the competencies of the knowing and propertizing 'bourgeois' subject, channelling and producing responses in particular ways (ibid; 6).

The methods I deployed were used to explore the women's subjectivities, their negotiation of daily material realities, and their social relationships. More specifically, they enabled exploration of the different articulations and performances of subjectivity produced from within the research relation, and the links between these performances and the resources available for the telling and producing of the 'self'. It is the different enunciations of these, and an understanding of how these accounts are differently established within the contexts of differing resources, spaces and audiences, which is of interest to a reflexive analysis of class (Skeggs:2008).

Working-class women have historically been and remain subjects of surveillance and regulation that work through specific modes of observation and technologies of telling. Welfare technologies in particular have focussed on the working-class mother as the potential conduit for the successful transformation of the working-class family's perceived profligacy and impropriety. Donzelot charts the movement towards conditionality, the perfection of new methods for allocating assistance to the poor through a judgement of their status as deserving or undeserving. The home visit and its intimate investigation of familiar relations became a pathway for the tutelage complex to extend itself for the inducement of 'a saving and corrective intervention' (Donzelot: 1979).

The deployment of specific methods and the practice of ethnographic immersion and observation must consider the women's relationship to this legacy. The working-class women all have experiences of being placed within such technologies, and their awareness of how they are positioned within them, the understanding of what is at stake (in terms of judgement) produces feelings of anxiety and affect, and necessitates strategies of deflection, adaptation, and withdrawal. Such experience is likely to inform their responses to any research that enquires about their lives, and that enters the spaces of their homes to do so. It is this history, and the issue of access to the resources for telling the self, that should be an important consideration when carrying out social inquiry.

Elaine, below, typifies the working-class women's feelings about recorded semi-structured interviews. Despite the levels of trust and familiarity I had built up over the course of a year, and the prior knowledge we had of each other, this method sometimes produced faltering and truncated responses.

Mark: How did you feel about being interviewed with a tape recorder?

Elaine: I didn't like it ... you've got to think before you answer, normally you can just say it, but you know it's there so you know they are going to listen to it later, so you have to think what you are going to say; you have to think about what you are going to answer.

Elaine's feelings that 'they' would be listening is a classically defensive expression of a working-class woman; an awareness of the possibilities of being judged, of being seen and heard as getting 'it wrong'. This is not to say that the middle-class respondents did not find the tape-recorder and interview to be an entirely comfortable affair. They elicited what Sophie referred to as the 'awkwardness inherent in sensitive cultural issues (I'm referring here to British reserve about finances, class distinction, religion, sex, politics, etc.)', but the manner in which they coped with these feelings and the interview situation was distinctive. In this respect the interviews prefigured 'the mobilisation of class capitals' and induced forms of reflexivity that expressed themselves through the women's respective access to the resources for the 'telling of self' (Skeggs: 2008; 6).

The working-class women were not in a position of 'self-possession'; they were less confident in controlling the research encounter, and less able to distance themselves through conceptual abstractions. Again, in agreement with Skeggs, working-class women, particularly the younger women, repeatedly ended their responses with phrases such as 'Is that right?' or 'is that what you wanted me to say?'; and where their responses were sometimes 'immediate, self-evident and seemed not to require further contextualisation' (2008; 11) the middle-class women provided expansive answers that moved from the particular to the abstract.

Middle-class responses were more confident within the interview context; they took the 'opportunity' of the confessional form to produce a narrative of the self out of their appropriation and relationship to the material under discussion. They drew upon their recognised cultural, social and educational capitals, in the sense of legitimated

competencies and resources - particularly linguistic and cultural capital (Bourdieu: 2010), to make a performance of 'self' through the display of knowledge. Where working-class reflexivity was often focused on protective strategies, silences, and evasions, middle-class reflexivity was used to produce a form of exteriority and display of competency.

The specific methods outside of the semi-structured interviews provided an extension, and a variation to the possibilities and performances of middle-class 'self'. As will be seen in the analysis chapters, these performances of self and value(s) produced through immersion in the specific methods, are far removed from the working-class women's. Here, Liz, middle-class, is indicative:

I enjoyed the handbag experience – how much we carry with us and what it says about us. It made me smile how much I 'played' to the recorder, I must like an audience. It was such a simple exercise but so much could be gleaned from it and it was thought-provoking for me too.

Whilst not claiming to overcome classed legacies, and emphasising that it is in the 'nature' of the relationship that what matters is formed, I believe that the methods provided for different ways of telling (and hearing) within the research relation. The handbag and walk methods, in particular, meant I was less in control of the research context than in a conventional interview, however unstructured. One of the strengths of these methods was that they allowed the working-class women to move away from responses to questions and instead to respond to everyday objects, events, routines and practices in their lives through which they could make reference to their experience. Dialogue and observation, as well as affective and emotional response, would often emerge in relation to things, situations and thoughts which were not directly prompted or framed by an interlocutor's question; eliciting memories, anecdotes and sensory responses.

Taken together, the methods allowed the gathering of 'rich data', expanding the perspectives and angles each provided on the themes of the research. On a very basic level, too, it is doubtful that I could have gained as much information and understanding about the middle-class women's volume and composition of 'capitals' and their personal trajectories through social space, their biographies and relations to others, place and

self, through the interview method alone. The methods were also 'fun'. The map making and handbag exercises were particularly enjoyed by the working-class women. The latter was marked by laughter at my 'excuses' (reasons) for rummaging around in their 'mobile bins'; and one managed to attach practical use to the exercise for herself - the emptying out of a pile of crumpled receipts, tissues, out of date correspondence and the general debris of everyday life.

Within the thesis, with the exception of the interviews, I have marked quoted passages with details of the method used to alert the reader to the context from which my analysis and interpretation has been produced. In using the extracts from the recorded methods I do not present the women's voices as an unmediated presence, they have been selectively edited and framed within my argumentation. Selection and editing of transcripts, however, often reduced the material and substance of what the women had to say, and so at times I have included lengthier extracts. Whilst accepting that my thesis 'is not to be judged on the truth of the voices, but ultimately on what is done with them' (McRobbie: 2002; 134) I hope the richness and strength of their voices and experience remains at least partly accessible to the reader within my own narrative and interpretive analysis. An emphasis upon their words, experiences and views, however problematized, still remains.

1.9 Research relations

I could make claim that the rapport I had with the working-class women, built through prior knowledge, enabled my research to reach across the differences in our social positioning. Some of them had known me for a long time, I had a social familiarity with them, which Bourdieu (2010) identifies as being one of the conditions of 'non-violent communication'. Indeed Elaine, below, seems to confirm that such personal knowledge reduced 'distortion'; from familiarity came safety and trust;

Mark: So you don't think you have held back from me in our time together?

Elaine: No, no, not really. I think it's because I know you, and I've known you a long time, and you've known a lot of shit about me and what's gone on (...) and stuff like that. And I think that's why my girls trust you, and Donna and that knows you as well. You're not a horrible person, no you're not. You think as well, you know about people. You don't gossip, I could tell you something

and you wouldn't repeat it, I know that. You're kind, you are. You are all right as a person. Safe, you're safe, safe.

Stacey turns attention here to the relations inside the research relationship. These are the problems of possible exploitation, betrayal and manipulation implicit within the use of friendship and intimacy (1998; 23) and are 'not necessarily feminist but more generally epistemological and ethical' (Skeggs: 2010b; 435). Such issues are to be partly addressed 'by attention to interpretive and representational practices' as well as by being the subject of an ongoing ethical reflexive concern (ibid; 435).

Using Elaine's voice to convince the reader of the rapport I have with her, to confirm my standing as trustworthy, intimate and knowing, is also to operationalise a strategic framing of friendship with a view to the reception of the research outside of the immediate research relationship (Skeggs: 2010). It promotes the idea that the voice articulated is none other than Elaine's, that the mutuality between researcher and researched has dissolved issues of power and has allowed access to truth and experience.

The attractive belief that I was able to gain 'access' to Elaine's experience, not because of the privileges of my classed and gendered disposition (accumulated, and sedimented through time in our particular relation to one another), but because Elaine was willing to help me out ('because it's you Mark' - as she said), will not suffice. Elaine's participation, like that of the other working-class women, was an obligation of sorts and our research relationships were imbued and realised through power, class, and gender and not outside of them. This was so at the outset, and throughout, the research process.

However much trust and safety is expressed, classed and gendered relations produced practical performances and embodied responses from Elaine, and from me, and my analysis is produced from within their performative play. The most consistent of these with respect to the working-class women were the repeated acts of performing respectability which were brought forward by my presence as a middle-class man in varying social spaces and discursive contexts. Respectability impacted upon ethical considerations and practice, and upon issues of access, of interpretation and

epistemology. Above all, respectability worked through classed femininity to provide a complex and shifting register for the women in negotiating the imbalances of power and positioning within the research relation; deflecting, avoiding, and contesting the possible negative valuation by the classed and male other.

In the extract below another man, from probation services, has been able to gain access to Elaine's home;

Notebook: I walked into a meeting with Elaine's son's probation worker around the kitchen table, I am told (by Elaine) that it is fine, to come in and make everyone a tea. I pull out some cups and boil the kettle. As I prepare the tea, Elaine comes over and without saying anything (but pulling a face and elbowing me) puts the cups I have chosen back into the cupboard and brings out some others. The cups I had chosen were stained with tannin ...

The trust that Elaine placed in giving me 'open' access to her life and home was betrayed through my lack of understanding of her sensitivities to respectability, my inability to stand in her shoes. I don't care about presenting someone in authority with a stained mug of tea, and that represents a very large gap in the differences between our experiences of life as they are expressed and produced through class and gender. For Elaine the stakes are different; her space to move is more cramped, she has to be seen to care even in the minutiae of everyday practice. Elaine does care; within differing contexts of her life, however, such care is, or may be feared to be, misrecognised. Within these spaces she must produce performances and display practices that can be 'seen' as correct and proper.

Time spent with Elaine may not have provided me with access to her 'true self' but it did make me aware of how her performances of self are expressed and realised within the constraints of class and gender in relation to others (including the researcher). Over time, perhaps, I was allowed access to selves other than ones constrained by the fear of judgement. It would be good to think so, but it is important to remember that the presence and working of respectability between myself and Elaine is no less 'real' than what might lie elsewhere.

There were real limits and restraints placed upon my research when it came to discussing and broaching sexuality, and these were connected to a broad umbrella of

subjects in relation to 'femininity' that can, and are sometimes presumed to, incur and stimulate shame or sensitivity when broached by a man across 'the sexed and classed divide'. Engendered and classed boundaries are part of the implicit, taken for granted knowledge of daily life. Researchers must 'learn about thresholds of sensitivity in different relations and contexts that shape where they can go, what they can do, what they can know. These limits, like ethnographic knowledge in general, are co-produced and change over time' (Kratz: 2008; 196).

My positioning as a male, middle-class researcher (read as having an official, intrusive, exposing capacity) sometimes intervened in my relationships with working-class women I had known for years. It did so across a range of sites. Theresa (below), for example, made it clear at an early stage of the research that respectability would motivate silence and deflection especially with regard to the recorded methods; her suspicion that I wanted to find out the 'gory stuff' says something about her fear of the judgement of impropriety:

Theresa: You want all the gory stuff; you're not going to get that off me Mark

Mark: Is there gory stuff?

Theresa: Yeah when I'm going out and stuff, and things like that [...] there is for everybody, but it's not good to talk about that stuff because it's not what you talk about or do, is it?

My question was not intended to be an act of deception. What I went on to discuss with Theresa was the discrepancy between expectations placed upon her behaviour by 'others' through her location in gender and class categorisation and how these related to her own realities, practices and values; that this was the subject of my interest, and not 'gore'. What helped in terms of 'access' and in negotiating differences between our positioning was that that they knew about the 'gore' in my life. Pointing to the differences of reception and evaluation of our persons in other contexts placed gender and class distinctions within real frames of reference and we could discuss how our behaviours were judged and seen differently, with different consequences.

I was far more conscious of the instrumental and potentially deceitful work of rapport building with the middle-class women than I was with the working-class women. The problems were not entirely related to my lack of prior connection or knowledge of them.

I felt I sometimes held back in conversation from making clear my position and perspective on some of the opinions they were expressing and the issues they were discussing in relation to my prompts. The research relation was sometimes characterised by a certain detachment; I was far less inclined to invest my own personal identity in the sense of articulating my value orientations and engaging in open dialogue. I feared it would serve to silence what I felt would be 'revealing' data. Like Herman (1994; 14) 'I was not engaging in covert research, but neither did I wish to jeopardise the project. I did not lie, but I did not tell the truth'.

Informed consent was therefore an ongoing issue throughout the research relationships with the middle-class women. The research questions addressed to middle-class practice are questions generated from Skeggs' theory of class as a relation of conflict, disempowerment and appropriation. Whilst I emphasised the more general objectives of exploring social positioning and class embodiment, femininity and relationship to place, as I did with the working-class women, I did not present Skeggs' thesis in any comprehensive way. Nor did I talk about emerging focus or 'findings'. I felt that putting questions of conflict, misrecognition, and entitlement directly to the women would have short-circuited my research.

Sophie highlights how this 'detachment' affected our research relationship when she reflects that although she was aware of the subject areas and the themes of my work she did not really know what my motivations (value orientations) were for pursuing them. At the outset of the research she had attempted to make a series of 'identifications' to construct an accord between myself and her;

I was intrigued by the prospect of being interviewed about issues I often thought of but never quite managed to articulate: where I stood in relation to Fenton, how I felt about volunteering, the uncomfortable class delineations I knew I constructed but wasn't always able to deconstruct. As the research project I am involved in has feminist aims, I was also interested to find out that Mark was familiar with a range of feminist scholarship. I think this predisposed me towards him ... I found that once I imagined I knew why Mark was motivated to do his research, I felt happy to answer his questions as openly and honestly as possible. I felt I might learn something about myself and might also be challenged to adjust my perceptions and opinions. Of course I'm sure I don't really know why Mark is motivated to carry out the research but at our first meeting I found that we knew one or two people in common. Knowing this helped me to frame a set of possible reasons for his interest and made me feel like I wanted to help.

Sophie was positioning me in terms of what she perceived to be our 'shared' locations within social networks, cultural and political activities, and attempting to make a correlation between these and shared values and perspectives that we might hold, or indeed build and construct. Perhaps these identifications (projections) were made by Sophie to overcome her perception of the differences in our gender (not directly articulated) but I would argue that they are all identifications that are made through class, although this is also unspoken and elided. In research relations such as these, my 'active listening' ('detachment') became a double-edged sword. The (relative) lack of intervention and discussion, and reassurances of agreement on positions developed a desire on Sophie's behalf not to expose herself to judgement. She was not sure where I was coming from.

Sennett (2004; 44) believes that 'mutual respect begins by virtue of a mistake ... by making Adam Smith's 'error' of mutual identification and so of sympathy, we overcome differences which stand in the way of working together'. For him this is an initial stage of developing a stronger relationship and social bond based upon increased understanding. My detachment can be seen to short circuit such a form of reciprocity. Sophie (below) highlights the anxiety and sense of risk she felt by the end of the research. My research practices, by holding back, appear to undermine trust; and with it the possibilities of hearing the 'truth' of self. Her feelings speak of the production of identities through the labours of the confessional form, but also the fear of exposure and betrayal;

The more interviews we had, the more aware I became of my boundaries and of what I was and was not comfortable talking about. I have noticed about myself that if I meet someone I get on well with I might tell them all sorts of personal things the first time I meet them, and then clam up in subsequent meetings. I think this is because I feel like there's more to lose the more I get to know someone. I found the final interview the hardest to open up in because by that point I was probably worrying more about what Mark might think rather than whether I should be entirely honest.

The privileges of location in social space that I shared with the middle-class women in comparison to the working-class women meant that it was sometimes easy to ignore their own emotional involvements, insecurities and feelings within the research relationship and beyond. I tried not to make the assumption that my research did not

induce vulnerabilities, or that their privilege and resources afforded them protection or warranted a less sensitive and respectful approach. They were constructing their identities through narratives, with deeply held investments, concerns, and sensitivities.

Vulnerability

Vulnerability appears within ethical guidelines in social research as an umbrella term for persons who are described through notions of diminished autonomy and are consequently seen to be at increased risk from exploitation and exposure to harm. These directives can point to people in poverty, those who are socially excluded and stigmatised, who suffer levels of oppression and intolerance, as well as those who suffer from poor mental health and histories of emotional and physical abuse. Such a framing of persons as 'vulnerable' can be constitutive of knowledge and identity production through regulatory mechanisms and classification, as well as exclusionary practice. Notions of vulnerability therefore can have an equivocal relationship with discourses which seek to define persons through 'lack' or through personal weakness and dependency. They can be aligned to morally redemptive narratives and to conventional notions of 'empowerment', and they are often informed by normative and essentialized notions of difference.

Within my analysis I hope notions of vulnerability run side-by-side with the understanding of strength, adaptability, and the ability to live beyond the confining spaces some of these women are given. There is no doubt, however, that some of the women within my research are vulnerable, and that indeed such vulnerability, resulting as it does from social process, is part of the focus for the research. The mediating concern of the researcher must be not to cause harm or for the respondent to be 'exploited for their grief' (McRobbie: 2002; 134), but at the same time the research drives forward by focusing on that which feels pain, the subject in this life, in these circumstances. The 'management' of such issues is complex, situational, and difficult for both researcher and researched and also requires an ethical awareness of representational and interpretive processes.

Many researchers have claimed that their work provides 'benefits' to their respondents of voicing not just their 'story' but also their pain. Bourdieu, for example, believed that the interview can be a site for transformation for the researched through a form of 'social pedagogy' and 'psychotherapy' where respondents come to 'be helped to understand their own structural position, what would otherwise be invisible and difficult to articulate' (McRobbie: 2002; 133). Like McRobbie, I am circumspect here. It is all too easy for the person in a position of privilege to accord their research practice with the value (and hence for themselves) of providing a space for others to safely express themselves and thereby reap the benefits of a therapeutic deliverance.

In simple terms one cannot predict exactly what the effects induced from such apparent 'relief' or 'voicing' of pain are. The researcher, exiting the scene of their production, is rarely in a position to take responsibility for - let alone track - the emotional and affective 'results' of the research encounter as they cross over into the women's own lives and social relationships. There is also a need to be aware of limitations within research and be able 'to recognise the more attenuated relation between the theoretical work we do and any social transformation for what it is' (Lawler: 2000; 10).

There were, however, occasions where some of the working-class women 'took over' and seemed to 'grasp this situation as an opportunity offered them to testify, to make themselves heard, to carry their experiences over from the private to the public sphere' (Bourdieu: 2010; 615). On these occasions it was important to recognise the very real possibility that they 'communicated other things rather than just simply a message of warning and something to be regulated by quasi-therapeutic control' (Parr: 2003; 348). It was also important to recognise that the women brought with them an understanding and interpretation of their own experience which carries knowledge and a conscious awareness of the inequalities and circumstances of their lives. That is, they were trying to tell me something that I did not understand because it was outside of my direct experience, and their efforts to get through such a barrier to explain the 'is' from the 'ought' often incurred further exasperation if not more pain. Joyce, working-class, kindly referred to such occasions as '*our work*'. Here rather than Bourdieu's researcher providing deliverance, Joyce worked to provide me with an understanding of her

experience. I would like to think that within my part in this labour I managed research relationships as sensitively and responsibly as possible; that I gave consideration and care to my practice, and to the women who laboured within it.

My inclusion of affective and emotional aspects of the women's lives within the analysis is made on the basis of their relevance for understanding class and not for the vicarious pleasure of disclosing the 'shocking' realities of others' personal lives. I provide my own interpretive analysis and contextualisation for them (theoretical and empirical). That is, they do not speak for themselves nor are they 'denuded (or de-culturalized)' (McRobbie: 2002; 130). Here I concur with Berlant, that 'to feel compassion for people who struggle ... is at best to take the first step toward forging a personal relation to a politics of the practice of equality' (Berlant: 2004; 9). Within my analysis I have tried, as best I can, when dealing with the affective and emotional pain of others, to provide 'both analytic and affective presence' that points in such a direction. Compassion, as Chapter 4 emphasises, is not a good in itself, but rather can turn 'out to describe a particular kind of social relation' (ibid; 9).

Anonymity

The women in my research will not necessarily agree with the use and interpretation of their self-disclosures made 'in confidence'. What they held as both personal and true, the analysis construes differently and places within a particular perspective upon social process. Anonymity, here, has presented a series of difficult problems for the presentation of data and for the ethics of my research. I have withheld personal and identifying information, and changed names, details and specifics about family, friends and events in the women's lives. Preserving anonymity involves subtle substitutions, and careful silences that the reader cannot be allowed to see. Such a process has dangers of fragmentation for those who have an attachment to the 'real'.

The fear of the consequences of these alterations for the 'integrity' of the analysis is of little importance when juxtaposed to the recognition of the harm and pain that can arise from personal identification. This can come either in the form of external agencies and persons recognising respondents within print or, more likely, respondents recognising

themselves but within a frame of interpretation that they take as injurious and inaccurate. It is unlikely in this case that the process of anonymising data will be successful in hiding the researcher's image of them (Murphy: 2010). This is a barely resolvable issue, an ethical problem that will not go away and can only be mitigated, and not removed, by revealing and arguing for the validity of the processes involved and through conducting research relations within a frame of respect.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality as a practice within research relations was particularly sensitive with respect to the working-class women because of the embedded nature of their social and family networks within Fenton. My involvement in their lives was a subject of interest and concern for those who lay outside of direct participation. Some of the women, too, came from the same family or knew each other as friends. It was essential, here, that I practiced confidentiality in an even-handed manner, refusing to divulge information about discussions to other 'interested' or connected persons. Such a practice is not a simple process of accruing trust. Respondents can begin to see you as a 'knowledgeable' collector of 'gossip' and will want to elicit both opinion and details of friends and family members. Not engaging in such activity (an everyday practice of social and normative evaluation which informs and regulates group and individual identities) can be taken as withholding the intimacy that the respondent may feel was held out as being integral to the establishment of the relationship.

Such 'detachment' can also cause anxiety and fear over what others have said and, given the good intention, paradoxically induce the fear that the researcher does not apply the 'rules' in an even-handed manner. These distortions and difficulties underline that ethnography is an intervention into the lives of others that has effects even where it aspires to 'tread lightly'. As Stacey observes 'fieldwork represents an intrusion and intervention into a system of relationships, a system of relationships that the researcher is far freer than the researched to leave. The inequality and potential treacherousness of this relationship seems inescapable' (1998; 22).

1.10 Interpretive processes

Whilst I do not deny the relational dynamic of the research process in the generation of my analysis, or position the researched as passive objects, I offer an account which acknowledges my control over, and responsibility for, the interpretive process. Stacey's observation holds true: 'it is the researcher who narrates, who 'authors' [...] in the last instance ethnography is a written document structured primarily by a researcher's purposes, offering a researcher's interpretations, registered in a researcher's voice' (1998; 23).

Within my analysis I provide close textual readings of recorded transcripts. A large amount of material has been filtered out for reasons of space and focus. The analysis, too, focuses in depth on some of those involved to the exclusion of others. In making these decisions I have tried to balance the requirements of providing evidence for a coherent argument that can put forward claims for theoretical generalisation and the need to explore particularities, contradictions, and differences between the women, and the gaps between their practices and their representations. In doing so, I have been attentive to Skeggs' observation that critical ethnography is a methodology suited to the exploration of the 'multitude of differences experienced in practice' but that through the ethnographic process of engagement 'time enables an analysis of which differences appear as significant and systematic' (2002; 32).

As I emphasised (section 3.1) qualitative research methodologies have moved beyond traditional notions of validity (theory confirmed by empirical facts reflected in objective reality). Validity becomes an issue of epistemology, of examining the rules (of production, of knowledge, of representation) that create the text's call to authority and truth (Denzin: 1996). This reflexive process, however, must take place beside an analysis that attempts to say something other than a concern for the loss of its 'objectivity' in the 'traditional' sense. Reflexivity is sometimes solely considered within the parameters of a reflection upon the constructed nature of knowledge and the consideration of issues of power. As Alversonn observes, this can narrow down what reflexive practice should also be about within the research process; a matter of thinking through data

differently, working with and against different interpretive frameworks to provide one argument for the research's validity (Alversonn: 2008). This requires an argument to be made that is 'convincing, credible and cogent in which the analysis made can be evaluated as rigorous and responsible and the account given substantial and satisfactory' (Skeggs: 2002; 32).

Ethnography has a difficult relationship to theory here. There are assumptions about the ability to be open-minded about the 'object' of study, and for the theories and frames of reference gathered by the researcher to provide a guide and system to the research without obstructing sensitivity to the 'empirical' data (Alversonn: 2008). Inductive ethnography is not a solution to these problems; its form of raw empiricism has a naïve view of 'data' and mirrors the epistemological errors of the traditions it seeks to critique. The 'inductivist, I began-to get-ideas-from-the-things-I was seeing-and hearing-on the street approach to field based enquiry' (Wacquant: 2002; 341) can hide the assumptions behind the researcher's descriptive processes. The presentation of pure or unmediated data leaves behind the problematic of the sociology of knowledge, concealing 'dirty data' behind complex and 'scientific' practices of coding and preventing researchers from asking about wider questions of causality.

At the other end of the spectrum, Wacquant identifies 'the reduction of process to static conditions' (2002; 1501) where the empirical material and subjectivities of respondents are deduced as being objectively derived from an external structure. Rather than providing a fine-grained analysis of cultural and moral distinctions within the area of the ethnography, 'inscribed in both institutions and minds that help explain the diversity of strategies and trajectories followed by their residents' (ibid; 1501) such a blanket use of 'theory' reduces respondents to epiphenomena of structures, without agency, and misses the opportunity to examine the specificity of power as it operates through 'local' sites and subjectivities.

As Walby observes 'different theoretical lenses constitute different worlds [...] theory is what organises our attention to the aspects of the real that we deem worthy of our attention' (2007; 1023). The researcher's task is to reflexively integrate theory

throughout the interpretive process. Alversonn recommends a process of reflexive interpretation as a 'comprehensive frame of reference for inspiring and structuring reflection' (2008; 247), a process which takes different theoretical perspectives and places them beside the empirical material. Such an approach avoids theoreticism and empiricism by opposing the simple use of one overarching framework or by appealing to the facticity of facts. At the level of data collection (or the construction of data) it entails the testing of differing theories to examine initial assumptions and interpretations, allowing alternative meanings to emerge.

The handbag method I used is illustrative. The 'data', provoking the laughter of one of Borges' taxonomies and of 'everyday life's' resistance to capture, was placed alongside differing interpretative frameworks. Foucault and Rose's elaboration of governmentality, Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital, field, conceptions of elective performativity and prosthesis, and Berlant's conversation with precarity were considered in relation to the contents of the handbags and the narratives of 'self' and of attachment and belonging that accompanied them. The interpretations they gave were set beside Skeggs' analysis of class.

Within this process I asked whether 'accepted' or 'established' or 'much-used' theoretical productions have anything to say about the lives of the women in the study and what they had to say to each other. As Skeggs observes, this is how knowledge and theory becomes situated: 'categories, representations and explanations have to have explanatory power in relation to the subjects/objects that they were designed to represent' (2002; 21). 'In the round', then, I have tried to test theory by applying it to my understanding of the experience (however problematized) of the women within my research because, like Rubin (1994), I really do think that that must be the 'true' test of its speculation.

1.11 Skeletons in the cupboard

My mobility and trajectory through space has more in common with the middle-class women of my thesis, as does my background in the field of community work and my education at the local university. It was the advantages and privileges of my positioning

that enabled me to establish myself in Fenton, and it was my advantage that enabled me to move back into the spaces of academia in Sheffield. My educational and cultural capital provide a sharp contrast with those I 'left behind'. My thesis exemplifies the privileges of a particular mobility that none of the working-class women have; a movement in and out of women's lives who occupy very different trajectories in social space to my own. My assumptions of access, my presumptions of knowing, and my appropriation and representation of the working-class women's experience is based on an 'entitlement' that needs critical scrutiny and challenge, but so too does my inclusion of the middle-class women in my research design.

'Objectively' this made sense to me; the decision was made with the intention of exploring Skeggs' theorisation of middle-class entitlement through constitutive relationships of class. As I said in the preface, attention needs to be directed towards the unmarked norm (sic). The neighbourhood in which the working-class women lived was socially mixed; it seemed a perfect opportunity to carry out a single, but 'multi-sited' ethnography (Marcus: 1998). The analysis that follows, in part, is an empirical exploration of social divisions of class between women as I interpret them through relation to 'femininity', 'care', attachment to place and so on; as such it explores the feminist class thesis of the emergence and 'the widening of class divisions between women (and the increasing articulation of class divisions through the bodies of women)' (Adkins: 2004; 7).

I have, however, three inter-related methodological concerns about 'skeletons in the cupboard' (Myers: 2003). Firstly, the analysis that follows may be criticised for neglecting to pay more attention to how connections can be made between women who differently experience the injustices of gendered relations of power at a juncture where feminism has moved 'away from a mobilization around 'who we are' towards a framework for considering complex and inter-related forms of social commonality/difference ... to develop a feminist politics of partiality in relation to difference [...] and to campaign for common issues and what we want to achieve' (Archer: 2004; 459).

My research may be interpreted, here, as the act of a man intent on maintaining and reinscribing division whilst claiming and attempting to retain the authority of the male knower from up above. I raise this concern so that the reader may carry it with them into the analysis chapters, and because I want to emphasise that it has been part of my reflexive practice throughout, in the conduct of research relationships and in the write up of my findings. I would argue that my focus is in particular upon gender through class, and that research that tracks the obstacles to shared understanding across differences is still worth having. Whilst I argue for the integrity of my analysis in respect of this concern, I am also aware that it is not for me to make such a judgement.

The second concern has consistently troubled me, even to the point where I have felt that I should stop research. It is here that I return to Lather. Rather than include middle-class women within my research framework (or indeed focus on working-class experience 'over there'), I should have turned attention to my own implication in the generation of inequality and explore the conflict over value and the embodiment of class through adopting an 'autobiographical' and reflexive approach. I should have done so via my own involvement in community work and social relationships within the neighbourhood. Such an approach, as Clifford (1986) advocates, would have provided a focus on 'the historically and politically constituted field of relationships between (and constituting) self and other' without trespass, and appropriation. To this I have no simple answer, except to say that this would have been a very different piece of research.

Thirdly, and returning to Marcus, in moving between the lives of women from different locations in social space, but proximate to one another through residence, I could claim to meet his call for a multi-sited ethnographic practice. Such a research design offers an 'opportunity to dislocate the ethnographer from the strong traditional filiations to just one group of subjects among whom fieldwork is done and place her within and between groups in direct, or even indirect and blind opposition' (1998; 21). Marcus juxtaposes this orientation (explored through the figure of complicity) with Willis' 'Learning to Labour' which brings together the traditions of political economy and interpretive and symbolic analysis to capture the 'structures of feeling' of ethnographic subjects. In these studies, for Marcus, 'the space of potential discovery and increased understanding of

processes and relationships in the world [...] is taken over by a discourse of purpose and commitment within a certain moral economy' (ibid; 18).

Given the investments and values that I have taken with me into the research process it may be remarked that I have reduced the opportunities for 'potential discovery' that my study 'site' afforded me. I have, it would seem, taken sides before I have ventured out. This has been less of a concern for my methodology and research practice than those concerns raised previously. Here I concur with Skeggs: 'values within research practices can cut both ways, they can both obscure and reveal understanding; the researcher's responsibility is to attempt to use reflexivity in an effort to understand how values are operationalised within their research activities, this is not the same thing as pretending they can be left behind for an objective and 'true' account' (2002; 33). My research, then, explores the work of 'moral economy' from within a perspective that has 'committed political-ethical investments' and interests of its 'own' (Skeggs: 2010; 436) but it has always sought to be responsible to both the working and middle-class women. My analysis, where it is critical, is aimed not at persons but at exploring process within a moral economy and making arguments about these.

It is here that my ethnographic practice has attempted to take on board Marcus' call for 'cross-class parallel juxtapositions' rather than the evocation and reification of a caricatured 'capitalist' world as a dramatic foil to be set beside a detailed exploration of working-class experience. In doing so I have attempted to be responsive to Willis's own observation that 'in different ways, all social agents have a hand collectively in constructing their own destiny, doing so in a way which is not simply determined from outside and which often enjoys the labyrinthine complexity of a cultural form' (cited Marcus: 1998; 44). If my representation of middle-class lives that follows still appears to look anaemic and constraining then this is only partly so because of reasons of space and focus. Rather my declared interest in exploring relationships of class as a specific limit to the exploration of ontology has found that 'the very existence and consciousness of the middle-class is deeply integrated into that structure which gives it dominance' (Willis cited Marcus: ibid; 44).

2. 'Class is a relationship and not a thing'

(Thompson: 1991; 9)

Gwen, working-class: The first time I realised I was working-class was when I was watching the news when I was little. There had been some floods and people had no electricity. There were this posh couple, and I remember her saying, we've been living off beans and 'seeoup'; she said it like 'seeoup', not soup, and I remember thinking that's a regular meal for me but for them that's like a thing to survive on because they are in trouble. Last night too I remembered that feeling I had as a child, I was watching a cooking programme with this Sophie Dahl girl, yeah, and she was talking about nostalgia and being at home and what food represents, and she said that too 'seeoup' like that 'seeoup'. But what she was on about was food, 'being home' ... Nice concept yeah! Yeah nice concept, and it reminded me of that time; 'this means home to me', la de la de la, 'when I used to come down on Sunday morning I could smell roast chicken' ... and I was like my god do me a favour, but she was saying it as if that had happened to everyone ... It pisses me off.

Jenny, working-class: It's not possible not to make value judgements, no not really, it's possible not to act on them, discriminate, but it's not possible not to look at someone and make a judgement ... like when I met you I thought probably middle-class and then when I saw you bring out tobacco I thought, my opinion changed; do you know what I mean though? Cos when I first met you I thought he's a clever bloke, he's sort of middle-class cos he's got a good education; I don't know many working-class people doing a PhD but when I saw you [I thought] he smokes rolling tobacco like me, I was just like, that's fine, you can talk to me anytime.

Jackie, working-class: ... last night I needed to get some money from the cash machine; it's very dark and dingy and this woman had stopped; very proper and posh and prim, older and middle-class, she had like this shit hot car and she was getting money out. She kept looking around; and I was giggling and thinking she's thinking she's going to get mugged. I saw this woman who walked past with her daughter and this woman looked at the posh woman and looked at the car and went 'oh very nice' (laughing) and I just laughed cos that's what I was thinking. What annoys me is that middle and upper class people don't realise or don't want to know what it's like for people who haven't got the privileges or just don't want to know about it. Ignorance annoys me ... they've got no bloody idea ...

Rosie, middle-class: Have I ever thought of myself as being of a certain class? Not really, but I'm sure somebody else could. I've just never thought of myself in that way ... I know it's there, and people talk about it, but I find it very difficult. I don't like the word class, I don't like it; I prefer to use the word opportunity. I do think it's about what grounding you've had when you are brought up ...

2.1 Introduction

I have prefaced this chapter with the voices of Jenny, Jackie, Rosie and Gwen because any theory of class must have as its starting place the study of the 'practices of living, the process of subjectification and the formation of subjectivities' (Walkerdine: 2001; 27). Class, here, as the extracts illustrate, has 'a lay normative presence' that refuses to be diminished by the retreat of theory in academic space (Sayer: 2005a). The most insignificant of practices or objects (for Jenny the smoking of tobacco, or for Gwen the pronunciation of 'soup') become the focus for scrutiny and evaluation; and the perspectives taken upon these (the way they are 'felt', 'read', 'heard' and 'visualised') are informed by class. It is a presence, as Jenny articulates, which is complex and shifting and has no clear boundaries; it is often ambiguous and contradictory, colouring and informing experience, practice and relation to self and others - including here the research relation.

Like Walkerdine, then, I argue that 'everyone ... detects the minutiae of class difference signs and uses the information delivered by these signs in the making of difference every day of their lives' (2001; 26). It is the production of this presence and the ways in which people experience, embody, and articulate this presence even where, like Rosie, they attempt to refuse or resist it, that 'is crucial to the status of class as a theoretical and political tool and to our understanding of class as it is lived today' (ibid; 33). The use of theory then, and the 'applicability of [its] concepts and categories' must be interrogated and tested for their explanatory power in relation to this presence (Skeggs: 2002; 4).

Much has been made of the absence of collective forms of class identification, or indeed the absence of any direct personal identification with class in the lives of working-class persons (Savage: 2010), but as these extracts illustrate, class is experienced in the lives of Jenny, Jackie, and Gwen as a complex 'identity designation' and is 'deeply implicated in the production of subjectivity, as written on the body and mind' (Walkerdine: 2001; 24). They underscore the need for class analysis to have a conceptual framework that can approach the complex play of 'identification, differentiation, including recognition, disidentification, dissimulation and subjective construction' (Skeggs: 2002; 4). To understand these processes, one must have a concept of class that understands it to be

a social, cultural, historical, discursive and material production. Class is a 'historical phenomenon,' or rather a historical relationship and a process in formation that is realised in the present on an intimate level. Class analysis requires attention to the history of its inscription, and to the ways in which such a history informs, realises, and affects classed subjectivities and inter-subjective relationships in radically different ways.

Class manifests itself through the marking and making of this 'difference' in the lives of the women within this thesis. That is, class is realised and lived as a complex performative within social relationships. Here, like Thompson, 'I do not see class as a 'structure', but as something which in fact happens' (1991; 8), or as Bourdieu states: 'classes exist in some sense in a state of virtuality, not as something given but as something to be done' (1998; 12). All the women in these extracts are in this sense doing class, just as I am doing class when I theorise it; only some, however, carry the authority to make their perspectives, judgements and categorisations stick. The analysis of class, then, must explore the differing relation the women have to these processes of marking and making class, and understand the ways in which class as process is constitutive, the ways in which class determines possibilities for persons to enter and participate in everyday forms of social, cultural, and economic activity, for defining and delimiting a sense of 'self' and other.

Gwen, Jackie and Jenny emphasise that class is manifested in their lives as a form of embodied relation of (dis)entitlement, one constituted and experienced through differences in disposition, taste, and cultural practice, forms of knowledge and value(d) practice. As Katy, working-class, said; 'class isn't just about money: it's in everything'. Class is about property (shit hot cars) as Gwen and Jackie recognise, but it is also, and as they understand, about the work of propriety, the processes of evaluatory and moral judgement; and the ways these dimensions of class coalesce to inform and produce class relationships and value(s).

Gwen, Jackie and Jenny also make explicit what 'others' may find contentious: class is brought into being in their lives as a relationship relative to other groups, one where one person's realisation of 'opportunity' is sensed as their relation to processes of

exclusion. Their experience of class requires a theoretical approach that understands it as a relation of antagonism and conflict (whether explicit or implicit, indirect or direct). It is here that the discomforts, embarrassments, and difficult experiences of class in the lives of the working-class women are very different to those of the middle-class. Jackie's sense that she, and those of her 'kind', are read as threatening, improper, potentially criminal, is common to their experience of class. This experience of misrecognition is central to the working-class women's experience and should be central to any 'theory' of class.

Here, class analysis must turn its attention to what Rosie refers to as 'grounding'. Her own disidentification from class perhaps reflects a middle-class practice that is as common today as it was in the past; it is displaced upon personal and familial responsibility and morality and reproduced as an individualised form of classed pathology. The concept of social positioning, in contrast, enables the exploration of the limits imposed upon what Rosie terms 'opportunity' (as if it was available to 'everyone') but also to see how different perspectives within relationships engender different forms of knowledge, valuation, value and practice (Skeggs: 2004).

When Gwen refers to 'home' as a 'nice concept', and when Jackie says that those she feels are judging her 'have got no bloody idea', they are highlighting the importance of positioning in a deep sense. The phrase 'no bloody idea' must not be dismissed as a misplaced sense of injustice, envy or resentment. Jenny's, Gwen's and Jackie's expression of anger, defensiveness, contempt, and resentment must be seen as evaluative responses to particular properties of class inequalities and relations (Sayer: 2005b). Their affectual and emotional responses are not to be reduced to the 'subjective'; rather we 'need to avoid treating fact and value, reason and emotion, as opposed, and acknowledge that while emotions and values are fallible they are often perceptive and reasonable judgements about situations and processes' (ibid; 951).

Class, then, is a social relationship where persons carry with them differing interests that materialise in disputes over value and valuation (Skeggs; 2004). The affective dimension of class in the women's lives asks questions that relate to these values and directs attention 'to think about how we live with class relations with others in a continuous

variation of valuation' (Skeggs: 2009; 38). This experience of valuation is resisted and contested; the woman passing the cash machine with whom Jackie makes connection is exemplary of the deflationary 'put down', the piss-take, as it is used to counter the experience of misrecognition (Willis: 2010).

The 'unspoken' connection made between Jackie and this woman reflects Thompson's observation that 'class happens when some men (sic) as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men (sic) whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs' (1991; 9).⁴ Class analysis returns, it would seem, to those confusions that arise over conceptions of class consciousness ('invented by displaced intellectuals') (ibid). Whilst many academics emphasise that class as an identity, or rather class as a language through which to understand one's positioning in relation to inequalities, is not available to persons such as Gwen, Jenny, and Jackie, there is a need to hold onto the tacit and mediated ways that class informs their inter-relational bonds of (dis)identification.

The rest of this chapter provides the concepts and overarching theoretical approach to class that I have used for my analysis. The mediating concern has been one of understanding classed embodiment and relations with self, others, and historical and material processes. In pursuing this concern I have sought to understand links between class, subjectivity, power, and culture within the context of 'everyday lives'. This chapter does not provide an exhaustive review of the literature and theoretical debate that surrounds these broad themes, instead it adapts and positions their discussion within a perspective that takes class to be its subject and which has attempted to explore how class affects and informs the lives, practices and subjectivities of the women within the research.

I underline the importance of understanding class as both a theoretical construct and a discursive and material production. I then highlight how contemporary inscriptions of

⁴Thompson's elision of gender is part of a tradition of class analysis that brushes out attention to the ways in which 'gender enables different forms of value inversion fought on key sites of class performance' (Skeggs: 2012; 279).

class have links with historical process, and the importance of this for the analysis that follows. I move towards providing detail of Skeggs' analysis of class via Foucault's theory of homo oeconomicus, bridging the discussion of the discursive production of class with a discussion of the realisation of capital through the production of valued selves. Skeggs provides a thematic of inscription, exchange, valuation, and perspective that bring to light the limits of Foucault's theory of governmentality, and they are concepts that underpin the analysis of class formation that follows.

Of especial importance, here, are the ways in which Skeggs has sought to understand and trace out 'an economy of personhood within capitalism which can explain how different values – economic, cultural, symbolic, social, moral – can be accessed, attached and utilised, and how they work through encounters that repeatedly enhance or diminish value in the person' (Skeggs: 2012; 283). Bourdieu is then discussed, for the way he throws light upon such processes and for the ways he inhibits understandings of engendered and classed experience. I then move on to highlight the importance of Skeggs' *Formations* for its insights into the experience of class, and for her later theorisation and discussion of value(s) and the affective.

2.2 The struggle of classifications

The fact that class is constituted through the 'performative power of designation' that includes processes of categorisation and classification presents difficulties for research that, like this thesis, designates particular persons as working or middle-class. I have indicated in the preface that I am drawing upon Bourdieu's conception of class, and I will turn to the details of his framework later; here it must be emphasised that I do not use or 'present a new stratification scheme in order to 'fix' individuals (women or men) in an easily identifiable structural or subjective location' (Walkerdine: 2001; 22).

It is important to stress Bourdieu's emphasis upon the use of class as a theoretical and explanatory construct to describe the social world, and not as the will and representation of a particular group. For Bourdieu, the mystical body of 'the working-classes' ('but no less real') is the 'process of institution' explained by a 'historical analysis of the genesis and functioning of representation' (1992; pp 248-9). The processes of

representation and classification, and this includes the 'theory building' of Marx, and the realisation of working-class history such as Thompson's *The Making of the English Working-Class*,

[are] a fundamental division of class struggle. The power of imposing a vision of divisions, that is the power of making visible and explicit social divisions that are implicit, is the political power par excellence; it is the power to make groups, to manipulate the objective structure of society ... the performative power of designation, of nomination, brings into existence in an instituted, constituted form a corporation, what existed up until then only as a *collectio personarum plurium*, a collection of multiple persons, a purely additive series of merely juxtaposed individuals. (Bourdieu: 1990; 138)

Class, then, is approached as neither an essence nor an indefinite set of fluctuating signifiers, but as an arbitrarily imposed definition with real social effects (Skeggs: 2004). Its theorisation, within this context, is used as a tool for reflexive and critical analysis rather than as an ideal type or pure concept to be analysed in isolation or given a transcendent telos (Walkerline: 2001). That is, class analysis must include the questioning of the constitution of class through representation, including theoretical production, normative forms of classification and categorisation whilst at the same time seeking to understand its historical materiality. Positioning within social space, in Bourdieu's theory, must here be provisionally distinguished from, and not confused with, real social groups or with the representations of class which emerge from them; whether these be the symbolic acts of imposition that ensue from 'official naming' or those that arise from the insult, 'that idios logos' (Bourdieu: 1992; 239).

For Bottero, such an approach has 'abandoned' the traditional conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of class analysis (class position, class consciousness, collective action) and exemplifies not a renewal of class theory, but rather 'a fundamental break with class categories' (2004; 987). Specifically, for Bottero, by questioning the centrality and analytically distinct domain of the 'economic' there is a danger of 'inflating' class to include social and cultural formations, reconfiguring causal models that have traditionally underpinned class analysis to become a project so broad 'that it can be regarded as a general account of stratification itself, rather than as a specifically 'class' project' (ibid). For Bottero, instead of re-instating the outdated language of class, studies of hierarchical stratification should ask a different question:

Not why the working-class have relinquished class identifications, but rather why, and under what circumstances, hierarchically differentiated groups adopt explicit class discourses, since this seems more unusual. Why do processes of hierarchical differentiation so rarely give rise to collectivised class identities, or indeed explicit class identities of any kind? (ibid; 997).

The critique relies on a misconception about how new class analysis approaches its subject. Bourdieu's work, in part, is an attempt to explain the relative but changing solidity of domination within the social world and why it is so difficult, and rare, for people to challenge the conventions and norms of a society through collective practices; precisely the question Bottero proposes.

Within contemporary social relations the language and institutions of the working-classes, and politics of class, have been broken down and deprived of authority (Willis: 2010). There is not space here to record and analyse these events. The point is that the breaking down of particular, and historical, working-class social institutions and positive representations did not remove relational inequality and social differentiation based upon location in social space (Bourdieu's understanding of class). Class is now spoken about in another language, one that does not emerge from the working men's clubs in the neighbourhood of this study, now student music venues; nor from the textile and engineering industries, radically reduced in size and transfigured; nor does it emerge from the local guildhalls or co-operative movements: only their plaques remain. This is a different landscape of class, one where the historical institution of 'the' working-classes has to a great degree lost its political voice; a voice that had often left working-class women out of the fold of consideration (Scott: 1987, Walkerdine and Lucey: 1989).

As Skeggs (2004) observes, critiques such as Bottero's establish a double bind for class analysis; they must either stick to older and discredited formulations of class or abandon the language of 'class' in favour of 'stratification'. The approach taken here is that class is not a static concept, but is something produced, reworked, and reshaped through historical and material processes; 'new theoretical tools' are therefore required to analyse its work 'not as a given but in a continual production' (Skeggs: 2004; 3). This re-making and reproduction of class occurs through, and inside, changing formations of other key discursive domains and is distinctive and determined in its form and experience to the specific spaces in which it is produced and lived. Intimately related to

other processes of stratification - yes; complicated, contradictory, with shifting boundaries - yes. But class continues to be salient, both analytically and in the lives of the women in my research.

The inscription of class

Today class manifests itself as a complex form of individualised pathology, and it structures social relations even though it is 'made up of heterogeneous individuals and categories negatively defined by social provision, material need and symbolic deficit' (Wacquant: 2008; 248). As Joyce, working-class, says of her experience of classed misrecognition in my research: 'oh yeah, the scum bag, the doley scum bag class isn't it? Don't even have to claim the dole, you can be on the New Deal for single mothers, you could be on Incapacity, you are still a doley scumbag class.'

Class has always been produced through associations with 'discourses of symbolic value and figures that condense moral value' (Skeggs: 2012; 269). The familiar and individualised forms of cultural pathology that realise class today cannot be understood without this 'genealogy', and neither can the experience of class in the lives of the women in the research. An exploration of this history is an extensive task beyond the bounds of this chapter; but history matters, it is carried forward and inheres in complex ways to inform the take up (or not) of subject positions and the negotiation of our 'given' locations in social space; and it is 'the political disciplinary and social inheritances that we travel through which leave traces and marks on us enabling us to see some things and not others' (Skeggs: 2004; 45).

Skeggs draws attention to the ways in which values are inscribed onto bodies, subjectivities, regulatory apparatuses and social relationships through these historical processes of class formation. Whilst these inheritances are not proscriptive of subjectivities, nor determinant of the perspectives that are taken on others, the analysis that follows emphasises their importance; the way the women view each other and feel about themselves, what they practice and value, are informed and mediated by historical processes which are classed.

Within my analysis, then, I emphasise how today's dominant representations of working-class life 'as excess, as waste, as entertainment, as authenticating, lacking in taste, as unmodern, backward, as escapist, as dangerous, unruly and without shame and always spatialised' (Skeggs: 2005; 49) re-work the historical legacies of class production. The representation of working-class persons as 'chav' and 'white-trash', the irresponsible and feckless working-class mother (with her casual sexual habits, neglectful mothering practices and her lack of care for self), the anti-social/problem family, and the 'dangerous' spaces they inhabit, recast disadvantage as moral fault, as a problem of culture. These representations and classifications are performative acts of symbolic violence in the deep sense that Bourdieu provides, a part of a symbolic structuring of inequality that have real effects as they organise and maintain classed distinctions.

This emphasis upon the discursive and material production of class within my analysis draws upon post-structuralist thought, albeit conditioned by Skeggs' attention to the need to frame its understandings within a wider framework for understanding 'power' (below). Such an approach can appear counterintuitive for theorising class, for it seems to deprive class analysis of its traditional subject and its model of agency. In feminist class analysis, however, this is seen as a strength. As Walkerdine has observed, class and gender relations cannot 'be fruitfully explored without understanding the production of women and men as subjects' (2001; 10). The conventional 'Marxist subject' of class analysis had allowed the 'the working-class' to become 'the repository of fantasies of Otherness and promises of transformation' (Ibid; 13). Such a projection of what it meant to be working-class:

bore little relation to the modes of regulation through which...working-class people were subjected ... working-class subjects rarely conformed to the fantasies projected onto them...becoming the targets of the left's huge disappointment in their failures to be transformed (ibid; 17).

Rather than retain an idealisation of the working-class subject, and then become disappointed by its failure to turn up in practice, Walkerdine emphasises the need for a classed and feminist perspective upon Foucauldian conceptions of the subject, power and knowledge.

2.3 The familial

We must now turn to the historical production of class through the rise of the sciences and the emergence of the bourgeois family; and in particular to a classed perspective upon Foucault's and Rose's elaboration of governmentality where the family is utilised as a social mechanism for producing and regulating the subjective capacities of future citizens (Rose: 1999). An analysis of the middle and working-class women's relation to femininity, to the discourses of care, and to the individualisation 'thesis' has to consider this history for an understanding of their sense of 'self', their differing negotiation and take up of subject positions, and their relation to others. As Walkerdine has observed, 'the rise of new middle-classes, a professional and management class central to the management and government of liberal democracy' was 'a gendered and classed incorporation of reason to govern over others' (2001; 178). In turn, Skeggs' *Formations* (2002) emphasises how working-class women's subjectivities have been conditioned and shaped through a very different relation and positioning within these historical processes.

Indeed, for Strathern (2005), the familiarisation of the middle-class family (literally the process of coming to know itself) occurred through the incorporation of the rise of those scientific knowledges that Foucault sketches out; entailing a set of complex distinctions and moral discourses from which it could define itself in relationship to its own understanding of 'others'. Class began to be constituted as a classificatory system to fix the mobility of networked connections outside of the blood ties within the family home; 'how people lived their lives as family members evinced and created their middle-class milieu; at the same time, one was naturally at home in one's class ... people were reclassifying themselves both in respect of their given identities and in respect of the relations they made' (ibid; 45). As my analysis emphasises, the moral, symbolic and material manifestations of such distinctions continue in 'new' forms within the contemporary making and marking of classed practices and relationships.

The class specific constitutive effects of the take up of the 'knowledges' of the sciences by the bourgeoisie is illustrated in Foucault's work through the connections between the production of specific forms of sexuality and embodied classed identity. Sexuality

became a key instrument in the self-affirmation of the middle-classes over the working-classes and its colonial 'others,' a defence and a protection which was extended to domains of hygiene, medical science and pedagogy as a means of social control and political subjugation. The 'cultivation' of the body of the bourgeoisie gave 'it a political, economic and historical representation for its present and future use' (1998; 125), a differential cultural and moral value, one that could be cared for, isolated and secured from the projection of the unclean, unwashed; 'we must say that there is bourgeoisie sexuality, and there are class sexualities. Or rather, that sexuality is originally, historically bourgeois, and that, in its successive shifts and transportations, it induces specific class effects' (ibid; 127).

It is here that the Victorian bourgeois 'child' became the site for the inscription of educational, medical, hygienist, and psychological practices in conjunction with the support and allegiance of the mother who was attributed with a naturalised expertise. Invested with the knowledges and practices of the 'sciences' that defined the norms of 'common childhood' she became the guarantor of the good self and the good society (Donzelot: 1979). Interpreted through her relation to heterosexual monogamy and restraint, her naturalised role as mother and carer, she became the main focal point for the reformulation of family life through the inoculation and protection of its values. The assignation of her 'natural' expertise in 'domestic affairs' and her role as the custodian of moral propriety within familial relations, acted to mutually enforce her claims to political rights and to her role as public educator (Brown: 2006). Continuity was established between her family and her social activities where 'she discovered a new missionary domain in which to operate; a new professional sphere was opened, and in her participation in the spread of the new welfare and educational norms she became 'an instrument of cultural diffusion' (Donzelot: 1979; 46).

Whilst the middle-classes established sanitary boundaries against the outside world, and invested heavily in its educative knowledges about itself and relation to the world to form a cradle of 'protected liberation' around the figure of the child, the working-class child and mother became the objects upon which disciplinary and regulative regimes encroached. The standards to be induced in working-class lives would not

simply mirror the values and investments the middle-class family made within their milieu; they were differentiated, they placed limits beyond which it would be difficult to move; they were made 'appropriate' to the type of body they were dealing with. The body of the working-class child was constituted in its difference to its 'Apollonian other' through its perceived relation to its familial and social milieu; it was made visible through the constitution of its difference to the bourgeois ideal (Donzelot: 1979).

The working-class mother came to be identified as the most economical conduit for the burden of normalisation within the family home. Philanthropic and welfare activity and forms of inducement through 'self-help' were implemented to break down the perceived threats of the 'clannish family' and the extended sociality and networks of working-class life. The offer of aid was made with a prophylactic conditionality that depended upon supervision of the working-class mothers' sexual/moral/fiscal and domestic propriety and organisation (Donzelot: 1979). Within this frame it was not a working-class girl's uniqueness and individuality that was to be nurtured by her mother. The nature of her service and work within the good society was to be engendered through her classed identity; she was to be instilled with the duties of domestic care and service work and her functions in reproducing and maintaining the social order (ibid).

The discursive and material production and regulation of family life and the engendering of classed subjects has, of course, shifted ground within the contemporary. Rose's work *'The Governing of the Soul'* (1999) is important within my analysis for its focus and understanding of the central role of the family and mother in reproducing the social and 'autonomous' citizen subject of today's 'liberal democracy'. Drawing upon Foucault's governmentality thesis, and extending Donzelot's study *'The Policing of Families'* (1979), he traces the ways in which the changing knowledge and concepts of the 'psy complex' have been dispersed and floated through the social into the spaces and minutiae of family life through the process of bricolage and translation. Here, the knowledges generated through medicine, psychology, psychiatry and pedagogy are seen to have gained ascendancy to inform the self-perceptions and self-consciousness of subjects, and are no longer 'presented as theory open to contestation, but as truths about human nature' (Lawler: 2000; 23).

Rose's work however, as that of Foucault's, tells us little about unofficial practices, or the experiences of those unprivileged by history. Their contribution to an understanding of how modern forms of rationality work through the 'conduct of conduct' must be set side-by-side with the different material realities and ontologies of the working-class women found in this research. Specifically in relation to motherhood, the working-class mothers in this thesis are persons who do not conform to the epistemological grid that seeks to describe/govern them. Foucauldian scholars who have taken up theories of governmentality have a tendency to collapse the distinction between ontology and epistemology. It is crucial to understand the differences between privileged and authorised knowledges and the material and ontological realities of the women's own lives, and their divergent historical inheritances and relationships to the discourses of care. Foucault's own emphasis on the resistances immanent to the work of power gains depth when explored through their experience of motherhood.

There is, then, a 'need to utilise insights from post-structuralism,' but also 'to go beyond them' (Walkerdine: 2001; 15). Foucauldian thought is important for understanding the production of subjectivity and 'the' subject but it is 'not enough by itself. It is the situated and specifically local character of how people live and transform their lives that is important ... It is the deep embeddedness of the production of subjectivity in the social and cultural that we are exploring here' (ibid; 15). Walkerdine's own study of working-class motherhood and Lawler's later work are central to the analysis. *Democracy in the Kitchen* (1987) and *Mothering the 'Self'* (2000) highlight and emphasise – at differing historical junctures – the classed concern that is, and has been, central to the figuring of the child and mother in 'democratic rule'. Like Rose, they emphasise the role of systems of scientific knowledge in the production of theories of child development and their role in regulating and making 'proper' and 'sensitive' mothers; but their work places these development discourses within the context of gender and working-class experience and practice.

Foucault's insistence, here, that morality cannot be separated from social and political practice and presented as systematic in the 'name of a smooth moral economy of equivalencies' (Connolly: 2008; 214) is particularly important when exploring the

‘familial’. He draws attention to the ways in which moral economies involve a ‘forgetting’ of the arbitrary impositions that condition and produce the pattern of equivalencies that are held as fundamental truths (ibid; 208). The knowledge of these accumulated conventions is naturalised; recognised and owned by subjects as ‘reasonable’ truths and values – a process through which ‘anciently established and irrationally recognised custom (is) once more confirmed by a person recognised as rational’ (ibid; 217).

It is here that ‘discourse’ exerts violence upon others through the imposition of practice and judgement. The understanding that the truth one holds to one’s ‘self’ or to one’s ‘group’ is constructed and substantiated upon the exclusion and marginalisation of ‘others’ should be invaluable in breaking down and exploring classed perspectives and experience. Foucault’s emphasis, here, is upon Nietzsche’s resentment as a source from which the problematic of ‘self’ and morality are constructed through ‘the constitution of difference as evil to protect a precarious faith in an intrinsic identity or order’ (Connolly: 2008; 218). I take up these points towards the end of this chapter when I consider the classed dimensions of the affective.

2.4 What happened to Capital?

The emphasis I have given to the social and discursive production of class might seem to have strayed from Marx’s conception of the importance of ‘capital’ for class analysis, and Bourdieu’s own contribution to the labour theory of value through his understanding of embodied entitlement and the work of *Distinction* (below). As Harvey observes, inescapably, ‘since we all live within the world of capital circulation and accumulation this has to be part of any argument about the nature of the contemporary body. To evade it ... is to evade a vital aspect of how the body must be problematized’ (1998; 405). Like Harvey, I believe that the best way of addressing such a question is through expanding the Marxian definition of class relation to mean positionality in relation to the variable circulation of capital, and that ‘armed with such a definition ... we can better articulate the internal contradictions of multiple positionalities within which human beings operate’ (ibid; 403).

Before moving on to Skeggs' framework for understanding this classed relation of variable capital, I want to draw further attention to Foucault's theory of governmentality and the 'conduct of conduct' as developed in his later work. I argue, here, that rather than being antithetical to class analysis, Foucault describes and documents the emergence of class as an individualised phenomenon where its production shifts ground from a wage earning class to a wage earning body (Foucault: 1980). This is the body of capital-ability, a subject realised through different technologies of economic and psychological environmentalism in which the economic becomes re-folded within domains previously seen as separate. The difficulties of employing Foucault for understanding class formation and the experience of class within engendered subjectivities will be addressed when I turn to Skeggs.

Homo oeconomicus

The central focus for Foucault's later analysis was in tracing out the ways in which the history of thought answered the question 'what is the utility value of government and all actions of government in a society where exchange determines the true value of things?' (2010; 46). In attempting to answer this question, his work, as it moved into a consideration of contemporary forms of liberal governmental rule, moved away from an analysis of a society of discipline to one of control, to a looser form of power over the wage earner's body, a form of power which sought to capitalise upon the production of individual subjectivities and capacities (Foucault: 1980). In this respect his project still held with his belief, shared by Skeggs, that the 'accumulation of men (sic) and the accumulation of capital - cannot be separated' (Foucault: 1995; 221). Here he also shares with Skeggs a central question about the formation of embodied identity in the contemporary, asking 'what mode of investment of the body is necessary and adequate for the functioning of a capitalist society like ours?' (Foucault: 1980).

The contemporary subject, as conceived through a particular perspective emerging from ordo-liberalism, and appearing in its most radical neo-liberal form in the work of Becker, becomes a conception of capital-ability (Foucault: 2010; 225). This is not the same subject of self-interest as that expressed through forms of bourgeois identity and its realisation of civil society from the eighteenth century onwards. Instead 'he is an

entrepreneur, of himself, being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of his own earnings' (ibid; 226); one neither divided from his own self through the social contract, nor alienated from himself through the exchange of his body in return for a living wage.

Rather, this is a subject who produces himself through consumption, and immersion in technologies of self. Conceived of as an 'enterprise unit' this perspective upon the subject en-frames a rationality of rule which re-configures its approach to accumulation and leaves the plane of land, labour and capital in the form of physical property and assets. Instead it turns for its object 'the analysis of the composition of human capital' and the way it can be augmented; 'a policy of growth focussed on the most modifiable of things'; *the subject* (Foucault: 2010; 233). Such a conception of the subject of interest entails a form of governmental practice that extends economic analysis and practice into non-market relationships, applying the economic grid to social phenomena which can be seen to respond systematically to modifications in the variables of the environment.

Economic behaviour is the grid of intelligibility one will adopt on the behaviour of the new individual. It also means that the individual becomes governmentalisable, that power gets hold of him to the extent, and only to the extent, that he is a homo oeconomicus. That is to say, the surface of contact between the individual and the power exercised on him, and so the principle of the regulation of power over the individual, will be only this kind of grid of homo oeconomicus ... the interface of government and the individual. But this does not mean that every subject is an economic man. (ibid; 253)

Foucault's concern in this 'colossal definition' of economic analysis is to highlight his identification of the central paradox of Liberalism and to re-iterate his formulation of the twin polarities of all forms of liberal rule. The subject, so conceived, appears both manageable and governable, but is one who must also appear to pursue his own interests. The point here, however, is Foucault's emphasis that this particular manifestation of governmental practice is a 'grid of intelligibility' and does not 'mean that every subject is an economic man'. In other words, it is a perspective which seeks to impose itself through practices as they have 'effects of objectivation and veridiction regarding men themselves by constituting them as subjects' (Foucault: 2007; 387). Without careful consideration of these points, and as Skeggs observes,

'Governmentality' becomes a theory of rule that performatively reproduces the conditions it has sought to describe and problematize (Skeggs: 2011).

2.5 The making of valued selves

Inscription, perspective, value and exchange is central to understanding how difference is made. This is more than the economy; it is what makes the economy possible. (Skeggs: 2004; 13)

For Skeggs, Foucault provides an understanding of the ways in which dominant (classed and engendered) knowledges and technologies are implicated in the organisation and exercise of power through the conduct of conduct, placing notions of the subject within the frame of the discursive and material practices which realise and inform the take-up and regulation of subjectivity through the internalisation of norms. Such norms are premised upon the 'logic of capital', that is they seek to embed its interests and values and the practices that work to realise them. What Foucault does not do is challenge the presuppositions that lie beneath the conception of exchange they are premised upon, nor examine the establishment of the relationships that provide the conditions for their particular form. In not doing so, he bypasses the question of how value is realised through social relationships;

Different forms of exchange are appropriate to quite different social relationships that they each play a part in reproducing or affirming. Different historical forms of exchange generate different social and economic relations and shape the possibilities for patterns of social relationships, notions of identity and self ... modes of exchange are therefore central in reproducing particular patterns of relationships and co-ordinating social identities, functions and actions. (Skeggs 2004; 29)

For Skeggs, the modern and restrictive sense given to the concept of exchange is shorthand for the exchange relation and is the foundation on which the bourgeois self is built. She believes that the successful inscription of the abstract nature of exchange has enabled the discounting of its foundations in moral evaluation, and its connection to 'social relationships and responsibilities' (ibid; pp28-35). Such a conception assumes the essential equality of all in the marketplace, and insinuates itself into the structures of representation and social life. The economic domain, represented as neutral, is in fact

Predicated upon individualised self-interest, rational calculation and productive value. This domain also reshapes self-formation, generating concepts of a proprietorial self that works in its own interests to accumulate, and is directed by inside and outside forces. This self is both enabled

and constrained by the exchange mechanisms established; this is how it becomes a self with or without value. This valuation process provides the conditions of possibility for a classed-self. (ibid; 31)

Whilst Skeggs concurs with Foucault that the self (the subject) does not pre-exist the discourses and material practices of power that constitute it, she emphasises that the processes of subjectification and inscription must be understood in relationship to positioning within social space and to the processes of valuation, institutionalisation, perspective and exchange that make it realisable or recognisable to itself and others; it is through these processes that the value 'attributed to certain markings comes to have an exchange value' (ibid; 13).

For Skeggs, understanding the changing practices and discourses of judgement and classification within the moral economy becomes as important as understanding systems of exploitation within forms of economic exchange. Class, here, always has a moral value and is produced through systems of evaluation that are intrinsic to both economic and non-economic types and understandings of exchange (Skeggs: 2004). Her focus is upon the ways in which different valuations arise as they are connected to the perspectives taken, how these perspectives inform and derive from differing knowledges, and how they arise from different experiences and carry different interests. Addressing 'the attribution of value and authority' which establishes particular patterns and relationships of exchange between groups and persons enables an exploration of conflicting value(s) and valuations that arise within relationships of class (ibid; 28).

Skeggs recognises that economic exploitation and the extraction of surplus value from labour is still an important part of understanding class and class relationships, but insists that class analysis must refuse to be tied to its traditional forms that drew attention away from generalisations of exchange to focus on relations of economic production. She argues that her analysis 'is not about a shift from economics to culture, but how culture is being deployed as an economic resource in the contemporary and how this shapes our understanding of class' (Skeggs: 2005b; 47). Her focus is upon the ways in which the economic and moral economies have become fused together in the production of value and forms of valued personhood within the contemporary processes of capital. Her work is not about economic inequality in the narrow sense of

the term but rather an attempt to consider the distribution of values within culture and the moral/symbolic economy, the ways in which certain groups are able to produce and accrue moral, cultural, social and economic values to their persons whilst others are fixed as a constitutive limit; as improper persons, as subjects of 'loss'.

She retains the Marxist understanding of class as a relationship of antagonism based upon exploitation and control of resources, but extends this understanding to 'matters of culture and subjectivity' (Skeggs: 2004). In doing so, she carries over the importance of Marx's move from the fixation upon the exchange of objects within the economy, and the fetishization of the commodity form, to reveal the social labour involved in their production. Marx's focus was upon the ways in which this labour is exploited for extracting surplus value, the ways in which social labour and use values become detached within these processes, and the ways in which the exchange relationships create different types of personhood; those who became alienated, and suffer loss, and those who became propertied. Skeggs brings these concerns into the realm of the cultural production of the 'self' in contemporary class relations. It is here that she believes capital works to realise new circuits of value and exploitation, working to fetishize middle-class persons as 'holders of value' (Skeggs: 2011).

For Skeggs the middle-classes have been the 'beneficiaries' of the extension of ownership of economic goods and the ownership of self through labour to the ownership of self through culture. She identifies the ways in which culture becomes deployed, used, and appropriated as the means by which middle-class persons accrue value to themselves. For Skeggs, middle-class material, cultural, dispositional and affective attachments and their appropriation of others' culture and practices, their flexibility and mobility, forms of self-reflexivity and displays of moral worth, are based on forms of entitlement and access. But their practices are also based upon exclusions; those that are figured as the constitutive limit for the formation of middle-class 'self' are in this sense a productive source of values. For Skeggs, then, it is the exchange relations of culture which are central to self and class-making; 'it is the ability to propertize one's self and one's culture (as an exchange value) that generates new forms of exploitation

based on immateriality' and it is 'the relationships of entitlement and exclusion (that) establish the basis for cultural exchange' (2004; 176).

Skeggs' interest, in particular, is in the ways in which values of sociality and the intimate relations of care, attention, and affect have become entwined with capital reproduction and the economic sphere in new ways to be subsumed within the realm of calculation for the production of human capital. For Skeggs, the middle-classes are in a better position to protect themselves from such exploitability, but are also able to harness it to make it work for them; they are able to convert 'their experiencing, choosing and displaying affect' as a form of social capital and investiture in self (Koivunen: 2010; 22). It is here that person value becomes a public performance and not a private affair; a moral legitimization of subjectivity and a display of cultural and affective difference through performance knowledges to generate moral and economic value in distinction to 'failing selves' (Skeggs: 2010b).

Skeggs provides a classed reading of feminist philosophy, legal theory and anthropology for her understanding of the historical construction of 'self'. For her, the differing realisations of self in the contemporary are informed by, and linked to, the historical emergence of the possessive individual, a form of 'self' that 'became the dominant symbolic model for proper personhood, legitimated through law and the social contract, extended through commodification and morally legitimated' (2011; 501). This conception of self produces 'singular, contained, individualised models of the social subject' (ibid; 497) which ignore the relationships, the labour, and the conditions of exchange that make them possible. Underpinning this reading is an understanding that 'the conditions of possibilities for the production of personhood through the history of inscription emerge from the legitimization - conceptually and symbolically and legally - of capital through property relations' (ibid; 499).

Recognising the contingency of 'self', Skeggs has turned in her more recent work to the concept 'of the person or personhood in order to avoid the etymological traps of the terms self and individual' (2011; 497). Within her use of the term, 'personhood refers to legal, social and moral states generated through encounters with others' and within this view 'the self is seen not as a subject position, but as part of a system of exchange

in which classed personhood is produced through different technologies' (ibid; 498). When referring to 'self' then, it is important to remember that this refers in Skeggs' work to particular forms of personhood, ones that she believes depend on respective class positioning for their conditions of possibility; 'the working-class self was not formed through possibilities for appropriation and propertizing; instead its formation was the constitutive limit to those very actions' (2004; 175).

Her analysis, then, provides a classed reading of Foucault's analysis of the emergence of homo oeconomicus, the subject of 'self-realising' capital-ability (Foucault: 2010), by focusing attention upon demystifying the 'the social hieroglyphic' of middle-class 'self', embodiment, and practice. Her critique aims to show that the values invested in this 'self' are 'inherently misrepresentative of its social content' (Skeggs: 2004; 177). For Skeggs the 'stand-alone subject' that is the premise of neoliberal rule and governmental reason represents the production of 'a classed bio-politics of human as capital (human capital) where the abstract imaginary of the normative 'subject of value' is premised upon concrete practices of exploitation and exclusion: those figured as the constitutive limit to proper personhood are also a necessary source of labour' (2011; 503).⁵

Skeggs attaches Bourdieu's notion of the symbolic with its model of social topography and embodied entitlement to frame conceptions of inscription, 'thickening' Foucauldian understandings of power by recognising the force of symbolic relations of legitimation and institutionalisation in social space, the way they serve to set limits on the possibilities of relationships of exchange and evaluation, and the accrual and conversion of capitals across a range of fields (Skeggs: 2004). Primarily, Bourdieu offers Skeggs' work and my framework with the beginnings of a pragmatics for understanding the ways in which the metaphors of property (in his terms 'capitals') are realised through a person's positioning within social space. In this respect he reconnects the production of person value (the 'capital-ability' of the person, as Foucault refers to it) with the

⁵ Skeggs, here, provides a classed reading of Pateman's theory of the sexual contract. Just as women's labour was historically the predicate for the legal and moral status of personhood for men, the middle-class valued forms of self, subjectivity, and practice are premised on working-class persons for their own attribution of the labour of self- production (Skeggs: 2004, 2011).

conditions that make it possible, providing a powerful critique of meritocratic notions embedded in contemporary liberalism's formulations of individuality, choice and assumptions of equality of access (Lovell: 2007).

Skeggs' use of Bourdieu, however, is selective and critical. Put simply, she believes Bourdieu is useful for describing the operations of dominant forms of power, the production of the middle-class self and its social institution, but inadequate when it comes to understanding working-class experiences of power and their own valuation of their practices and relationships. Before turning to this critique and to her understanding of working-class experience and practice (providing key areas of insight and concepts for the analysis that follows), I outline my own understanding of his relational concepts of capital, field, and habitus. I emphasise the elements of his thought that I take with me into my analysis, including those aspects that Skeggs builds on in relation to middle-class uses of culture and taste.

2.6 Capital, Field, and Habitus

Bourdieu offers a sociological theory which he believed avoided the pitfalls of structural determinacy, where the social world is viewed as a space of objective relations irreducible to interactions between individuals, and where subjects become explained as 'simple epiphenomena' (1990b). Social practices and relationships are, for Bourdieu, to be studied neither as the result of the working out of these putative objective social laws, nor as the determinants of independent and autonomous agents who exhibit independent faculties of reason and decision making. Instead they must be understood within a relational and reflexive sociology through his concepts of habitus, capital and field. It is through these concepts that he proposed 'a non-intellectual, non-mechanistic analysis of the relations between agent and the world' that could trace the inequalities arising from the interplay between embodied practices and forms of socially symbolic institution (1990b). Bourdieu's overarching claim for such a theory of practice was that it proved the existence of a space of differences based on principles of economic, cultural and social differentiation (2008).

It is the 'objective relations anchored in structures of power, existing independently of consciousness or will, but compromising a historical formation developed by an accumulation of conflicts internal to it' that constitute fields and symbolic space as a whole (Bourdieu cited Coole: 2005; 136). For Bourdieu, each field produces a hierarchy of valuation through norms, rules and conventions which can become legislated through law but are more properly regarded as first and foremost forms of social institution. The values of the fields are the 'active properties' or capitals that agents compete for. They promote, elicit, and enforce distinctive patterns of 'valued' behaviour, discourse and identity, and define what types of goods, practices, and dispositions are permissible and legitimate as well as excluded and devalued. The fields' 'rules' are devoid of an inventor and are porous as a space of potential and active forces; that is he argued that his fields, whilst primary and conditioning of his habitus, remain open networks of shifting power relations arising from the asymmetries between forces that confront one another.

For Bourdieu, it is the structure of the fields within social space, and the habitus' position within them that generates and embodies it with various forms of capital – economic, social and cultural. These are the 'active properties' chosen as 'principles of construction' and 'are the different kinds of power or capital that are current in the different fields' (1992a; 229-231). For Bourdieu, people are distributed across social space in accordance with the 'volume of capital, composition of capital, and change in these two properties over time (manifested by past and potential trajectory)' (2008; 114). He identifies three main forms of capital. Economic capital is the material assets and wealth of the holder; that which is 'immediately and directly convertible into money' (1986: 243). Social capital is the accumulation of resources, both potential and actual, generated from social connections and obligations within social and family networks and through relationships within work and other institutions or associations. Cultural capital exists in three states: the embodied, comprising the dispositions of the mind and body, the objectified state, meaning cultural goods, and the institutionalised state, for example, academic positions held (ibid).

Access and accrual of capitals (their composition and volume) depend on particular social inheritances and embodiments, and involve generational transmission. Their

realisation for exchange and advantage also depends upon the relationship of a particular habitus with a particular field. This means that as active properties, capitals owe their specific expression and force to positioning within social space; 'a capital does not exist and function except in relation to a field' (Bourdieu: 1992; 101). That is, they must be recognised through conversion that can render 'unrecognisable the true principle of their efficacy' (1990a; 118).

Symbolic capital is this denied capital, recognised as legitimate, that is, misrecognised as capital. Symbolic recognition is the mechanism of realising distinction, a process which provides the possibility of converting one type of capital to another and allowing mobility across social space and the realisation of positional advantage through exchange and accrual. Legitimation is the key mechanism in conversion of capitals to power and status; capital has to be regarded as legitimate before it is capitalised upon (1990a; 108-10, 1992a; 75-6). It is here that 'the symbolic system creates, circulates and maintains distinctions from the perspective and interest of those with power (symbolic capital) enabling them to accrue value to themselves whilst keeping others contained' (Skeggs: 2012; 271).

Importantly, however, Bourdieu maintains this concept within a relational framework;

Symbolic power – as a power constituting the given through utterances, of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world ... is a power that can be exercised only if it is recognised, that is, misrecognised as arbitrary. This means that symbolic power does not reside in symbolic systems ... but that it is defined in and through a given relation between those who exercise power and those that submit to it i.e. the very structure of the field in which belief is produced and reproduced...words alone cannot create this belief. (Bourdieu: 1992a; 170)

Bourdieu's conception of misrecognition and symbolic violence, whilst complex, emphasises the performativity of the dominant symbolic through social institution. The 'dominated' are seen to incorporate the valuations of the legitimated through the operation of a form of 'social magic', misrecognising and veiling the social processes and relationships that come to marginalise them. For now I set aside the details and the problems that beset Bourdieu's concept of habitus as they are bound up with this conception of misrecognition; I return to these issues and the need to refine his concept of capitals later. In the next section I turn to the ways in which new class analysis has

used Bourdieu's thought for exploring the reproduction of class within contemporary process.

Distinction

An anecdote within my research related a story where a student, in turning to introduce herself to another at a society stall in Fresher's week, asked her what she was reading and the woman had replied 'Reading? I am reading Debrett's' and with that she moved on. Neither woman met each other again, for they moved in different social circles, but the brief interaction served to put the first in her place; acting as a reminder that educational capital, objectively defined in qualification and institution, must always be understood in relationship to other forms of capital and embodied entitlement. It is often, as Lawler puts it, 'not what you do or what you have, that is marked as right or wrong ... but who you are' (2004; 112). Whilst such experiences realise themselves across the hazy divisions of class in complex ways, it is working-class persons in particular that have to labour to 'constantly prove they are capable of carrying symbolic values' rather than be who they are (Skeggs: 2012; 270) whilst it is middle-class persons who 'are able to pass judgement, implicitly or explicitly, on others, and to make that judgement count' (Lawler: 2004; 112).

Bourdieu's emphasis, here, on the role of distinction, taste and aesthetics in the reproduction of classed inequalities, and his focus upon the body as a central site for these processes, has been highly influential for exploring the engendering of class divisions within the contemporary. Lawler, focusing on media and cultural productions explores the pathological representations of working-class bodies in terms of the expression of disgust, deducing from them what they reveal about middle-class identities and (dis)identifications. Here she draws heavily on Bourdieu's critique of the Kantian aesthetic to show how 'ownership of taste' is seen to reflect true humanity whilst at the same time conferring uniqueness, a uniqueness 'achieved through an incorporation of collective, classed understandings' (Lawler: 2005; 429). Middle-class disgust, she argues, is projected upon those who are perceived to lack such taste, they are disgusting because they lack knowledge, morally suspect because they lack the sensibility and judgement (a 'facile aesthetic') that would serve as a sign of their

humanity. For Lawler, those 'seen as lacking this taste must either not know any better, or must perversely lack the desire to become different ... working-class people should cease to show the signs of working-classness' (2005; 441).

McRobbie (2004, 2007), emphasising Bourdieu's conception of symbolic violence, explores media and cultural representations of working and middle-class girls. She focuses upon the pervasive presence of the production of the dichotomy between the 'A1 girl' who embodies successful femininity in new times of individualisation, and the 'Pram face' girl who remains tied pathologically to outdated gendered norms. Adkins and Skeggs, in their summary of McRobbie, underline two crucial points. McRobbie's analysis highlights 'the widening of class divisions between women and the increasing articulation of class divisions through the bodies of women' and, in doing so, she emphasises that 'social reproduction is understood as centrally concerned with shifting forms of ... female embodiment' (Adkins: 2004; 7).

In a marked departure from Lawler's analysis, Bennett (Bennett et al: 2009) research on the organisation and role of cultural capital in contemporary Britain departs from Bourdieu's thesis of the Kantian disposition of disinterest, and the practices and display of taste and aesthetic. Their findings, contra those of *Distinction* (2008) lead them to conclude that it is difficult to assert a unifying logic for the social space of lifestyles that is marked exclusively by class; they underscore that gender, age and ethnicity play their part in the choices, preferences and boundaries for cultural consumption that cannot be subsumed or explained by his unified class habitus. Where class differences are evident they are seen to become less a matter of cultural content than an orientation towards cultural consumption. It is here that they identify the omnivorous disposition to be the dominant expression of cultural capital amongst the middle-classes in contemporary Britain.

Class boundaries for the omnivore are, however, implicit rather than explicit; emerging through reference to the implied fixed and static tastes of the working-classes, whose culture is inferred as 'lacking'. They are, though, ambivalent in their conclusions about whether the omnivore entails a form of cultural currency for the middle-classes, or signals the breaking down of class boundaries and the marker of new forms of tolerance.

They suggest that 'the ethos is a source of security to the middle-classes, a liberal and egalitarian veneer, a denial of hierarchy, sanctioning access to hedonistic and popular practices' (Bennett et al: 2009; 255) but believe they can find confidence in their claims that cultural hostility is relatively limited in Britain today; surmising that middle-class participants of their research do not say they dislike working-class people because of their tastes. Their research leads them to conclude that, contra Lawler, the British 'seem rarely to use aesthetic preferences as indicators of personal worth' (ibid; 256).

Savage develops this analysis through his research on the Great British Class Survey where he draws upon cohort groups composed of the 'elite managerial class' and the 'precariat,' those who occupy extreme positions within the social space of differences (Savage et al: 2013). Here he finds Bourdieu's thought to be more pertinent for understanding the role of culture and symbolic domination through the process of classifying. What he terms as the elite managerial and predominantly metropolitan class does not, however, restore Bourdieu's emphasis upon aesthetics in the sense of high culture in the same way as may be ascribed to older forms of aristocratic proclivity. What the managerial elite do is talk about and think about class in ways that those who occupy the hazy, but central spaces of the social, do not. That is, they are actively engaged in the generation and formation of classed representations and categories through the deployment of their cultural capital; such a making of class is realised through the register of irony and knowingness rather than in the register of the 'highbrow'.

Like Savage, Skeggs has been interested in developing and extending the work of Bourdieu to explore the ways in which culture becomes deployed, appropriated and embodied as the means by which class inequalities reproduce themselves. There are significant differences, however. Whilst Savage does not imply that we are all 'middle-class now' there is a clear suggestion in his analysis that cultural consumption, practice and social differences have become less marked by class distinction in the majority of persons' lives. To understand the remaking and structuring of inequality, analysis should move its attention away from the relatively undifferentiated 'majority' (albeit finding their own specific and allocated spaces within his proposed new schemata/typology)

and shift attention to the movers and shapers of the managerial elite. Skeggs, as stated earlier, is concerned with exploring class as a struggle against classification rather than trying to formulate new forms of categorical placement. In addition her analysis of class – whilst alert to the importance of elites – is less willing to envision class-making as the possession of the few. It is here that she has no qualms about interpreting the omnivorous disposition as a means through which middle-class selves are created in distinction to, and through exclusion of, working-class persons (Skeggs: 2004).

Here I draw on her understanding of the aesthetic and prosthetic ‘self’ and her reading of the cultural omnivore. The purpose is not to provide a typology of discrete types of ‘self’ that are to be found in the research. What matters is the stress Skeggs places on understanding that the conditions of their possibility (their theorisation and their realisation in practice) can only be understood in relation to relationships of entitlement and access to resources (including knowledge, ‘ways of telling’ and performing). They represent, then, Skeggs’ own theoretical understanding of the logic of middle-class theory and practice as she frames them within a Bourdieusian schema of entitlement, but one adapted to changing forms of capital (re)production.

The conception of the aesthetic self has had various guises, but is reliant for its core articulation on the idea of the ‘economies of signs’ (Du Gay: 2007; 138). Skeggs traces the aesthetic self to a shift in emphasis from character to personality, a transition that reflects a movement where ‘self-sacrifice yielded to that of self-realisation’ (Skeggs 2004; 137), in which personhood is realised through appearances and performance of difference through consumption, ‘primarily as the consumption of signs, of exchange. These signs are the means by which value is known and attributed’ (ibid; 137). For Skeggs, the aesthetic self is an investment made through ‘new informational goods’ which enable a display of knowledge (of required objects but also of practice) to produce social difference. Using the work of Featherstone and echoing that of Bourdieu, this is a self that ‘relies on the accrual of cultural capital in the right composition, of the right volume, with the right knowledge in the right way’ (ibid; 136).

This appears to bear relation to the analysis of the epochal transformations identified by Lash and Urry of the ‘generalised process of ‘de-differentiation’ of economy/culture

relations' (du Gay: 2007; 139), where goods become primarily conceived in terms of their inscription with particular meaning and association rather than in their use value. It also bears resemblance to Foucault's more critical analysis of the subject of enterprise. Here the self 'operates primarily via a differentiating not a homogenising logic' of commodification in which 'social differences are not limited but multiplied (through) the proliferation of individual differences' (McNay: 2009; 63).

The prosthetic self is seen as an extension of possibilities for personhood realisable to the aesthetic self through an enlargement of the possibilities for the uses of culture. Strathern's work is significant for Skeggs because it shows how the shift from nature as the ground of authorisation opens out 'previously unchartered markets for cultural appropriation' that were formerly denied or excluded from consideration as improper (2004; 138). The loss of these restraints/authorisations (e.g. femininity as no longer grounded in sex, but as being seen as engendered) means that choice and reflexivity become intensified. For Skeggs this exemplifies a state where 'the middle-classes continually have to make choices, of viewpoints, of resources, of what they attach to themselves' in their efforts to establish and maintain the authority previously granted through older forms of authorisation (ibid; 139). This is both a 'dilemma', a crux of insecurity, and a site of self-production.

Skeggs draws attention to Lury's conception of 'indifferentiation' (the loss of perspective) and 'out-contextualisation' through which 'the subject is increasingly able to lay claim to features of the context or environment as if they were the outcome of the testing of his or her personal capacities' (Skeggs: 2004; 140). Out-contextualisation makes the source of authority and differential value of the self dependent upon the display of the 'thought of the objective object' through prosthesis itself (Lury: 1998; 18). Lury clarifies: 'This is not simply a process of de- and re-contextualisation, but a reconstitution or regrouping in order to make visible the ability of a thing, an object, a part to be taken out of context' (ibid; 19). In such a theorisation, compulsory individuality is transfigured into a form of 'experimental individualism' that involves the 'dramatic, as performative' through the temporary, knowledgeable, and ironic attachment to objects and practices to the self (Skeggs: 2004; 139). Lury argues that

(T)he primary capacity ... is the ability to be disembodied and then re-embodied at will, that is, to be disembodied from specific social relations, to be deracinated, without gender, class, sexuality or age, and then to display a combination of such natural and social characteristics as required through an assertion of a claim to the significance of their effects: to turn the substitutability of the customised individual in post-plural society into the individual art of colouring by numbers. (Lury: 1998; 24)

The aesthetic/prosthetic are examples of how middle-class persons are able to appropriate resources and participate in cultural practices that were previously deemed as 'improper'. Within the theory of the 'enterprising self,' forms of governmentality work through a 'certain flexibility, tolerating an array of practices and values as long as they are compatible with a consumerised notion of self-responsibility (McNay: 2009; 63). For Skeggs (2004), however, the definable limits of tolerable conduct are marked and determined by class; immorality and impropriety become available across a range of sites for middle-class persons, they are able to vocalise forms of vulgarity and make performance of self through the previously unspoken, and they are able to mimic and strip aspects of 'others' culture that were seen as out of bounds for the constitution of older forms of classed identities.

Skeggs argues that the aesthetic and prosthetic self can be distinguished from the cultural omnivore because the aesthetic/prosthetic 'can cross boundaries, be flexible and mobile' and are 'concerned to (and can) authorise (their) own perspective and partiality' (Skeggs: 2004; 147). For the prosthetic, signs have value for the way they can be used to display irony and critique. They become the means through which reflexivity and knowledge are revealed through the performance of a self and are always 'predicated upon a critique of how certain perspectives become legitimated' (ibid; 137). The cultural omnivore is more reliant on what the symbolic determines as legitimate practices and objects for consumption and accrual. The omnivore is not about 'creating new values' through reflexive practices of re-evaluation and play, but is concerned with maintaining boundary formation and 'is a confirmation of class distinction, rather than a challenge to it' (Skeggs: 2004; 144).

'Property thought'

'Property thought' is an important thematic in Skeggs' work for understanding the establishment of these middle-class forms of 'self' through the establishment of

particular types of exchange relation. For Skeggs 'thought of the proper' is the central conduit through which the processes of evaluative judgement are made to establish proprietary relationships of a particular kind, drawing 'attention to how property and propriety have long been central to the formation of middle-class self, how ownership, exchange and morality are always intimately connected' (Skeggs: 2004; 175). It is the establishment of relationships of property and propriety through entitlement that structures class relations, and crucially it is these relations that 'constitute the property - not the thing, person or practice that is being exchanged' (ibid; 175). Here Skeggs is drawing on Davies' (1994, 2007) use of post-structuralist feminist legal theory, which understands that the thing, object, or practice that becomes the attention of another is a construct, formed through a particular perspective and interest; 'the decision to propertize or not constructs the object as property' (Skeggs: 2004; 175).⁶

By drawing attention to the constitutive and evaluative role of dominant (legitimated) perspectives in the process of objectification, 'property thought' enables Skeggs to move away from Bourdieu's 'pascalian' notion of interest (below) to a more nuanced account of the historical imbrication and production of value/values within the formation of middle-class practice and subjectivity. Property thought, as it is used within my analysis, aims to reveal both 'the practical and symbolic productivity' of property for constituting middle-class selves (Cooper: 2007); providing a thematic for revealing how persons become seen and recognised as selves or not; or as Davies puts it, to be able to distinguish 'between entities which are moral 'ends in themselves' and entities which are only means' (2007; 13). This entails exploring how the metaphors of property which centre on concepts of 'hierarchy, purity and limitedness,' defined 'through exclusivity, sovereignty, self-identity, law, territory, boundaries, title and unity' (Skeggs: 2004; 174), are realised within a pragmatics that inform processes of embodied entitlement.

⁶ Skeggs cites Strathern's example of women being read for their worth as reproductive, and she adds the class difference which becomes ascribed through the inscription of the working-class female body as fecund, but dangerous, and excessive. The imputation of value through misrecognition sees a reversal and doubling (Skeggs: 2004; 11). The improper subjects of working-class 'excess' are not seen as propertizable (the women are literally no-things, or things with negative value). They still function, however, to accrue worth to the perspective that de-values them.

A pragmatics of property requires attention to the ways in which objects, persons, and practices are defined and given value as they are condensed as property through proprietary evaluation. It requires understanding what these perspectives exclude, what boundaries are put in place, and how (*crucially*) certainty attempts to replace ambivalence; 'being encoded as property requires certainty and clarity, even as encoding things as property invariably illuminates the limits of both' (Cooper: 2007; 631). Above all, to understand the pragmatics of property requires attention to the ways in which relationships are established and framed and to Bourdieu's conception of symbolic power and to social positioning; the ways in which legitimacy is conferred, and the ways in which this gives recognition and approval, and allows access and entitlement, for certain types of persons to accrue values to themselves.

2.7 Departures from Bourdieu

There has been much work by feminist scholars, and others, that has attempted to argue for the complexity of Bourdieu's concept of habitus, and a considerable amount of work that has sought to re-shape and modify it in light of the critiques laid at its door. Bourdieu, it is argued, 'shows the advantage of a more phenomenological perspective, where habitus allows him to take seriously the lived experience of players whose agency is constituted by, but also necessary for and sometimes incompatible with, the objective field' (Coole: 2005; 138). For McNay (2004) such an account provides for a fruitful analysis of the contradictory and ambivalent forms of 'identification and affective force' that occur at the level of subjectivity by connecting them recursively to fundamental underlying social structures operating at one remove from everyday consciousness.

Gillies, in turn, believes Bourdieu provides understanding for 'the way class is lived as an embodied subjectivity orientating individuals to the opportunities and constraints that characterise their lives' (2006; 35). Reay provides conditional support; the habitus is an 'open concept' to be used through empirical investigation, and one through which

we begin to get a sense not only of the myriad adaptations, responses, reactions and resistances to 'the way the world is,' but also of individuals struggling to make the world a different place. There is little evidence of determinism here. It is not a lack of action that is problematic, but rather the focus on pre-reflective dimensions of action (2004; 437).

Whilst I draw upon these writers' valuable work in working with, and against Bourdieu's thought, I do not accept that 'habitus' is the 'open concept' others have taken it to be.⁷ It is over-determined, mechanistic, and too thin a description of 'agents', their meaning-making practices, and their emotional and affective lives; be they middle or working-class. The suggestiveness of practical mimesis becomes, in his hands, the means through which he can master his material. It reduces the 'phenomena' under observation to establish his theory as authoritative, as the proper place from which to understand (de Certeau: 1988).

This is a longstanding criticism within feminist thought; for Smith, Bourdieu's sociology does the 'specialised work of transforming the particularities of people's lives into the standardised and objectified forms in which they can be recognised', his habitus produces an 'automatism of conformity among women to patriarchal images of subservience' (Smith: 1997; 120) through his imposition of an androcentric paradigm for understanding relations between men and women (Bourdieu: 1992a; 215). Bourdieu's conception of women is of the 'static, the archaic, the homogeneous, the structurally neat' (Tsing: 1994; 279). It is a vision that takes male authority for granted instead of analysing the ongoing work of gender with both women and men positioned as social actors. As such he repeats the long tradition of male sociological thought⁸, in his efforts to place 'ambivalence outside the realm of practice', and in particular the ambivalences 'at the heart of many forms of gender and sexuality reproduction', his work fails to understand that identities 'are worked and uncomfortably inhabited' (Skeggs: 2004; 29).

As widely recognised, Bourdieu also leaves his habitus within a framework that reproduces dominant conceptions of interest and exchange intact; this is a subject

⁷ Bourdieu (1992b) himself provided short shrift to any conception that habitus, field and capital could be understood in any other way than his own:

Eagleton: Maybe I'm caricaturing it, but is doxa not itself a more contradictory affair? That is, can people believe and not believe, or believe at different levels?

Bourdieu: No.

⁸ One where conceptions of knowledge imply a 'propertisation and legalisation of a terrain [where] solving the riddle of femininity, involves the imposition of legislative conceptions on the unknown territory, reducing sexuality and sexual difference to a normatively confined space' (Davies: 1994; 373).

whose practices are always and already caught up in the activities of competition for symbolic distinction (Honneth: 1986). Indeed it is because Bourdieu emphasises the corporeal and exchange value self that he is so scathing in his approach to the attribution of moral or higher value to human behaviour. His sociological practice, explicit in its cravings for 'axiological neutrality', displays a deep suspicion of values. For him 'motivations' owe their efficacy to the fact that they

function below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control by the will. Orientating practices practically, they embed what some would call values in the most automatic gestures or the apparently most insignificant techniques of the body (2008; 466).

In attempting to extricate his habitus from the charge of determinism and from the loss of a theory of conflict, Bourdieu argued that the working-class habitus can exhibit a form of social suffering that internalises the tensions and contradictions between disposition and field. Bourdieu, here, appears to propose a different ontology to that of the acquisitive and exchange-centred habitus of the middle-classes; but one based upon adjustment and lack (Skeggs: 2004b). The incorporation of dominant valuation through misrecognition represents a bodily submission but one 'that internalises silent suffering, which may find bodily expression, in the form of self-hatred, self-punishment' (Bourdieu: 1992a; 121). The habitus too, through its inheritances and practical sense of the world, can become divided when it experiences social change, or when it enters a new and unfamiliar field; here Bourdieu finds a habitus 'in constant negotiation with itself and with its ambivalence, and therefore doomed to a kind of duplication, to a double perception of self, to successive allegiances and multiple identities' (cited Sayer: 2005; 26).

Bourdieu, here, has been influential for a number of academics in developing a focus upon 'the lived experience of the social damage inflicted in late capitalist societies on the least powerful and the intra-psychic and relational wounds that result' (Frost: 2008; 440). It is a concern that I share within my analysis, a concern that seeks to understand the relation between a person's experience of inequality and the 'mechanisms by which social relations become internalised' (ibid; 446). The problem is that 'habitus', theoretically and methodologically, 'closes off the positive, affective, justifiable

experiences of anger and exclusion' from the consciousness of persons themselves (Skeggs: 2004b; 87).

A focus on 'the voice of pain' also elides 'all the things which co-exist with suffering and disadvantage, the 'syncretic dynamism of contemporary metropolitan life' (McRobbie 2002; 136). Here, as McRobbie points out, the literature which explores the 'language and humour' of working-class life (Willis: 1978), and 'even just in the 'art of making do' (de Certeau: 1988) can broaden perspectives to understand the difference between 'suffering and survival' (Skeggs: 2004b; 88) as well as focus attention upon processes of re-evaluation, and the 'daily cultural struggle around authorisation, in which those who are positioned to make judgements of others' are continually de-authorised by those who are positioned to be judged' (Skeggs: 2005a; 975).

In the next section I turn to Skeggs' *'Formations'* (2002) to emphasise the importance of her work for rethinking, developing and departing from Bourdieu's theory as it has relevance for my study. Her exploration of working-class women's experience, organised around the 'trope' of respectability, is 'a powerful illustration of the uncertainties and negotiations that accompany the reproduction of normative gender identity' within the formation of classed subjectivities (McNay: 2004; 186) that I draw upon extensively within my analysis.

2.8 'Formations'

Formations explores how Skeggs' working-class women worked through respectability as a means from which to dis-identify from their class positioning and the negative value judgements they felt were ascribed to them; revealing the ways in which the desire 'to avoid being positioned by the vulgar, pathological, tasteless and sexual' (Skeggs: 2002; 100) necessitated investments in, and a reworking of, femininity (the labour of appearances and the labour of care) to deflect the sense of judgement and shame they felt from their identification as working-class. In the absence of recognised cultural, educational and economic capitals, their relation to femininity is experienced as 'a structure of feeling' which offered the promise of finding and retaining value in their lives, a resource for halting loss and putting a floor on their circumstances. In doing so

they attempted to secure, through the institutions of heterosexuality and marriage and the take up of care work, economic security and recognition within local circuits of exchange (Skeggs: 2002).

In attempting to negotiate categories and domains of identity heavily invested with the historical meanings and valuations of middle-class perspectives, they were locked 'into systems of self-regulation and monitoring, producing themselves as governable subjects' (Skeggs: 2002; 162). Their investments were also misrecognised within wider circuits of exchange, they continued to be positioned by the classed perspectives that they wished to dis-identify from; they were excluded from converting their cultural resources and competencies into symbolically recognised forms of capital. This is because respectability and 'the feminine' are given their legitimated and institutionalised forms of value through middle-class perspectives of what is proper and appropriate; so whilst respectability was 'something to desire, to prove and to achieve' it was also something that was illusive, always felt as the property of others (ibid; 1). Taking up positions within 'mothering' and caring subject positions, and within heterosexual relationships, and the 'taking up' of feminine behaviours and appearances, did not consequently succeed in assuaging the sense of failure and blame they felt, and the anxiety and pain of not 'fitting in'.

Commentators have sometimes summarised Skeggs' work on respectability within the context of Bourdieu's thought. Here identifications made by social actors are not based on recognising oneself as belonging to a given classed position, but as the process of differentiating oneself from 'others' to acquire recognition established by the 'field' through attempts to acquire recognised and legitimated forms of cultural capital; that is as 'tactical and strategic 'moves' that are made in the effort to give 'distinction' and receive recognition' (Devine: 2005; 14). Reading Skeggs through Bourdieu, however, is to miss the contribution of her empirical work and to overplay the contribution of his own understanding of class and its purported benefits for explaining 'ambivalent, contradictory and complex values, identities and forms of awareness' (Devine: 2005; 13).

It is worth underlining, as a starting point, that Skeggs emphasises that the women's 'interest' in *'Formations'* is not straightforwardly about 'profit' nor motivated by a sense of individual entitlement but by a 'refusal of recognition' (Skeggs: 2002). Rather than a search for 'distinction', then, they were in search of spaces where they could find safety from classed judgement; that is they did not want to stand out. A related point, here, is that whilst some of the women of *'Formations'* made attempts to 'pass' as middle-class they did not want to *be* middle-class. This is important because it emphasises that their classed negotiation of femininity through respectability cannot be explained through Bourdieu's concept of misrecognition, they did not simply incorporate the (engendered and classed) values of the dominant. Indeed, Skeggs emphasises that conflict over value and valuation is central to the complex formation of the women's subjectivity; class is experienced in their lives as a 'structuring absence, a dialogic of judgements of self as measurement against others' (ibid; 74-5) that materialises through a classed struggle against symbolic de-valuation.

Bottero (2004) suggests that accounts of class influenced by Bourdieu's thought, and she cites Skeggs, are disingenuous because they implicitly draw on the language and concepts of older class approaches whilst claiming to overcome their pitfalls. They posit disidentification and misrecognition as the means by which subjects fail to understand their collective bonds and shared position in class terms. It is, for Bottero, a re-working of Marxist and Althusserian formulations of 'false consciousness'; an approach that implies 'a 'correct recognition' or form of identification' that lies outside of the capabilities and understanding of lay people (Devine: 2005; 16). For Bottero, the older language of class as being explicit and oppositional is retained for the academic despite the lack of evidence that people in their everyday lives 'are willing to talk about themselves and others in explicitly class terms' (2004; 993).

Bottero's critique, applied to *Formations*, is an oversimplification and has to be placed within the context of the lived experience of working-class lives and Skeggs' nuanced account. In her rejection of Bourdieu's habitus in favour of a more 'knowing' but also complex and contradictory 'subject', she gives her working-class women more credit and practical sense than Bourdieu's theory would allow; 'to disidentify we need to know

from what the disidentifications are being made. Recognitions have to be made, resisted, challenged for disidentification to occur' (Skeggs: 2002; 123).

'*Formations*' examines, here, 'what it is to be through categorisation, such as 'woman', 'feminine', and 'heterosexual' through the perspective of classed experience (Skeggs: 2002; 12). These 'singular categories of identity are always uninhabitable' (ibid; 167) but for working-class women this is more so because the assumptions underpinning their proper form are classed. They are also lived through one another, and they are often conflicting, producing ambiguity and contradiction, and it is class, again, which heightens and makes this experience particular. The ways in which the women recognised their selves through negotiation of subject positioning, and the ways they detached and dissimulated from class, was 'context specific and sometimes temporal, changing over time, space and place. The production of themselves for recognition was deployed strategically' (ibid; 164). *Formations*, then, is demonstration of how

the generation of categories and classifications had to be learnt and recognised by those who they were designed for and how this is a process of negotiated meaning. The gap between classification and positioning enables the exploration of how actually class does and does not work. Academics may define class but how it is lived may be significantly different. (Skeggs: 2004; 42)

Skeggs' empirical research and feminist appropriation of post-structural theory, here, provides a more sensitive and complicated 'picture' of subjectivity, the experience of class, and evaluation of self and other, of its effects, affects and spatial-temporal variations than Bourdieu's framework can provide. The inscriptions of femininity, gender, sexuality and ethnicity, the values they carry, and the valuations made of them through particular perspectives, function in Skeggs' framework as a way not just to understand the sticking and fixing processes of class but also the ways in which different inscriptions work in contradiction, produce ambivalence, affect and counter valuation *within social relationships* as well as within the formation of subjectivities.

Use value and the contingency of values

Within class relations, Skeggs emphasises that dominant interests and perspectives do not just produce conformity, acquiescence or quiet submission. They exclude, regulate, diminish, but they are also contested and recognised as a point of conflict over value. It

is here that 'recognition struggles are not only about the relative rates of exchange of different forms of capital, but also about the relative worth (use value) of different kinds of goods/categories of people' (Skeggs: 2004; 147). Such struggles, and their affects, underline that within processes of evaluation it is not just power but also morality playing its part. To understand working-class values and practice, and to reach beyond Bourdieu, we need to 'keep exchange and use value separate, for this enables us to see how different groups have different possibilities for evaluation' (Skeggs: 2004; 12). That is, focus needs to be widened to the differing perspectives taken rather than the 'object' being exchanged or appropriated; here 'it is possible to see peoples dispositions, characteristics, culture and artefacts as having use value only to themselves, both beyond exchange but also becoming an object of exchange the moment another person becomes interested in it/them' (ibid; 11). As Lawler observes, when these alternative systems (of valuation and value) are occluded 'there can only be lack: one effect of narratives of lack is that they rob the subjects of such narratives of any moral value' (2005; 434).

For Skeggs, working-class use value is that which remains behind after the appropriation or denigration of value by dominant perspectives, it is neither recognisable to those who seek to appropriate value from others nor dependent upon relations of exchange, it 'disrupts the chain of value connectors' made in economist terms and focuses on the 'uses of culture, relations and practice' (2004; 186). Use values emerge from the material and emotional conditions in which working-class persons live, and their symbolic exclusion from forms of accrual and recognition. Working-class performances of femininity, for example, have use values that are misrecognised and realised as a constitutive limit to inform a middle-class sense of propriety; as a dispositional resource and practice, however, they serve to make lives liveable that exist within conditions of precarity.

The women in *Formations*, here, drew upon their knowledge and competencies to construct contextual and tactical performances of femininity which expressed use values that were shared and recognised amongst one another. These were made through necessity, sometimes through critique and defence, and sometimes as a

‘structural inconvenience’, but they had ‘nothing to do with comfortably inhabiting or ‘naturally’ aligning themselves with femininity’ (Skeggs: 2002; 165).⁹ More ‘generally’ their labour of, and for, respectability within conditions of precarity and symbolic denigration created use values that served to

re-legitimate value practices that have been de-legitimated, entering different, nearly always local circuits of value and generating alternative values about ‘what/who matters,’ ‘what/who counts and what is just. These value practices cannot be explained by an epistemology developed from understandings situated in entirely different materialities, or from theoretical abstractions, rather than alternative, lived and emplaced practices. (Skeggs: 2011; 508).

Commitments

Sayer’s work on the moral significance of class (2005a) raises important areas of discussion for my research. Like Skeggs, he develops the Marxist distinction between use and exchange value, and draws upon McIntyre’s distinction between internal and external goods (the former are intrinsic to specialised practices and social activities, whilst the latter are more about prestige, power and status). And like Skeggs, he believes that ‘distinctions between use value and exchange value and internal and external goods bring into view the respects in which inequalities and struggles of the social field go beyond the pursuit of interests and power’ (Sayer 2005a; 95). Use values and internal goods are often felt as non-exchangeable in the lives of social actors, ‘they can’t be sold or swapped for something else’ (ibid; 41) and therefore should be considered as a good in their own right. Sayer believes, too, that the concept of commitments is superior to that of investments in games, because it implies stronger, more serious attachments, ones that involve objects, practices, others and relationships which we care about, and ones that cannot be easily reduced to matters of taste. Commitments too can embody altruism rather than self-interest and are not confined by questions of power over others (ibid; pp 40-51).

⁹ For Skeggs ‘the appearance of femininity is a constantly transformable act based on attachment and detachment of practices and objects in a circuit of exchange, a wilful playfulness, performative and performing, (and this) means that it needs careful empirical attention, not just an understanding of misrecognition’ (Skeggs: 2004b; 24) Chapter 5 applies such an understanding and approach.

For Sayer, 'actors also value others and their conduct in terms of their goodness or propriety' and such moral sentiments and the values embedded in them are considered to 'strikingly cross cut social positions' (Sayer: 2005a; 42). He remarks, here, that the concern to understand class relationships through a focus upon 'moral boundary drawing' has a tendency to inscribe inter-class relations as 'purely mutually contemptuous' and ignores other qualities such as 'benevolence, compassion and the like' (ibid; 140). Drawing on Adam Smith, he believes that analysis of moral sentiments needs to begin by first '*abstracting from social class*' in an effort to recognise the 'common features of human socialisation that are more or less universal' (ibid; 143). For Sayer the struggles of social field make little sense if we ignore these moral sentiments and recognise that the scope for moral behaviour and evaluation varies independently of major social divisions.¹⁰

Skeggs' work is much more critical with regard to the respective commitments and attachments of working and middle-class persons. There is little in her work that considers the ethical motivations or commitments of middle-class persons with regard to class relations in a 'positive light'. Even academics appreciative of her work have criticised her for extending a form of class antagonism to those who try to 'cross over' for the 'right commitments', whether in regard to middle-class research on working-class experience such as mine, or in the case of the middle-class women of my research, their 'ethical' orientation and relation to care as it is realised through their work in the field of welfare.¹¹

It should be remembered that although Skeggs does indeed appear damning of the middle-classes in her attribution of a Bourdeusian motivation for accrual ('Bourdieu offers us a model to map the making of the middle-class' (Skeggs: 2011; 501)) she is

¹⁰ Sayer is careful not to make the class relationships that emerge from such sentiments transparent. Differences in class between persons distort and refract moral sentiments; 'even actions which are not driven by struggle for advantage over others, indeed, even those that have egalitarian motives, are likely to be twisted by the field of class forces in ways which reproduce class hierarchy (Sayer: 2005; 169).

¹¹ For Sayer 'while these forms of refusal of class mixing are utterly understandable in terms of the struggles of the social field, if the motivation of those who try to mix across class divisions are not selfish then this kind of negative reaction would itself be anti-egalitarian ... it can have conservative effects. There is a danger of this, for example, in Beverley Skeggs' hostility to such transgressions' (Sayer: 2005; 174).

referring to a middle-class dominant 'perspective' rather than to individuals. Skeggs, too, is arguing from a position: a position that believes the merits of middle-class sentiment and worth have had enough attention and space. She is, nonetheless, much more sceptical than Sayer over this question of 'commitments' and moral sentiments and over the seamlessness of shared ethical and moral orientations and values. She herself recognises that her analysis of class has the danger of falling foul of Bourdieu's model of interest and investment that confines middle-class practice and self to 'an accumulative, capital-based model'. It is, however a danger that Skeggs feels as justified:

I shout loudly, the purpose has been to show how some people do actually fit and benefit from shaping themselves through these capitalist metaphors of profit and loss, depreciation and inheritance, interest and investment. If culture is made into a property that can be exchanged for value across a range of sites, then it is important not to lose sight of the broader framework that enables, indeed compels, some selves to operate in this way. (2004; 187)

Before turning to such a 'compulsion,' it is worth emphasising that it is the detail of the argument that can make what is easily dismissed as 'class war' something rather different; to borrow Berlant's words on Harvey - 'a polemic is a call for precision, not a way of drowning it out' (2011; 277). Skeggs' scepticism of shared cross-class values and commitments is founded in a historically informed understanding of the different social and subject positioning of working and middle-class persons, and their very different experience of material realities. She draws attention, as I have highlighted, to the differing historical relation to femininity, ethnicity, sexuality, citizenship and 'care' that working and middle-class persons have, as well as their differing location within social space and their respective allocations of capitals.

In doing so, she carefully maps out the differing class relationships to 'self' and 'other', to morality, propriety, and to value practice. Working-class values, here, cannot be simply made to connect with a morality that emerges from the common features of human socialisation. Rather, they are produced 'in opposition and in relation to the dominant and universal' and from within their positioning within social space. That is, as she illustrates through her work on respectability, working-class practices, values, and re-evaluations only make sense when understood from the specifics of their own conditions – material and symbolic. It is from this perspective that Skeggs seeks to explore working-class alternate values and sensibilities, not as a theory of intrinsic moral

value. To conclude this section, I quote Skeggs and her concept of value; it provides a summary of her work on 'imagining personhood differently'. It is this conception and approach to value and valuation that I explore in the analysis chapters:

The concept of value ... is contingent and situational, based on practices, on how value can be lived and materialised, carried, inscribed and recognised on bodies, on persons and in practices. Different circuits and exchange mechanisms exist, some enable capital/s accumulation; others exist alongside and others are autonomist, based on reciprocity, care, shared understandings of injustice, insecurity, precarity. All these values circulate through the person as they face capitalism in very different directions ... different imaginaries for understanding personhood are shaped through different spatial and temporal configurations of value: a model of extraction from (surplus value extraction from labour power - time and energy), a model of accruing to (time and energy on self-development), whilst the other is based on relationality (time and energy with and for others). (2011; 509)

2.9 Precarity

It is in relation to the contingency of values, the affective and the precarious, that the work of Berlant is both insightful and problematic. Within my analysis her work on compassion, for example, is used to understand the respective relationship the women in my research have to attachments of care as a 'social and aesthetic technology of belonging and not an organic emotion' (2004; 5). The focus is upon the ways in which compassionate commitments to others are informed by differing historical legacies that are relative to the women's different engendering through class processes. Here, however, I want to highlight Berlant's conceptualisation of the affective specifically in relation to precarity and the experience of class, for it draws attention back to the end of the last section - a focus on the relative positioning of the women in my research within the material and symbolic.

Berlant believes that a 'spreading precarity provides the dominant structure and experience of the present moment, cutting across class and localities' (2011; 192). For her, 'affective responses may be said significantly to exemplify shared historical time,' a time experienced as the dissolution of disavowal. What Berlant is highlighting are 'the moral-intimate-economic conventional good life fantasies' that neo-liberalism has eroded and made fragile ('the privatisation of public life and the fragility of all of the institutions and spaces for the reproduction of life - intimate, public, private, national,

economic') (ibid; 201). Berlant turns 'attention to diverse class, racial, sexual and gendered styles of composure' and recognises that 'the distribution of the sensible' varies in its register according to the 'norms of self-management that differ according to what kinds of confidence people have enjoyed about the entitlements of their social relations' (ibid; 3). She does, however, run the risk of conflating these differences within her description of what she calls the 'situation,' slipping into elision of the respective relations to power of differently located groups; 'the wealthy are experiencing the material and sensual fragilities and unpredictability that have long been distributed to the poor' (ibid; 195).

The process of capital re-organisation (what the reflexive modernity thesis calls de-tradition) does indeed create frailty and expose vulnerabilities; so called objective and sacred institutions erode, along with their authority. Old normative assumptions shift ground, suffer erosion and contingency. These values and institutions, old certainties and 'promises', have historically situated people very differently. People, too, bear the vulnerabilities of risk and the insecurity of contingency differently, and it is their positioning that influences the way they are affected and respond. This entails recognising that the relation to those cruel objects of optimism to which they stay attached, and the values that are/were invested in them, are also differently realised.

The 'debates about reworking insecurity' in the 'new precarious public sphere' are precisely, and as Berlant recognises, those that are dominated by the insecurities of those positioned best and who 'profit' more from 'the situation'. When she talks of 'a differing genre of social time and practice in which relation of persons and worlds is sensed to be changing but the rules for habituation and the genres of storytelling about it are unstable,' (2011; 6) the perspective of class must be maintained. The institutions and regulations that emerge from global crisis insure against the vulnerabilities of some, and not others. For those on the margins of social space (globally) the affective responses to crisis by the 'powerful' or the 'better positioned' are more often than not the ones which will silence them in public spheres.

For Rose, here, the psyche, its appetites and desires, its ethic of work and citizenship, and sense of personal responsibility for its own production, are produced through the

'fabrication of a kind of 'passional economy' in which human beings and their corporeality are connected into flows of needs and desires, pleasures and anxieties' (Rose 1999; 271). He points to the affects of anxiety and unease of this governmental subject as the 'inevitable accompaniment' to self-realisation, 'a constant and intense self-scrutiny, a continual evaluation of our personal experiences, emotions and feelings in relation to images of satisfaction, the necessity to narrate our lives in a vocabulary of interiority' (ibid; 258). Rose's ontology of vulnerability and anxiety is structured within a middle-class and engendered perspective, a hermeneutics of self ('the unceasing reflexive gaze of our own psychologically educated self-scrutiny') that as I have emphasised requires access to the resources to make such self-realisation a possibility, or indeed to make sense. Nonetheless its particular forms of compulsion need attending to.

Walkerdine and Lucey explore, here 'how ... girls' subjectivities [are] created in the social spaces that open up for them in specific historical circumstances and social and cultural locations' (2001; 11). Like the middle-class women within their research, those within my thesis stand in sharp contrast to the working-class women. Highly educated, single, and ostensibly detached from the 'discourse of care and the realities of interdependence and self-abnegation' (ibid; 9) that characterise the working-class women's lives; some may appear to embody the success of the 'A1 girl' (McRobbie: 2007). Walkerdine and Lucey's *Growing up Girl* (2001) emphasises the need to reach beyond such representations to understand the role of rationality and 'of the feminine in the making of the bourgeois subject,' that is to focus attention on how 'the technologies of the social produce modes of power and regulation through which a particular kind of subject is produced at a particular historical moment' (2001; 166).

Here the emphasis is upon how 'girls are made as particular types of subject' through focus upon 'the place of subjectification and subjectivity' (the lived experience of being a subject) (ibid; 176). They find that the anxiety and insecurities faced by middle-class women over their place in the world, and the pressures they feel, are key to understanding the ways in which 'other' subjects are made and fixed in place. That is, the processes of individualisation as they affect the middle-class women implicitly

reproduce class through the production of difference and distinction in the realm of everyday practice.

Brown places these concerns within the wider political contexts of neo-liberal rule. It is here that the inducement of individualisation and false autonomy for the 'sovereign' subject becomes its 'vulnerability'. Neoliberal forms of governmentality erode conceptions of the public domain, understandings of collective values, intersubjective bonds and dependencies, and work to atomise understandings of social relationships and responsibilities, separating out questions of social justice from determination in structural factors. Under such conditions, Brown believes the contemporary subject is produced in reaction to its powerlessness, premised on its own exclusion, and is pressed into a 'politics of recrimination that seeks to avenge the hurt ever while it reaffirms it' (Rose, citing Brown: 1999; 269).

Such 'a personalisation of politically contoured conflicts and inequalities' is given a classed reading by Skeggs. The resentment expressed against 'welfare dependents' and those working-class 'others' perceived to tarnish new forms of 'national sentimentality' (2004; 183) are the most obvious expressions of middle-class resentment. In the new precarious sphere of financial crisis, such affects are only further heightened and used for cutting back on the most 'unproductive,' the skivers and shirkers; 'one has to 'schematize' the logical figure of the enemy, providing it with more concrete features that will make it into an appropriate target of scorn, hatred and struggle' (ibid; 180). The historically induced suffering of working-class persons realised through conditions of living in precarity and symbolic violence are reduced and transformed into a medium of offence against the 'proper' person. For Skeggs, here, 'the powerless simply become an affect, a resource to be plundered to gain the political and moral ground that has been lost by the powerful' (ibid; 184).

Skeggs' work on reality television draws attention to the ways in which the affective is operationalised within cultural production to generate a sense of middle-class propriety through the spectacular visualisation of the immaterial labour of care within working-class women's heterosexual relationships. The figure of the working-class woman is made visible and subject to evaluation, her performances quantified and moralised

through the domain of affect (Skeggs: 2010). For Skeggs the resources for verbalising emotion and the 'accepted' genres for their performance are engendered classed inheritances. Drawing upon Illouz, she focuses attention on the culture of therapy and communicative bargaining within intimate relationships. The 'conventions' of middle-class 'relationship work' and display of intimacy through immaterial labour become recognised emotional competencies, the grids through which working-class performances are judged through the translation of the affective within the relationship as a narrative of failed sensibility. The emotionally labouring body is 'a form of class and gender reproduction, promoting a bourgeois model of how intimate relationships should be performed' (Skeggs; 2010b).

Skeggs reserves the term resentment, for the expression of the affects of 'the excluded'. For Skeggs the affective dimensions of working-class experience are legitimate responses to felt injustice but also a sign of a different value system (Skeggs: 2009). Here she draws upon Ngai and her work 'Ugly Feelings' (2005). Capitalism, for Ngai, has moved beyond a politics of alienation to an affectual economy aligned with the requirements of flexibility, mobility, adaptability and performance to produce the 'readiness to reconfigure oneself' as an operational requirement, and where affects are 'neatly reabsorbed' into the wage system and reconfigured as professional ideals (Ngai: 2005; 4). She concedes that dysphonic affects (anxiety, irritation, insecurity, restlessness) seem to be the 'the psychic fuel' on which capitalist society runs, but that the affective production of 'ugly feelings' - such as envy - are marked by ambivalence and cannot be subsumed within forms of 'counter valorisation as therapeutic 'solutions' to the problems they highlight and condense' (ibid;3).

Ngai observes of envy, here, that 'it is impossible to divorce the pervasive ignobility of this feeling from its class associations or from its feminisation ... forms of negative affect are more likely to be stripped of their critical implications when the impassioned subject is female' (Ngai: 2005; 129 - 130). Envy can be better understood, however, as an affective response to felt inequality, rather than 'a pejorative or morally coded' quality where the facts of 'not having' are 'reduced to illusion'. For Ngai, envy induces what she terms 'equivocality'; the 'morally degraded and seemingly unjustified status of ugly

feelings produce an un-pleasurable feeling about the feeling (a reflexive response of feeling ashamed about the feeling) a feeling akin to a reflexive irony' (ibid; 10).

2.10 Conclusion

The range and sophistication of the theoretical traditions that bear on my research have necessitated this extended exploration. They provide an analytical context and a set of conceptual tools with which to articulate and interrogate detailed experiential knowledge. But I have now reached a point when it is necessary to return to my starting place: the fraught boundaries of class within a physical [geographical] neighbourhood well-known to me. Thus my research begins in and returns to the fluid networks of a specific place. Within the confines of that space, my respondents do not simply passively reproduce at the local level the constraints of class, gender, and capital. Embattled within complex and often desperate circumstances, they actively intervene in and seek to modify the forces that work in and through their lives. Those processes are reflected, and in some sense re-enacted, within the analysis that follow

3. Property and propriety

3.1 Introduction

...In the elements making up human capital we should also include mobility, that is to say, an individual's ability to move around, and migration in particular... (Foucault: 2010; 230)

(Handbag exercise)

Mandy (aged 21)

Pram net

Feeding bottle

Powdered milk

'Red book' and 6 week examination letter:-

'bottle fed at 6 weeks, hip examination normal,
no cardiac murmur, pulse present,
reacts to sound, relaxed eye, blink eye reflex
present, parental eye contact, first smile'

Hair bobbles (prevent baby pulling hair)

Disposable nappy

Milk token

Baby wipes

Baby brush and comb

Hat (windy and cold)

Pink mittens (scratching)

Slipper boots (cold feet)

Purse

A five pence piece

Bank card

Receipt for 5 chicken legs, jar of peanut butter

Olivia (aged 21)

Vintage leather satchel (charity shop)

iPhone,

Note book for dissertation

Compact mirror

Make-up: 2 lipsticks, dark classic burgundy,
lighter shade to soften, blusher

Shopping list

Chewing gum

Hair bobbles (tied back for dancing)

Key pass (community centre)

Aspirin

Contraceptive pills

Purse (charity shop)

Driving licence

£10 note, pound coin

European health insurance card

Keys for work

Receipt for Anne Frank's exhibition

Train tickets, bank cards

Friends business card (discounted drinks)

Student card (snapped de-icing car window)

Hair appointment card

... what I think is at stake in this kind of analysis is the problem of the inversion of the relationship of the social to the economic' (Foucault: 2010; 240).

Today, as outlined in Chapter 2, the 'epistemological shift' within neo-liberal perspectives has been to establish responsibilities for 'self-realisation' upon individuals for their own self-ownership and enterprise. Within such a perspective the distinction between the property of the person and the person themselves becomes lost, capital becomes 'inseparable from the person who possesses it'; it cannot be abstracted but rather becomes considered as both the 'expression' and the 'principle of decipherment' of a person's 'capital-ability' (Foucault: 2010)¹². It is here that 'through the prism of individualisation, class differences are re-invented' and where value judgements and distinctions come to obscure inequalities through appearing as culture (McRobbie: 2004; 101).

As McRobbie observes of such processes, the symbolic violence exerted upon working and middle-class women's identities is integral to the processes of social reproduction today. It is a violence exerted 'through a particular (post-feminist) spatial and temporal framing of female individualisation, the body, and the world of cultural objects' (2004; 103). What is made visible of a young working-class mother like Mandy is made to signify all that lies beyond the bounds of 'the enterprising, global citizen,' she is a person who lets 'down themselves, their children, their community, their class, their country, and ultimately their race'(Haylett: 2001; 358).

The bodies of young women are now to be understood according to a scale running from welfare dependent, single maternity, marking failure, to well-groomed, slim, sophistication, marking success. The pramface girl who is pinched and poor looking, common and cheaply dressed, with a child in a buggy, is in sharp contrast to the A1 girls who can spend a disposable income on themselves and aspire to full participation in consumer culture. (McRobbie: 2004; 102)

My intention in this chapter is not to reproduce such a perspective or to reduce the working and middle-class women through objectification to what they own or lack but rather, and simply, to highlight the differential access they have to the processes of 'individualisation' through recourse to property. Rather than keep this relation of inequality hidden in the name of propriety I draw attention to it from the start. It is for

¹² 'Capital', here, is defined as the set of all those physical and psychological factors which make someone able to earn this or that wage (Foucault:2010)

Mandy, as I will emphasise in the chapters that follow, an affective subject. In common with many of the working-class women in my research she refers to the ways in which she is treated as a 'no-body': 'being a no-body' means that you are positioned as a person of no property, a person with no recourse to propriety, no recourse to a self that can be performed and evaluated as being a somebody. No voice that can be heard. The law of the proper is also the 'elimination of the significance or meaning of certain groups' (Davies; 1994; 371). At the same time, a perceived lack of property and of propriety, of moral substance, form, significance, gives authority to make Mandy the target of regulative practice as 'the object of public knowledge, public objectification and public reduction' (ibid; 378).

Olivia may be understood as standing on the other side of the social relation as 'the subject of entitlement, acquisition and appropriation who moves across social space with ease constantly entering fields for the conversion and accrual of value to their selves' (Skeggs: 2011; 504). Of course this is a sociological perspective upon the A1 girl of individualisation, a figure realised through technologies of regulation and control that focus upon 'capacity, success, attainment, enjoyment, entitlement, social mobility and participation ... a constant stream of incitements and enticements to engage in a range of specified practices which are understood to be both progressive but also consummately and reassuringly feminine' (McRobbie: 2007; 721). What the putative subject position of the 'A1 girl' belies is the complex of fiction and fantasy, regulation and defences in which young women's bodies and minds are inscribed' and where their positioning within the 'new economy' is far from comfortable (Walkerdine: 2001; 216).

For now, however, my necessary focus is upon the 'Can do' girl, and the 'girl who can't', and upon the relations of class (dis)entitlement. In having such a focus I highlight how the relative social positioning of the working and middle-class women conditions what type of choices for self and self-making are available to them. It is here that whilst class processes of entitlement and exclusion are 'much more difficult to detect when it comes to matters of culture and subjectivity' (Skeggs: 2009; 36) they are also stark in their materialisation; class is 'subtle and complex' but it is also 'deadly' (Walkerdine: 2001; 26). This is expressed clearly by the differences in Mandy and Olivia's life trajectories.

The material realities in Mandy's life regarding housing, employment and consumption must here be emphasised and they must be made to connect with what Olivia terms her 'luck' (Chapter 4). It is class, 'that anachronistic concept of modernity' that explains this simple division (ibid; 4).

Economic hardship and lack of 'property', however, must also be placed within a consideration of how social differentiation and the inequalities of class extend themselves through cultural, embodied and symbolic processes. In this chapter I begin to provide such a focus by exploring the relationship between the middle and working-class women's holdings of recognised capitals and the social, economic, cultural and institutional conditioning of Fenton. It is here that I focus on 'the power over space that comes from possessing various kinds of capital': capital that takes 'the form in appropriated physical space of a certain relation between the spatial structure of the distribution of agents and the spatial structure of the distribution of goods and services, private or public' (Bourdieu: 2010; 124). Bourdieu has observed that such a correlation is a somewhat blurred relationship, but it is one which is crucial to any account of class; the social relations of (re)production have a 'social existence only insofar as they exist spatially; they project themselves into a space; they inscribe themselves in a space while producing it. Otherwise, they remain in 'pure' abstraction, in verbalism, verbiage, words' (Lefebvre: 2007; 128).

Here it is important to re-emphasise that the neighbourhood in which Mandy resides is a particular articulation of 'a restructuring and re-territorialisation of social power' where 'the poor and the relatively powerless are held in place' whilst others, like Olivia, are 'free' to enter and leave in pursuit of their 'life biographies'. In particular, the mass migration of students into the area in the search of further educational capital has achieved a distinct form of territorialisation, 'a work of transplantation, a moving of things and an uprooting or deporting of people, which itself presupposes extremely difficult and costly transformations' for the working-class women (Bourdieu: 2010; 124). As Skeggs has observed, what is important is 'not who moves and who is fixed but who has control' over mobility and connectivity, who has the capacity to withdraw and disconnect (2004; 50).

3.2 The Village

For Olivia 'student life' is a transition between her familiar surroundings and 'independence'. It provides the space and opportunity for the fusion of consumption (of learning, of leisure, of cultural experience) combined with the licensed freedom to experiment with social / individual roles before taking her place in the 'adult world' of work. Fenton offers what Bourdieu calls the promise of the profits of localization that transpire from access to institution and valued forms of networked sociality. It is an experience that Olivia hopes will, in the future, pay back her time with 'the profits of position or of rank' through 'the monopolistic possession of a distinctive property' (Bourdieu: 2010; 126);

Mark; walk: what is it that you like about the area; I mean why did you choose to live here?

Olivia: Just where it is, the location really, that's it. It's so close to - oh that's the club, it's where your more developed students go, sophisticated; I don't tend to go to the pub next door, it's more for the first year students really - but yes it's location, its 10 minutes to University and 20 minutes into town. And you've got everything really, so close to all the shopping, and then there's the social life. But I wouldn't live here if I wasn't a student. Not in this area, student life wouldn't ever go away, I would just be getting drunk all the time, but definitely in Hadley (a suburb to the north of the city) I would live there; very nice [...] I go to this picture house a lot, and to this café here, really nice, we are always there, really good, and there is the furniture store; he always has massive vintage mirrors and stuff, I like vintage. [...] That's where I used to live last year - up there on that street. It's weird because it's - like my mum's friend came over to visit, and she used to be at uni here, and she showed us where she lived, and it's mind-baffling. It's weird because in ten years' time it (the area) will be exactly the same, all the houses and stuff...

For Savage, middle-class representations of place work to display a sense of their 'belonging' through distinction; they combine 'a fusion of aesthetic, emotional and instrumental attachment, which strikingly makes no reference to other dwellers' (2010; 126). Indeed Olivia, in this account, makes invisible the working-class culture and residents that live within Fenton, for her it appears wholly defined by student life. Olivia, here at least, bears a resemblance to Savage's 'elective believer'; her relationship to the neighbourhood is one where it is viewed as 'a destination on a personal map, a landmark in a personal journey, representing a form of exteriority, not emplaced, but standing alongside' (ibid; 118).

Olivia's conception of place is that it is static, that it will remain the same whilst she herself will evolve and move on. Her accrual of educational and cultural capital is her way of securing her symbolic and material status in the future; the promise of a place in the suburbs, 'Hadley perhaps,' one that will certainly not involve residence in this neighbourhood. Strathern draws attention, here, to the ways in which place is conceived in a similar manner to that of class, 'persons acquire identity from the places they are at, modified by where they have come from and where they are going. Places stay, persons move, and a further cultural slip is made from geographical to class location. Classes are fixed, individuals are mobile' (2004; 117). Indeed Olivia's narrative is one projected into the future through the ideal of a social 'trajectory'. In terms of her 'life biography', her stay is a temporary suspension of the 'rules of the game' which will be reasserted to complete the familiar pattern of middle-class social reproduction. Her attachment to both place and 'this life', this identity, is a temporary one. It has a use value in the present which can be converted for an enduring exchange value, as much as it can be exploited for advantage by the landlords themselves.

Olivia, walk: That's another lettings agency; everyone's an estate agent at the moment aren't they? I need to go into property; that's where the money is; definitely it's opened my eyes a lot working at Iftikhar's place ...just the amount of money those landlords actually get; it's unbelievable...

Mandy, too, provides an image of the 'village,' but her elision of other persons, and her relation to mobility and future sense of self through relation to place is very different,

Mandy, map: There are a lot of people that have been here for years that have got similar problems and they've just ended up in pubs and bookies or sat in each other's houses. It's like ... there's an invisible mental wall round Fenton, and everyone who's grown up and lived in it, that's their world, they've never been out of it or beyond it, except to go to prison (pointing to map). There are different classes and groups, like poor people and then poor people that have been on benefits all their life that might end up on sickness benefits or have, you know, some sort of illness or drugs dependency or an alcohol problem - in fact the government are paying you to die quickly in a way, because it feels like ethnic cleansing, they are trying to eradicate certain types of people in life... ¹³

¹³ It is important to emphasise that when Mandy says it 'feels like ethnic cleansing' she is not trying to make a claim for injury based on racialised pain over and against advantages given to other ethnicities. It's not like ethnic cleansing because those 'different classes and groups' she identifies are 'mixed' in their ethnicity.

Mandy separates out those who have the mobility to move in and out of her neighbourhood from those who live within its 'invisible mental wall'. Here the 'village' is formed in relation to the outside, and through the exclusion of those within its spaces who do not have the same shared experiences. The residents that truly belong are those whose social inheritance and disadvantage has carried down through to the present. Mandy *seems* to echo Bourdieu, 'those who are deprived of capital are either physically or symbolically held at a distance from goods that are the rarest socially; they are forced to stick with the most undesirable and the least rare persons or goods. The lack of capital intensifies the experience of finitude: it chains one to place' (2010; 127). She points to the shared practices and experiences of living this life; people cohere in pubs and bookies and sit in each other's houses – 'that's their world'. Such processes appear as being performative, they *seem* to imply a social retraction rather than a form of symbolic territorialisation realised 'from an investment in a future belief of knowing where one's place should be and making claims for that space' (Skeggs: 2001b; 409). It is as if 'her kind' have 'fallen into the zone of enduring social liminality wherein a specific tropism operates that would effectively isolate them from neighbouring categories' (Wacquant: 2008; 250).

Mandy is all too aware of the mechanics of this 'tropism'. She points to the regulation of 'everyone who's grown up and lived in it' and the role it has in fostering this sense of place and relation through the divisibility of risk management programmes that take the place of 'welfare' and the more robust and punitive mechanisms of law and order. The lack of worth attributable to 'certain types of people in life' descends to the point where they become less than recuperable. The permissible has its limits which are symbolised for Mandy in the realities of banishment (the prison on the hill) or are contained through the management of the methadone prescription. Here rather than welfare being framed within the discursive space of inclusion, the lives of the 'unproductive classes' are managed out through their life course by the drip-drip effects of social insecurity.

Mandy and Olivia's accounts of neighbourhood are just two examples of the many ways in which they, and the other women in the research, construct Fenton as 'place' or realise 'community'. As the analysis progresses it will be seen that there is a great deal

of flexibility and contradiction in the ways in which Fenton is realised that includes modification of who belongs and who is 'excluded,' and what Fenton represents and means to them; what and who are valued (Day:2006). These perspectives, however, must always be understood through consideration of the women's social positioning and the ways their experience and understanding are conditioned by social processes in and outside the neighbourhood.

One of the central features of the working-class women's experience, here, is that their relationships and proximity to one another emerges from being 'fixed' in, or indeed 'uprooted' from, geographic space by social process and the relation these social processes have to their inherited and current holdings of capital. That is, their identities, practices, and relationships are not attributable to 'place,' but become expressed through their particular relation to it and each other through 'shared' experience over time. As I will emphasise, however, the social relations that establish themselves between those women who Mandy identifies as 'sat in each other's houses' provide a strong rebuttal of Wacquant's account of working-class anomie. For now, however, I persist with highlighting 'lack,' for lack informs and conditions this sociality nonetheless.

3.3 A room of one's own

Olivia no longer lives in Fenton; after finishing her M.Sc. she returned to her parent's house, and from there she moved to a Mediterranean city to undertake a TEFL qualification, serving as a 'gap' year in her transition from education to employment. When she left her home in Fenton it lay empty for the summer months save for the flow of students lined up for viewings for the autumn term. Whilst the middle-class student or the young professional may move beyond Fenton to find a more appropriate space, the struggle for move-on housing for Mandy is a significant and formative experience. 'Leaving home' for her was fraught with emotional and material complexities and challenges. The changes in the 'distribution' of housing benefits and the dynamics of the local housing market have worked as a form of enforced family dispersal. Much of the stock that had served as family housing has been converted to 'houses in multiple occupation,' with high rents and term-time length deposits with a 'no DSS' bar. Young

working-class women, whose families have lived in the area for three or four generations, are increasingly forced into the outlying estates in less 'desirable' parts of the city where students have not settled, and where young professionals choose to avoid.

Mandy's sister, Theresa, was not untypical here. When she left her family home, her only access to social housing was in a new neighbourhood where she had to negotiate the perceived threats and insecurities of living on a 'sink estate' across town (Chapter 5). Mandy was desperate to avoid her sister's experience and she had worked hard to get herself a tenancy in Fenton. She counted herself as one of the 'lucky' ones: she had secured housing by accessing one of the independent living schemes that had 'training houses' in the area for young parents. She understood here that she was placed in a position where she had to compete with others 'like her' for a rare resource, a room of one's own. She visited Sure Start workers, went to see the doctor, sought the support of other agencies to gain recognition for her needs, and had stayed in a hostel for young homeless persons.¹⁴

Mandy's struggle to find housing is shared by many of the young working-class women within Fenton. Her access to social housing involved 'playing the game'; knowing the rules which govern housing decisions, exploiting the conditions and terms of engagement of a multiple range of services and agencies that are 'there to help' them. This is not to say that these issues do not exist, rather that the situation many young women like Mandy face is that these 'conditions' become the only 'resources' from which to retain a foothold in their community; they have to incorporate themselves within the terms, goals and rationales of voluntary and welfare agencies to achieve their outcome. Mandy was assigned a support worker, and a temporary tenancy agreement as her 'transition' to independence. It is a very particular form of exchange, and framing of her person; as lacking, as vulnerable, as wrong. Mandy must be supervised and

¹⁴ See Gillies (2005) for other expressions of this fight for a home through forms of persuasion, intimidation, and manipulation of housing tenancy exchange systems amongst working-class women.

trained in her care for her child, but at the same time her virtue is to be defined by her ability to carry out paid work (as if her care of her child had no value). ¹⁵

3.4 The virtues of paid work

Mandy wants to work, to have a career, but as Walkerdine has observed in reference to Beck's subject of individualisation, for her to consider herself as the producer of her own labour situation, and in this way of her 'social biography', would be to overlook the 'biggest self-invention' of all; 'the possibilities of working-classes remaking itself as middle-class' (2001; 21). Like Mandy, all the working-class women in my research had left school without recognised qualifications; at around the age of sixteen they had faced the demands for self-invention through employment and career without access to a grammar school and university education. The injunctions they hear to become autonomous and free subjects, to make of their life a personal biography are felt to be a mockery. As Joyce, below, remarks of her own experience, 'when you go down to the job centre all you get is some fucking tosser who says 'well have you looked in paper? Have you looked on the noticeboard there? Have you used the machine? Is there owt that you fancy?'

The job opportunities and economic returns provided through the local accommodation firms, bars, cafes, shops, supermarkets and the University itself are promoted as the positive effects of Fenton's adjacency to a seat of learning. The 'front of house' jobs and those that might offer the requisite experience for moving 'up the ladder' rarely go to 'the likes' of Joyce or Mandy. The 'flexibility' of the conditions of employment in a local night-time and seasonal economy matches the flexibility that 'unattached' students have in their study. At their level of entry into employment the working-class women's experience of exploitation in the labour market is acute. They understand they can

¹⁵ The terms of her tenancy reflect the view that young working-class motherhood is socially unacceptable, that it is a risk factor for social exclusion despite consistent research that points to poverty as the fundamental risk, and that young mothers like Mandy are, and can be, 'good' mothers despite the inequalities they face in their lives (chapters 6 and 7).

always be replaced, discarded; the work they find is part-time, low paid, physically demanding, mentally tedious, insecure, unvalued.

Joyce, below, explains her decision to leave her last job as a cleaner for a student rental agency. She understands, acutely, the class relation between her and her employer. She contests and dismisses the contract in which she hands over her body to be grinded out for a 'living' wage. For Joyce this contract is theoretical, she is granted no rights, no protection:

Joyce, map: I had proper flu Mark, I was on swine flu tablets, 11 days in my house fucking crying Mark because I had nobody there ... but he (the employer) - and I've not even had chance to recover - but he has put me on for extra shifts; you know what I mean? To cover other people. That's why I left Mark because you don't let yourself have the chance for your body to recover before he is grinding you out again ... and I just thought to myself 'No - you (employer) are not getting out of bed when you are poorly, babe, you are giving us the extra shifts' ... he was sly ...

Joyce's work was not unionised, the best she could do was to return to benefits after a period of sanctioning for her 'refusal' and seek further 'opportunities'. In her search for employment she must compete with the qualifications of the students looking for extra cash, with the curriculum vitae's and their terms of expression that secure work in the pub, or work the tills in the shops. She has given that a go too, but her experience and skills are never recognised as being of the right kind to have a job with 'prospects'. For Joyce the chances of entering 'meaningful' employment of any kind are slim:

Joyce: It's really hard because I'm a mother, you know I can write down my community work and stuff like that, and I can write down that I'm honest, I isn't going to nick things, go in your till, that I like to be on time because it's only polite, and things like that. But sometimes with everything; with people having qualifications or maybe somebody's got more experience within that department than you yeah, or (because they haven't kids) they can work more hours than I can ... so you get the knock backs. I got the knock back from there, I got the knock back from the One Stop one time, I got the knock back from Extra's in town, and a shop with beauty stuff in it; you know - just like a shop assistant that one was - but it does knock you back it really does ...

Olivia found herself in a very different position when she came to live in Fenton. Her parents supported her through university, but thinking ahead and improving her future position in the marketplace were taken as personal responsibility. Her employment at the rental agency is part of her learning, like her voluntary work at a local community centre, to gain experience that will add value to her qualification once she has finished

her studies. Whilst Joyce was a cleaner, Olivia found herself working in lettings in 'front of house':

Olivia; handbag: That's a business card, Iftikhar's, he works with me at the estate agent's, I worked there full-time over the summer, and at the moment two days a week, next week it's my last day because I have to stop and finish my dissertation. I applied through Job Link at university, got it straight away, went for an interview and they were like fine have it... It's fun, really fun. I just take students round in my car and show them dodgy properties, you know telling them about the area and stuff ... it's nice (the area), it's nice to have the student atmosphere around here, you go onto Ravenscroft Road and it's just buzzing; I like that. They (the employers) are brilliant, over Christmas they took us to London for a do; we had only been working there for three months and they were like 'we are going to take you to London for the Christmas do.' We went to see a show, and we stayed in a hotel and it was amazing...

Olivia's job did not require formal qualification or experience of lettings (she had none). It is the type of job that Joyce, or Mandy, could easily accomplish. Of course, the possession of property helped Olivia get the job; her driving licence and car were perhaps useful resources upon which her employer could draw. Olivia, however, offers something of an added value.

Olivia has value partly because of her limited knowledge, the perspective that she has of Fenton is a valuable resource for her employer to mine. Her enthusiastic embrace of those 'student' streets as the place to be, and from which to enjoy student life, are precisely what a lettings agent requires in order for clients to take 'those dodgy properties' as their temporary homes. Rather than seeing her work as exploitative (of her person, the students, and the use value of the housing to working-class families), she sees it as an experience she can exchange for furthering her own aspirations - 'I need to go into property ...just the amount of money those landlords actually get.' Joyce and Mandy have a far greater knowledge and experience of life in the area that would offer no reassurance for the manager who employs and takes such good care of Olivia. Their engagement with clients, here, would be risky because it might offer a different perspective, a different kind of knowledge.

Olivia's face also fits, she has the right kind of disposition; her social and cultural capital embodies her with a value that the employer needs because it will carry legitimacy within the right relationships. No doubt her employer recognises that her disposition is

one from which he will be able to extract surplus value from her labour. The service Olivia provides for her clients and employer, perhaps, is in part-predicated on the standardised (classed) norms of femininity that colour her holdings of social and cultural capital (Chapter 4). This may be an example of the 'presentation of a naturalised identity' that cannot be 'contracted out and exchanged' by Olivia as it cannot be 'claimed as a performance'; her identity work is naturalised as part of herself; she is employed as a woman (Adkins: 1999; 605). Nevertheless her positioning in social space entails that she is relatively enabled to protect herself from exploitation through the renting of her body; she is able to accrue assets over time, her labour is something to be 'nurtured' rather than 'ground out'. Joyce, as subsequent chapters will show, is regarded as the kind of feminine subject who does 'not (have) the potential to be a subject of value, without access to the resources required to produce themselves as such ... It thus becomes a matter of how different forms of culture and labour are given value and how these can be exchanged or not' (Skeggs: 2004; 71).

Whilst Olivia occupies a contrasting position in social space to Mandy, Sophie is placed at even greater advantage through her inheritances of social and cultural capital. In the passage below she provides a vivid illustration of classed entitlement in her attribution of self-value through her commitments to work and her ethics of care. It is a public performance of value produced within the research relation, but one where the 'resources required for its development (are) hidden and psychologised' (Skeggs: 2011; 508):

Sophie, map: We should work, work is important for our souls, sometimes I think I should just be a physical labourer because it's more straightforward, but that's not my forte, I have tried it, I've been a gardener for a week, I've cleaned toilets, something really satisfying, but that would be wasting the amount of money that people will have invested into me ... I think he (her father) would like me to carry on in academia. Or maybe go back to Africa and to get involved in development work ... because I gained so much from my research there and although my research is valuable in essence, it's not helping anyone there practically. I guess I've got that from them (parents): we feel that we should be doing something in the public sector or the third sector; things that are focussed on social justice...

Sophie recalls Williams' observations regarding 'the reforming bourgeois modification of individualism,' which counters the pursuit of self-interest as natural and right with the

idea of service, an ethical practice of profession and self-sacrifice to the greater good; 'the instilling of that kind of confidence which will enable the upper servants to supervise and direct the lower servants,' which is often 'idealised as the necessary form of civilisation, or rationalised as a natural distribution corresponding to worth, effort and intelligence' (1972; pp312-315). Rather than a position of privilege, a life free of the attrition of cleaning toilets becomes an expression of virtue but also of obligation.

What is problematic is that Sophie's attribution of value to herself is made in relation to those who exist within a dimension of 'straightforwardness'. The attrition, boredom and lack of opportunity to progress that many of the working-class women experience, daily, through their paid and unpaid labour becomes, in Sophie's rendition, a release from the pains of the complex life she leads, one that she pursues through obligation to pay back the 'investments' made in her. Jackie (mother of three) expresses her 'ugly feelings' of resentment as they relate to her 'life biography' through work as she 'jostles and juggles' her employment between her care of her children;

Jackie: No disrespect but I want more than what I've got now, everything points to you being a cleaner, but I want more, I want to enjoy my life. I work three cleaning jobs, all part-time - one in morning, one late evening, and one weekend shift. I've had it with cleaning, it's shit, and it's shit pay, and they make you feel bad for not doing your job right. All you're doing is cleaning other people's stupid rooms...

The working-class women are excluded from entering the circuits of exchange that the middle-class women have access to realise 'self-value'. The virtue of work as an expression of self and of personal responsibility, too, must be set beside consideration of inequalities in labour markets, including the availability of jobs but also to the values accorded to them. As Levitas points out, 'the ideology of the virtue of paid work' embeds itself within a language of individualised meritocracy which papers over the inequalities of gender and class', but if, for the working-class women, 'the work capitalism offers is mostly awful ... the consequences of unemployment are worse' (2001; 451). It is here that McRobbie observes that the retrenchment of welfare runs side-by-side with neo-liberalism's insistence upon realising the figure of 'woman' through her capacity to work; absorbing 'ideas of women's issues according to a vocabulary of individualism, meritocracy, aspiration, and achievement' (2011; 2). I

return to the classed effects of this 'gendered axis of social division' that inform 'the new sexual contract' as I progress, but here it should be simply noted that 'the attribution through freedom' (of the capacity to work) 'takes sharply differentiated forms across seemingly more fluid boundaries of class, ethnicity and sexuality' (McRobbie: 2007; 722).

3.5 Poverty, and omnivorous, ethical, and aesthetic self-realisations

Poverty has an obvious relation to self-realisation through property, and to power over space; stepping out across the threshold of home and into the spaces of neighbourhood with only a few pence to your name (a daily practice for Mandy and for Joyce) provides for a sense of ontology and relation to other, to space and time, that is in marked contrast to those who are able to carry credit along with their persons. Doing so as a mother makes such experience all the more acute. Living within precarity concentrates attention on hard material realities, and these realities are experienced through complex, painful, emotional and affective registers that are far from 'straightforward';

Joyce, handbag: I live with insecurity Mark, that's the other thing I feel tremendously - you know I'm in debt and I don't feel secure - how can I possibly feel secure. It could be anything; it could be a big thing, like a bill. I mean that's been on my mind, or it could be a little thing like this (the funeral of a mutual friend we had attended). You know, when you go to funerals you think about - like you know, obviously they've lost family and they've got rest of their lives without a dad, but it makes you feel insecure, you've not got things like organised, you've not got things in place and it makes you think that if that happens to you what about Lucy (daughter); but I mean I've got nothing better than five pence today, you know these things, but you still can't do anything about them ...

Poverty co-ordinates and conditions subjectivities and relations to self and other; the 'big things' in Joyce's life are the bills. The roots to the working-class women's insecurities, and the triggers for the affects that are realised from them, have entirely different relation to the flow and circulation of variable capital, and could not be more marked in their differences, to those of the middle-class women (chapter 4). The lack of security in Joyce's life stems from the impossibility of the accumulation of self, the inability to organise and put things in place, to have a sense of property, protection and solidity. What is so horrid for her is that this insecurity impinges upon her feelings of empathy for the daughters of a friend that had died. Recognition of shared positioning

does not always have a positive quality, it can turn inward, feel selfish and alienate through fear. Self-realisation, here, is produced through relation to precarity and remains in the present, the inability to move on, not for her, but for her child.

Most of the working-class women 'make-do' living on a low income and do so with ingenuity and through partnership with friends and family; they create small spaces for themselves in which they can take pleasure in their lives and find solutions to their constraints. Such practices emerge from their conditioning in precarity and are expressive of the values they share with each other. Elaine (below) is a poor woman in economic terms, and would be for a reader of Wilde an example of how poverty reduces the possibilities of transcendence; someone whose subjectivity is bound by cost, calculation, and utility. The intimate knowledge of the prices of goods and the labour involved in their acquisition, however, are motivated by the need to keep her, and those that are dependent upon her, above the material threshold of poverty. They are informed by her care and labour for others:

Elaine, handbag: like on a Thursday, going into the market. The fruit and veg are cheap, but it's delivered fresh on a Thursday, I'll get big bags of grapes for a quid, two punnets of strawberries for a quid. I go all over and look for bargains with Sharon. Go to Iceland, then Eskimo Toes, then Fulton's, and Farmfoods'. Milk's a pound at Khans; four pinters for a quid, two packets of sugar a quid, two loaves of Hovis one pound fifty, tatties - a huge bag ninety nine pence, Fray Bento's a pound at Morrison's. I go all over for food bargains, clothes bargains. There is a guy, if you give him twenty quid, he'll get you fish and meat what you want, cuts it up into nice pieces... and God at Christmas, I have to start early, I've got my kids, and then I've got my grandkids, and then partners as well. Everyone gets summat, I've always done it; even if it's summat little, it's the thought that counts, you got to start early ...

Elaine's investment and labour in the daily routine of finding goods at the best price costs her dearly in time and energy. Many of her practices are determined by the trajectory of Fenton as a place for student consumption and leisure activity. Her local shops have out-priced her, or no longer cater for her tastes and needs, and she travels to shops in predominantly working-class areas further afield. Even the local charity shops have moved beyond her means, becoming destinations for students searching for 'vintage' clothes. Elaine has no choice except to practice her forced mobility. Rather than conceiving of these activities as making her time-poor, she manages to transform

them into activities that make her relationships with others meaningful; she extracts pleasure from their necessity by carrying them out alongside friends or immediate relations in the family.

Elaine refers to some of these shopping expeditions as her 'yellow sticker tours'. These consist of the purchase of out-of-date food, and damaged goods from disparate shops and where knowledge and timing is key. When she returns home she will protect her son's sense of self-worth and decency by carefully peeling off the stickers and date marks and placing the goods in a freezer stuffed with previous purchases. She refers to such activities as a 'hoarding of food' which makes her children 'go mad with her' because it leaves the home scarce of cash. It is a practice built out of an intimate understanding that the future is precarious, a practice mirrored in the fluctuations in the jewellery she wears as it moves in and out of the pawnbrokers. These are ways of practice and value which are inherited from her own personal exemplar of working-class respectability in the face of precarity. When Elaine travels out on her shopping expeditions she carries her mother's eternity ring in her purse as an intimate reminder of these relationships and obligations (see 3.7).

Both past and present day political responses to helping 'the poor' through the inculcation of moral agency and self-sufficiency to combat deficiencies and failures of thrift and propriety are no more than cruel twists when applied to subjectivities already conditioned by the experience of living at the wrong end of inequitable distribution. Duty, responsibility and respectable motherhood are regimes that Elaine heavily invests in; like the other working-class women within the research if there is a 'culture' evident from my time with her, 'it is very much a culture of necessity and going without' rather than profligacy and irresponsibility (Flint: 2010; i). Rather than financial fecklessness and passive dependency upon the state, there is 'agency, ingenuity and intensive domestic management' (ibid), with concern and obligation toward others; a life where finances are highly self-regulated by the need to show both self-restraint and discipline.

The point is not to valorise the 'simple poor,' an aesthetic/moral position articulated by those fortunate enough to reflect on their own relation to materialism from the

perspective of satiety, or from those who wish to protect the status quo (Williams: 1972; 310). Elaine and the other working-class women, for the most part, do not make attributions of value to their own selves and practices. It is what has to be done; it is not exceptional, unique, or loaded with moral distinction. Indeed rather than focus on their own material impoverishment and hardship they often turn to immediate comparisons with those that are 'worse off' than themselves;

Elaine: There are people worse off than me, I'm not poor, I've seen people worse off than me, you see them face to face, how they are, and I would never class myself as poor; some people have to beg to live, you can't say you're starving, you can't say you're poor, I mean we use them words anyway, but when you see others and what they go through ... I just plod along, so I do, just plod along. I've got catalogues, I've got club man; I only got him to get stuff at Christmas for kids, but I suppose everyone has debt. I just get on with it, do you know what I mean?

Whatever coping strategies are put in place, however, the mundane and the everyday can threaten emotional wellbeing;

Jackie, map: ... and I cry when my washer breaks down ...

Jenny: you are lost without your washer ...

Elaine: ... when my Clare were playing in the living room and smashed TV; that's when I cried, I had just finished paying it off, I were shocked, heartbroken, I'd paid all that money for it in Bright House; for over three year, I couldn't afford to go out and buy one, the interest pushed it up rotten ... I just cried...

The widescreen TV has come to stand for the excessive consumption practices of the feckless, symbolising a refusal of the responsibilities of thrift and productivity. Bright House for Elaine, in turn, symbolises her exploitation as a poor woman. It is an example of the 'offer' of exorbitant terms to purchase something that 'everybody else' has, and pays less for; be it the pre-pay gas tokens that have pushed Mandy into further debt, or the interest rates Elaine has to pay the 'club man' or for the catalogue she uses for 'emergencies': efforts to keep children entertained, warm and clothed come at a higher price and risk. Poverty incurs its own premium.

Before returning to the relationships through which Elaine and the other working-class women negotiate their material and 'symbolic' restraints, I turn to focus upon some of the ways in which the middle-class women realise themselves through recourse to property and propriety via their own practices of consumption. The emphasis here is

upon 'possibility' and 'access' to material, ethical and aesthetic resources for self-constitution through immersion within a 'regulated society of consumption' rather than on the complex experience of subjectivity that such entitlement realises (chapter 4).

Olivia may be taken, here, as an example of the cultural omnivore, a person able to accumulate cultural capital through the omnivorous consumption of a diverse range of cultural products and activities. Her student card provides her with an 'inclusive identity,' one aligned to the dominant cultural and institutional representations of her neighbourhood. Night or day she can use it to pass through the electronic stiles of the library to gain entry into archived and copyrighted knowledge. It can bypass, too, the uniformed security at the doors to the 'Union' and enable her to access a shopping mall that includes beauty parlour, travel agent, bank, and supermarket, advice and welfare services and a variety of themed cafes and bars. Such permitted spaces promise a filled diary of social and cultural events, a multiplex of sporting facility, music venue, cafes, arts and societal allegiances, computer and IT services should she choose to use them. Further afield, in the neighbourhood and beyond, her identity confers further conditional access to cultural activity and discounted consumption.

Her possession of a car, together with the collection of train tickets in her purse (visits to see friends in her 'home' town, trips to cities for shopping and clubbing), and her European health card (used for a skiing holiday) all mark her out as mobile; as not being bound to place and neighbourhood. Indeed Olivia had just celebrated her friend's twenty-first by surprising her with a 'spontaneous' trip to Amsterdam with a couple of close mates. It was, she said, a departure from the usual nature of celebration ('the flights were like really cheap and we thought let's do something different'). The Anne Frank's exhibition ticket was part of their stay, which she described as a happy experience of 'slumming it in a dodgy hostel' and doing and seeing lots of interesting things, plus 'getting drunk'. Her trip, then, combined the propriety of the culturally serious and the ethically reflective, with the sanctioned access to the 'improper' and hedonistic. She appears to have no problems moving between 'high' and 'low', she appears to possess 'a mobile and flexible body that can access, know, participate and feel confident about using a wide variety of cultures' (Skeggs: 2004; 143).

The limits established for Olivia's capacity 'to link, bridge and span diverse and proliferating social worlds' (Bennett et al: 2009; 39) will be considered later, as will the role that gender plays in the containment of her person through immersion in a consumer culture 'of post-feminist masquerade' (McRobbie: 2007; 723). Here, however, it is of note that Olivia is also a consumer and producer of a particular 'look'. Her leather satchel was searched out from vintage clothing stalls that she visits in various cities on her shopping trips. It complements the bicycle she rides around Fenton, an old upright with a wicker basket at the front. Together with her faded jeans, her retro biker's jacket, her flats, and a vintage hair clip, they inform a presentation of her feminine self that imbues her with a sense of 'identity'.

It is a look that both signifies a challenge to the consumerism of brands (Olivia will pick out labels from her clothing if she has to buy new) and an investment in herself through consumption to accomplish a form of distinction. The combination of vintage and retro clothing and accessories (rather than second-hand contemporary) communicates particular knowledge, competency, taste and difference. It aims at authenticity, made through an appropriation and approximation of a 'common' past culture. There is an ethics expressed here, an anti-consumerist, anti-mass-produced look that trades in the 'rare, covetable and tradable' items of yesteryear's mainstream consumerism.

Liz, aged forty-five, also has the privileges of an accretive and 'inclusive' identity. Her narrative as she unpacks her bag, however, has a very different relation to propriety and property to Olivia's, and could serve as an example of how the autonomous and responsible subject is produced through immersion, appropriation, and enrolment in an array of discursive and material resources as an ethical and self-reflexive project. Liz's 'self'-regulation of mind, body and soul through the techniques of self-examination and asceticism are practices aimed at the mastery of self to realize a person of ethical character and restraint. On this point she is the subject of the 'socially instituted forms of training and practice' that realise a self with value through the Protestant tradition (du Gay: 2007; 60).

The disciplinary realisation of spiritual goals, however, is also embedded within the biopolitical regimes that work to organise identity through the contemporary dietary regimes and their injunctions to be fit and healthy. Her ethical orientation too is readily convertible into a 'market niche' by which the technologies of Capital embed themselves within her practices through the modulation of affect. Here, Liz's practices are exemplified by her choice of credit which serve to express her ethics of 'choice' through *caritas*, and at the same time accrue the benefits of an 'inclusive' identity through material rewards and 'points'.

Liz; handbag: I have this bag (taken from her handbag) which I can whip out if I go shopping, the Co-op whatever, and my mum's friend made this. My mum does a lot of stuff raising money for a hospice...

Mark: You are the first person that talked about bags in terms of where they are made, do you know where that one was made?

Liz: I don't always look at the provenance, but unfortunately it's made in China, there is a label in there, but I suppose that is a gift, so you are allowed to be unethical, you have to accept it ... I have a very small bar of chocolate; I had given it up for Lent so I couldn't have it, so it's in my bag ready for the end of Lent. I think it's kind of like, to try to be a little less greedy, I gave up coffee and wine last year, I gave up wheat another year, biscuits and bread and things; I think it upsets my tummy ... now in my purse is my credit card, it's a Co-operative visa, but it's an affinity card so it is with the Tear Fund. If I spend money on it the Tear Fund will get a little donation, it's a Christian organisation that works overseas with development projects. The Co-op is a vaguely ethical organisation... I've got my Co-op membership card here too, so when I go shopping I get points, it is also for the foreign exchange service... I have another affinity card, which is for the World Wildlife Fund, now this one I never use. I was approached at an airport gate while I was going through departures and the lady said if I fill a form out they would give a ten pound donation for opening the card...

Mark: so you never snapped it up?

Liz: no...it's got a nice picture of a tiger on the front ...

Liz, too, extends herself through her attachments of affinity to Fenton in ways that are different to those marked earlier by Olivia. She is self-conscious and reflexive about her commitments, making both aesthetic and ethical investments in her notion of community through her practices of consumption. Here it is the local cinema that functions as the site of attachment. It is given a form of significance that raises itself above the 'mainstream,' and this significance is something that she has entrusted in herself the duty to uphold in the face of threatened decline. The cinema comes to stand

in as a form of memorial space to preserve values that are under threat from undifferentiated and vulgar tastes of mainstream consumption. Rather than a loci of lived cultural memory, this is a form of remembering that 'begets forgetting' and 'conceals the past as much as it remembers it' (Connerton: 2009). It is a sense of place informed 'not through adaption to history' but rather through its appropriation via the 'reflexive grip of the educated middle-classes' (Savage: 2010; 133).

The next one (a card from her purse) is my friends of the local cinema which, I've just noticed runs out in March, so that means I'm not a member anymore and I must have forgotten to renew. I do like to go there because it's just round the corner and is a quirky place and offers alternative viewing to the multiplex ... Years ago it was mostly non-mainstream but to keep them going they need to show mainstream ones every now and again ... Even if I don't go it's only fifteen pounds a year and it's something that I would keep going because I think it's a shame that old things die off and it's a nice part of our heritage that we should keep. ¹⁶

If Liz provides an example of a responsible, ethical and reflexive self through her relation to ascetic and affective regulation, then Sophie provides an example of how middle-class persons labour to perform their public value within the research relationship through recourse to an aesthetics. The 'everyday' of consumption, here, remained relatively unmarked in her narrative and must be assumed to take place. The habituations of the 'ordinary' and the pull of necessity are not part of this sense of self, or at least are not recognised as aspects of life from which she can understand and perform her value. Sophie rises above the mundane and 'habitual' routine of everyday in a display of subjectivity and relation to the world that is defined as at a distance from such concerns. In contrast to the working-class women's maps, the only space of 'consumption' are those of her hairdresser outside of the city, and those of cafes that she circles around her house (see fig. 2).

Mark; map: What about your more routine things like day-to-day shopping ...?

Sophie: I don't know; I find all that kind of thing boring, I find people endlessly fascinating, I don't really like shopping it takes time out of seeing people ...

Mark: Do you go shopping?

¹⁶ The cinema, historically, was rooted in a very different neighbourhood audience to the one it now caters for. It functioned not as an arts house as Liz suggests, but as an outlet for populist and nationalistic interventions into the domestic and working life of its neighbourhood residents.

Sophie: I go shopping if I have to eat, I really love food and I love eating, but it tends to be simple food... I went to the supermarket at the weekend to pick up a few bits; but it would have been to and from going somewhere else. I tend not to go just to the supermarket; I have to go for other reasons as well ... and I don't really go into town ever to go shopping. I like shopping abroad ... like the last clothes I bought was when I was in Spain visiting Joy last year - 14 months ago; Brighton, maybe Devon... I do go to coffee shops and cafes though... I associate them with - they are linked to friends from these differing areas, I tend to meet people, uni people, and people from there (pointing to map), they have a cultural element to them, restaurants and eateries, I just love socialising over food...

Sophie transposes the pure aesthetic of Bourdieu's high culture to her everyday choices and practices, incorporating 'an ethos of elective distance from the necessities of the natural and social world' to construct 'a life of ease - that tends to induce an active distance from necessity'; a performance of a disinterested disposition that 'doubles freedom by exhibiting it' (Bourdieu: 2008; 5). Needs, if they are to be mentioned, must be seen to be met through an aesthetics that displays the values and 'virtues of sobriety, simplicity, economy of means, which are as much opposed to first degree poverty and simplicity as to the pomposity or affectation of the 'half-educated'' (ibid; 227). Beneath such a performed aesthetic Sophie combines the servicing of her social networks with the accrual of cultural capital and sense of distinction. Where she does 'book club' and the 'cultural' through 'café', Elaine refuels in a greasy spoon with Sharon to take time out, to have a 'laugh' and a break from their labour.

Olivia, Sophie and Liz's 'self-realisations' through their property and propriety may be taken as examples of how identities proliferate and differentiate themselves through types of consumption and immersion in differing technologies of performance, individualisation and distinction. I will turn to more examples and 'singularities' as the analysis progresses. Here I will make a generalisation. As examples of 'self-invention,' however problematized such agency and capacity for self-reflexivity may become through a Foucauldian frame of analysis, they are dependent upon access and forms of entitlement to the types of resources (knowledge, time and energy as well as material) and the circuits of exchange and recognition that the working-class women do not have.

Here I interrupt the narrative of 'self', to pause upon the subject position that all of the working-class women, except one, in my research do 'take up': 'mother'.

3.6 Becoming Mum

Jane's experience of the material and emotional realities of life in Fenton (below) are not shared by all the working-class women, but nor are they unique. In her life, for sure, the assumed 'normal milestones' found in the life narratives of the middle-class women, educational success at grammar school, university life, learning to drive, gaining a foot on the career ladder are absent. Without the requisite capitals to be recognised, and move across social space, 'being a female somebody is only capable of being articulated through the difficult pleasures of having a child' (Hey: 2005; 866).

Jane: having a baby was - I felt like I needed to move on with my life. I wasn't getting nowhere, a drunken alcoholic, like a lot of people round here; drink, temazepam and sleep and that's it - honest they are all on them round here, mine were because of (...). But now, having a baby - it's like, but I don't really know ... my life were not going nowhere, it were just like give me a can, give me a sleeping tablet, sleep, there you go, that's it; there you go. Now I get up and do more things, I'm off the sleeping tablets. I seem to enjoy life more than what I did...

The take-up of motherhood, here, is not an investment in self for the self but the opportunity for a release from a circumscribed ontology, a release from the monotony of a life and temporality where choice and prospect appear to be words that mock her everyday experience. Damned to a life of 'getting nowhere,' her investment in motherhood appears as a way of reaching beyond the 'social somatisation that engraves subordination on the body and brain' to find 'meaning from symbolic resources which are themselves subordinated' as feckless and irresponsible (Willis: 2010; 11). This, as I will emphasise, is not to say that Jane hopes to find value within the dominant symbolic; she understands that her take up of mothering identity will be devalued there (Chapters 6 and 7). Rather, the promise and practice of motherhood offers her a way through the 'cycle of what is'.

The calculative and intentional connotation of 'investments' in relation to the lack of other forms of capital available to Jane must also be replaced by an understanding of her and the other working-class women's relation to care as a 'happening historically, as training in affective sense perception and intuition' that occurs within the 'cramped temporality of the everyday' (Berlant: 2011). The working-class women's investment in their mothering identities and in their practices of care are made through these

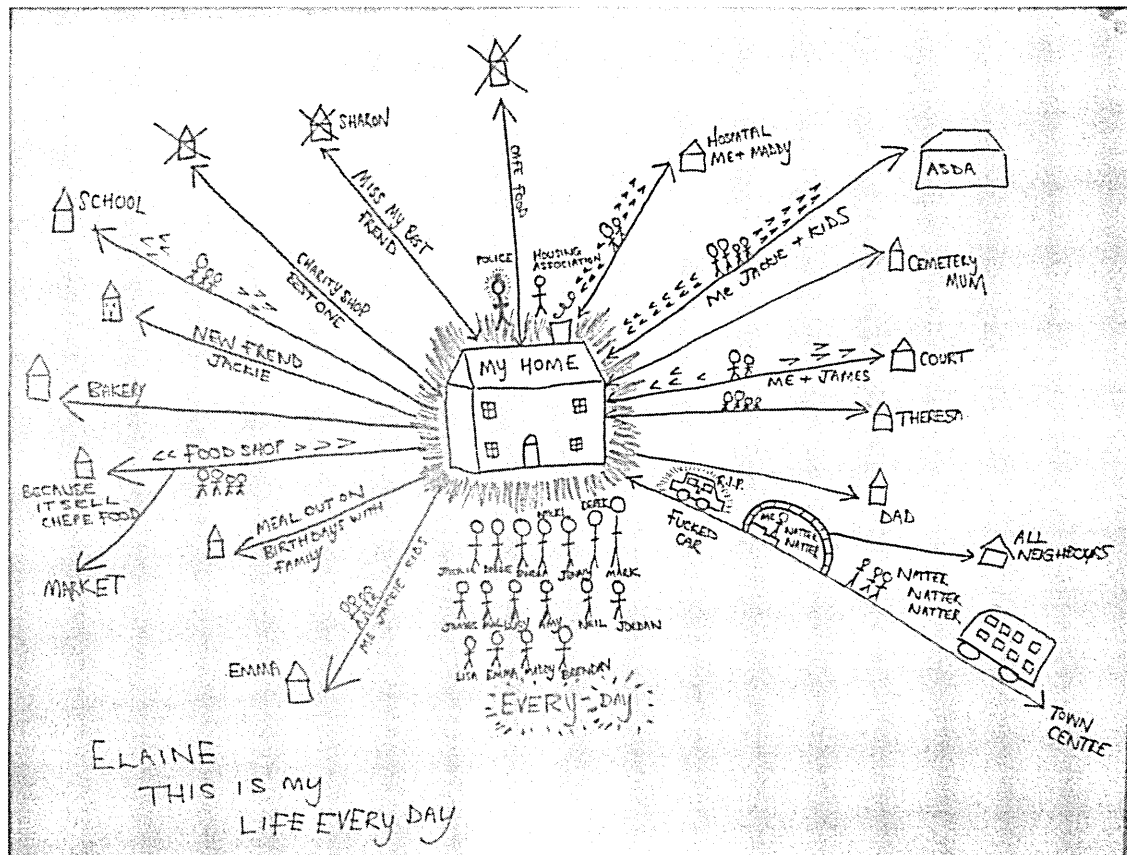
processes of personal familiarisation and their classed connection to history (Chapter 2 and below). But they are also reflexive with regard to the limits imposed upon 'opportunity' for 'self-realisation'. Jane has awareness about the constraints she faces, a situated understanding of her social world. Here, then

it is as important to document aspects of social experience that are relatively impenetrable to an agent's demands, despite high levels of reflexivity, in relation to the perceived openness of the social world, to understand contemporary identity formation we need to also emphasise what comes 'after' that moment of reflexive awareness, in which choices are resourced or otherwise. (Adams: 2006; 523)

If it appears that my framing of Jane's account is rather bleak, it will be emphasised in the succeeding analysis chapters that she, like the other working-class women, is able to produce 'a subjectivity from alternative use-values, not just based on necessitarianism, suffering and subject to forces, but on living life with a very different set of values' that emerge from 'a different relationality, a different sociality' to that of the 'singular, contained, individualised models of the social subject' (Skeggs: 2011; 497).

The next sections prepare the ground for such an understanding by underlining the contrasting nature of the relationships and social labour through which the working and middle-class women's lives are embedded and realised. Such a focus serves to highlight the very 'different moral calculus' that is expressed through a classed divergence in the temporal and 'spatialised realisation of new economic relations'; revealing 'how the social processes of living in the space of transition is differently realised by different bodies as well as differently located social groups' (Hey: 2005; 858). To do so I narrow attention to the maps that Elaine and Sophie produced during my research, and from which I will provide 'generalisation' that will be given particularity as the analysis moves forward in the succeeding chapters.

3.7 'This is my life every day'



Elaine: My values? My children, they come first in everything. They are loved, they are looked after, they are clean, they are fed, and they are brought up right.

The affective 'flames' that surround Elaine's home, the police presence (the figure hanging just above her roof), and the weight of numbers of her social network arriving on her doorstep provide an array of signifiers for those who would wish to read her life through a vocabulary of pathology. This is the crisis of the familial, a problem (and 'broken') family: anti-social, criminal, one that is all too extensive and whose forms of 'bonding capital' maintain its poverty and inability to move (symbolically, materially) beyond its confines. I address this reading in succeeding chapters, here I want to emphasise aspects of Elaine's life and relationships that lie within her situation of 'crisis ordinariness' (Berlant: 2011) that can be carried forward beyond this chapter.

The density of her family network, the close ties of kin and social friendship drawn on her map, suggest a particular engendered and classed realisation of the geographies of care and responsibility. Elaine's sense of value, and sense of belonging to 'others' and

her neighbourhood (the felt quality of this experience, whether 'good' or 'bad' or something rather more complicated), in part, derives from the encoding of a sedimented tradition inherited from familiar relationships and practices. Elaine's personal and inherited relationship to the values and labours of her relation to working-class respectability is central;

Elaine; handbag: [holding her mother's eternity ring] my mum were beautiful, loving, caring, she were beautiful, really a good mum. She never went out, she never drank, every bit of money went on our food. I mean there were eight of us and we were best dressed kids in area, even if clothes were from jumble sale. We all had big dinners and we never had chips or beans or burgers. We had big dinners cos it was cheaper; my mum had nowt but we were always spotless, always best dressed on street weren't we? And the best fed. More than owt the kids are over-privileged, not underprivileged ...

Elaine's own investments in care, like those of her mother before her, are realised in terms of the time and energy she expends in the emotional, practical and material support she gives to others (her father who lives nearby, an elderly neighbour who is sick, the grandchildren of her three daughters who have left home, aged 28, 24, 21) and the ongoing work of organising domestic activities and seeing to the emotional and physical needs of the three children who remain, 16, 10, and 6. The map in many respects, then, is a representation of Elaine's labour. This is the material labour of the domestic sphere, a labour underwritten, informed, and accomplished through those so-called immaterial aspects of 'affect, care, love, education, socialisation, communication, information, entertainment, organisation, planning, co-ordination, logistics' that she performs in her daily life (Fortunati cited Gregg: 2010; 185). It is the type of labour that 'has long been made invisible, surplus and naturalised, and is not counted in the theories of value' (Skeggs: 2010b; 30) but is one, nonetheless, that Elaine makes heavy investments in. Such activities provide Elaine with the supports 'for personal identity without accumulation, certainty, or fixity' that nonetheless express 'crucial human value' (Young: 2005; 125).

Elaine has lived in Fenton for all of her 47 years and could only laugh when I asked her to number the relatives and friends who live nearby;

what it is, there is that many families in Fenton ... and we are all related to them one way or another, or we've known over time ... there is the Gilroy's, Khan's, Docherty's, Smiths and Davidson's... God I mean, loads, loads; we all grew up here, we were born and bred round here.

The symbols for houses and persons on her map, then, represent social bonds that have been formed through time within an immediate locale and whose boundaries are defined by daily practice and processes of (dis)identification. Elaine's labour takes place within a particular milieu which informs her sense of belonging, and is also produced through her part, and those who have relation to her, in its 'shared' processes and practices.

Like most of the other working-class women, Elaine is a person who is rarely alone; there is always somebody passing by or through, coming to visit. And like all the working-class women in the research (rather than some), it would be impossible for her to carry out her routine and daily activities without chance encounters breaking into her life, delaying or transforming her intended purposes with forms of sociability, and interaction. Elaine will always encounter those she knows well, stop, and talk.¹⁷ Elaine uses the symbol of the bus stop and of the arch over her gate to convey this relation of identification, social meaning and belonging. The gate offers the passer-by an opportunity to delay their progress by calling out to Elaine in her kitchen, take time out to share a cigarette and exchange stories, have a laugh or share their worries; to 'natter' as she says on her map. The bus stop is a locus for communication as well as a point of departure for her required journeys (to the school, the shops, the hospital). Events of this kind are not trivial; 'the sum total of local public contacts, most of them fortuitous, none of them implying private commitments' informs her sense of belonging and play their part in realising her neighbourhood, with all its well-trodden paths and familiar destinations and spaces, as a 'memorable social text' (Connerton: 2009; 26).

The presence of those affective flames, expressive of Elaine's classed relation to precarity, reveal the dangers of holding a romanticised and nostalgic sense of working-

¹⁷ There are many working-class residents, too, that she will recognise but to whom she remains more distant. A nod or brief word of acknowledgement is the slightest of gestures of recognition; such moments of interaction conceal more intimate knowledge of family history, present circumstance, and articulate the play of regulative propriety in her relations with others.

class identity and belonging, or believing that a sense of community and cohesiveness arises from immobility and economic and social restraint. Elaine's labour is rooted in present difficulties and, within this context, the life represented on her map cannot be described in terms of 'dwelling', or 'settlement'. Any order that she imposes on her present situation (through her 'plodding on,' as she says) is an achievement. Her practices and subjective positioning within precarity cannot be reduced to the habitual.

Elaine expresses her relation to Fenton, here, through recourse to the fantasy of escape, but one (crucially) that would carry her intimate relationships, and the values that inhere in them, with her rather than leave them behind:

Elaine; map: One day I am going to run away, I'm going to win the lottery and run away

Mark: Where are you going to run to?

Elaine: To an island, I'm going to buy an island, just for me and my girls...

Elaine was the only working-class woman who 'owned' a car in my research, marked on the map with the legend 'RIP fucked car'. The ingenuity and resourcefulness that she had practiced to keep it on the road (as her means to 'escape') had finally run its course: lack of money and the car's age had finally told. Her closest friend, Sharon, who is disabled and who Elaine helps out in terms of practical care, lives on the other side of the city and is no longer within easy reach. Her house is now crossed out on her map, as are their shopping excursions to charity shops in working-class districts of the city. Nearer to home too, are other homes with crosses marked against them. These represent the strains of the familial in Elaine's life as they emerge from conditioning in precarity. Her daily routines and trajectory within Fenton are here, and sometimes, as much dictated by exclusions as by points of contact.

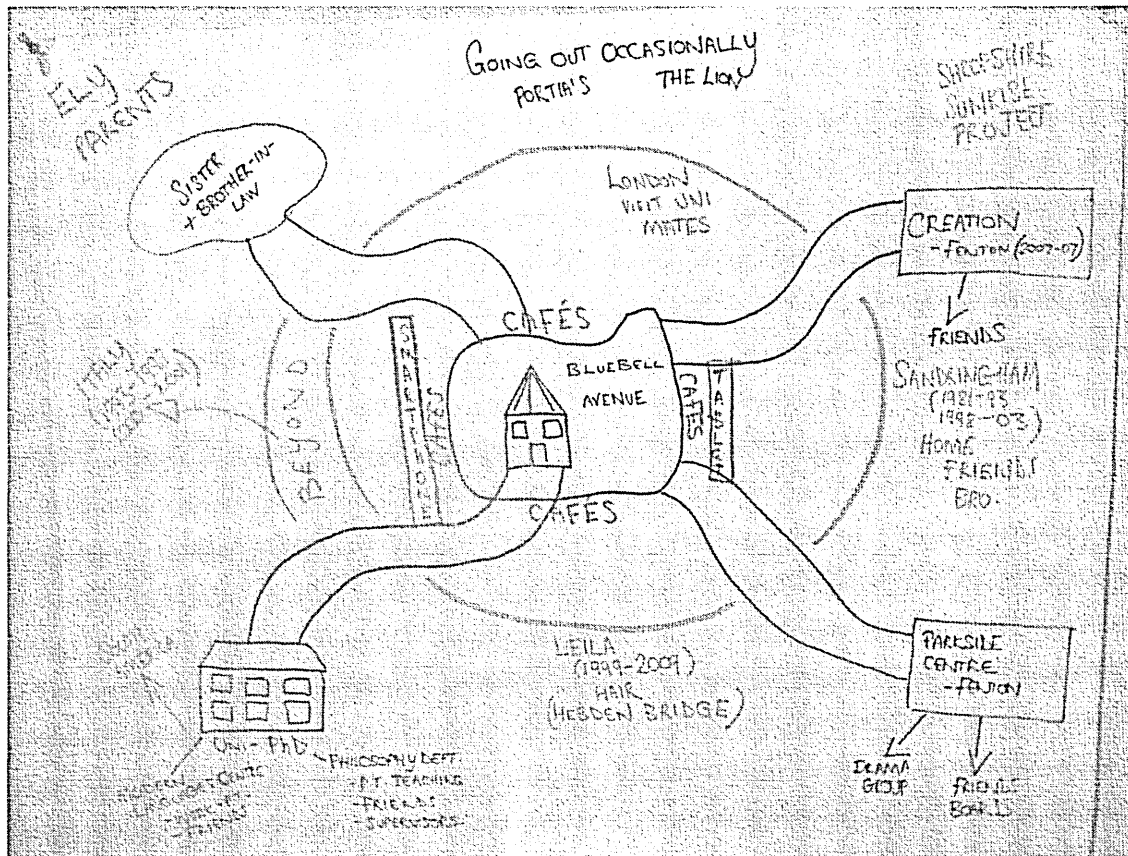
The sheer volume of people who drop by Elaine's home sometimes weighs down on her. Her positioning within kin relations as mother, arbiter of disputes, source of material and emotional support and advice, a person and place to drop off the grandchildren, always entails she has to negotiate 'time for herself' with more immediate realities. Like the other working-class women in my research, Elaine has very little time or energy to commit to the thesis of 'individualisation'; rather than 'future facing, self-orientated,

positioned with many possibilities for accruing value,' her life is 'present-located, other orientated' (Skeggs: 2011; 509).

Elaine: I don't know who I am, I've got to find time to find out who she is, who this 'Elaine' is - I don't get the time to find out who I am. When you've got things going on in your life it's hard to think about yourself, it's hard to think about yourself when you've got a lot of shit going on ...

The particularity and the negotiation of this 'shit going on' in Elaine's and the other working-class women's lives will be the substantive subject of Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Here it is enough to emphasise that living in a time of transformation - of welfare, of familial relations, and the changing social and cultural conditions of Fenton and beyond, requires day-to-day negotiation, struggle and skill inside and outside the home. Elaine, like all the working-class women, has less scope, less defences, and fewer recognised resources to make a distinction between inside and outside performative. Home life as an imagined and secure space of self-realisation and ontological security is not an easy accomplishment: as well as being the locus for love, concern and relation with others, it is also a place of risk and insecurity.

3.8 Networked Individualism



Sophie; map: I suppose this is not big enough, I am going to have to do some behind because really I've never really seen myself as rooted to any one place; even though I see these as my home and hub ... I have friends who live all over the world; Hong Kong, Spain, South America, Australia, Cambridge, Ely, Dorset, London. At times I get the mick taken out of me by my friends; they think I live the life of Riley; which I do. I live the life of Riley but in context, in my context; in the sense that I'd say that travelling has been the thing that I invest the most in, not so much money or travelling for myself, but travelling to see people... for me, going to see someone in their context is really important, so it is like a duty.

Like the other middle-class women, Sophie is a person who appears to have been cut loose from the 'traditional' constraints of gender and the geographies of care and responsibility found in the working-class women's lives. Her networks of interpersonal ties typify Wellman's thesis of the transformation of community from solidarity groups to that of networked individualism (2001; 187). The spaces she draws to define her sense of belonging and social identity, her embedding in the relationships through which she obtains support and information, appear as associational and elective; they are determined through choice of whom and what to interact with. It is a sociality informed by the sharing of achieved characteristics, lifestyles, norms and voluntary interests

within and across a range of social fields: cultural, religious, educational and charitable; stretching out across global space.

It would be a mistake, however, to view Sophie as simply representing a personal biography of choice that exemplifies a 'decoupling of self from the weight of the group, community, and tradition' (Hey; 2005). Sophie's apparent 'freedom' and personal agency may stand in stark contrast to the working-class women's apparent fixity and constraint, but it is nonetheless informed and dependent upon her classed and gendered positioning within social relations rather than by any simple notion of individualisation free of ascriptive ties (Adkins: 2004). Sophie's map and the narrative that accompanied its drawing is, though, of a different (classed) representational order to that of the working-class women who took part in this exercise, and it is a performance of self which expresses subjectivity with an entirely different relation to space, time, and value.

Like Elaine, the things that Sophie most 'invests' in are relationships. Her networks, though, require a different form of sociality to maintain and foster, they are the product of a different type of affective labour, and they provide for very differing 'returns'.

Mark: You haven't got a regular pattern in terms of contact with friends then?

Sophie: No, no regular pattern ... I don't have people calling in on me as I tend to invite or arrange something beforehand; and then because I know people dotted all over the city it doesn't make it easy, unless you organise something in advance; I often do organise things and I get to eat dinner around someone's house at least once a week, like for the book club...

Sophie does not have many visitors to her home, and when they come their presence will have been planned in advance. Home appears as a relatively secure space; a 'hub' from which she can collect herself and organise her activities. Where Elaine's home is surrounded by those affective flames, and remains open to constant visitation, Sophie marks out a clear boundary around her property. Sophie's mobility here is underwritten and premised upon the resources (material, dispositional and emotional) to secure a defensible private space. Sophie arranges our meetings in an art gallery in the city, at the University, or at a café in a location convenient to her present activity. She is

confident in maintaining a boundary of privacy between her life and my intrusion, but also keen to combine her sociality with immersion in the 'cultural'.

Whereas the working-class women's activities are firmly located in the present time, Sophie gives her spaces of affective attachment and connection a historical and dated significance. These spaces are marked out as temporal spaces of self-realisation, sites that she occupies or has moved on from in her accumulation of an ongoing biography. As historicised periods in her life, the spaces come to stand in for, and display, her cultural capital through her experience and creative productivity; they represent parts of her personal development. It is a self-conscious and reflexive performance of 'self' enunciated through a Heideggerian framework of 'building' rather than dwelling, and one that, as I will show, must 'always must be structured by future deeds' (Young: 2005; 137).

Sophie, map: Sandringham, which is the place I grew up from and lived until '93, and then '98 - and I used to go back there all the way through university until 2003 ... and there is that 'beyond' category, in Italy, having lived there from '93 to '98, it was a formative experience ... here (pointing to map) I got very involved in the Sunrise project, an environmental arts festival in Shropshire, there are lots of arts projects that have stemmed from that - that's been - that's how I got to know a lot of people, going to these events ...and I go and volunteer there every year now ... Creation was all about Fenton; so that feels like a very Fenton part of my life really... but I suppose the other one similar to that in Fenton is the voluntary work at Parkside, it's not a church but with similar kinds of connections, lots of people friends that I've kept over the years ... but also something I've been involved in less now, but I was there for a good few years from 2000 and 2007.

Sophie draws in these differing spaces and areas of activity in her life through a form of conceptual schematisation, they become particular and discrete expressions of herself and of who she is as a whole. They are sites through which she expresses and realises her individuality through extension and appropriation of self in both time and space. She expresses a particular relationship with exteriority, one which brings it into a relationship of self-possession through its partitioning and its signification. Sophie expresses the personality structure of possessive individualism, one where personality is affected by the relation of the will to an externality through a process of appropriation, of form, of property, of residence; 'in other words, immediate or original subjectivity is put into things, which are appropriated by the person. Personality is this taking control

of oneself by putting the subject into the external world, and taking it back again as object.' (Davies: 1994; 381).

Sophie, map: I've got lots of different parts that I am involved in, they represent different aspects and facets in my life in itself ... the Centre for Global Development ... lots of friends who are kind of colleagues there, the University and other PhD students and also my supervisors here... That [marking out a place of work] keeps my sort of Italian part of my brain going. Here is kind of linked to my South American thing [pointing]... A lot of [these people] I met through Creation we meet in The Lion once a week; it was an attempt to be more culturally accessible, it sees itself as a church which is culturally embedded in the community ... The other one similar to that is the voluntary work here... and I love all the different aspects of my academic growth. I just can't give them up, I've got good links and relationships. This [pointing] feeds part of me that other parts don't feed, that's important. I think that is essentially what I think of all my different friends in different places, they are unique aspects of my life...

Sophie's social capital, and mobility across social space, is evinced by the number and strength of her connections, but also by the capital possessed by her contacts within each of these spaces, and the recognitions offered to her by involvement in the institutions embedded within their social fields. Sophie attains legitimacy and recognition within these fields because she comes to them loaded with her own holdings of educational and cultural capital. Sophie is tri-lingual, has a degree in History of the Arts, a Masters in a European Literature, and is under-taking a PhD. The composition and volume of this capital, of course, places her at some distance to the working-class women. Her ability to 'network' and to accrue further capital has a relationship to her past inheritances ('I am clearly middle to upper class, my grandfather went to Eton, my father to Pemberley college') and is inseparable from her current holdings of economic capital ('I don't have any 'bad' debt, only 'safe' debt ... I'm very fortunate to earn the money I do, and to get the financial support from my parents that I have').

The necessity ('duty') that Sophie feels for maintaining and developing her networks is a personal requirement for self-development. Bourdieu emphasises here that the accrual of capital requires an investment made through relationships, a form of labour of sociality that can accrue value to the self which is 'consciously or unconsciously aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term'; such activity transforms 'contingent relations ... into relationships that are at once necessary and elective, implying durable obligations selectively felt (feelings of

gratitude, respect, friendship) or institutionally guaranteed' (cited Holt: 2008; 250). The forms of sociality and relation Sophie engages in seem to support his view. Work becomes play, and play and familiar relations are felt as work. Her differing activities, whether they be in the fields of religion, volunteering, education or her more formal 'work' all become sites of both obligation and intimacy, requiring an emotional investment and labour in relationships;

... so I suppose I think of the university stuff as work, kind of lots of enjoyment involved in that, and then Parkside again as kind of work; well work-ish because volunteering feels like some kind of work role, and even the church stuff... And kind of represented among these different spaces; none of these things are really - the people I meet in all these different spheres are not really sort of fixed as just related to work or just related to family and friends - I kind of think of them as people I need to engage with ...

For Bourdieu, with his heavy emphasis upon the instrumental, Sophie's immaterial labour is the labour of distinction and capital accumulation. Clough (2003) would no doubt place it within the frame of control, which unsettles the fixity of gender binaries within his analysis of social relationships and makes 'home no place like home'. Indeed Sophie, below, perhaps provides an example of how capital has subsumed 'the social reproduction of biological and social life' through the domain of affect and attention; 'beyond the socialisation of labour time, capital is engaged in the socialisation of the affective or capacities to attend' (Ibid; 360).

Sophie; map: To me it's the most important thing, staying in touch with people and seeing them and spending time with them. It's difficult and I do this here [pointing], so like this week I've got things on almost every evening, and I don't get to see Sarah or [them]. I feel real pain, and it feels wrong. I really feel when people ... I stay in touch with people, I don't find it easy to let go of relationships. It actually physically hurts me to say no I'm really sorry I'm absolutely out of time. Like this part of the map, well these three different aspects, have been very complicated. It's been too much really, I think I've realised I've taken on too much there, but the trouble is once you're in, you can't stop. I feel guilt, not being in touch with people enough, not doing enough there [pointing], not doing enough work (pointing), it looks like I do, I'm very busy but I'm not necessarily ... I do the same thing with work that I do with relationships. Something will have to give I suppose. And I just can't integrate all of this, this life ... and it's difficult to see how this life is compatible with having a relationship really. Could I give it up if I met someone I wanted to be with? I don't know that I want to spread myself so thinly; but I know that if I left here it would be cataclysmic for me. I mean with academia I will probably have to move away, do I want a job so much to give this up? [Pointing to the map] It might be a good thing, it might mean that ... but no; no doubt I would just build it up again.

The delivery of Sophie's narrative mirrors those embodied adjustments and fissures in identity that Berlant (2011) draws upon in the work of Tsianos and Papadopoulos to describe the affects of immaterial labour. It is a labour that places a constant demand on her emotional resources; it stretches her out thinly and makes her 'out of time'. She displays the restlessness and hyperactivity that ensues from the difficulties of managing and being exposed to the overabundance of communication, the demands placed upon her for cooperation and inter-relational activity. Such features of her life pose management problems, of time, emotion, and relations to others; they are the problems of simultaneity and recombination. Her flexibility and mobility is experienced as the 'unsettledness of her distribution and dispersal across different spaces and time lines' (Berlant: 2011; 197), and is vocalised as a form of vulnerability, guilt, and pain. In her attempts to satisfy emotional demands and obligations she finally conveys a certain affective exhaustion about her life. Her work of maintaining, renewing, and recombining her ties is an emotional labour that costs; it drains and exhausts as much as it holds out the hope of meaning and benefits.

Sophie's complaint here is engendered, it reflects Merck's observation that capital 'production finds its subjective equivalent in the disciplined flexibility of middle-class [male] professional service worker characterised by a habitual mobility, adaptability, an apparent autonomy and ability to self-fashion. Her positioning, as a woman, within such an economy 'attuned to freeing up the previously static and relatively fixed spatial and temporal dimensions of daily life' (2007; 56), places demands upon her person that are contradictory, ambivalent, and difficult. I return to this in Chapter 4. Here, however, it should be emphasised that Sophie's classed manifestation of anxiety and 'affect' is realised within and connected to the circuits of capital in ways that the working-class women's are not. For whilst they may be read as signs of her 'dissent' and consternation at a 'complex' and demanding life, they are also 'the psychic fuel' that will realise her 'flexibility, adaptability, and readiness to reconfigure' herself as a person of value (Ngai: 2005; 4 citing Virno).

3.9 The complaints of class

Sophie's 'time-poorness' is radically different to that of the working-class women's. It arises from the exhaustive self-inventions of reflexivity winners (Hey: 2005) whose losses can be recuperated and (as Sophie herself remarks) be 'built up again'. Like Sophie, Elaine's immersion in her networks of sociality also exhaust her, she rarely has time to herself away from the demands of others, but this is a labour of care which does not accrue value to herself that can be used within wider circuits of exchange. It will not help her move beyond her immediate conditions, it is not part of a process of self-extension across social fields. Indeed, as I will emphasise, whilst Elaine's 'immaterial labour' produces and maintains her social relationships and realises values for her, her children, and friends, it has no recognition of worth in wider symbolic systems (Chapter 7).

When Sophie complains of time-poorness she is pointing to her inability to realise herself in a particular project ('not doing enough there', 'spreading myself too thinly'). It is a time-poorness which threatens the realisation of her future, of not realising her capabilities, and value. Elaine's relation to time and the forms of sociality that emerge from it, like that of the other working-class women, is different. Elaine's time is played out within present circumstance amidst her classed relation to Berlant's crisis of ordinariness: 'this is my life every day', as she titles her map. What she wants from present activity is to have a laugh, enjoy herself with her friends; what she wants from her time is respite from the demands that are placed on it. Elaine wants the time of the labour of normative social reproduction to stop, and to let herself rest.

Jackie (below) understands this feeling, and the difference that class makes in her life. She draws attention to inheritance, to the possibilities to move on and accrue, and their relation to insecurity;

Jackie: What do middle-class people worry about? Well that's a bit of a tricky one actually. The middle-classes are sometimes people that maybe they've struggled to get themselves where they are. Or maybe they've just been a little more fortunate in that they were born into property, or maybe something came along and they were able to trade up, or move along. I think a lot of middle-class people do actually struggle, but it's not a struggle like our class face; their kind of

struggle is 'oh my god I've got to do this and oh god I've got to do that' ... I'd love to be able to worry about some of that...

The temporality of the working-class women's social labour, and the values that are produced and lived within it, is significantly different to that of the middle-class women. Their concern is not with future possibility for self-realisation, but with each other in present time (chapter 7). Sophie occupies a temporality and positioning in relation to capital that de-couples 'subjects and their social life through the dispersal of locality and its new forms of temporalities [to] produce forms of consciousness which are future projected on the basis of securitising risk' (Connerton: 2009). In her life the future is envisaged as 'the cause of current experience and action' rather than being embedded in the present and having relation to the past (Ibid, citing Beck; 3).

Sophie also offers up her social labour of care and attention as a performance of her value, her vocalisation of the emotion and pain that this labour realises works as a sign of her ethical disposition, of her embodiment of moral value and sentiment; her caring self is seen to cost her a great deal, it even 'physically hurts her'. For Skeggs, this 'experiencing, choosing and displaying affect' is a way middle-class persons establish and accrue forms of value within symbolic recognition orders; such 'feelings and emotions become value statements about one's capacity and are crucial to the exploitation and display of morality of the person' (Skeggs: 2010b; 34). It is here that the 'moral' values of sociality and intimacy in the private realm in her life become co-joined with the economic via the accrual of cultural and social capital, and the display and performance of an attentive and caring subjectivity. For Skeggs such a process 'brings together Foucault's project on the self with Bourdieu's establishment of cultural capital ... whereby the self accrues moral and economic value across social space for use in the present and future' (Skeggs: 2007; 3).

As a subject of 'immaterial labour,' Sophie may be 'compelled' to perform her value through her performance of emotional pain within the research relation, but she is also better positioned than the working-class women to do so, and she is better positioned to draw upon the resources for 'telling' herself (Chapter 1). The pain and the affects in the working-class women's lives are of a radically differing order and are often

experienced as a dis-investment of self, indeed they cannot be drawn upon as a source of legitimacy to make entitlement claims (Skeggs: 2004) (see Chapters 5,6,7). Be it within the contexts of reality television, research relation, or everyday social spaces, it is 'the affective as value-added to the scene of the emotional performance that enables the transaction of the different forms of women's labour to be translated into exchange or not' (Skeggs: 2010b; 48).

3.10 'Looking ahead'

For Berlant, Sophie's 'exhaustion' and 'pain' would perhaps arise from her own affective relation to 'crisis ordinariness' that mark the 'shifts and hiccups in the relations among structural forces that alter a class's sense of things, its sensing of thing' (2011; 198). The fragmented, intense, and exacerbated delivery of her narrative is suggestive in this sense of an experience of a 'intensified and stressed out learning curve about how to maintain footing, bearings, a way of being, and new modes of composure amid unravelling institutions and social relations of reciprocity' (ibid; 196). Indeed in all the exercises that I conducted with Sophie I got the sense that her position as a woman in contemporary relations was 'precarious' in Berlant's sense; that she was adrift from the traditional expectations and forms of attachment that were her cultural and familial inheritances. Central here, was her articulation of her anxieties about renegotiating her expectancies about family, sexuality, work and religious belief.

This experience of 'the corrosion of security' in her life, combined with her valuing of 'the lateral freedoms and creative ambitions' of self-making that ensue from de-tradition (Berlant: 2011; 193) are central to understanding her and the other middle-class women's responses to their classed 'others'. So whilst her 'complaint' may seem frivolous and self-indulgent when placed beside the realities of Elaine and the other working-class women's lives encountered in succeeding chapters, it must not be easily dismissed because it plays its constitutive role in the formation of class-relations. Indeed the 'instabilities, incongruities, antagonisms, ambiguities, and messiness that constitute' their 'new-found' situation are re-worked and become 'attached to the soft hierarchies of inequality to provide a sense of [their] place in the world' (Ranciere cited Berlant:

2011; 194). I take up these difficulties and insecurities and the way they mediate relationships with 'others' in the next chapter.

4. 'Post-feminist' freedoms and their limits

4.1 Introduction

Olivia, handbag: Contraceptive pills - there you go, that's in there all the time because I always forget and my friends are like, why don't you just take them in the morning and I'm like, oh no I'm useless like that. So I generally take it - say if I'm at work and I have my cup of tea and I think that's what I need to do, and my bag's right there, or if I'm queuing up to pay for something in the shops and I'm like oh yeah, you need to take it ...

In the first sections of this chapter, I focus upon the ways in which the middle-class women negotiate what McRobbie (2007) calls the bio-political juncture of the new sexual contract in their everyday lives. As Walkerdine observes, here, 'these young women were not 'reproducing' anything certain that had gone on before' (2001; 167) but neither are they subjects entirely free to break with past inheritances. Indeed, they are subjects of 'an economic rationality which envisages young women as endlessly working on a perfectible self', but whose co-ordinates and telos are less a 're-definition of gender-relations' than, arguably, a re-working and retrenchment of older forms of 'patriarchies and hegemonic masculinities'; ones made through the 'attribution of apparent post-feminist freedoms' (McRobbie: 2007; 720).

Taking up a place within the new economy through work and education, and immersion as consumers in a highly sexualised and sexist economy produces 'the bourgeois subject as feminine or the feminine as a masquerade of the bodily performance of the bourgeois subject as masculine' (Walkerdine 2001: 188). It is here that the forms of 'self-regulation' and 'self-invention' that Sophie and the other middle-class women are 'compelled' to act out within the 'fragility of the present arrangements... demands certain psychological strategies to defend against uncertainty and fragmentation' (ibid; 212).

Whilst I draw attention to the difficulties and anxieties of the middle-class women's positioning in a 'new' economy, it is important to stress that I have restricted space for a fuller exploration. As I have emphasised, my study is not focused on middle-class experience per se, but upon the ways such experience impacts upon and helps inform and reproduce relationships of class (dis)entitlement. In the second, and more

substantive, part of the chapter, I carry forward this discussion of insecurity alongside the theme of embodied entitlement. I do so through a focus upon their encounters with their proximate others in the spaces of Fenton, highlighting the ways in which their labour within processes of 'individualisation' and the 'insecurities' that it manifests is a 'struggle that defends against Otherness' (Walkerdine: 2001; 166). It is here

that classed subjectification works not only on complex conscious and rational processes but also on desires, wishes and anxieties, and creates defensive organisations through which participants live their inscription into the discursive practices that make up current sociality (ibid; 212).

Specifically with regard to 'current sociality,' I explore the ways in which the middle-class women's 'propinquity' to other social groups is negotiated and used to inform and secure their sense of self and sense of belonging to Fenton. In doing so, I re-emphasise Skeggs' understanding that it is through exploring the uses of culture and a focus upon practice and the formation of relationships to persons, objects, and places that we can understand how value is realised through relationships of class. In particular, I explore 'how property relations become articulated as a property of the person' and how 'property, propriety and entitlement' are used for movement through space, boundary formation, maintenance, and investment in self (Skeggs: 2001b; 407).

4.2 'A girl can have everything'

Olivia, below, positions herself in relation to a populist feminist discourse of 'girl power'; it is a discourse that she identified with 'in the playground'. Here within the spatial frame of her educational development the feminist aspiration for autonomy, respect, self-esteem and entitlement are connected to ideas of collective struggle for equality and rights (Skeggs: 2002; 144).

Olivia: It's funny, when I was little I would be like I am going to get married at 21, and have kids. But things have changed... When feminism comes to mind I think of women with the banners and the billboards and getting paid the same as men, strong women's views. When I was young it was girl power, the Spice Girls, yeah as soon as you said that (feminism) it reminds me of when I was at school when I was eleven. Girl power, it was a big thing, in the playground. Don't play with the boys, just girls together ruling the world. I love that word girl power ...

As I will emphasise, Olivia's reflection that 'things have changed' is as much an expression of ambivalence and anxiety over the possibilities of her (future)

‘individualisation’ as it is a statement of release and freedom from older normative and engendered conceptions of where her place should be. In her life ‘the much hyped girl power and female future looks decidedly unsteady and...extremely difficult’ (Walkerdine: 2001; 216). The appeal of ‘girl power’ and its aspiration for a better, collective, future for ‘girls together,’ has in Olivia’s life become absorbed and overtaken by feelings of personal insecurity. Indeed those ‘feminist values and ideals’ have come to be displaced by the pressures imposed ‘by an array of political and cultural forces, to reshape notions of [her] womanhood to fit with new or emerging (neo-liberalised) social and economic arrangements’ (McRobbie: 2007; 721).

Walkerdine remarks here that modern forms of governmentality demand a subject who is capable of ‘bearing the burdens of liberty’. Such an injunction requires and incites subjects to be autonomous and choosing subjects, subjects who can make investments in the present for their future realisation; ‘whatever the constraints, obstacles and limitations encountered, the individual must render their life as the outcome of individual choice as a form of self-realisation’ (Walkerdine: 2001; 2). This is a ‘particular kind of subject, stand-alone people who are aware of and responsible for their own thoughts and actions ... these subjects are made not born’ (ibid; 2). Within this context it is difficult to underestimate the differences between the middle-class women and their mothers’ positioning within the ‘old sexual contract’. They are subjects of very different processes of interpellation, ‘from being assumed to be headed towards marriage, motherhood, and limited economic participation, the girl is now a social category understood primarily as being endowed with economic capacity’ and autonomy (McRobbie: 2007; 722).

Expectation

Olivia: My fears? I don’t want to be an adult at all, I’m quite scared; I’m just going to wake up one morning and be an adult. If I go to job interviews and I don’t get them, I would be very upset, things like that; and saving money for a house and things. It would be really disappointing if I couldn’t do that because when you are at university you don’t have to worry, I suppose not working hard enough, my parents get cross if I am not working hard, and they get cross if they see me out with my friends all the time... My mum wants me to sort out what I want to do, employment-wise, she aspires for me to get a good job ... I don’t think she expected me to go to university, she just knew, and the type of school we went to, quite an academic one; so I think she just knew I would

go. Nowadays you are just expected to go to university. It was just a different way for her, a different outlook on education. She just went straight into having kids and then work, and I'm there doing as many qualifications as possible, what she went through; it's just incredible how hard it was, and I think that - teaching abroad, that's my first main goal, and then working up to something in social work, working with families, children...

Olivia marks the difficulties her mother faced when raising her. It is an experience that she, but also her mother, wishes to avoid. The emotional work invested in her route to individualisation and the formation of her anxieties and her subjectivity, however, is also elided by Olivia and remains implicit. It is 'different now' and 'nowadays you are expected to go to university' sits alongside her mother's persistence and labour in realising aspiration for her daughter. As Chapter 7 will emphasise, the practices of parenting that have informed the middle-class women's outlook on life, what they must aspire to, what success should mean, is historically specific to the formation of the middle-class family and its cultural practices and requires a great deal of hard work; work that, as Sophie made apparent in Chapter 3, can become taken as a 'virtue' (Walkerdine: 2001).

Olivia, too, elides the privileges of her family's social positioning that have allowed her to realise the 'expectation' of educational attainment. Young working-class women like Mandy, and their own mothers, have no such assumptions. As McRobbie (2007; 727) emphasises, the retreat of welfare, the decline in state funding in education, and the increased search for competitive distinction that inheres within 'competitive [and apparently] meritocratic systems of reward' works to produce a 'gendered axis of social division' that figures those such as Mandy as exemplars of 'shabby failure' (later). This is not to deny or disparage the hard work that Olivia has invested in her education. Indeed the account she gave of her study contrasts with the figure of the student as slacker or bohemian implied in her description of Fenton in Chapter 3. Like the other middle-class women, she had supplemented her educational efforts to shore up her prospects and her CV with part-time work, and by volunteering in the community sector.

As in Walkerdine's research, what is striking about middle-class narratives of their educational experience is the level of anxiety induced by 'expectation.' It manifests itself in the fear of not accumulating enough educational capital, of never being good

enough (Walkerdine: 2001). Sophie (below), despite her outstanding academic achievements, 'had a big, big, big feeling of failure' and guilt. It is this emotional anxiety that acts as a driver for her 'successes'. Past her twenties she continues to be driven by her parent's desire for improvement;

My first degree was going to be Russian and Linguistics and I did really like it; but it was really hard work ... I was doing 17 hours of study rather than the 5 hours everyone else seemed to do; but I just could not do it, could not do it. I got really upset and worried ... I had a massive sense of failure there; I let myself down, my parents down ...

Just as in the research of Walkerdine, the middle-class women rarely 'made a connection between their sense of inadequacy and their social and economic location' (2001; 180). Sophie, however, highlights such a connection when she reflects on her own educational 'successes' as 'disappointments' in her parents' eyes. Here their aspiration for her to keep that one step ahead of her social others is most manifestly classed; 'it gets girls places in the right universities and ensures they do well there... in difficult economic times excellence acts as a form of insurance' (ibid; 184).

... it was always given that I would go to university, it was a family expectation, they expected us to achieve quite highly at school but then of course it wasn't quite as straightforward as that ... anyway [in the end] I applied for four different universities but my dad really wanted me to apply for Oxbridge. My grandpa, when I said I had got a place here was like 'never mind dear'. My family, well that kind of side of my family, thought anything north of the Watford Gap was a little bit down-market. Dad still now, when I applied for a higher degree was like, why can't you apply to other places, you should apply to Cambridge...

The threat of pregnancy

All the middle-class women with the exception of Rosie (Chapter 7) place their relation to possible motherhood within the frame of a life biography; a possible future stage that would come after 'seeing the world,' higher educational attainment, and the pursuit of a successful and fulfilling career. Here, as Walkerdine observes, the regulation of fecundity in terms of class difference is notable; 'for middle-class young women it is their inscription as the bourgeois subject that counterpoises fecundity in a way that simply does not allow the possibility of pregnancy' (2001; 187). 'Early' motherhood was seen as a threat to their sense of present and future selves. The possibilities of pregnancy were envisaged as a form of 'death'.

Rebecca: I couldn't imagine having an abortion at 18, whereas now I could if I were to get pregnant outside of marriage I could imagine choosing abortion, which would be massive for me; shocking for my parents ...it would have been a tragedy for them if I had a baby, they would have felt it was incredibly irresponsible for me to bring a life - to have a baby who wouldn't have a father. They would be really - they would have if I had married; they would have felt that I needed to get an education, a career... and anyway I can't guarantee that I am going to have a family. I mean kids would be great if I met someone, but it's a huge deal, I just think people don't realise what a huge deal it is having kids. I've seen that it is difficult for Penny, she's got two kids and her job involves a lot of dedication and she is not able to put so much into her work now - she has taken time out to have those kids...

Rebecca, like the other middle-class women, understands that motherhood is still associated with downward occupational mobility, that gender equality is conflated with labour market participation and leaves aside the continued assumption that women will care outside work and in the home. She understands that paid work does not divorce women from 'care,' emotionally or practically, but rather makes life a complex set of temporal and spatial practices and dislocations. She does not wish for the emotional cost of combining care with a professional career; does not wish to take up the subject position of 'the superwoman who can do everything and has no choice but to do everything' (Walkerdine: 2001; 215).

Potential motherhood here 'operates against an 'other': loss of money, position, status' and possibilities of self-realisation, but it also invites implicit evaluation of 'others' (Walkerdine: 2001; 167). It is here that the inheritance of Rebecca's traditional classed 'values' and patterns of social reproduction become re-worked and lived uneasily within the new economy. Motherhood outside of heterosexual wedlock is loaded with the moral valuations of traditional propriety, and these go hand-in-hand with the threat to the investments that her parents have made in the narrative of individualisation for their child. Moral responsibility to provide the right environment for childhood and for taking up responsibilities for self-realisation cut across the inscription of possible motherhood. As will be made evident, where these two productions of feminine 'self' (as potential mother, as the bourgeois feminine subject) meet is in their implicit valuation of those who 'fail' in meeting the requirements of social and personal responsibility.

Clever and beautiful

The injunction to achieve educationally and aspire to a career as central to the attainment of success stands side-by-side with the requirements to fit in with normative expectations about what the appearance and performance of femininity should be in times of apparent 'de-tradition'. Walkerdine refers to this predicament as being trapped within the requirement to 'become both very clever and very beautiful,' a pernicious injunction to realise personal identity through the idea that 'a girl can have everything' (Walkerdine: 2001).

Olivia (below) finds herself immersed within the sensibility of a 'post-feminist' cultural climate where the 'obviousness' of the feminist ideas for equality she grew up with have become entangled with the registers of personal empowerment, individual expression and choice (Gill: 2007). The set of 'post-feminist' themes that Gill identifies as intersecting with this (neo-liberal) call to freedom envelope and condition her subjectivity and her relation to femininity. She displays a preoccupation with the 'feminine' body and appearance as a locus for self-reflexive presentation. Such performances of the feminine 'self' rely on the careful management of her body, codes of behaviour, and knowledge of consumer practices, and immersion in the 'makeover paradigm'.

Indeed she makes positive investments in her femininity across a range of practices and sites, organising, colouring and adding value to her selection and consumption of music, clothes, cosmetics, and her choice of male partner. It is here that Olivia makes a correlation of being feminine with appearances but also suggests that it is a quality realised from within the expression of the true, correct, and proper self. Femininity, for Olivia, is an outward presentation of the right kind of qualities that she finds within herself: her propriety and value is expressed by her public display and performance of her sexed and feminine body, an assertion of the natural and essential difference of her sexed identity grounded within normative heterosexuality.

Indeed 'everything' a girl should have would appear in Olivia's life to align itself to 'the controlling cultural norms and market productions of gender and sexuality, including

norms and productions of beauty, sexual desire and behaviour, weight and physique, soul and psyche' that course through liberalism's 'depoliticised underworld,' cloaking and eroticising 'the deep and abiding male super-ordination' (Brown: 2008; 198).

Olivia: Femininity ... I think it's definitely looking after yourself, making yourself visually presentable, but again it's how you present yourself inside; being polite is definitely important ... having nice hair and taking care of myself, makeup I suppose, but femininity is about having good taste in everything, good taste in music, good taste in the opposite sex, good taste in clothes. I like skinny jeans, the denim jackets, leggings, the vintage look ... I try [to work on keeping slim] ... I'm border size eight. Like I've got my bike and I cycle everywhere, but I've got massive muscles, and I want thin, but they are just growing, horrible; yeah I could make more effort ...

Mark: Are you naturally size eight? I mean what is a size eight?

Olivia ... Like Rachel off Friends she's good - that's a size 8. But then again men like curves, so who knows? I see myself as very curvy, which is rubbish. I definitely need to lose a few pounds and I think if I did - my house mate is size six, so tiny, whereas I'm double that. Men love small girls. I always think, sometimes when I complain about my weight my boyfriend says that it's ok; but I think he would prefer a tiddly bit thinner. When we go out and he always says 'have you seen how gorgeous she is' - we have that nice relationship, always really good at having banter where we don't get jealous - but he loves stick thin girls and I'm like 'why are you with me?' But no, he obviously loves me. But I think being really thin, it's nicer for girls to be slimmer than men. But then again (my friend) says that guys are looking for curves and boobs, but she says that because I have them ... in some ways it's like you don't like what you have, do you? She says she'd just love to have my figure and I say well just eat more... Yeah I just need to lose a few pounds, my boobs are a problem, when I go into a shop and try on a new top ...

Here the normative projections of what feminine appearance should look like have literally become shrunk, a state of affairs where 'the real' becomes stigmatised whilst the simulacrum (Rachel off Friends) becomes the norm from which Olivia feels herself to deviate (Frost: 2005). Her anxieties over her weight are not to be assumed as mundane, dismissible: as Bordo observes, a concentration on the pathologies of bulimia and anorexia obscures the normalising function of dominant inscriptions of femininity and 'diverts recognition from the central means of the reproduction of gender' (Bordo: 2004; 186).

The pressures that Olivia feels to achieve 'the unattainable' are internalised and self-owned but they are also clearly identified in her talk. It is a structure of power that works through her everyday practices of 'self' regulation, mediated through her personal relationships, and emerges from a media culture that circulates and reproduces the 'feminine' in terms of realising validation within a heterosexual matrix of

masculine desire and constraint. Whilst the dominant discourses that realise Olivia's relation to femininity serve to habituate, normalise and homogenise patterns of behaviour and practice, they do so as a 'durable and flexible strategy of social control' (Bordo: 2002; 166). Power here works not through force but through the arousal of pleasure and its concomitant relationship to feelings of anxiety, doubt, and emotional pain. Such a 'voluntary' structure is a form of governmentality that 'works to conceal that patriarchy is still in place, while the requirements of the fashion and beauty system ensure that women are still fearful subjects, driven by the need for complete perfection' (McRobbie: 2007; 726).

For McRobbie (2005), the inscription of the post-feminist feminine masquerade locks (some) young women into a world of ambivalence and contradiction and circumvents a critique of patriarchy, leaving them only with 'illegible rage' and the interiorisation of female complaint. It is here that the spectre of negative feelings that the middle-class women revealed when they spoke about femininity, specifically the appearance of femininity, is far more obvious than examples of pleasure. The mundane, sometimes fleeting expression of lack, failure, anxiety and dissatisfaction is ubiquitous within their lives. These negative feelings were about not being able to inhabit the normative and regulatory fictions of what femininity was meant to look like. The daily practices underpinning the performance of femininity, through attentiveness to the body and to other bodies, worrying about dieting and exercise, make-up, and dress, were consistently worked through a language and emotion of lack, failure, anxiety, and dissatisfaction. Some felt and expressed these more strongly; all expressed them in different ways and registers, and developed different defences and vocabularies to work them through; but all the women - even those like Olivia who were relatively positive about 'what God had given you' - expressed these 'ugly' feelings.

Vicky (below) is in her early thirties and is conscious of the devaluation of herself in relation to perceived norms of idealised feminine appearances. Femininity viewed within these terms, for Vicky, is not something which she attaches great value to, but is something she recognises as imposing on her sense of self and her movement through social space. Her rage, however, is far from 'illegible':

I hate fucking men's magazines with women on the front and I really hate women's magazines. I don't enjoy; I hate the way there are images all around that make you feel bad about yourself, or that are designed to make you feel that you would be better off if you looked like that ...

Vicky does not take up the inscription of the post-feminist masquerade, she refers to herself as a 'he-be-she-species' because she wears androgynous ('baggy') clothes. This is not, however, a confident and politicised enactment of an expression of a feminism that refuses the 'normative'. She suffers feelings of abjection from her own body; routinely, naggingly, she is under constant threat of the judgement of self and others through her visibility:

Vicky, middle-class: At the moment because I've put weight on and I'm feeling really uncomfortable with myself ... I don't really like dressing up at all and I'll avoid going out. I literally do, I have very few clothes and because I've put weight on and can't fit anything else I won't go out, and if I do go into shops I don't want to buy anything else because I'm not comfortable with myself. So that sounds really shallow doesn't it?

Shallowness and vanity are the normative attributes applied to Vicky's 'ugly feelings'; 'If we are never happy with ourselves, it is implied, that is due to our female nature, not to be taken too seriously or made into a political question' (Bordo: 2003; 253). Her reduced mobility, her lack of confidence, become signs of her own moral failing and lack of strength of character. This is a double movement, or refluxive flow, of shame within her sense of self; the shame imposed upon her through her recognition that her own body is evaluated as not right in the eyes of the male and normative gaze, and shame at her own recognition of the 'frivolity' of her concern, of not being able to 'get over it'. Vicky's feminist perspective does not make her immune from the pressures and effects of living in a highly sexist culture.

I have discussed some of the anxieties of the middle-class women's positioning in a 'new' economy and within normative projections of femininity. I now carry forward this theme of uncertainty alongside that of embodied entitlement. I do so through a focus upon their encounters with their proximate others in Fenton: firstly, their 'ethnic' others, and then, in more depth, white working-class women. Before doing so, however, it is important to briefly draw attention to the apparent lack of substantive connection and overlap in their lives with their social and ethnic 'others'.

4.3 Proximity

Bourdieu (2010) has been used to explain the symbolic and spatial boundary work of class relations through his conception of the socialization process as generative of a distinctive class 'habitus', the internalized embodiment of social norms and established patterns of behaviour with people who share similar locations in social space results in their flocking together, people of similar classes feel 'at home' with people who share their dispositions, and tastes (Watt: 2006, 2009). Liz (below) despite her 'intentions' to integrate herself within the 'community' of Fenton, seems to confirm such a process; she finds herself gravitating to those who share her interests, practices and tastes, she is 'naturally' drawn to those who embody the norms through which she has been socialised;

Liz; tour: This is my friends Vic's house, I come round here quite a lot, we've got keys for each other's houses ... I have organic vegetables delivered here because mine, I don't know whether people will pinch it or not ... Just go left here, my friend Jill lives on this street, with the green door, and again I occasionally pop round, to use a ladder or DIY tools ... I met her through the church with Vic. Louise ... moved to Hadley because they've got children... There are a lot of different student properties, lots of council properties, a lot of families, and then obviously people that I know, the professionals, the people from church that have chosen to buy around here; quite a few purchased property to see if they could influence, to see if they could learn, be part of the community, but they would also become a community ... that's quite a long time ago, and since ... I know there are people who have lived here for a hell of a long time so I suppose I don't entirely fit in, you know I wonder if people see me and say oh look at her decorating the house and all this fancy stuff and who does she think she is, I think that's entirely in my head...

Whilst researchers have used Bourdieu's thought to emphasise the importance of reflexivity and mobility for the appropriation of 'distinction' through specific forms of cultural engagement and taste within 'place' (Savage: 2010), such work downplays and obscures the sense of ambiguity and defensiveness in middle-class practices of 'settlement' that Liz exhibits here. Fenton is a material and social space that is unfamiliar to the middle-class women's own upbringing; their migration into the neighbourhood has brought them into proximity with ethnic diversity, to working-class space and bodies. In this sense they are the 'stranger'; their movement into Fenton carries with it a disturbance of their socio-spatial order, inducing anxieties and fears (Sandercock: 2002).

A focus on the ambivalence and anxiety induced from proximity and movement into Fenton that Liz intimates brings to the fore a questioning of the ontological security of the 'migrant' and 'elective believer' which studies that use 'habitus' implies is relatively assured. Mendez (2010; 151) asks here 'is there any use of disclaimers, excuses, justifications, embarrassment, modesty?' in the movement into a new residential setting, she relates such questions to notions of authenticity, of the proper, because, and as Liz demonstrates, it is the incentivizing and affective force of 'mobile identities to be 'cursed' by the tension between different projects of authenticity' (Ibid; 152).

The rest of this chapter explores how the middle-class women make this strangeness 'familiar' and safe, and how these processes become constitutive of classed selves and classed relations. Specifically, my focus is upon the ways in which the spaces of Fenton, and the bodies of social others are made to function in proximate relations as a productive source for the constitution of self through the pragmatics of propriety, property and affect. In doing so I explore the ways in which some cultural characteristics fix some groups and enable others to be mobile and how some forms of culture are condensed and inscribed onto social groups, marking them and restricting their movement in social space (Skeggs: 2001).

4.4 'It's just so sweet'

In this section, I turn to the ways in which the middle-class women positioned themselves in relation to their proximity to those they perceived to be their 'ethnic' others through discourses of toleration and cosmopolitanism. I do not explore the experience of those identified as 'ethnic' others, most of whom are working-class and British born. The purpose, rather, is to provide a contrast between the differing constructions and evaluations the middle-class women make with regard to their proximity to their ethnic others and those they make when negotiating their proximity with white working-class women (section 4.5). The focus is on the ways in which perspectives upon these other bodies serve to establish and organise relationships that create and accrue value to their persons through the attachment of value. Such perspectives are informed through the marking and making of difference. What is

constructed as valuable about these proximate bodies is detached from the object of the gaze, and what remains is an essentialized and spatialised subject of racialised inscription made safe through toleration (Brown: 2006).

Whilst most of the middle-class women implicitly or explicitly resisted normative and naturalised conceptions of femininity, their representations of non-white ethnicities within Fenton often invoked the categories of race as an objective fact rather than a socio-historical construct. They 'were' their race (Byrne: 2006). Like Byrne, my own research found that middle-class constructions of whiteness in relation to these 'other' identities 'tends not to be an explicit, proclaimed identity [but rather] a silent or unmarked norm, which serves to exclude and marginalise others, and yet is critical to the construction of the white metropolitan subject as normative' (ibid; 12).

The extract below is drawn from a conversation in which Liz was providing a commentary on the problems of 'regeneration' of her neighbourhood, including the poor state of housing and the anti-social behaviour of some residents. Liz, and this was a repeated practice through the middle-class women's 'presenting' of their ethnic others, put on and affected a poor mimicry of her neighbour's voice. What was significant about her neighbour was determined by the inescapable inscription of his ethnicity in his speech. He may have lived in Fenton for over forty years, but he remains signified as belonging to his race first.

Liz, tour : It's really sweet, I've got, there is a guy who lives a few doors up and he moved in here, he bought his house in 1965 which was the year I was born and we always chat and he goes 'you always looking after your house and making it nice.' It's just so sweet. I went round to help him with his washing machine because it got stuck the other day ...

Liz here is making a claim of belonging and attachment ('I've got') that is based upon her propriety and her capacity to maintain good relations with this 'sweet' man whilst at the same time setting herself and him apart from those other residents on her street. It is not just the approval of her neighbour (through his recognition of her worth) which attributes self-value to Liz or their shared pride in looking after their properties and conducting themselves well. It is also her own positioning with regard to her tolerance of him. The affective tone of apparent conviviality, an example of good neighbourliness,

is one of tolerant condescension expressed most clearly by the attribution of 'sweetness' and the mimicry of his voice. It provides a mild example from within everyday life of what Brown imputes to the domain of tolerance within governmental political discourse, one which when expressed through the 'anti-political language of ontology, affect and ethos' aims 'to separate and disperse us, and then naturalise this social isolation as both a necessity (produced by difference) and a good (achieved by tolerance)' (2006; 89). For Brown the 'action of tolerance never affords the same access to superiority' that is established for the giver through its generous conferral (ibid; 14).

Sophie, below, shows how the essentializing differences rooted in the deployment of tolerance are refracted through lay perspectives. Tolerance of 'difference' here is 'conferred on foreign practices (and) shores up the normative standing of the tolerant and the liminal standing of the tolerated'; serving to reconfirm the orders of social power (Brown: 2006; 203). Here is a clear illustration that it is not tolerance itself that is the problem, but rather the 'signs of identity production and identity management in the context of orders of stratification or marginalisation in which the production, the management, and the context themselves are disavowed' (ibid; 14).

Sophie: I would distinguish the Asian community and a poor white community ... it's a place where there are cultural and ethnic divides, or with ethnic opposition between the two groups ... there is the Mosque that is prominent, which again I actually like the look of, I like walking down the hill and seeing the minaret and find it aesthetically pleasing, but I know that there are children disclosing that they are being hit at the mosque, so that's a sensitive issue ...

The two identifiable groups, 'poor whites' and the 'Asian community,' are constrained by their limitations with the inability to see beyond their own ethnic positions. This is where the conflict in the neighbourhood resides. Sophie can see beyond this cultural and ethnic divide, but in a particular way. She assimilates difference through her aesthetic appreciation and acceptance of the externalised signs of 'otherness' (although importantly not that of the 'poor whites'). At the same time she keeps those who occupy its space at bay by 're-inscribing the marginalisation of the already marginal by reifying and opposing their difference to the normal, the secular, or the neutral' (Brown: 2006; 45). She does so by making the figure of the abused child stand within its spaces, a symbolic investment representing the vulnerability of a tolerant society. Such practices

of tolerant and cosmopolitan civility and discernment have as their hinge the withdrawal of tolerance itself; the ascriptive identity is always seen to 'harbour orders of belief, practice or desire cast as significant enough to provoke rejection or hostility' (ibid; 45). It is a 'sensitive' issue precisely because it shifts the grounds of tolerance/intolerance away from particularity towards the universality of a particular group, a group who 'have these beliefs or values by virtue of who (they) are' (ibid; 46).

Sophie is not alone in placing a positive evaluation of living amongst 'difference' whilst at the same time maintaining the boundary work necessary to keep 'self' and 'other' apart. Like Watts' study in Camden (2006), the graduate professionals and students all made investments of belonging to Fenton through a discourse of multiculturalism; commonly articulated through the possibilities of consuming the 'exotic'. Rebecca, below, shows how the purchase of something as mundane as coriander accrues surplus value through the designation of its character and origin as 'Asian.' She positions herself as the visitor, a tourist passing through and sampling the delights of the foreign, experiencing the exoticism of the multi-cultural:

Rebecca: I quite like seeing people from multi-racial backgrounds in Fenton, I kind of find myself thinking 'oh I'm living somewhere multi-cultural, that makes it, me an interesting person' - which is horrible, but I'm sure that went through my mind, but I know it opens me up to diverse experiences in life which I would value ... I think when I go to Asian shops I would want to be over-polite, try to be extra nice because I would want to get on with people from different backgrounds, I'd feel like yes this works, this integration can work, and I can go and get a bunch of coriander, to cook a curry and I'm white but that's ok they don't mind.

Liz, Sophie and Rebecca reveal the flexibility of the discourses of multi-culturalism, they assert the benefits of 'positive exposure' whilst still ensuring the 'fixity of the differences between 'them' and 'us', the norm and the other' (Byrne: 2006; 16). Rebecca in particular reveals the processes of self-valuation and exchange that are made possible from such a relationship. The neighbourhood (as a multi-cultural space) is subsumed within her person; she herself becomes the subject of interest ('that makes it, me an interesting person'). Rebecca is also conscious of such processes, they are 'horrible'. Her anxiety and self-reflexivity, however, entail that she will be 'over-polite' and would be 'extra nice'. Here, tolerance is in effect performative; it establishes relationships and identities of a particular but racialised kind.

I now turn to the routine privatisation of difference in another register, that of class, to mark the presence of the intolerable, but nonetheless constitutive, figure of the white working-class woman. It is here that 'class makes a decisive re-appearance in and through the vectors of transformed gendered individualisation' (McRobbie: 2004; 100).

4.5 Bad exemplars

The feelings of anger, injustice, anxiety, shame, and the sense of failure felt within a space defined by a generalised masculine order of heterosexual desire run side-by-side with the recurrence of a class-specific stereotype in the middle-class women's accounts of Fenton. In the extract below Vicky provides the first example when she refers to the 'local women' who venture out into public space on a weekend. Vicky, to recall, is conscious of the devaluation of herself in relation to perceived norms of idealised feminine appearances. Femininity viewed within these normative terms is not something which she attaches great value to, but is something she recognises as imposing on her sense of self and her movement through social space.

Vicky: ... you do go out and see women out there with their boobs hanging out and their skirts up to there, whether they think that's what they've got to do to justify themselves, and again that's just my judgement and I feel a bit sad, but if they are happy and comfortable in that then good luck, not for me to judge. That's probably how I feel about it ... (but) you can see women tottering around looking so uncomfortable and awkward, and I think why are you wearing that - to me that isn't tasteful because you are not doing anything nice for yourself. If I'm honest, no I don't like people who tan themselves orange and use slap - I don't understand it, I don't understand it at all. I think it's a mask and an insecurity; for other women it's a mask, it's a shield that you put on, that does empower you yes ... it's not really envy, it's just me; more of an internal thing than external...

Within the apparently fixed stereotype the play of identification and difference provides an equivocation which moves between 'not really envy' and pity (implicitly inferred). The slap, the tan, the breasts, and thighs that are flaunted before (his) eyes are signs of insecurity; where she does 'baggy' they put on a 'mask'. It is assumed that the 'slap and tan' are there to empower the women; that they gain confidence (something she does not have) over something that they lack ('justification'). Partial identification is reworked into difference and rejection through the appeal to her own inner worth and authenticity ('an internal thing').

Vicky's appeal to personal taste is, here, nothing to do with individuality per se since 'whatever suits' is undercut by the moral approval she gives to her own perspective which makes her uncomfortable with the 'choices' that other women make *as women*. Vicky may suffer insecurity and resentment within a space defined by masculine norms, but she will remain true to herself, she will not play the game, she has what they lack - self-respect. Vicky is able to attach to herself a sense of self-worth and propriety, one that she believes the women to de-valorise through their shared identity as women by their performances of femininity and sexual display. These are felt as a minor injury of sorts, they make her feel 'quite sad'.

The second example of the stereotype of working-class femininity, whilst offering a re-iteration that class often operates through a 'kind of second order signifier' rather than through its explicit reference (Lawler: 2005; 124) is set beside a mixture of convention and practice that shows how historical formations of middle-class femininity and propriety neatly absorb and adapt themselves within contemporary formulations of individualism. Unlike Vicky, who has a more ambivalent position to normative conceptions of femininity, Olivia identifies herself with the qualities of the feminine subject, albeit with the inevitable sense of dissatisfaction and unease that such an identification provokes. Here she provides distinction between her own practice and that of her social others:

... I wouldn't wear skimpy things, like I wouldn't go out in my bra like some of the girls do, just those particular clubs you can go to; they just go out in tiny little skirts and bras, I don't know why, they're not on a beach ...

Mark: who are these women you see, students?

Olivia: ... just the women living around Fenton, it's so funny how you can differentiate between them; definitely what they wear, I know this just sounds really funny, just their haircuts and things ... I do think some of them take it too far sometimes, when they constantly have to have their nails done, their hair pristine and all the makeup. I would save up for practical things rather than getting my hair done first...

Taste is again defined as a personal 'choice' but it is equally clear that choice is displayed and valued through a perspective that disqualifies or 'differentiates' other practices. The practice of femininity for Olivia is marked by drawing a boundary around the excessive figures of those that 'take it too far,' those that do not show the proper

restraint. Such a limit is defined in terms of frivolous overinvestment, sexualised transgression, and improper economic self-management; all historical legacies of the formation of middle-class feminine respectability from the Victorian period (Skeggs: 2002).

Sophie, below, provides a further example of the deployment of the working-class stereotype; another variation of middle-class distinction in response to the bad object/subject of the working-class woman;

Sophie: ... respectability? I think of a neat garden, a perfectly kept lawn ... It's really interesting. I do respond to what people wear and think that there's something, not disrespectful, but something that's problematic – that's one of the things that jump straight into my head when I think about respectability. I have quite a few issues with the term 'chav', and think it's quite offensive, but whether you put a term on it or not there's a certain way that I'd see as a chav look. I guess I'd think of people loudly using swearwords in the street as not respectful; and I get quite angry - stupidly really because I'm a feminist - when I see women wearing really revealing clothes, really short skirts, or when they go out on a night out; girls really drunk, and falling over, tiny dresses and no coats. I just feel uncomfortable...

For Sophie, the marking of propriety on the body is akin to the keeping of an English middle-class lawn, the quintessence of the symbolic value of property as the expression of self; a care for the proper order, presentation, and 'keptness' of the person who holds value; an outward expression of one's inner worth and sense of place. Here the reading of the inscription of race cuts across Sophie's reading of femininity and the working-class body. As Davies remarks, 'whiteness can also be seen as a form of property, valuable, territorial and often mapped onto physical landscapes' (2007; 7) which informs the make-up, alongside class and gender, of national cultural capital. The presence of 'chav' disrupts the assumed socially-defined hierarchies of 'race' and nation, an affective figure of disturbance and shame. It is here that we can refer back to Sophie's earlier spatialisation of the 'poor whites' and the 'Asian community': neither will ever truly belong to this symbolic space. The term 'chav' has become part of the lexicon of popular cultural representations of the 'undeserving' and welfare-dependent working-classes (Haylett: 2001, Nayak: 2006). Its usage was something of a social institution within the everyday of middle-class women's narratives of their 'others' in my research. As Gillies has noted, 'there is little racial ambiguity in the term 'chav'' (2006; 30). Those who use

it as a shorthand proxy for signifying all that is distasteful and failing in their social 'inferiors', and who position themselves within the discursive space of a tolerant liberal and cosmopolitanism would find its use 'difficult to sustain and justify if it included visible ethnic minorities' (ibid; 30).

Like Vicky and Olivia, the criticism of (assumed) working-class practice made by Sophie is based on the perception of an implicit betrayal of a respectful identity. Sophie fixes on the same attributions of inferred sexual excess, vulgarity, and poor taste that Vicky and Olivia use to differentiate themselves from working-class bodies. There are differences however in the formulation of propriety. Olivia makes her distinction through an acceptance, elaboration and particular expression of femininity and middle-class propriety. For Vicky it is the attempt to attain legitimacy and authority through the performance of a femininity and sexuality defined through masculine norms that leaves her subjects as lacking in integrity as women. Sophie makes the same observations, but her critique, as I emphasise below, is made from the perspective that defines 'improper conduct' through the articulation of a self-reflexive individualism. The working-class women's offence is not just that they present a devalued common exemplar of their gender, but that rather that they are not 'unique'.

Sophie's own careful deliberation, here, about how she presents herself in public is the expression of a self that depends upon the value of distinction as a performance of critical reflexivity and irony. Rather than representing the truth of her sex (as is the case for Olivia), femininity is called upon as a resource, and critiqued, attached and (partially) discarded. She rejects what she sees as the established model of identity and behaviour that she feels some articulations of feminism establish for her as an individual. The prescriptive form of feminism threatens Sophie's ability to make choices and invest in her own identity as a feminine subject of, and by, choice. 'Feminist', 'feminine' and 'lipstick lesbian' identities are used as sites through which she can affirm and perform her difference and value as an individual through display and presentation. It is a form of experimental individualism (Lury's 'colouring by numbers') appropriate to the prosthetic self outlined in Chapter 2, one that involves the 'dramatic, as performative'

through the temporary, knowledgeable, and ironic attachment to objects and practices to the self' (Skeggs; 2004; 139).

...I suppose there is a sense of how I portray myself to the outside world, in the way I speak, and I think I'm quite aware of the way I'm dressed. I think that every morning I go through what I'm going to wear carefully because I really like dressing in a way that suits me, says something about me... there is that element of finding people who are attractive who are quirky, or aren't kind of, you know, ordinary... somebody would have to have thought through the way they are dressed for me to find them attractive, otherwise if they were just boring in their clothes... I think I make quite an effort to reflect my personality in what I wear, I used to worry about it in terms of vanity, and the feminist discourse about how I shouldn't make an effort because that's another way of being objectified, but actually I don't really believe that. I have my own commentary, primarily little expressions of not having to totally fit in [with expectations]. I make some sort of stands but they are quite small ones; I still wear make-up and do all the things that old school feminists would see as - like I remove hair, that's not very good for your feminist credentials, but I do make stands ... so I am like a lipstick lesbian, a frivolous feminist ...

What is important to Sophie is that she is different and that people can identify this difference and read its intelligibility as a marker of her knowledge about the world. At the same time however, and as Lawler observes, 'such a rising above' is an immersion within particular and shared classed understanding; revealing 'aesthetic and moral evaluation as a classed process of exclusion rather than an expression of individual uniqueness' (2005; 440). It is also a sexual/moral economy of taste that can be reproductive of class relations and exclusions through establishing the drivers and rules for intimacy within her everyday encounters. As Bourdieu pithily remarks, 'taste is a match-maker; it marries colours and also people, who make 'well-matched couples', initially in regard to taste' (2008; 243).

The differing uses of the working-class stereotype display different perspectives and positioning with respect to femininity. They all, however, use the marker of the working-class body as the constitutive limit for proper personhood. The stereotype is used as a discursive domain to make personal the distinction between others. It operates to exclude and devalue whilst at the same time enabling the accrual of personal worth. All three examples use 'taste' and aesthetics to inform and justify a moralisation of personhood. The working-class women offend, disturb and enliven the middle-class women's sensibilities as an offence against their persons.

It might be argued that my focus upon middle-class boundary-drawing has been to make what is marginal in the middle-class accounts central: that I have leapt on some minor cases of everyday evaluative judgements to make my case for class antagonism. I would point to the importance of marginality, and also to the huge amount of 'reflexivity' that the women practice when it comes to making what appears as marginal to their lives (the easily dismissed) so central for presenting their own sense of self. As Lawler observes, 'if this suggests an anxious and defensive bourgeois subject, this should not be taken in turn to suggest that the power relations embedded here are weak' (2005; 442). These everyday slurs need not to be dismissed: they are an important element in the social reproduction of class today and connect to, rather than remain outside of, the acts of official naming which exert a symbolic violence upon working-class lives (McRobbie: 2007).

When proper selves are being delegated the responsibility of self-governance, they serve as a contrast to those in need of governance. The professional reformers growing in numbers every year need to deal with the differences between themselves and those in need of reform, and the framing of this difference is one of the most important sites of class struggle today. (Skilbrei: 2006; 292)

The next section explores this regulative dimension of 'moral superiority' through a focus upon middle-class involvement in community and charitable work. It is here that they buck the generalisation made within some academic writing that emphasises the decreasing importance of place for middle-class identities (Savage: 2010). Far from displaying disengagement and withdrawal they make heavy investments in 'place' and notions of community. They do so by participating in forms of civil activity, by making a contribution to a form of 'greater good'. Here they express moral sentiments which appear to be an example of what Sayer calls social virtue.

The concern is to explore these engagements through a focus upon the affective dimension of property relations. It is within this context that I explore how the middle-class women express and realise a 'politics of belonging' as a 'necessary part of moral claim making' (Savage: 2010; 115) through their conceptions of citizenship and political participation (Skeggs: 2001b). For Skeggs the idea of property and propriety can operate through the 'place of identity and community, [which] when made as a territorial claim,

produce simultaneously a property relation and an experience of a violation of a claim to property' (ibid; 408). It is through such a process that I explore how the affects of impropriety (experienced as a violation of the norm, of the proper) manifest themselves on one side of the classed relation through the reading of the inscriptions of working-class space, and the presence of working-class bodies.

4.6 Care and Attention

Rebecca: I am middle-class... but I'm not really apologetic because I tend to think it's what I'm born into and it's who I am, and I can't deny it; as much as I may try ... Yes, you realise you're born into a class but there are lots of other things that are relevant to your identity, but class is relevant to the choices I make and the things I like. I try to be aware of it, because you have an inherent fear of people who are different ... it's an anxiety I think of how to relate to people who are different. I tend to think of working-class people as potentially poorer and therefore in need of my care and attention which is obviously quite patronising; but I suppose that's something I have been thinking about more, I was reading something about working-class identity, because people are less apologetic about it, there are actually cultural elements that are really enviable, which is not the way I had looked at it before...

Rebecca does not straightforwardly refuse or ignore her class position but it is not something that she embraces either. Rather it was something given to her, an inheritance that she did not ask for but one that she recognises is inseparable from the way she makes decisions and valuations over tastes and behaviours. Rebecca is honest and reflexive enough to recognise that her disposition towards working-class persons is marked by a form of classed condescension, the 'poor' working-class invoke the need for her to confer 'care and attention'. As well as being frank about her 'inherent anxiety,' she articulates what Sayer sees as the middle-class dilemma:

condescension within class relations is not merely a kind of individual behaviour but a structural feature of the relation, deriving from objective differences in capitals ... to attempt to ignore the fact that someone has little economic, or cultural capital can be highly insensitive; on the other hand, to acknowledge their lack of such capital can seem patronising, as reinforcing ... rather than countering inequality (Sayer: 2005; 172).

The danger is that such an understanding can take its own values and practices as both advantageous, and as standards that can be generalised to those that others should be allowed/ helped to attain or aspire to. Indeed Rebecca seems aware of the dangers of seeing working-class persons as disadvantaged and as somehow lacking (in culture for example), and has sought (through her reading) to identify other perspectives. These

are the qualities of the unpretentiousness and 'unapologetic' authenticity of working-class culture. Here Skeggs (2004) may identify the potential processes of affect stripping of the 'authentic'. Walkerdine may also view Rebecca's attempt to find value as one which parallels the discourses of toleration marked earlier. The granting of equally valuable but different value and practice orientations displaces critique of the inequalities within social and economic relationships.

Rebecca, though, provides an example of what Sayer terms the emotional and lay normative sentiments of class that have a 'morally problematic nature' because they do not just produce commentaries on other persons, but are crucial in influencing their own actions towards them' (2005; 141). Indeed, as I will demonstrate, such processes can be seen in Rebecca's own establishment of commitments to Fenton over the time of her association. It is a narrative account that progressively secures anxious space through experience: experience interpreted through the application of particular knowledge. It is important to remember here, that 'it is not just the encounter but the relationships generated from the encounter between bodies that rely on prior systems of inscription' (Skeggs: 2004; 155).

The Haunting of the Proper

Rebecca, interview: I used to feel quite threatened, those streets round there are quite different, more students live down there now, but before there was a division between the higher streets up there and I felt nervous especially around the pub, but that's changed because I've had more experience. There is still a bit, the streets are not so attractive, the houses look smaller and pokier, they feel unfriendly and I don't know why that is, but they - there is something a bit claustrophobic, the houses have outward signs of dereliction, the streets are small and narrowish, that must indicate something about the people. There are all these things that go on in my head when I am in the area but I don't necessarily articulate them. I probably feel that the people inside the houses are less likely to be friendly towards me... there are aesthetic things that I think could potentially make it intimidating ... I kind of like it, but I wish there was more greenery, there is a park but that's not particularly nice and there are things that demonstrate the issues underlying the area ... lots of health problems, I know the stats, linked to not very good diet habits, smoking habits ...

Rebecca provides a reading of class difference that is intimate and acute in the way it interprets the finer details and intricacies of the landscape and street; providing an emotional lexicon for where to go and when, what route to avoid and at what time. Such a reading informs the construction of symbolic boundaries that work their way

through into her everyday practice. She juxtaposes her narrative of increased mobility with images of a working-class landscape of abjection, fixity and lack. It is these elements which are highlighted to provide a contrast and backdrop for her account of personal development and confidence. Her experience is about how she has come to terms with the presence of these 'unchanging' features.

Bourdieu would perhaps identify in Rebecca's anxiety an aversion to 'the homogeneous, the undifferentiated...an obsessive fear of number, of undifferentiated hordes indifferent to difference' that threatens to 'submerge the private spaces of bourgeois exclusiveness' (2008; 469). Indeed Rebecca's ontological insecurity, her sense of being out of place, draws upon a morality made through the register of the aesthetic, it is the lack of taste (naturalised as the absence of a landscaped greenery) that makes the environment 'intimidating,' it fails to offer the 'enchanted landscape' that Savage (2010) identifies as a prerequisite for the middle-class elective believer to feel at home.

Her narrative, however, also echoes the spatial geographies of working-class space and life made by the nineteenth century philanthropists and reformers (Sibley: 1995).¹⁸ She lets her perception of the physical environment, 'things', stand in for persons themselves. These metonymic associations are made through the moral and evaluative registers of property and propriety ('the houses have outward signs of dereliction, the streets are small and narrowish, that must indicate something about the people'). The inhabitants become a potential source of physical and moral danger. At the very least she feels that it is possible that in their nature they will be unfriendly, that their dispositions will be closed, at worst they may be 'derelict'. Such dereliction is the abandonment of the proper and hinges for its force in Rebecca's narrative upon the residents' symbolic (dis)investment in the home, a site which has historically acted to reflect the expanded boundaries of the middle-class sense of self and identity (Sibley: 1995).

¹⁸ Sibley draws attention to Chadwick, who 'connects slums to sewage, sewage to disease, and disease to moral degradation' (Sibley:1998; 56)

Rebecca's perspective, her reading of the property and impropriety of 'things' constitute 'the issues underlying the area ... lots of health problems, I know the stats, linked to not very good diet habits, smoking habits'. Similar knowledges (of health, hygiene, immorality and laxity) were implicated with the nineteenth century middle-class spatial separation from their others. They informed the development of a proprietorial self which differentiated itself from the bodies and lives of working-class subjects; a sense of self that emerged as a form of cultural production around a scene of difference 'confirmed through the construction of an endless series of misrepresentations, all of which share an essential quality, the quality of otherness, of being not-me' (Sibley: 1995; 6).

Impropriety, however, animates a sense of distinction and unease, but also a sense of moral agency. Rather than just inspiring 'flight' after completion of Rebecca's degree, the anxious spaces of Fenton have induced a sense of obligation to return. In the passage below she turns from articulating a sense of difference and distance from Fenton and its residents to making a claim of belonging and identification. In doing so, she 'transforms foreign forces into objects that can be observed and measured and thus control and include them within its scope of vision' to realise a strategy of appropriation, one which 'assumes a place that can be circumscribed as proper and thus serve as the basis for generating relations with an exterior distinct from it' (de Certeau: 1988; 36). Through such a process of territorialisation Rebecca is able to transform feelings of personal violation, fear and insecurity. This is a project of personal security but it is also an investment in self articulated on behalf of common purpose; a future-projected orientation where there will be a re-alignment between Fenton's material spaces (what they symbolically represent in her imagination) and her own sense of the proper:

I felt a sense and desire to become involved in the area, a sense of wanting to be a good member of the community and thinking that students are not always good members of the community, because they are not here all year, because they do not see the downsides of it ... and so from then onwards it becomes more a part of your life, you get involved ... Before I would automatically feel that everyone knows I'm a student therefore I am identified, and if there were a lot of people on the steps (of the houses) I'm like oh 'I'm a student', but now the nearer I approach the Centre the more I feel like I have a stake in Fenton, which again is purely psychological. I think I used to

imagine what I would do if someone challenged, or shouted at me, especially the young lads because I would see young lads kicking footballs around, being a bit scary, well now I would just say I'm off to the Centre ... I remember feeling I had something to cling onto, I have a reason to be walking around here, down this street. Now at the Centre - when something gives you a reason to come together, you put it out of your mind, we have this thing in common ... at the Centre it's a uniting thing, although I tend to feel on the back foot because of my privilege, I tend to defer to other people, listen more than lead ...

Rebecca conceives the community centre as the space of spontaneous synthesis of civil society, people 'come together' for a reason, such a reason is based upon principles of reciprocity where individuals attain their happiness through 'uniting'. Power functions and emerges within this space in a similar fashion to the formation of the collective good (the common interest), it occurs 'spontaneously' through the bonds which link each individual member of its space together. In this case, Rebecca's class differences position her to 'follow' rather than lead. The expected subordination is revoked. This is at any rate Rebecca's way of imagining the Centre as a civil space. The Centre is a community of association of collectively held value and interest; differences are suppressed. This is the imaginary and affective space of communitarian belonging which emphasises the 'instinct, sentiment, and sympathy ... the impulses of benevolence individuals feel for each other' (Foucault: 2010; 301).

Rebecca's narrative, however, manifests another register of interest; one made through the affects of impropriety produced through the experience of the affective dislocation and disjuncture of place, the everyday, and self (Probyn: 2004). It is the possibility that those who induce fear and insecurity in her person and who occupy the spaces of Fenton may in fact be reversing the processes of pathology and stigmatization that she has, unwittingly, accorded to them. Their presence is felt as a challenge to her right to be there, she feels she is seen to have the wrong identity, the identity of someone who does not belong, who is marginal. The 'residents' challenge her sense of authenticity and propriety. Her personal valuation is at stake, she wants to be seen as worth more than this through her 'care and her attention'. Within Rebecca's narrative, then, there is the presence of what Probyn refers to as the 'strange little strain of shame' that manifests itself in the 'positivity of interest' that is 'immensely productive politically and

conceptually in advancing a project of everyday ethics' (Ibid; 329); one that materialises in her own investments in community work.

It is an interest that comes to express itself through the formation of a property relation with regard to herself and the neighbourhood – a right to be there, something to cling onto. It is an entitlement realised through her acquisition of a legitimate 'title' as a worker, a claim on the property of the neighbourhood through use of its space, and the propriety of such a use (expressed as a shared ethical cause, the need for the imagined community to realize its possibilities, to come together as 'our space') (Skeggs: 2001b; 413). Indeed the community centre is constituted as the symbolic centre of the community in terms of property and propriety. Such an assertion involves a symbolic reworking of the spatial ordering of the neighbourhood, making those who occupy the centre stage in her imaginary, those that she feels make her marginal become peripheral.

Those kids out on the streets 'kicking footballs' are a constitutive limit, but also Rebecca's targets for reform. Her community work, here, is expressive and productive of specific forms of classed caring practice, it is rooted in particular upon a middle-class emphasis upon emotional development, the need for communicative expression, and the discovery through imaginative play of the child's own self-worth. Such practice is designed to address patterns of familial disorder of working-class life that she perceives exists outside of the Centre - 'I mean here there are families that do not have the social resources to care for themselves, and for the parents to care for the children, they have behavioural issues which are quite common to the area';

Rebecca: map: I was part of running a theatre club. It was really to allow the children to express themselves and explore themselves through drama, but we didn't really feel like we were reaching the kids we started the club for. A lot of the kids were from really good, well fairly well-off families, who weren't particularly disadvantaged. We envisaged it was something that kids could attend who maybe didn't have opportunities to express themselves in their home life, that maybe they were frustrated or unable to communicate very well. But the kids we worked with in the end thought it was a safe place for them in the area they were living in; they were not particularly typical kids - so it was interesting in the end that the dynamics were unexpectedly not something we were looking for but that worked really well and it was a real joy to be part of.

Following Skeggs, Rebecca's enactment of property relations connects 'agency of individuals and the activism of social groups to which they belong with the policies and institutions that seek to shape social relations' and draws attention to the 'problematic nature of citizenship' (2001b; 417). The Centre functions in a similar manner to the one observed in Shields' ethnographic study of a youth centre; it is a 'mission of good work' and a 'state-sponsored and legitimated site of reform' which materialises 'the adult and middle-class interests and concerns over what constitutes good childhood and good parenting within the spaces of 'community' (2008; 246).

Rebecca is reflexive enough to acknowledge the warp of intention and interest produced through her particular perspective upon care and attention here. Her reflection upon the unintended outcomes of her involvement in community work, however, doesn't quite disentangle the association of poverty with immorality. The 'good' families are the 'sort of well-off ones', and it is their children who have gained a secure 'our' space. What remains beyond the boundaries of her and their association within the Centre are still those 'typical kids,' the 'other' to this civil space; that which is beyond the identity and propriety of her sense of self, the threatening and unruly other.

'Giving them a good scrub'

Olivia, below, provides a further example of the functioning of the abject in the classed imaginary. It is an example that draws together and re-works the differing classed inscriptions of space, race, femininity, and care that have been present throughout the chapter, and so provides a fitting conclusion. Olivia volunteers on the drama programme that Rebecca helped to design. She is younger than Rebecca and she has spent less time in Fenton, and this may go some way to explaining why her perception of those children who come into the Centre is markedly different:

Olivia, walk: You've just got to try to help them (the children), I do sometimes attach myself too much and that's what my mum's said she's worried about, if I do go into that sphere and go into helping children; that I'll just come home in the evening and just cry. I've just got to try and separate myself a bit, not get too involved and just help at that point in time. The kids are quite difficult at times, a bit out of control, but then you can see that they are quite underprivileged, like coming in with dirty clothes, and smelling and things; so it is a bit heart-breaking, you just want to take them home and give them a good scrub... but you can't because we've just an hour at a time,

you've just got to help them forget about home life, get them to enjoy themselves. But to make a difference in the future, that's what I'd like to do in the future, you know changing things...

Through the marking of the child's presence we can see the repeated articulation of middle-class norms of care as they are practiced in relation to class (Chapter 7). Her practice of care requires a material and emotional sanitary boundary to be drawn round the child for its own protection and relief, a temporary withdrawal from the dangers of working-class life. What makes the child a worthy subject of benevolence is the narrative of lost 'innocence' of childhood beneath the smell, the dirt and the unruly behaviour. These signs are read as the outcome of bad relations within the home. The child's perceived vulnerability also exposes Olivia to her own sense of wounding, an affective sense of not being able to do enough from which she must protect herself through distancing. Understanding the boundaries to her own self-involvement and her inability to do more in the present animate a sense of limited transformative agency, a form of compassion that impels a moral duty or what Berlant (2004) calls a 'sympathetic agency'. In the future she will do more, change things.

Like Berlant, I do not wish to make an easy dismissal of Olivia's (or Rebecca's) compassion but instead question and think about it 'as a social and technological aesthetic of belonging, not as an organic emotion' (2004; 4). Compassion cannot be seen to be the sole property of the self - something which one gives, or dispenses, rather it is the historical emergence of differing forms of training and the 'multitude of conventions around the relation of feeling to practice... there is nothing simple about compassion apart from the desire for it to be taken as simple, as a true expression of human attachment and recognition' (ibid; 4-7). Berlant suggests that such 'social optimism has costs when its conventional images involve enforcing normative projects of orderliness or truth' (ibid).

It is when the figure of the working-class mother comes into the frame of spatialisation that these relations of feeling to practice and care are most obviously manifested as classed. The stimulation of affectivity through encounter, and the form of boundary work realised to contain its dangers work in an entirely different way when applied to this figure:

Olivia; walk: Round here, I don't want to sound mean, they're just quite chavvy; you know? Just young mums, tracksuit mums. I don't know they just don't take care of themselves ... chavvy, just quite scary really. I don't like to generalise now, but just tracksuit-bottomed, smoking - I always think that is quite chavvy, smoking - hair scraped back, young mums, like rowdy, don't care who they are in front of - just there arguing - they shout across the street to each other 'Madison get back home' and I'm like oh, maybe it's just like it's different to the way I was brought up and things; yeah I definitely feel very lucky. I like talk to them, if I come out of my house I'm like 'good morning', but I wouldn't want to mix with them, I think I'd be quite scared, they're quite scary, they've got big voices and big attitudes.

Mark: How do you relate these feelings with the work you do with children in the area, because those kids are...?

Olivia ... yeah obviously they're the same families; I don't know, I just try not to think about it and try to focus my attention on the children, yeah it is hard to separate them from this; but you have to empathise with the children because you don't know what's going on in the home...

Olivia's evocation of the working-class mother realises a figure that is once again 'too material' (Lawler: 2005; 432). It is her body, her clothing, her auralty, her dispositional practice that let her down. Here, however, there is a temporal shift in register, one that moves from the night-time stereotype to that of the figure who inhabits the daytime. This is a figure who rather than being mocked for her excessive concern with appearances lets herself down through lack of attention, 'she' does not care, for either herself or for child or for how others view her. She is seen to inhabit a temporality that is undefined, unproductive in its use (economically, socially, and culturally); undifferentiated from 'others like her', she has no individuality and cannot be separated from the 'masses'. 'They' are also racialised subjects, the chav mum, the epitome of a dirty and shameful whiteness that has no symbolic value. 'They' are just there, together, in public space; smoking, shouting, disrespectful and unrespectable. The working-class women are made present to fix and exclude them, drawn into a spatialised relation from which she realises her sense of propriety and her 'luck' but not to the causal relations that determine it;

In particular, the abject become the 'primers of culture', never ceasing to challenge the full citizen from their 'place' of banishment. To label someone as abject 'is at once the setting of a boundary, and also the repeated articulation of a norm ... they 'haunt the proper' (Shields, citing Kristeva: 2008; 245).

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown how class is produced as a form of cultural property and a social relation 'figured through difference and moral attribution' and 'embedded (inscribed) in personhood and put to effect in symbolic systems of exchange to generate value' (Skeggs: 2004; 80). In doing so, I have highlighted the 'alterity, for the middle-classes, of working-class existence', to show the ways in which middle-class identities are performatively produced through the 'expulsion and exclusion of (what is held to be) white working-classness' (Lawler; 2005; 429). The historical legacies and changing classed inscriptions of citizenship, sexuality, femininity, ethnicity and working-class place coalesce within middle-class perspectives to inform the sticking attributes of negative value to working-class persons, highlighting the presence of class as 'an organising principle' within middle-class subjectivities.

The middle-class women's formulation of belonging through compassionate action presupposes a 'mobility and reflexivity and capacity to bring about change' (Day: 2006). It is their capacity in terms of time, energy, and their holdings of particular types of educational, cultural and social capital embedded within particular social networks and institutions, and their classed relation to the discourses of care, which sets them apart from the working-class women within the research. It is these differentials that Skeggs (2001b) identifies as providing for 'a pragmatics of property, propriety, entitlement' that enable them to transform their particular metaphors of property and propriety into action for both self-realisation of value and for authorised and legitimised claims on 'community' and allow them to be seen as legitimate actors in the governance and regulation of working-class lives.

As Chapter 2 emphasised, it is the establishment of relationships of property and propriety through entitlement and exclusion that produce and structure class relations, and it is these relations that constitute 'the property - not the thing, person or practice' (Skeggs: 2004). The classed stereotypes found in this chapter have nothing in common with the working-class women in my research, instead they say 'something about a normative and normalised' middle-class identity (Lawler: 2005; 432) that however

differently individuated is predicated upon the insecurities and the resources of privilege. The next chapter begins to explore the experience of the working-class women as they negotiate the spaces of Fenton and the material and emotional realities of their lives.

Before doing so I conclude here by returning to Mandy as she steps out of her home and onto the threshold of her neighbourhood space. When Mandy leaves her house with her pram, she has to negotiate the staggering volume of wheelie bins left out on the pavements and the bumper to bumper lines of parked cars belonging to the students and commuters to the nearby city centre. The wheelie bins with their overflowing waste, the cars mounting the pavements, and the stream of students that travel up her road towards the University entail that she will step out with her pram and push her child along the road to make her journey a less frustrating, if more highly visible one.

This mundane and everyday practice, seemingly trivial, is generated from within the social and economic changes occurring within the neighbourhood; changes that do not accommodate Mandy, that perhaps erode her sense of belonging. Her 'right of way' is problematized, made more difficult, harder to negotiate. It is a displacement that is both literal and symbolic and entails a contradiction that she must contend with. At the same time that she is pushed out to the margins of consideration by social change, her person becomes an object of high visibility, an object of scrutiny; she becomes misrecognised by a perspective that fails to see the logic behind her practices, practices that emerge in response to her relegation within the symbolic, and within the spaces of Fenton.

Mandy, interview: ...sometimes pushing buggies and that, they look at you...I don't know they just look at you and you can tell that they're looking at you differently, I know some of them judge, it's like you can tell sometimes. You see I think most people who see women with kids and they never see a bloke around, assume that straightaway... it's horrible, you just feel horrible in yourself, but they're just sad and they're upset with their lives, that's why they behave like that ... I can't say it affects me right much because there are a lot of single mothers around here; and they're quite strong, well they might not be strong; but they show that they're strong, and you got to show people that you're strong, even if you're weak; you've got to be strong for your children more than anything. Your children are your life ...

Mandy's dispositional defence against the misrecognition she experiences underscores important themes for the exploration of classed relations of property, propriety, and affect that will inform the succeeding chapters; a defence against de-valuation and the existence of alternative values and commitments in her life, together with the presence within her milieu of forms of sociality that are unrecognised and de-valued but nonetheless sustain her. The importance and the uneasy inter-relationship in Mandy's life, here, of respect and respectability cannot be under-emphasised, nor can the love that she has for her child be calculated. Mandy's projection of strength is indicative, it is a dispositional practice which expresses her refusal of evaluation, it is a demand for respect and an embodiment of value. Strength to not let precarity or diminution get the better of her; for her child's sake. The strength to push on up the road; 'even if you are weak, you've got to be strong for your children ... your children are your life.'

It is to these themes that I now begin to turn.

5. The labours of respectability

5.1 Introduction

Theresa, handbag: Oh don't start with me on makeup [...] it's whatever suits your face and what you feel comfortable in...

Mark: Would you ever go out in evening without it on?

Theresa: What without makeup? No ...

Mark: ... and how would you make yourself up?

Theresa: It takes me ages to get ready when I'm going out. I'll do my tan or I'll go and get a spray tan done, or I'll build my tan up over a few days; I'll do my nails, do my feet, shape them, paint them for about an hour, toe nails to match with what I'm wearing, and then I'll probably dye my hair, do my make-up, put loads of perfume on and then get dressed.

Mark: How do you do your makeup though?

Theresa: How do you do it?

Mark: You see it's a bit like me saying to you I played a game of cricket ...

Theresa: Right, I put a base coat on, it's like a cream, it makes your foundation go on better, it depends - I don't do it every day but if I'm going out on a night out I put quite a bit of makeup on, then I will put my foundation on, blusher - I can't live without my blusher - blusher decorates your cheek bones, or you can make it change the shape of your face, and then you put highlighter on; that changes the shape of your face, certain parts of your face - it's like alien to men isn't it? And then mascara, eye shadow, lipstick ...

Mark: And what are you thinking about when you are doing these things?

Theresa: Looking in mirror making sure it looks right. And then I'll do my hair, I'll either straighten it, curl it, try loads of different styles with it, see what looks nice with what I am wearing, I'm concentrating making sure it looks nice...

Mark: So it's a form of work?

Theresa: Yeah but it's fun doing it though, yeah it's like really concentrating to make sure it looks right. I'm trying to make myself look as nice as I can, a clear complexion, your eyes are as nice as they could be so you can notice them, your lips are as nice as they could look so you could notice them, your cheekbones are defined ... for me to make sure I look nice, because I think it looks nice...

For Theresa there is pleasure in the labour of feminine appearances, an attention to an array of micro-practices and learned skills and techniques with subtle rules. Satisfaction is derived from competency, experimentation and absorption. Her activity of 'making-up' is an immersion of self in temporal and spatial practice through negotiation and interpretation of the wider discursive productions of femininity she encounters in her

life. Theresa's 'freedom to choose' and her apparent ownership of feminine practice is, of course, complicated by the fact that how she appears on her night out, how she is received, and how she feels within herself in relation to others, will, in part, be determined by whether her cultural competency in 'making-up' her performance of femininity will be validated, given legitimacy, recognised, within her local circuits of recognition and beyond. Theresa's investments and pleasures are perhaps those that middle-class perspectives come to fixate upon as excessive, inauthentic, and crude; her labour is likely to be devalued and de-legitimated in the wider circuits of symbolic recognition.

Theresa's relationship to femininity, her engendered sense of self, like that of all the working-class women, is far more complex, contradictory and ambivalent than the middle-class stereotype suggests. Her 'making-up' and preparations for a night out, a practice to which I will return, is but one expression of this relationship. Theresa's negotiation of femininity emerges from a complicated web of relationships that connect to the formation of her identity within local contexts (familial, sexual, socio-economic, spatial and temporal specificities), the type of physical capital she was 'given' as an inheritance and the way this is evaluated through hegemonic norms, her inheritance and holding of other forms of capital - cultural, educational, economic and social, and the wider symbolic restraints which position her as a 'subject without value'.

It is within these relationships that Theresa mediates femininity in the dialectic between experience, interpretation and take-up (Skeggs: 2002). Such engagement and practice, whilst 'improvisatory, inventive, and creative' (Mehta: 1999; 69) is bound up within a complex materiality that 'entail(s) trade-offs in terms of such things as social power, social approval and material benefits' (ibid; 70). Her performances of femininity, like those of all the women in the research, must also be seen as the taking up of a position in relation to others without either implying determinism or self-authorship (Butler: 2007). These are the complexities which this chapter explores.

Historically, middle-class inscriptions of femininity (practices of care, appearance and dispositional conduct) were defined and given legitimacy in a manner that made working-class women 'other' to middle-class sense of self and propriety, a perspective

through which they became both evaluated and regulated. The inscriptions of femininity that have become socially performative have been historically instituted within a masculinised world of power that is also classed (Skeggs: 2002). Chapter 4 showed how this classed relationship materialises in the present day spaces of the neighbourhood. I explored the ways in which middle-class perspectives (within everyday encounters and institutional contexts) read working-class women like Theresa as improper subjects, as 'matter out of place' (Douglas: 2010; 503). In this chapter I make clear that these perspectives 'make invisible the restricted access to different forms of capital and they make invisible the labour and social relations that underpin the imperatives and necessity for particular forms of femininity' (Skeggs: 2001; 305). In doing so, I explore some of the different spatial and temporal contexts from within which their femininity is produced as 'both a performance (a conscious enactment) and [as] performative (a reiterated practice)' (ibid; 299).

I underscore the recurrent theme of material precarity and place this within the context of the women's awareness of the judgements of their appearance and conduct by their classed others. I highlight the force of their experience of misrecognition in differing social and material spaces and stress the ways in which they are differently enabled/disabled from 'deploying' femininity as a resource for moving through social space and for constituting themselves as persons of worth. There is repetition in my analysis: misrecognition, and its affects, the need to construct performances of femininity through conduct and appearance to deflect judgement, the contradictions these performances have with working-class realities, and the difficulties of holding these together. These are repetitions that are re-iterative in all their lives, but they are played out and experienced differently, and these differences are important because their particularity, when acknowledged and respected, breaks through those pathological representations that fix them in place.

5.2 Material realities

When everyday suffering is pathologized as an individualized problem the pain of endurance is not recognised. (Skeggs: 2004; 59)

I have drawn attention to the lack of recognised capitals the working-class women have in their lives. The exclusions, inequalities and oppressions, the pain and difficulties experienced in their lives are 'not simply in the form of differential access to economic, educational or cultural resources but are embodied' (Shilling: 2006; 109). The working-class women, their persons, their children and their family histories reflect the substantive evidence within the field of health literature that when it comes to psychological and physical welfare class difference is enduring and ubiquitous; evident across almost any health measure (Frost: 2008). Bourdieu's work emphasises that the lifestyles, tastes, practices, and dispositions of different social classes, and the differing material and emotional contexts through which these are informed, are inscribed on/in bodies and contribute to the reproduction of inequalities through their reception within symbolic recognition orders. The embodiment of inequality as a reflection of the inequalities of distributive justice in terms of physical and psychological health (Rose: 2009) is therefore conditioned and produced within a moral and symbolic economy that misrecognises the emotional and physical effects of class. That is, they are misread within dominant evaluative orders as signs of pathology, as a refusal of responsibility, a failure of will (Berlant: 2007).¹⁹

I have emphasised that the expectation and demand upon working-class women's bodies and minds in the world of work is one of attrition and subordination; 'as appendage to the machine', these are bodies that require a separation from the mind and from aspiration, a demand for flexibility only appears in the conditions and terms of their labour; to fit in with shifts, to get used to being temporary, to being paid poorly for forms of work valued lowly. The labour of their care as mothers, and their maintenance of social relationships within their neighbourhood contexts, is also conditioned and made harder by their experience of material poverty and hardship. As Chapter 6 will emphasise, the value of this labour of care is not so much hidden as refuted, adding to

¹⁹ See Berlant (2007;761) for the ramifications of these 'cold facts' within the logics of governmentality, where 'social justice activists engage in the actuarial imaginary of bio politics; what seem like cool facts of suffering become hot weapons in arguments about agency and urgency that extend from imperilled bodies'.

the injuries of class the symbolic derogation of their persons, and the social relationships that they most invest in.

The hardship and the pain of some of the working-class women's lives within these material and emotional contexts can be expressed through life's attritional aspect, the wearing down of their bodies and of their emotional energies through the practices of survival and making do. It is here, as I will illustrate, that their 'experience is simultaneously at an extreme and in a zone of ordinariness, where life building and the attrition of human life are indistinguishable' (Berlant: 2007; 754). It can also be expressed through a violent and destructive turning-in upon the self of the valuations of others, an internalisation of blame and guilt which reduces the space from within which a person can breathe, and become.

Katy, in the extract below, places conceptions of normative femininity in terms of bodily appearances and 'self-realisation' within the context of her own material and psycho-social realities. Her position within precarity is experienced as a 'wretched and insecure economic condition' and as 'shameful and destructive'; a question of existing rather than living, staying afloat rather than thriving.

Katy, handbag: I'm a size 8. Look at me - I'm petite! Hang on a minute love I'm fucking underweight and I feel like a bag of shit. My body's knackered, I'm already going on 50. I'm not even 40 and already my body is packing up. Varicose veins, bunions ... my body's not in a fit state; if anything it is 60. My heart has registered everything, my chest is tight with worry, my skin takes years to clear; it comes out in dry patches. It sounds fucking disgusting, it sounds stupid, it sounds damn right dirty but I've not had a wash today, I've not cleaned my teeth, and I've certainly not eaten. Well that will be because I've stayed in my bedroom all day, I've cried all fucking morning...

To be clear, my intention is not to reproduce a representation of working-class life as a 'stark, atrophied place without hope': Katy's pain is real and not 'an effect of the utilisation of managed research techniques' (McRobbie: 2002; 136). Insecurity and vulnerability, as I have emphasised, is constitutive of the women's phenomenological experience of class and runs side-by-side with their experience of exclusion from relationships of accrual. Such insecurity is a structuring principle of their subjectivities and practices, and it has impacts upon their bodies and their emotional wellbeing.

The middle-class women emphasised that the 'demands of femininity are such that ideal femininity requires a radical bodily transformation at which virtually every woman is

bound to fail, adding shame to her deficiency' (Skeggs: 2002; 82). Class realises crucial differences; in terms of experience, access to resources, and negotiating hegemonic injunctions. Normative conceptions of the 'feminine,' or the idea that 'feeling feminine' can accrue a sense of ontological security through self-identification, stand in stark contrast to Katy's 'lived situation'. For Katy the sassy, confident, and self-owned relation to femininity that Olivia anxiously embodies; or the critical, ironic play of Sophie through an attachment to, and a detachment from, its signs is felt as beyond reach. Indeed self-invention in every sense, and a sense of futurity are not present possibilities for Katy. In such circumstances femininity, as a locus for self-making and of self-possession, appears uninhabitable in ways that contrast dramatically with middle-class experience.

Katy will, however - and as she says to herself often - 'pull herself together' and leave her front door. She will do so, 'in part', through constructing and making a public performance of femininity; a performance that, as I will show, is mediated through the 'trope of respectability,' the desire to feel and be seen as a person of value. This 'pulling together' is resourced from within precarious circumstances but it also takes place and must mediate itself in relation to the conditioning of a moral economy where 'the slippage from working-class to 'underclass' works to drive out the notion of 'respectability' from the poor altogether' (Lawler: 2005; 435). It is in this sense that Katy's attachment to 'respectability' is an attachment that Berlant might call one of 'cruel optimism'. It is, though, a classed relation; she draws upon respectability and makes investments in herself through her own negotiation of ideological inheritances (Skeggs: 2012b), and it is cruel because these classed and gendered inheritances are based upon her exclusion, but nonetheless inheres in her person as a 'structure of feeling'. Respectability as 'something to desire, to prove and to achieve' remains, in Katy's life, 'the property of others' (Skeggs: 2002; 1).

For Bourdieu, working-class women are 'less aware than all others of the 'market' value of beauty and much less inclined to invest time and effort, sacrifices and money in cultivating their bodies' (2008; 2006). There is simply no profit to be had for Katy. As well as ignoring the reach of normative and regularising discourses of hegemonic forms and compulsions of femininity in her life, he ignores, as Skeggs makes clear, the ways in

which femininity for Katy is both an 'uninhabitable category,' a site for deflecting and dissociating from class pathology, and a resource from which use values can be found (Skeggs: 2002). It is true, therefore, that the 'voice of pain is not enough' (McRobbie: 2002; 131). Whilst I focus upon the material realities, the classed historical legacies, and the symbolic restraints of such a 'pulling together,' for these are its conditions and its conditioning, I also hope to embed them throughout the rest of my analysis in the 'signs of social and cultural vitality ... which to a certain extent alleviate and also dramatize through collective expression' aspects of the working-class women's experience that make 'social suffering' a thin descriptor of their lives (ibid; 131).

I will allow the reader a little freedom when reading my transcriptions of Katy's voice, and those of the other women I introduce through my narrative. You may pick up on the ingenuity of their art of 'making do,' on the humour and intelligence of their negotiation of 'everyday life,' and the generosity of their disposition towards others. My interpretive gloss will at times be reserved for the 'weight of their world' as they attempt to labour for respectability and respect within spaces that deny it to them. It is, for Katy, a cumulative experience and labour over time that gives rise, sometimes, to the feeling (emotionally and physically) of being 'a bag of shite'.

5.3 Resourcing appearances

Katy: Femininity? From charity shops; loads. I started volunteering at one just to get the discount, believe ... but yeah I do try to work myself up a bit ... last year I had my daughter's hair done by some cheapest way of getting her hair cut. After hers turned out right I looked at myself in mirror and thought 'Katy get yourself in there' (laughing). You know that was the first time out of my wallet that I've spent on my hair in years.

When Katy first became involved in my research it was summer time, the time of the exodus of students from Fenton. Katy had come to find a use value from the unwanted possessions that the students leave behind. She, along with some of her friends, walked the streets and opened up the black bin-bags that spilled out from the front yards, or had been piled high in skips. Katy did not just keep things for herself (there was more than enough); she circulated items within her social relationships, and she had an eye for what a person might like ('Yesterday James left my house with a wireless keyboard, iPod speakers and a charger; wicked, he were like, yeah that was what I needed,

wicked'). Sometimes, too, she found something that provided occasion for collective entertainment and relief; a gorilla suit provided occasion to disrupt expectations ('I jumped through the door and they absolutely screamed'). Sometimes she found something valuable that could move beyond the gift economy and be sold to a second hand store. Above all else, however, these 'tat walks' provided the materials (cosmetics, clothes, handbags, kitchen items) from which she could construct her presentation of femininity in terms of personal 'appearances' and for furnishing her domestic sphere.

Many of the working-class women in my research would be careful to avoid being seen to resource themselves in such a way, they would wish to protect their respectability. Nonetheless they share with Katy something of her practices; producing femininity as 'appearance' from 'within your means' is a shared and collective practice within their social relationships. Katy's ingenuity and skills in finding ways to keep up the circulation of the signs of femininity is matched by their shopping. Inexpensive beauty products and clothes are methodically researched and purchased from October onward, and they are put into circulation at Christmas. Cosmetics are seasonal stocks of shared commonality; everyone knows more or less what to expect, everyone knows where it was bought from, how much it cost. True value is realised in knowledge of the shared experience of 'living within your means,' the knowledge that others have made a gift of their own time and labour.

Katy, herself, veils any sense of lack or shame in her activities. Instead she invests them, and the leftover waste of student life, with the promise of opportunity of relief; not just through the material that she can garner at no 'cost' but also through the doing itself; the experience of fun, delight, surprise, consternation, and intrigue that she feels when sifting through the bin-bags. It is this that provides an episodic relief to her immediate realities of social and economic insecurity whilst still being located within its terms. As she relates to me 'I do not give a fuck, I am on it mate'. For Wacquant her activities may represent an immersion in a 'craft of day-to-day survival and where one must continually do one's best with whatever is at hand, that is precious little,' a situation where 'social mourning amidst poverty must remain unstated directly, on behalf of not feeling

defeated, of remaining optimistic ... in order that a scene of social belonging may still be experienced as such' (Berlant: 2011; 187 citing Wacquant).

Indeed Katy assigns a moral purpose to her activities when set beside those who discard their unwanted possessions. She assembles the items she does not take and places them on display so others could find use from them; any items she decides are not recyclable she bags up and places in the bins. Katy gives her activities a social purpose; they display her social responsibility, her sense of belonging to Fenton. It is a very public articulation of her engendered sense of self and value and its responsibility and connection to Fenton.

Katy, walk: It's like here (pointing) ... their rubbish bags are torn open on the garden, what's the point; over there that's a fucking health hazard ... There's times and places round here when people don't show respect, don't want that sense of community, they stay for the duration and then they're fucking off. Don't get me wrong, I like some of the stuff students do; the big prints what they put on the walls, the graffiti. They're trying to do a Banksy aren't they? Bless them. It's just it would be nicer if it were like a bit more on a level, so there was a bit more family housing; you know the houses, the bins, the bottles on the windowsills, the trainers on the phone lines [...] and some of the young people that live round here too, they have a persistent attitude, cocky little fuckers that should be doing something better with themselves.

Mark: What does respect mean to you Katy?

Katy: Respect means knowing that I've done right, like morally, like I can hold my head up above the water, I'm not rich, I've got no widescreen TV, none of my things are stolen, none of them are on HP. My daughter - you know - that's my respectability, and you know it's important for us to conduct ourselves within our own community, to be respectable, to be able to teach each other respect as well. You don't just demand respect; you give it as well ... Fenton has had a bit of bad press, when you say Fenton some people assume it to be rough ... But it's alright...

Katy is drawing attention to the values that embody her conduct and it is through these that she attempts to put distance between her person and pathology, a sense of self constructed to counter the standardised themes of pathology that she hears voiced about those 'like her'. Her awareness of how her person and those 'like her' in Fenton are pathologized as 'rough' and as subjects to be conditioned by the demands for respect is sharp; 'You don't just demand respect; you give it as well.' Anti-social behaviour, criminality, fecklessness, and lack of moral and financial restraint are counterpoised with a morality that draws on familiar values. Her worth as a woman (her propriety) is defined in terms of her inculcation of family values in her daughter, her honesty, and her ability to live within her means. Self-respect is acquired through

recognising her abilities as a mother, her self-regulation exemplified by her managing within her precarious materiality without recourse to 'sin' (Sennett: 2004). This is a responsible self with moral agency whose value inheres in her conduct, her own and her relation to others. It is a self that makes a distinction between the 'undeserving' in her neighbourhood who have that 'persistent attitude' that exemplifies a lack of respect, and those students who pass through without regard to it.

Like Rebecca in Chapter 4, Katy is performing boundary work, she is articulating a claim of belonging to a 'community' and a sense of moral purpose and value; and like Rebecca she is trying to produce distance from those identifications by others that she feels fix her in place. In this sense, both Rebecca and Katy involve themselves in what Sennett calls a labour of proof, 'a labour of 'moral fitness' that requires comparative judgements of worth' (2004; 58). They have, of course, contrasting access to the resources to provide themselves with a sense of ontological security, a sense of self respect, to realise themselves as persons of worth. They are labouring from very different positions in social space, their subjectivities conditioned by different relationships to value, to discourses of care, to notions of propriety and 'self'.

Katy is investing in the values of respectability. This is the legacy of the respectable working-class mother, a discursive 'location' that she attempts to inhabit within her precarious reality, one through which she both finds value and attempts to deflect judgement from her person, so that she may not be seen as 'undeserving'. For Katy it is respectability which 'works to foster an ethic of labour' in her life 'which strives to be recognised and known as worthy of personhood, a constant need to prove one's worth which 'links disposition to display, psychology to labour' (Skeggs: 2006; 9). In this sense Katy, like the women in *'Formations'*, labours to produce herself as a particular kind of feminine subject 'in relation to public narratives of what it means to be a working-class woman' (Skeggs: 2002; 162).

5.4 Comparative evaluations

Katy responds very differently to Vicky, Sophie, and Olivia when she talks about the differences between herself and middle-class women she sees in Fenton and beyond.

Appearances are still crucial but a focus upon the performance of 'femininity' is displaced by class analysis, her resentment is neither expressed as envy nor as disgust at others' 'natural' dispositions but instead arises from her sense of inequality and injustice. She understands class as a social relationship and she knows where she is within such a relation. She understands that within a moral economy of property, propriety and entitlement she does not belong, and that her exclusion is inextricably bound to others' 'luck'. For her, the markers of class are everywhere and in 'everything'

Katy: You can tell the difference, you know even by the clothing and properties, it's in everything, you can tell it's in everything. These people have totally different lives. My home is not the same as the home of somebody who has got a nice job, nice settled background; my clothing is not the same as somebody that's got, you know, sort of everything ...

Katy's own public investments in respectability here run side by side her labour of care and her aspiration for her daughter Alice to be able to escape the material hardship and burdens of class that they currently experience. This is where her labour and her investments lie, not in herself but in the care for her daughter and in the promise of improvement for her; that somehow she will break into those circuits of exchange and accrual that 'those people with totally different lives' have access to. This is the proximate promise of 'female individualisation' and a release from the constraints of class that have held Katy in place. Such a promise for her daughter is symbolised for Katy by the adjacency of student life and institution:

Katy, map: She (Alice) likes the idea of going to university yeah (placing it on her map) 'not just for the freebies in fresher's week mum,' right yeah but 'you get everything when you go to university you get free computers an' everything.' And I said 'well yeah you do actually, they give you your own learning net and you know and stuff like this'; she understands, you know from doing certain things so many doors open up to you - yeah. And I've said to her 'and I've known people who've gone to university Alice and that's their thing, and they have gone and got a job, but they also only gone and got a job in the university'; you know, and she said 'yeah I'll do anything.'

The objects that Katy sifts through in the course of her tat walks become a reference point from which she engages in the distance between her and Alice's positioning and that of their dialogic classed others (Skeggs:2002); those who embody and practice a differing relationship to feminine propriety, who have recourse to individualisation:

Katy, walk: Oh that's nice actually (a jacket), oh look (searching the pockets) she has been paying with her card. Eight pounds for drinks, at the social club, she has been to the social club, easy... an Adidas headband, maybe she was 118, maybe she went on one of those student runs through the

bars, you can tell - look day-glow orange, and day-glow green headbands... look at those shoes, where's she been in them? Bless her; mind you I've got a suede brush to work them up... my daughter wouldn't wear this top though; she has taken the label out, it was Lacoste. Bloody plum - what's the point in doing that? I expect she didn't want to be labelled; I know the feeling love ... oh and look she loves me, she has left me some Rimmel rich moisturiser, and a lipstick ... and look a card for that restaurant on Darwin Street, couldn't afford that ... money to burn, well Mark you have to have...

Katy's reflections are a mixture of generosity and resentment. She marks the young woman's apparent freedom and mobility through space, her leisure and her cultural pursuits are those things that Katy cannot participate in, symbolised here by the restaurant but also by the student's presence in the former working men's club that now functions as a music venue. Katy's ironic aside, 'didn't want to be labelled; I know the feeling love,' points to her understanding of the differences between herself and those with the power and mobility to express themselves as selves rather than being entrapped by representation. The Lacoste label for her daughter, certainly, would be something to desire, and to have, because for her it would display a marker of distance from her person and the poor economic realities she currently inhabits.

Working-class women like Katy and her daughter have a very differing relationship to 'the new personality structure' of a consumer society where survival depends upon 'the ability to select the most advantageous set of interpretational tactics' to produce and maintain an 'acceptable image' (Turner: 2008; 97). Such differences are marked by material realities but they are also informed through differing relations to value and to conceptions of 'self'. I turn, here, to some of the other working-class women's perspectives upon their dialogic others in Fenton; these will throw light on Katy's own motivations and concerns as she attempts to 'pull herself together' as a respectable feminine working-class subject.

Gwen: It's intimidating, I thought I was going to have a panic attack the other day; everyone looked shit-hot, everyone was thin, the clothes were expensive. I thought what about the comfort, girls, something practical here. You feel very much like you're dowdy all the time. It's like a bloody fashion show, I swear to god - I'm like are you going out on the piss or something? And they're not, they're going to university. But sometimes though I'm a bit envious too; I wish I'd gone through the phase of having a fashion. I think the students here are; well they can show their children pictures of when they were younger and go 'look how we were dressed, this was how we used to do our hair and makeup, this was popular at the time,' whereas for me I've never had that. I couldn't go 'look at me when I was younger - didn't I look fab - look at what I used to wear'. I'm

a bit envious of that really, I think I'd like to have been outrageous and have fashion, look distinctive...

Gwen, like Turner, highlights her neighbourhood space as 'a competitive arena for presentational conflicts'. They are spaces that provoke anxiety and bewilderment as well as envy, but they are also spaces marked by class; not its disappearance. Beneath 'distinction' and 'uniqueness,' Gwen marks the hegemonic norms that underwrite these performances of femininity, they are tied to normative conceptions of desirability ('shit-hot'), on the self-regulation of bodies ('everyone was thin') and upon the ability to draw upon the resources to make such performances (an 'expensive' preoccupation). She understands, too, how such regulative norms work to make women labour within their everyday realities ('what about the comfort', what about the 'practical') and she is aware of their impact upon her as a form of compulsion through negative self-valuation ('I thought I was going to have a panic attack'). In these respects she shares the perspective of Vicky and to an extent of Sophie as they marked their distance from normative conceptions and expressions of femininity.

There is a difference, however. Whilst most of the middle-class perspectives focused upon the engendering of feminine norms from which they as women critiqued and distanced themselves, the working-class 'women never see themselves as just women; it is always read through class' (Skeggs: 2002; 91). Gwen places her 'envy' of those women, here, within the context of her own classed relationship to femininity and to 'individualisation', a cultural upbringing within a particular material reality that did not encourage the desire to be 'different' but rather inculcated the importance of not standing out. Gwen's mum wanted to instil, in her daughter, the 'particular moral significance and responsibility ... status, self-worth and pleasure' (Skeggs: 2002; 46) that could be gained from being respectably working-class.

Gwen: Even though they were working-class, my Mum's side of the family have always had that little bit of snobbery in them. So you can still be working-class and look down on the person next door to you, because there were certain things in our family that we couldn't have, or do, because it was common; and my mum was like you can't have that, you can't do that, it's common. I reckon we were sort of (laughs) this end, respectable working-class...

Gwen learnt from her mother the importance of distancing herself (through her body, her clothes, her consumption and leisure practices, her cultural pursuits, and her social

relationships) from those that 'lived next door' but who had no hope for improvement (Skeggs: 2002). Her transition to 'woman' did not bring with it the same kind of possessive relationship with self that she sees in those students' lives, she cannot externalise her youth as something distinctive; as a possession to mark a phase in her biography, a form of cultural capital to pass on to her children, as something that she can use within social exchanges.

Theresa's response to her dialogic other (below) moves from envy to admiration and self-admonishment. The students she sees moving about Fenton are getting on with their lives and achieving things (in ways she didn't) but they are also having fun (which she wanted to have, but it didn't quite work out). Theresa watches these young women and believes their fashionable displays of femininity, and their freedom from the restraints of relationships (and being tied down by motherhood) are things to be admired. Theresa's comparative evaluations do not provoke envy or resentment here; she has a rather generous disposition towards others which sometimes turns in upon herself in the form of devaluation.

Theresa: I think that students are just young having fun and that, got no kids; I wish I'd done that, honestly I do, but you don't realise until it's too late, I should've gone to college or university instead of having kids. I'd say that girls from round here though are more trendy than girls from other areas because the students are all fashionable, when you are looking at their clothes you think, oh that's nice, but there's also some stuff and you think that's what we used to wear too, but because that's all we could afford. Like black pumps, we call them prison pumps, I used to wear them, but then they became really fashionable! And I mean some of them now, when you see them walking up to college, they walk around in their pyjamas, they are wannabe chav!

Theresa's surprise and hilarity at the idea that the students she sees sometimes appropriate styles and items of clothing that she associates with those 'like her' is revealing. As we saw with Olivia's representation of the 'chav mum,' a working-class woman who 'dresses down' is the subject of derogation. Somehow the women Theresa sees have the ability and the confidence to wear clothing that for those like her would be judged and evaluated as 'improper'. For Skeggs such a 'playing at not being middle-class does not jeopardise their ability to use and capitalise upon their cultural capital, nor is it likely to generate shame and humiliation when it does not work' (2002; 91).

Indeed, the authorisation of controlled de-control in middle-class practice takes a particularly nasty and instituted form with respect to class. Events in both union buildings and student clubs in town have themed themselves as 'chav' nights. The figure of the chav as the constitutive limit for middle-class propriety and sense of self is here made appropriable, or at least the signs that make up her caricature are available for re-signification. This is a horrid expression of what Skeggs refers to as the 'split projections of one's class's tastes [and desires] onto another' (2002; 171). The 'class-making' performances of 'chav night' provides opportunity for the actors to transgress and act out their own fears, fantasies, and desires whilst maintaining that they 'belong' to the bodies that they are parodying.

Theresa (below) is aware of how conceptions of impropriety work according to the divided logics of class within Fenton. She highlights the way middle-class perspectives upon her daytime 'conduct' draw on the projections of the 'anti-social' and the bad parent as the antithesis of respectable feminine identity. Playing music on a sunny day, with the children outside having fun in the front yard, provokes the affects of disdain and contempt from her classed others; she feels she is perceived as 'trash'. Theresa draws upon the discourse of respectability to counter her de-legitimation, highlighting the discrepancies between middle-class practice and their own evaluation of her.

Theresa: When the students come over, and parents are dropping them off, they are looking at the area like this (looking down her nose). Both my neighbours are students on each side and when I was in garden with music on; well it's just in their faces, it's how they look. But if only they knew what their own kids were like (laughing). On one side you hear them having sex all night and on the other side they sit around having naked bonfires. It should be me who complains to the Council (laughter). Last week I looked out the window and a student guy was running down street holding his thing like this and then a girl comes running after in her knickers and bra. But the parents look at you when they pull up in the car and look at you like you're right trash because your kids are out and running about, well you know, you think - what are your own kids about!

Perhaps the students' parents would disapprove of their own offspring's behaviour, or perhaps they would see it as part of the student experience, part of their 'licence', their transition, before they move on. The point is that Theresa feels that the middle-class parent's perspectives fix her in place whilst their own children are entitled to forms of mobility and expression denied to her. They are free to express themselves, experiment, have fun, but she must remain indoors, look after her children properly and keep them,

and herself, quiet. It is a consistent theme: 'the women know they are being positioned as contagious, not belonging or dirty ... they do not believe they have the same entitlements, the access to the same rights...they are made to feel invisible and at the same time under scrutiny' (Skeggs: 2002; 93).

Theresa's earlier self-criticism when set beside the young women she sees freed from her 'traditional constraints' of gender is not uncommon in my research, but reiterative. Reflections upon personal failings to take hold of opportunities to 'improve' their lives, their 'failures' at school, and their 'decisions' to have children were often made through the emotional register of shame. This is an incorporation of dominant valuations of what a 'proper self' should be and do without a corresponding language of class through which they could allow themselves to understand the inequalities through which their own relation to processes of apparent de-tradition is established. Bourdieu refers to this de-valuation as an 'appalling fact - one that intellectuals don't like to accept, but which they must accept...it is a formidable mechanism, like the imperial system' (1992b; 121).

His conception of misrecognition, however, ignores what happens when the evaluative judgements of class are experienced directly through proximate encounters such as those that Theresa experiences, or when the working-class women negotiate their positioning within wider pathological representations of class. It is here that the women both express resentment and a refusal of their positioning and where they make investments in femininity as a defence and a deflection from pathology (Skeggs: 2002). It is to some of these that I now turn. I do so first by focusing on Theresa's own experience of devaluation as an improper feminine subject and placing such devaluation within the contexts of her ambivalent and conflicting relation to the respectably feminine.

5.5 Deflecting judgements

When answering my clumsy question about how she would describe herself, Theresa turned to appearances. It is a defensive but knowledgeable start. Theresa, as seen previously, is only too aware that the evaluation of the appearance of femininity and the

labour of feminine characteristics are often conflated and resolved through a focus on the classed body (Skeggs: 2002). The characteristics she ascribes to herself, of possessing a fiery temper, being mouthy and loud; when joined to a subject position of 'mother' are, she understands, those signs that will mark her out as lacking. This fear of evaluative judgement explains her less than expansive response to my question, and it informs her negotiation of neighbourhood spaces and proximity with 'social others.'

Theresa: What do you mean, how I look? Like a mum.

Mark: Like a mum, what does a mum look like?

Theresa: Chubby (laughs), how would I describe myself? A good mum, a caring person, a fiery temper, mouthy, loud - that's it.

Mark: When you say mouthy and loud do you mind thinking of yourself like that?

Theresa: Not if I'm sticking up for myself, no, that's the only time I'm mouthy and loud, just arguing and sticking up for myself, for what I think is right...

Mark: Do you feel you have to do that a lot ...

Theresa: I feel that I get judged ... but I like to shock people me, people who think you're one way, but really you're not. Like you know this thing about swearing in the street, and being outspoken ... It's like my housing worker, she gives me the impression that she had a right good upbringing and stuff and she says to me one time when a bloke was working on house, she went 'oh be gentle with him Theresa,' and I thought, oh you don't know me, how dare you say something like that; 'be gentle with him' like I were going to be right cheeky with him; he was a lovely guy and I thought bloody cheek.

Theresa's contact with the housing worker leaves her with a strong sense of her being evaluated as lacking in discernment, as lacking the respectable feminine disposition of docility and propriety. For Theresa the professional worker's well-intentioned familiarity grates with presumption and misrecognition. It seems to her, and this is an experience familiar to many of the working-class women, that her behaviour is always open to direction and moderation, her knowledge always in need of broadening. Theresa feels that her sensibility, her moral codes of conduct, are misrecognised by those 'who don't know her', and it is these valuations that make class that 'structuring absence' in her negotiation of her proximity with social others. It calls for, and induces, performances of femininity to deflect judgement

Theresa's 'shock' tactics are the means by which she manages the presentation of self through the labour of performance. In the case of investments in the appearance and

conduct of femininity they are often attachments and displays that are made outside of the daily realities of Theresa's life, but they are also sometimes those that she has made in her own life but that she has to make public. She will, she tells me, not just alter her speech and her disposition on occasion (a 'throwing' of her taste and politeness that catches her by surprise) but will also drop into conversation something that her 'other' may be surprised to know. In her interaction with her health visitor (below), for example, she makes it public that she has asparagus on the menu. Such performances are produced when she wishes to 'pass' and where passing is, as Skeggs observes, not a subordination or a form of ironic mimicry but a dissimulation, and a desire to be legitimated (2002; 86-7).

Theresa's 'loud mouth', however, reasserts itself when these classed anxieties are induced in relation to the negative evaluation of those investments that are the closest to her heart. Whilst at her home I saw the health visitor, on a routine appointment, proceed to question her insensitively about her childcare. The professional became increasingly sanctimonious in relation to Theresa's defensiveness (you do know, don't you that smoking will harm your child? That small children do need to be talked to even though they cannot speak? That perhaps you should have persisted with breastfeeding a little longer...). As Theresa's anxiety increased the health visitor moved on to question how she had managed to acquire such a nice house with such pleasant décor and so many home comforts; such surroundings that she, as she related, 'had not been able to afford as a young woman'.

Theresa was judged according to what she was taken (visualised) to be - stupid, undeserving, and criminal. The fact that her home was beautifully decorated, that she had invested so much time in it, that her cupboards were stocked with food (including asparagus) provided proof of this criminality; how could a woman 'like' Theresa have such things, how could she be capable of these investments? Theresa was left with her temper, it made her feel awful, she did not want to verbally abuse anyone, she did not want to go on the attack; 'class relations are felt as they are lived, and these feelings generate strong emotions, sometimes violence, degradation and resistance' (Skeggs: 2002; 92).

For Skeggs, 'femininity requires the display of classed dispositions, of forms of conduct and behaviour, different forms of cultural capital' which are not part of working-class women's 'cultural baggage' (2002; 100). Theresa's fiery disposition is illustrative. It did not 'come from nowhere,' nor can it be just attributed to classed encounters such as those with the health visitor; it was produced within particular local, but still classed, contexts. The transition from 'girl' to 'woman' for Theresa had been abrupt and difficult. Without an education she had left home at 16 to live on a 'sink' estate to escape her responsibilities of care for her younger siblings and have some 'fun'. Theresa wanted autonomy, freedom. It was, however, a hard reality in which to make the transition to adulthood. Young women who found housing there were often examples of what housing workers call 'failed tenancies'; often isolated and without meaningful support or protection, their homes and bodies can become the sites for control and exploitation by young men. Theresa, along with other young women within my research, had to negotiate such problems as best she could.

In her time within the estate, her property was used for storage of stolen goods, the place where local lads partied and experimented with drugs and their sexuality. Theresa was not the passive victim of these young men's behaviour. Neither was her relation to them absent of forms of identification; rather they were negotiated and expressed through the 'shared' difficulties of their positioning within wider social processes and their dialectic with life 'on the estate' and its social relationships. Nonetheless the gendered imbalances are best expressed as prerogative. It was a hard space from which to gain her wished-for autonomy; it was a hard space to learn about sexuality, and it was a hard space from which to survive in terms of attachment to mainstream values and codes of feminine behaviour and conduct, or indeed to be become 'respectably' working-class:

Theresa, walk: (through the estate) This girl told me that John were doing stuff to her that were beyond belief ... I didn't know he were like that, but she said 'well no you wouldn't would you, cos you haven't had to face shit off him'. What he was doing was [...] he was an evil bastard, and that was when it started. When I saw him next I said, I've heard about you and Georgia and I think you're a disgrace, and I told him to get off my property. For a while it was difficult to go out (because of the fights and arguments)...but when I heard more stuff going on, I couldn't sit there and let it go ... I (had to) became friends with him again because she's got this baby and it wasn't helping her and I can't sit there and watch the poor girl go fucking down with a child. Just fighting

him was doing no good. I had to do what was right, I had to stand by the girl because she was going through crap, and you can't turn a child away, so I had to be friends with him, to make sure he stayed away; he treated her like a piece of shit. I tried to help her, in a roundabout way; I passed a bit of food to her, and I made sure that he didn't take her money any more.

The 'autonomy' and freedom that Theresa had had hopes for when leaving home had been realised through experiences such as these: experiences that are so far removed from the realities of middle-class 'transitions' as to be barely comprehensible. Since leaving home she had acquired a local reputation which was hard-earned, she had become the go-to woman for local disputes and developed a fearful reputation for being a person not to mess with, and above all for not being 'feminine'. Theresa had learnt to fight; to stand up for herself. She is a large and powerful young woman, with a physical capital that normative conceptions of femininity devalue. Within this spatial and social context, she had put her capacity to use to defend herself and her friends. It was a form of physical capital that she drew upon to survive, an investment that could realise, through her labour, the most precarious forms of respect in the absence of alternative forms of capital to move on and leave behind. This was a very delicate and precarious balancing act for a young woman to achieve. Such a reputation and disposition had had its costs within her immediate neighbourhood. She was at once the subject to be distanced from, the subject to go to, and the subject to be feared. It was not what she had wished for.

With no economic or educational capital and no recognised cultural capital, and an association with social networks that were seen locally and institutionally as dangerous, if not criminal; motherhood, for Theresa at 18, was her way out. Having and caring for a child, as she explained, offered a way of putting distance between herself and the endless cycle of confrontation and reparation that stood in for her experience of 'youth'. It put distance between herself and the local network of relations built up within the framework of grafting, scamming, dodging, and blagging, its circulation of knock offs and snides, and its endless confrontations and negotiations of respect (Nayak: 2006). It gave her other responsibilities, a promise of 'intimacy, fulfilment, self-identity and self-worth' (McDermott: 2005; 74) that could not be realised through other routes.

Theresa's experience and her local 'reputation,' as well as her decision to make investments in motherhood, are precisely what Katy wishes to protect her own daughter from. Alice is 15, and Katy knows that there are, within her community, those that realise the 'coping strategies of subjects disorganised from the mainstream markers of respect and moral worth and [who have] a ferocious commitment to 'become respectable' in whatever ways are left' (Hey; 2005; 868). Whilst Hey may understand 'the wresting of individual survival at the expense of community or through the redemptive project of early motherhood' is 'about making uses of resources at hand to deal with immiseration and exclusion' (ibid), there is no way Katy is going to let this happen to Alice. She has made investments in the public value of respectability even as she understands that the worlds of 'respect' and 'respectability' in her neighbourhood are permeable and complicated, that some are made 'indecent' not through their morality but through the 'the spin-off of their lower position in social space and of the different relation to the future that comes with it' (Wacquant: 2002; 1489).

The distinction between these two categories is not a hard and fast one but, on the contrary, labile and porous, produced and marked by micro-differences imperceptible to the distant gaze of outsiders. But [that] through a cumulative dialectic of social and moral distancing, determine divergent fates among people who seem to have started out from about the same place. (ibid. 1500)

5.6 Precarious respectability

Despite Katy's claim not to 'give a fuck,' respectability continues to be her primary concern as she labours through the unwanted possessions of student life to resource herself and her child, and it structures her selection and use of the materials she finds. Her anecdotal asides as she pulls items from her tat bag reveal, here, the intimate and relational practices carried out between mother and daughter as they negotiate femininity as a practice of respectability. They are indicative of the performativity of working-class femininity as a practice of reiteration in the minutiae of daily practice, an attention to the micro-practices necessary for appearing as the respectably feminine subject, the learning of specific bodily techniques ('Oh leggings, that's great we'll keep them. Why does Alice always have to pull her leggings up by the crotch, do you know what I mean? I tell her most people do it by side of leg; no, she does it by crotch and this is why she ends up with sag').

They also emphasise a more overt form of moral instruction, one that provides a self-conscious and reflexive counter to the pathology of working-class femininity as promiscuous. Katy's heavy investment in protecting her daughter from the adverse effects of a highly sexualised culture are underscored by her classed concern to safeguard and cultivate her daughter's respectability within her community, she understands where blame will be targeted, and who will burden the risks;

Katy, walk: (Holding up a skirt) that's not my style sorry; I don't like that, it's too tacky. And you know I don't want my daughter wearing all these short skirts; kids aren't getting a chance to be kids, they've got to be women, they've got to be big women at 16. Well they're not; society is making them grow up too fast, they can fuck off, sexualising kids [...] it's wrong, wrong, wrong; it's wrong Mark. It's basically saying to them you've got to be this way, this is how you've got to look if you want to fit in. What happened to fucking intellect, what happened to strength of character, what happened to morals? What because she looks good on outside, because she's got her hair bleached, because she's got her nails done, because she's wearing latest shoes, she must be a really good person ... They've got to comply; with their hair, their shoes ... and if they are looking like big women they should be shagging like big women shouldn't they?

Katy's investments in care for her child are the main source from which she accrues self-respect and positions herself as respectable; but she also understands that her and her daughter's body 'is a marked body, marked by class' (Skeggs: 2002; 83). Like all of the working-class women in my research she understands that the 'surface of her body' 'is the site upon which distinctions can be drawn' (ibid; 84). Alice must learn that some things and some practices are 'tacky' when worn by her 'type,' that she must not be seen to be common. She must make investments in femininity through conduct and appearance; and it is respectability that mediates both.

Several months into my research, Katy's concern with maintaining respectability for Alice became more urgent and complex. Alice had her name daubed on the fences of the houses surrounding her home with the legend 'slag'. One of the girls responsible had been taunting her with text messages. The girl lived on Alice's estate and after a school day had shouted abuse from her kitchen window. Alice had argued with her and the girl had tried to slap her. Alice reached through the window and grabbed the girl's throat. Two community police officers on patrol in the estate had spotted the incident at the moment of Alice's retaliation. After consulting the girl and her parents, they had

instigated proceedings for a case for anti-social behaviour and informed the police of an offence against the person. 'Madness,' as Katy referred to it.

It was an 'event' in Katy's life that altered her positioning within that cumulative 'dialectic of social and moral distancing' within Fenton. Her public holding on to value and precariously fragile distance from 'the rough,' as well as her own personal investments in respectability and her hopes for her child were to be subjected to the processes of criminalisation. It was a time when the institutional penetration in Fenton had seen a rapid implementation of 'anti-social behaviour' interventions, a period where the 'criminalizing of [working-class] children had become a national obsession' in New Labour's efforts to induce respect for authority (Willis: 2010; 7). Alice's consequent court appearances became the locus for a huge amount of anxiety for Katy. Respectability and holding on to value was important, but the risks were not simply reputational; they posed threats to her abilities to keep her attachments to the future for Alice that she had promised. Since proceedings had been instigated there had been intervention from the school, the housing authority, and a visit from a social worker, as well as the police. Katy's housing, her child's educational achievement and future prospects (she was approaching her GCSE's) were placed in jeopardy.

Neither mother nor daughter believed that they were being treated fairly. They wanted the context of the incident heard and they fought hard for their sense of justice. Below is one extract from her many accounts of these meetings over the course of a year, this one taken after a preliminary hearing;

Katy, handbag: Go on read it (a letter from court). The solicitor wanted her to plead guilty so that things could be just dealt with, and I said, wait a minute I've spent 15 years teaching my daughter not to lie, why should she plead guilty when she isn't? So she, because I'm being boisterous, is getting all uppity. She was explaining the perspective of the law, and that if it went to trial she would be found guilty, and that it would be worse. I understand that. But why when I have taught my daughter to tell truth, do I have to tell her now that truth doesn't need telling; she hit her back, her parents only wanted to press charges because (to force the Council's hand over a request to leave the estate for better housing) [...] So (the solicitor) was like this with me, and when the barrister turned up I just broke out in sweat and my brain were going over what she had said. But then there is this and that, and this, which I wasn't happy with. But no, no-one was having it. I wanted things investigated for the truth but the barrister and the solicitor just got like this (mimicking a refusal to hear with her face). It's like if you disagree with something like a fundamental disagreement, or a moral disagreement that you feel you should be able to air, you

can't even air it because they say that you are being this way, that you've got an attitude; all the fucking time.

A more succinct description of the experience of misrecognition would be difficult to find. Just as was the case in her other meetings with housing, with school, with her solicitor, and with the police and social worker, Katy had found herself dropping those qualities of docility and deference that classed perspectives and conceptions of her feminine conduct require. It is here that her conduct, like that of Theresa, is misrecognised because it does not conform to the normative; it fails to tally with the injunction to 'both appear and be feminine' (Skeggs: 2002; 100). Katy's dispositional values of care let her down, they placed her 'outside of the need for justice and place[d] others at the centre of moral authorisation' (Skeggs: 2004; 59). These encounters with authority were an unbearable strain for Katy because she was constantly trying to hold together two contradictory subject positions, the one demanded of her and that she knew would be required, and the one that held her values and her daughter close to her heart.

As Berlant observes, there is 'a lot of contingency involved in localising any process in a life, a scene or event. They might take the sense of trauma as equal to its claim to exceptionality' (2011; 11). This has not been my intention, this 'event' in Katy's life and her experiences of misrecognition, must be placed within the unfolding of the more mundane materiality of living class as a 'process embedded in the ordinary' rather than to be understood as 'trauma' (ibid; 11). For Katy this 'ordinary' is attritional. Alice was found guilty, just as her solicitor had said she would be. She was fined and bound by conditions, and Katy is the person who had to find the money to pay, pushing her into further financial difficulties. In the succeeding months 'the mundane reiterative everyday experiences of living degradation and negative value' (Skeggs: 2002; 167) worked their way through into her life. The pull of the ordinary saw her fall into further financial crisis, a delay and complication with her benefits had been covered by the 'club man' and had pushed her into a vicious cycle of debt.

Katy (below) had to try to secure for herself and her daughter an emergency payment from social security; she was already frustrated and ashamed with herself for not making the money stretch. Whilst poverty provides emotional, physical and economic limits to

the expression and relevance of performing the appearance of 'femininity,' for Katy its symbolic importance refuses to diminish. She knows that her appearance and her vulnerability may come to signify the position of the abject, a subject who is 'not recognised other than as scandalous', a position 'not yet liveable yet nevertheless occupied' (Lovell: 2003; pp 4-5). What Katy fights to preserve is the very outermost limit of respectability, to keep her body solid, upright, to be able to hold its own in front of the screen of the payments counter. She must hide her vulnerability, her fatigue, and her pain. To show it would confirm, from a reading of her body, what 'they' know; it is her fault, a hopeless case of failed will; something 'wrong' with her. This time Katy will be polite, reserved, and she will be responsive in the right ways, the ways that she has learned to sing for her, and her daughter's, supper.

Katy, map: (drawing the welfare offices) I had, don't get me wrong, I had some stuff in the freezer, bits left, but there were only enough for Alice and I were like – 'this is what you are eating, there isn't a choice you know' [...] but what you're on about the effects on your body, I already felt ill because I hadn't eaten, I wasn't sleeping because I were stressed, but the best part of it was that I had to go walking; I had to go walking left, right, and centre over to Town Street and back across to Flint Place. I felt like collapsing, you know when you're standing there in that queue, physically collapsing, and I'm standing there and I'm thinking don't faint, don't faint, don't faint, don't fucking pass out, you know what they're going to think - that there's something wrong with you [...] that you're a crack-head or something.

Katy does not want the identity of the poor woman because she knows that it will be misrecognised, she recognises that she is 'within' a relation to others where she may become fixed as the site of the illegitimate. There is of course 'something wrong' with Katy. She has gone without food and sleep, her relationship with her daughter has become strained, and her emotional and physical wellbeing is low. Katy knows that her pain will be misrecognised as much as her moral claims to authority will be misheard, that the inequalities that she faces in her life will be misread as personal attributes of a failing self. Like all the working-class women to one degree or another, she is 'forced to inhabit an identity not of [her] own making,' unable to access the circuits of recognition that would allow a self which could be 'owned and articulated as a property of the person' (Skeggs: 2004; 59).

I have emphasised the ways in which Katy labours to appear and be respectable within material circumstances and a moral economy that denies it to her. I have underlined

that in her life, as was the case with all the mothers in the research, 'caring defined what it meant to be respectable' (Skeggs: 2002; 109) but that a concern with 'appearances' was central to her understanding of how she was positioned and her conduct evaluated. In the next section I explore occasions where the women made investments in femininity within their own circles of recognition. Here the focus on feminine appearances shifts from a concern with respectability and the need to deflect the judgement of others towards the practices of respect and recognition between persons who occupy similar positions in social space. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to say something of the temporality of the signs of femininity in their lives.

5.7 Pyjamas and tracksuits

Within Skeggs' *Formations*, 'relinquishing regulation and responsibility for bodies (they call it letting go) was a dominant theme' in the working-class women's distancing tactics from classed pathology (2002; 83). In my own research this fear of 'letting go,' as we saw in Katy's earlier description of herself, is also a fear which is realised within their subjectivities and their lives as possibility. This is perhaps why the distancing tactics between women who invested in their femininity, in terms of their bodies and their appearances, and those 'who don't or can't' were less pronounced in my research than in Skeggs' *Formations*. Making such distinctions would not just distance them from pathological representations of class, but also from neighbours, friends and the family members who lived out the realities that remain hidden behind these representations. They are aware too of their own 'labile and porous' relationship with the moral and social conditioning of the distinction between the rough and the respectable, that the possibilities and conditions for 'letting go' are proximate to them.

This is a truism; distinctions were made (see below), but the women's understanding of the adjacency of 'letting go' to their own lives, their own experience of the power of evaluative judgements, and their relation to precarity tempered their sensibilities. In their daily lives, outside of encounters within institutional contexts, they are also women who rarely expressed those forms of dissimulation, or performances of 'a desire not to be' that Skeggs found in her own research. Whilst they made efforts to dis-identify from their positioning by middle-class perspectives they were, here, far less characterised by

the anxiety and insecurity that characterises the 'dis-ease' of attempts to 'pass' found in *Formations*. The majority of the working-class women could not be described as 'drawing upon representations to know what it means to be middle-class' and thereby becoming 'locked into thinking that representing themselves in the same way will produce similar results' (Skeggs: 2002; 86). This is not to say that they did not express a 'desire not to be shamed,' or that they did not have 'a desire to be legitimated,' (Skeggs: 2002; 87) but that in their lives they understood that there was a gap between 'ambition and possibility' (ibid). And it is from within such a gap that re-evaluation occurs, rather than resignation or shame.

Elaine and Donna, below, are aware that they are the subject of evaluations that produce the stereotype of the working-class 'chav' mother. They point to their investments in feminine respectability through the care of others, but they also challenge the normative assumptions of respectable feminine performances through their daily public practices. In Elaine's case this is a very practical form of feminist orientation and resistance: she will not add to her labour of care by concerning herself with the labour of appearances. Elaine is no conformist with regard to the expression of self. And Donna, like many of the women in my research, is defiant in her refusals. She will not be dominated, shamed, dismissed, and deferential. She is aware of others' disapproval, but she is more interested in gaining and being given respect than in making efforts to appear respectable. For Donna and many of the other women what is important is who is judging her, and she is clear that the authority to do so is derived, for her, from local understandings of value and practice:

Donna, map: That is how it is. Tracksuits, hair scraped back. There is nowt wrong with it, it's what we wear isn't it. It's just a different way of life isn't it, when people look down on you every day, I mean going to Khan's (local newsagent) for a pint and you get that look, and they think they are better. Well I just don't like it and I certainly won't let it bother me ...

Elaine: We've got our tracksuits on, our hair scraped back because we've got kids to look after, we've not got time to sit there on our own, look at ourselves, put make up on, put clothes on to run around and clean the house. I can't get up in the morning and doll myself up. I go to school in my pyjamas (laughing) and then I go home and clear up (laughing). I don't mind ... my daughters go to school every day with clean socks, clean knickers, and clean clothes.

The women, here, are not simply to be understood as evidence of the condition of 'refusing what they are refused'. They are re-evaluating what the normative takes as

the 'good' and the 'proper' through reference to their own experience and the insight this gives them into the 'normal'. Their tracksuits and pyjamas are worn with knowledge and 'attitude': they signify their commonality rather than their individuality. Their dress 'code' is a form of cultural capital within their own social relationships, it signifies their strength and refusal, and their realities, from which they do not attempt to dis-identify. Their clothes mark their difference to the students and professionals they see, not in terms of lack, but in terms of the connections and relationships that they have with each other.

It is the strength of their relational commonality that protects them from the inducement of shame that Vicky was so susceptible to, in spite of her access to 'feminist' critiques of normative injunctions. This does mean that those who 'break ranks' are chastised sometimes, not for 'letting go,' but for making over-investments in femininity at the wrong time, in the wrong place. Here their clothing works to mark the local institution of their own economy of social exchange, those who attempt to mark themselves as 'different' *all the time* are likely to be subjects of exclusion. To decry this is to ignore the values that these relationships carry. To ask whether, if they had resources to do so, they would make more investments in femininity in terms of 'the normative' is beside the point. Perhaps they are women who could be learnt from rather than 'improved' upon.

The inscription of care in the working-class women's lives, as Elaine drew attention to, also 'shifts from self-distinction to doing the right thing' (Skeggs: 2002; 88). When set beside the investments they make in femininity through their roles and responsibilities as mothers, the appearance of femininity becomes less of a focal concern. Investment in feminine appearances through clothing and cosmetics were often considered (but crucially not felt) to be an irrelevance to their lives, as something that they had neither the time nor the resources to be pre-occupied with. It was a distraction and a drain on resources which could be given over to others. They recognised the appearance of femininity as an attachment with the quality of a luxury; even as they may recognise it, as Katy does, as symbolically central in positioning them, or take pleasure and enjoy its performance as Catherine does below.

Indeed some of the women converted such restrictions and apparent 'lack' into proof of the ethics and values embedded in their care for others. On rare occasions, such distinctions operated to inform differential judgements upon others within their neighbourhood spaces. Through the trope of respectability they made efforts to dis-identify from pathological representations of the working-class mother as irresponsible and feckless:

Tina: I've been a single parent with limited funds so I've tended to live out of charity shops. In the years between 20 and 30 I don't think I dressed for myself at all, I dressed in what were available to me, and I dressed to what they had in charity shop. I used to think about those women who have expensive clothes; that yeah, you are getting into debt or either you are doing summat you shouldn't be, because as a single mother on benefits I know you can't afford to look like that; you live within your means ...

Catherine, below, invests in the care of the 'feminine' self as a source of personal pleasure and as a means of retaining a sense of propriety. Here the requirement of acceptable feminine performances is indeed, as Skeggs suggests, not to be seen to have 'let go'. Catherine's investments in 'care of the self' reflect that these practices are the 'means by which the women felt they could know and place others [...] based upon respectability' (Skeggs: 2002; 101). In her attention to appearance, however, what is adjudged as good practice is also re-evaluated through her own understanding of 'style' and this is made, as Skeggs suggests, through a comparative evaluation of her classed others performances of femininity. When she refers to her presentation of self 'down the road' Catherine is referring to her need to maintain 'standards' to mark herself from those who have 'let go', when she refers to 'up the road' she is marking a distinction between herself and those she sees as both displaying 'pretension' and lacking in 'kudos' (ibid);

Catherine: I make sure when I walk out the house I have a shower and comb my hair; even if it's down the road. You know it's one thing if they don't want to dress up, but if they smell they've got issues, they need to clean themselves up, it's not nice, it's not healthy [...] Look after your hair, keep yourself clean, wear perfume, wear some make-up, polish yourself up rather than walk around like a tramp. Nobody's going to check you out if you look like a tramp, you have to try and look good. I mean I do look after myself; I get time after the kids go to bed, you know - have a bath, polish my nails and everything. You feel better in yourself, you feel good, and it's part of being a woman and it's a good thing to do [...] but up the road that's different, you are going to be seen and that's when you make more of an effort. Mind you though, you see some of them rich ones, the students, and you think why pay all that money for hair like that, it looks a bloody mess!

Catherine understands her investments in femininity offer a means by which she can gain approval and recognition, but these investments are not simply to be understood from a perspective that would render her as a classed dupe of gender relations and they are most definitely not attempts to pass as middle-class. It is to these issues that I now turn, by returning to Theresa's preparations for a night out with her friends that opened the chapter. These are practices and performances of femininity that have, like Catherine's, a spatial and temporal specificity. They are also practices that connect to the working-class women's sense of agency and strength and their re-evaluation of the normative as much as Elaine's and Donna's refusal to be 'shamed' by their wearing of tracksuits.

5.8 A proper night out

The investments Theresa makes in femininity for a 'proper night out' are ones that have other audiences and concerns beyond those governed by the rules of propriety. They are made to put distance between herself and her day-to-day realities, to have fun and to escape the pull of the ordinary. They are investments made that provide a source of pleasure, a means of critique, a hope for accrual, and for recognition. Whilst middle-class perspectives may give Theresa's practices no legitimacy and position her as vulgar, excessive, and improper, they have use values that are shared within her local circuits of sociality.

Theresa has become skilled at nail art, producing the most intricate and crafted designs for her friends to wear on their nights out. She has a portfolio of designs which she keeps alongside collages of cuttings from magazines to show her friends. For Theresa, these investments had given her skills and knowledge that her friends and those outside of her immediate relationships admire. She receives recognition within her local spaces, giving her opportunity to express her competency and knowledge. Her friends drop by to be adorned with her nail art and eyelashes, or to have their hair styled before they go out for a night. They are investments too that sometimes give a supplementary economic value through receipt of a small cash payment. It is a way of making do, and making extra, so she can buy necessities for her children. Such activities are carried out within intimate spaces where production and consumption run seamlessly into

relationships with each other; values are shared, useful, and recognised. Theresa's competencies, too, offer her the hope and opportunity for improving upon her circumstances, via her investments in education through an adult education course in health and beauty.

Her engagement with femininity through her practices of 'making-up' and accrual of respected knowledge must also be understood within these contexts as a strategy of deflection from her 'non-feminine' reputation within her local milieu, without relinquishing her agency or sense of self. They are, too, a way for her to show that she is not a woman who is to be subsumed by the category of mother. Most importantly perhaps, they are investments in femininity that are knowledgeable and are deployed tactically. It is here that Theresa's skills and knowledge share some of the characteristics found in Skeggs' conception of 'glamour'. Such practices and competencies give Theresa and her friends the space from within which they could operate with 'attitude'; they are investments that are less about the desire to be positioned as respectable and non-working-class and more about the practice of performing a version of femininity that 'operates as a disposition and a form of cultural capital' through a 'performance of femininity with strength' and it is this 'attitude that makes the difference. It gives agency, strength and worth' (Skeggs: 2002; 111).

In the extract below, Jane, a friend of Theresa and a mother of three, describes the preparations they make before a night out on the town. A proper night out is an opportunity for Jane and her friends to display shared cultural competency in appearing as a particular feminine subject; one produced through sharing that set of distinctive knowledge practices that Theresa has become expert in. It is a collective expression of belonging and understanding rather than the elaboration and attention to self that Sophie projected into her deliberation over her presentational self in Chapter 4.

Jane: Getting dressed up? I don't see the point cos you're cleaning, you're cooking, what's the point? Can't be arsed ...

Mark: ... are you ever arsed?

Jane: ... yeah on a weekend when I go out (laughs) brush me hair, make sure I've got something decent on, can't be arsed with make-up; only when I go out and that's on a proper night out. When we go out we usually come here, you know, you've seen, the bathroom's big enough isn't it? [...]

From start to finish, the drinks come out; the music goes on, the bath is getting run, the hair straighteners are on, the tongs are on, the make-up's all over the bathroom, people are at the ironing board. That goes on for about two hours, talking shite, talking about what we are going to do on our night out. It's a girlie thing isn't it? Getting dressed on your own is boring. But it's just to go out and have fun, can't be arsed with men, we just want to go out and have fun and that's it. I used to go out and he (partner) used to come up to me and say he wanted a dance; I'd tell him to fuck off 'oh fuck off I can't do with it' [...] but I haven't been out for that long though, the nearest place I get to is the Crown and that's it.

Mark: So your dancing days are behind you?

Jane: Personally I'd say so; until he (son) gets older and I'll get dressed up on Wednesday nights just to piss him off.

For all of the working-class women, these nights out are rarities that offer a break away from material realities. They take on the form of the carnivalesque; an overthrow of the restraint of domesticity and grind of living on a low income. In this sense it is a throwing off of the 'proper' established order of things. As Skeggs suggests, here, their production and enactment of femininity is a conscious performance where the women are aware of the gap between themselves and the feminine identity that is put on. This is not a 'respectable' space or a 'feminine' space but rather one in which 'raucousness, rudeness, outrageousness and challenge to femininity occur' (Skeggs: 2002; 106). Indeed the nights out themselves can often serve to critique and subvert those normative conceptions of heterosexuality and power that the middle-class perspectives assume that these women are victims of. For Jane a night out is having fun, about her ability to be with her friends and have the opportunity to say 'oh fuck off I can't do with it'.

For Skeggs (middle-class) feminist critiques of femininity can undermine one of the few ways working-class women can find social recognition, pleasure and fun within local circuits of sociality (2002). Jackie, Theresa, Jenny and Elaine (below) share this understanding of the value and pleasure of the performance and appearance of femininity within local spaces. They recognise that physical, or corporeal, capital is one of the few resources which some of them have access to and play with. They recognise its potential usefulness in both 'trading up' on their position within local spaces (to catch somebody's eye) but also as a strategy of fun and critique of those very conditions (to wind the boyfriend up and to put them in their place).

Mark, map: Quite a few women in my research seem to react quite strongly to women who dress up to go on a night out, they talk about short skirts and boobs hanging out, getting drunk [...] they feel it's demeaning to ...

Jackie: ... I don't think they're comfortable with themselves, are they? If they react like that - people can wear what they want to wear; it's a big enough world isn't it?

Theresa: ... Of course it is

Elaine: ... like when you wear your nice dresses, she has got a big pair of boobs our Jenny...

Jackie: ... Bloody heck, I wish I could dress like that, I wish I could.

Jenny: I mean can I tell you, I was buzzing - the other day. I was with Linda and we were on Dent Street and there were two guys who were beeping their horns at me and I thought I've just been beeped, I've been beeped at today, I hadn't been beeped for ages, and I was just buzzing ...

Theresa: Yeah - I think if she looks pretty, say it to her; you look nice in that.

Jackie: ... if it bothers you - to be respectable isn't about what you wear anyway ...

Theresa: it's about who you are as a person, it's about how you respect someone and how they respect me...

Elaine: I have respect for someone if they are caring and considerate, disrespecting for the clothes they had on, or if they didn't look right [...]

Theresa: I mean it's stupid; I just think - go on, she's on the pull, or she's out to wind her boyfriend up.

Elaine: ...They are getting dressed to catch someone's eye, or to just have fun ...

Jackie: A girls' night out ...

When Jackie says 'it's a big enough world' she is asking for people to show and give respect for others, to understand that people have to work with what they have, or can find. Respect, for Jackie, Elaine, Jenny and Theresa is not just the attachment of self-worth, but also recognition of the relations they have with one another; an incorporation of a disposition that is open to and caring of other selves built upon an understanding of their positioning and circumstances. Respect is distributed within their local circles of sociality and it does not concern itself overly with a wider public valuation of their propriety. The women have an alternative person value system that always located judgements to the conditions from which values were produced (Skeggs: 2011). All they ask for is not to be valued through misrecognition of their appearances but through their consideration for each other and the values that they conduct themselves through.

5.9 'I just say good luck to her'

In present economic and social circumstances, affective attachments to 'the traditional family model' are ever more unrealisable for the working-class women in my research. Intense economic hardship and the emotional stress, combined with the lack of recognised 'capital-ability' to live out 'choice' and 'opportunity' for either men or women have never been, and still aren't, conducive to maintaining the affective spaces of familial attachments when made in the terms of middle-class normativity and propriety. Sally, below, whilst highlighting the nexus of the inscription of femininity, heterosexuality and care within her subjectivity, also emphasises the materiality that these categories are lived and laboured through in her life:

Sally: In my experience you, it's an instant, there's a spark and you; I mean first time I ever met him the whole room lit up. It was weird, and it's never changed; even now for all the crap that's gone on. When he comes into my presence everything's light. He's walked out, he's been thrown out, and he's crawled back. I could get up in the morning and he'd be gone [...] he's alright do you know what I mean? I don't doubt that there is a good man inside him. I just obviously haven't been right person to bring him out; he had problems as a kid. He was put into care and with his adopted father he got into trouble. And that were it, it didn't help he were half-caste, he were out on his ear, no arguing no questioning [...] and from that he went on to borstal and prison and drugs. Now he's got where he's trying to get a grip of an addiction to alcohol, and he wants to stop but he's struggling [...] I'd like to think it was a relationship, but I think he thinks it were a bit less formal than that [...]. I wanted him to be there, to be a full-time father; that's what I wanted. I wanted him to have a life as well as his children, and I just don't get how it can't be more appealing to be at home with a wife and children than living outside [...] I've tried, I'm still trying now, still trying now, still say to him get right, get a grip, get right, come home.

The break between tradition and the innovative and the new is not as easily encompassed as it may seem in the narratives of de-tradition and individualisation. This is not just because some are positioned less favourably to 'break free' of old and limiting constraints. The 'new' is not just the preserve of pioneering middle-class subjects. The working-class women are neither dupes of gender nor examples of failing selves to be set beside the apparently successful, reflexive, and mobile identities found within the middle-class group. They re-define their roles and relationships and struggle against the limits (material and symbolic) that they find confronting them in their life. These 'choices' and struggles represent considerable agency and strength when placed beside the limited nature of their opportunities for a 'biography of choice' in their lives.

The strength of the working-class women is evident in many different ways within my research, and it is particularly striking when it comes to the subject of re-negotiating and re-evaluating what the normative is within their everyday familial relations. Many of the women in my research were involved in a daily struggle which actively questioned and fought out battles over the normative assumptions and practices that run side-by-side with the conventions which organised their heterosexual relationships. They have changing expectations and beliefs as to what their relations with men should look and be like. These struggles occurred within established relationships, but they also expressed themselves in their breaking free of constraints, their refusal to adjust and to labour in the terms established for Sally.

In the extract below, Theresa (in her twenties), Elaine and Jenny (in their forties) are discussing the subject of marriage. Their conversation, in its light-heartedness and humour, is indicative of the positioning they make with regard to heterosexual relations and marriage. Theresa once again draws on ideas of the proper, both in terms of propriety and property.

Jenny: It's like when I look at you Elaine, single; I've never been single in me life, you know I'd just love the break (laughter)

Elaine: Some women need men don't they, can't do without them; I can live without them.

Jenny: Oh I'd love the break

Theresa: ... all the little luxuries in life

Jenny: That's it isn't it?

Theresa: The nice things, getting took out, wined and dined and that

Jenny: Many of the times I've thought I'd love to have a break and then I've thought how am I going to get the gas bill paid? What will I do then? (Laughter) I'd say I'm a bit selfish that way

Mark: So it's not love then? (Laughter)

Jenny: Oh yeah, it's on the list, right at bottom after gas bill

Theresa: I'd love to get married me, means somebody loves you doesn't it? I'd love to get married, means you found somebody who respects you, share each ...

Elaine: ... a waste of time

Theresa: But look at Amy with Neil, 'my husband', cos it makes her feel good.

Elaine: One was enough for me, wouldn't have another

Theresa: But some people get married and live happily ever after, don't they Mark? (Much laughter)

Theresa's vision of the promise of marriage is open to the critique of harsh reality, as it is here by Elaine who counterpoises her own experiences. Theresa's apparently 'romantic' attachment, however, also points to the continued offer of respectability through marriage. It promises approval through status and legitimacy; perhaps she, too, would be invited into Amy and Neil's circle of recognition. Her reference to those 'little luxuries in life' is taken up by Jenny. Here the 'romance' of 'gift exchange' is placed back in the context of the economic realities that she faces. Jenny is aware that her own situation would be far less secure if she was to 'take a break', she only has to look at Elaine's current difficulties to know that.

Jenny balances two part-time jobs in the evening and weekends with looking after her children, whilst her husband has manual work during the week. Keeping the home secure from precarity is a labour and a reality that makes her determined and focused ('I'd say I'm a bit selfish like that') and places romance within a different hierarchy of values ('right after gas bill'). I am not suggesting that Jenny's partnership is not strong or that it is 'loveless,' rather it is a relationship that draws upon the lived (gendered and classed) experience and emotional attachments that are made within and against 'hard times'. Jenny's humour is an example of anti-pretentiousness set beside the romantic genre of love, rather than a dismissal of the values of respect and sharing which she acts out and struggles for in everyday life.

Theresa's apparent naivety also contains within it an ideal of valuation that Jenny's relationship in many respects embodies. Theresa's own aspirations for respect and sharing are values that are informed by her experience and her resistance to notions of respectability and propriety rather than stemming from submission. Her relationship with her (now ex) partner means that she is well aware of the constraints of the domestic and private sphere. Aspiring to be the respectable mother and partner in terms of (traditional) classed forms of heterosexual relation entails a loss of space and movement.

Theresa: Respect is where someone treats you well and you treat them well, considerate, wouldn't want to hurt you. Does it mean proper - in some ways yeah, but everybody has to let their hair

down don't they? Like I've grown up more since I've had Megan and I think that made me grow up more. But I'm like an old woman, I feel like right grown up and miserable [...]. It's like with John - sometimes we could have fun and stuff, but it's like he's right serious, you can't be yourself around him; like if you had music on he would come and turn it down. I think for me, to be in a relationship, it would have to be with someone I could have fun with, be myself, and not stress you out, and cause arguments for nothing...

5.10 Conclusions

Theresa, like Elaine (below) and many of the other working-class women, is refusing that working-class inscription of domestic responsibility that inheres within Sally's subjectivity which, in the 'most engendering ways, divided on class lines' forged the working-class family 'on the basis of a turning back ... of each of its members onto the others in a circular relation of vigilance against the temptations from outside, the cabaret and the street' (Donzelot: 1979; 45). They want more space, they are in search of a form of 'cultural diffusion' and expanded sense of relationality. Here we can turn back to the scene of middle-class disapproval, where Theresa felt the negative evaluation of the parents of those students. As an (apparently trivial and minor) act of symbolic violence within the everyday it acted to put her back in her place. Her attempts to make herself coextensive within social fields are hampered by the 'surveillance of her deviation from the norm' (ibid; 45). Theresa, like most of the working-class women and like Elaine below, will not be put back into her place easily.

Elaine: I always worked, when I were married. I had to do things for myself and the kids. It were me who bought all their presents, bought the clothes, paid the bills. Yeah, If I wanted a tenner I could have a tenner, but he'd throw it on floor so I'd have to pick it up; that's why I always had to have a job, always ...Now I can go where I want, do what I want, I'm not stuck, I go up to see my mate, I go see Sharon, I go to see Jenny, I go see Jackie, Linda ... and I see all my family without him moaning, pulling my sisters down. It's completely different, if I want to go to bed at 9:30, I'll go to bed at 9:30, if I want to stay in bed all day, I'll stay in bed all day, as long as I've dealt with the kids. I do my own thing, I do what I want, got nowt to be depressed about, only James (son). Honest to God, it's been great the last few years, freedom, I've never had freedom, I've never been happier. I've put weight on and everything; it's like being a teenager, being able to have fun with friends, it's completely different, it's lovely...

The 'relations of reciprocity' as they were grounded in the post-war settlement and social contract, critiqued by feminists for their entrenchment in the gendered principles of the 'family wage,' its particular positioning of where a woman's place in life should be, and concomitant notions of her vulnerability and need for protection, have been

revoked and withdrawn within what Tyler (2014) identifies as 'the gendered politics of reciprocity'. They have been replaced by new forms of governmental management based on the principles of responsabilisation and autonomy defined through work. Whilst women such as Elaine re-define their relation to patriarchy in the home they are castigated within the circuits of symbolic economy and left unsupported by the state. 'Unsupported', but not left alone – for as the following chapter will emphasise – the 'new man' in the facilitative state intervenes and attempts to responsabilise and problematize working-class parenting practices and subjectivities.

6. 'Love gone wrong'

6.1 Introduction

[A]nd of course, as in the past, it was upon working-class families that they were to perform their mission of propagating these new norms that had done so well by them [...] the relational demand, and pedagogy were to be spread along the same lines, according to the same technocratic interventionism that was once used to sell savings banks and schooling: the promotional goading and attendant blaming of families who, through their resistance, were ruining the members' chances ... to free the masses from their mental fetters, from miseries that used to be material and moral but now were sexual and emotional, so that they would produce fewer children, and above all, fewer social misfits. (Donzelot: 1977; 221)

The perception of what counts as the proper with regard to mothering identity and practice, and the 'type' of self (child) she is supposed to produce has been marked by class in distinct ways since the onset of the industrial period (Donzelot: 1978). Chapter 4 highlighted the ways in which the figure of the working-class child becomes invested with emotional and moral significance for the middle-class resident; inspiring both fear and anxiety but also a form of compassion and sympathetic agency. This reading of the inscription of the working-class body has a history that informs middle-class moral and emotional economies; it informs their reading of encounters with working-class others, and the types of regulative practice developed to address their perceived difference and impropriety.

The social and political concerns which fixate on the figures of the anti-social (feral) or neglected working-class child, embodied within the perspectives of Rebecca and Olivia, are just two re-workings of traditional classed concerns. The threats to the moral propriety of civil society and its social order emanate from these familiar but dangerous bodies, and the solutions to their problematic nature have always entailed that the lines of force for reform converge upon the figure of the working-class mother. As Lawler observes, 'the good society is held to result from good citizens grown from good children' who are nurtured in their fulfilment by the 'good enough mother' and 'it is in adults' social and political preoccupations around the self, the social world, and the relation between the two, that theories of childhood are forged' (2000; 35-36).

This chapter begins by highlighting the importance of understanding the child-mother relation as a key focus for middle-class concerns, and emphasises how middle-class understandings of childhood and child development serve to validate middle-class mothering practices whilst acting as a mechanism for disciplining and de-valuing working-class mothers and their children, obscuring the structured economic and symbolic restraints they face in their lives.²⁰ In the analysis that follows my primary concern is to highlight the affective dimension of Elaine and Tina's negotiation of their encounters with middle-class perspectives upon their mothering practices and identities within institutional spaces. I show how working-class affects are triggered in response to their misrecognition; how they arise from a sense of injustice when the emotional and material constraints they face in their lives are ignored and displaced onto their persons as matters of bad culture.

It is in these spaces that they experience the pain and hurt of classed relationships most acutely because it is here that they are blocked from access to the resources and the recognitions they need for survival, and where what they most invest in is devalued. When working-class mothers are drawn into these spaces, 'voluntarily' or by force, the different circuits of value within relationships of class are revealed (Skeggs: 2010b). From the working-class mothers' perspective this often entails loss through exclusion. It also entails conflict through the diminution of their practices of care by those who stand in a relationship of authorised evaluation and judgement. It never, however, realises simple acquiescence or submission.

6.2 'The birth of a child is always a public event'

(Strathern: 2005; 17)

Foucault (1980) asked 'what mode of investment of the body is necessary for the functioning of a capitalist society like ours?' Perhaps the most crucial of sites to explore such a question of 'investment' through regulation is the figure of the mother, and the labour of her care. Today, what Skeggs refers to as the 'gendered separate spheres' of

²⁰ The themes and concepts outlined in this chapter are carried over to the succeeding chapter 'the sensitive mother'. In that chapter I explore more fully the experience and practice of working-class mothers away from direct and external regulation.

‘money and emotion’, ‘the accounting of counting and accounting for character’ (Skeggs: 2010; 350) have become collapsed into each other in new ways. Foucault (2010) highlights the neo-liberalism of Becker’s environmental analysis of familial relations:

Time spent, care given, as well as the parents’ education - because we know quite precisely that for an equal time spent with their children, more educated parents will form a higher human capital than parents with less education [...] in short, the set of cultural stimuli received by the child, will contribute to the formation of those elements that can make up human capital. This means we thus arrive at a whole environmental analysis ... of the child’s life from which it will be possible to calculate, and to a certain extent quantify or at any rate measure, the terms of the possibilities of investment in human capital. (Foucault: 2010; 229)²¹

As Skeggs demonstrates in her work on reality television, ‘fusing calculation and care’ represents the opening out of ‘new markets’ through the quantification of intimacy but also allows for new forms of moral accountability and new forms of regulatory governance (2010b; 29-37). Quite simply, within the context of this chapter and Chapter 7, some mothers produce valuable citizens who embody their own capital-ability, and some mothers accrue value to themselves in the form of the recognition given to their cultural competencies as mothers. Other mothers can’t; at least in the terms of the moral/economic ‘value’ established within this new economy of affective labour. It is these other mothers with ‘less education’ who become the targets of reform, and it is their faulty management of relations within their families that must be corrected.

As Chapter 2 highlighted, in Foucault’s analysis of modern forms of rationality the social emerged as a new hybrid form allowing for ‘a novel interlacing of interventions and withdrawals of the state, of its charges and discharges’ (Donzelot: 1979; x). From within such an understanding, the family is no longer conceived as a sovereign model for good government or a discrete network of sociality but instead becomes a privileged instrument and mechanism for the discipline, management and security of the population, a scene informed through its penetration by complex technologies (political, medical, psychological, welfare, legal, administrative). The family becomes an ‘indispensable correlate of parliamentary democracy’ through the generation of ‘the

²¹ It is here that the social utility of Becker’s economic analysis ‘fits so well’ with the behaviourist and developmental psychology of Bowlby and Winnicott; it provides a ‘picture of realism, an adjustment’ where ‘mothering becomes a set of functions which can be experimentally mapped and articulated’ (Walkerdine and Lucey: 1987, 57).

promotion and claims' from within and without (Donzelot: 1978; 94); a site for the production and regulation of the subjective capacities of citizens and the 'privileged pathway for the fulfilment of individual wishes and hopes' (Rose: 1999; 155).

The mother's role within this relational environment of 'continuous libratory drift' is central; 'the autonomous subjects of liberal democracy are constituted both as making themselves and as being made by the mother' (Lawler: 2000; 75). Donzelot, Walkerdine and Rose all highlight the importance of the changing inscription of the mother-child relation through the inculcation of behaviourist and developmental discourses within mothering practices and subjectivities, 'both rewarding and persecuting' (Rose: 1999; 155). For Rose, the establishment and re-invention of these relational norms has resulted in the 'revalorisation of the child-centred family as a site for the emotional investment and self-realisation of citizens,' a shift in register from training and moral influence, character and instruction, to a 'science of social contentment' through the organisation of instincts (Ibid; 158). The mother becomes crucial to the production of the well-adjusted child through her regulation of their emotional economy and environment; she becomes responsabilized for 'regulating not just [the child's] habits and morals, but their feelings and wishes, and anxieties'; a process through which 'the mundane tasks of mothering came to be rewritten as emanations of a natural and essential state of love' (Ibid; 161).

This is at the heart of the conception of the 'sensitive mother'; a mother who, as Walkerdine observes, is a fiction. She is a mother who transforms her labour into forms of invisible pedagogy, who is available and receptive to meet her child's needs through the presence of 'mind, emotion, as well as body' (Walkerdine 1989; 64). Sensitive mothering operates as a process of continual emotional and educative development, a nurturing of identity that sees all aspects of the environment as offering forms of learning. The domestic labour and routines of the sensitive mother's life are thus subsumed within the interests, needs, and wants of the child; they become opportunities for the child to learn, to reason, to make choices (ibid; 21- 25). A mother's essential purpose is this nurturing of reason, choice and autonomy in order that the child may take its place in the adult world as a responsible, reflexive citizen. There must

appear to be no overt exercise of authority, no ostensible regulation 'no power battles, no insensitive sanctions' (ibid; 24). A child must have the 'illusion of choice', it must think of itself as an agent of its own free will' (ibid; 25). The mother and child relation is therefore one that must realise 'an easy democracy that will be that stepping stone to equality' (ibid; 2).

The understanding of the mother-child relation expounded within these development theories of attachment and interaction allow for an 'environmentalism' which excludes considerations of other factors in a child's development, or at the very least makes the mother-child relation the primary and significant link (responsibility) between the production of good and bad child-adults. Behaviour perceived to stray from the normative becomes attributed to the 'nature' of the child-parent relation through a 'narrative of love gone wrong'. The 'story of autonomy and equality of opportunity' embedded within this understanding entails that the 'social relations which militate against the 'success' or autonomy of many persons become obscured in this focus on individual psychology - a psychology of which the mother, more than any other figure, becomes a guarantor' (Lawler 2000; 47).

Here, as Walkerdine suggests, the argument is not that attachments are not important for children (or adults) but rather that the assumptions that lie beneath the theoretical elaboration of their ethology should be placed under critical scrutiny. They ignore 'the complex interplay of material, economic and social conditions' within and outside family life (1989; 141), and they are premised upon a process of adjustment and harmony between the child and mother which obscures unavoidable power, conflict, exploitation, and oppression. The idea of the mother's responsiveness and responsibility to meet her child's needs is therefore 'not the best way to understand the relation of mothers to children' (ibid; 29). It is predicated upon a 'utopia' that itself relies upon the abnegation of her 'self,' and it ignores the ways in which, in learning to become reasonable and independent, the child becomes a regulator of her/his person through personal claims and needs made over and against the mother. It also ignores the fact that for the child this 'choice is an illusion, an elaborate charade' (ibid; 25).

Before commenting upon these contradictions and lacunae as they relate to classed differences it is important to stress that the transformation of traditional familial forms has not made the gendered assumptions behind the parent-child relation disappear. As Walkerdine has observed, women mother because they give birth, 'the inconvertible fact of biology' places the mother at the centre of social and familial reproduction through a process of naturalisation: 'Again and again, mothering is literally produced as natural, that is, it becomes the object of science which proclaims it as natural' (Walkerdine: 1989; 40). The de-gendering of the parent-child relation is anything but complete either in the home, or within the fields of welfare, education, law and social policy. The discourses surrounding the importance of the family to the social order, whether progressive or conservative, continue to emphasise, implicitly/explicitly, that mothers 'bear ultimate responsibility for the production of the good citizen' (Lawler: 2000).²²

Lawler highlights the contradictory relationship this naturalised identity of mother has with its ascribed role in realising the autonomy and the freedom of the 'good citizen'. The mother's 'self' is predicated on relationality; defined and constructed in terms of a heterosexual and feminine identity, and her responsiveness and responsibilities to her family members rather than autonomy. Mothering is therefore an identity realised on producing others and not a self (Lawler: 2000; 99). For Lawler, the constitution of the subject position of the mother on the basis of the category of the child creates a situation where the 'existing truths about the nature and needs of the child simply become incorporated into critiques of motherhood' (ibid; 85).

Whilst normative mothering discourses position middle-class women within forms of self 'oppression' through the naturalising of their own labour, a form of self-abnegation that becomes a complex site of emotional conflict, blame and anxiety as well as pleasure, it also positions them in respect to working-class lives. This, as I have

²² The 'de-gendering' of the child-parent relation is an important element in securing the benefits of equalities and the sharing of responsibilities, it does nothing however to critique the conception of the relation itself. The focus on class highlights rather than obscures 'the fundamental theoretical issues involved in the account of mothering as behaviour and the production of correct environment' (Walkerdine: 1987; 56)

emphasised previously, renders them 'powerful in their morality, and prepares them to be the very members of the caring professions who will come to regulate the working-class mothers, who may come to be seen as frightening, rigid and pathological' (Walkerdine: 1989; 8-9). Any perceived failures or deviations from normativity in the child will be read back through classed misrecognition as failures of her attention and responsiveness; her 'lack' of labour or her 'faulty' labour is thus made visible to herself and to others; she has cultivated an 'unnatural child'.

The class perspectives which inform dominant understandings of motherhood and child development ensure that working-class mothers are viewed in relation to their lack of competencies in middle-class knowledge practices; they will never get it right. Her children come to be seen as deviating from the 'approximation to the norms of common childhood,' that which provides for the conditions of 'individuality' (Lawler: 2000; 37). Walkerdine provides a perfect, situated, example of how middle-classed perspectives work to exclude the working-class child and mother from the attribution of value; 'If working-class children [are] quiet in the waiting room of a doctor's surgery they are repressed. If they are noisy they are hooligans. If middle-class children are noisy and run around they are 'independent and autonomous' (1989; 41). Such an analogy can be made to apply across a variety of spatial contexts including the public street and the classroom. The production of deviance ensures that the working-class mother and her child, as well as the relation between them, becomes the site of regulation and intervention as well as of antipathy.

Developmental discourses of motherhood and the child-parent relation are a form of embedded middle-class science that comes to displace ontology with a (self and classed) authorised epistemology (Strathern: 2005; 46). To successfully embed particular knowledges within one's familial relations you must have access to the types of resources and the network of relationships through which they can be understood and realised. As Walkerdine, Lawler, Reay and Gillies demonstrate, working-class mothers' practices emerge from within different forms of relationality, resources and experience. It is because this different experience and positioning goes unrecognised, and because the privileges upon which the success of middle-class practices and knowledge goes

unmarked, that 'those in the know are frequently authorised for surveilling those that are not [...] this is no arbitrary division of the population, but a means by which class relations are produced and reproduced' (Lawler: 2000; 26).

As emphasised, forms of 'scientific proof about mothering' have been bound to, and have developed out of, accounts of 'the raising of working and middle-class children' (Walkerdine: 1989; 21). The difference produced within such knowledges has entailed that working-class mothers and families are constitutively produced and reproduced as 'necessary, different, disgusting' (ibid; 30). Such differences are supported by the process of the re-iteration of the 'scientific' norm through a simple 'cause and effect model' which:

maps middle-class practices out through their comparative relation of difference to working-class lives, and concludes that every difference in the working-class is a pathology to be corrected. Such a process ignores the 'specific conditions' of the norms production (ibid; 42).

It is to this clash of values and valuation and to these specific conditions that I now turn.

6.3 In trouble with the law

Elaine's experience provides an example of how middle-class perspectives upon the child and mother relations are embedded within 'sanctioned parenting models' (Gillies: 2006; 145). I emphasise how this regulative intervention in the form of a 'voluntary' parenting course is underpinned by middle-class knowledge and experience, and obfuscates the harsh realities of Elaine's life as a mother and the structural inequalities within which this reality is produced and lived. As I have emphasised in Chapter 3, Elaine is a woman who has made huge investments in her identity as a mother and her practices of care. Over the course of the research such investments had come under increasing pressure because her son James had 'gone off the rails'. His contact with the criminal justice system had caused her pain because it ran counter to everything that she sought to foster in her son in terms of 'what is right and what is wrong'.

Elaine, for the most part, has been able protect herself from personal blame by contextualising James' behaviour as arising from his medical condition. He was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder at the age of five, and this had worsened rapidly at the onset of adolescence:

Elaine, map: He can't help how he behaves, cos children with ADHD; you can tell them one thing and it goes out of their head, it doesn't register in his brain, to him he isn't doing anything wrong. He is on five Ritalin tablets a day, he doesn't sleep at night ...

Elaine's experience of his condition had been compounded by living within poor economic circumstances and by the inability to access resources within educational and welfare services. Like most of the working-class women in the research Elaine has also been careful to guard her family against the intervention of social services, which she sees as interfering, judgemental and damaging to the cohesion of the family. She was frightened that their possible involvement would blame her as a working-class mother:

Well they blame the mothers, but it isn't the mother, you can't blame me, I didn't make James go out and break into cars and steal and stuff like that. I've lost control of my children? I've got six children, and James is the only problem I've had, they've never been ASBO'd, never been done by police; so one out of six; and he's got behaviour problems, he can't help the way he is...

Although she is reluctant to seek support from social services, Elaine has made extensive efforts to try and ensure that James gets help that she feels that she cannot provide. Like many of the working-class mothers in the research, however, Elaine's contact with schools and professional workers leaves her feeling frustrated and worn out. She places such an experience within the frame of class, observing that if he [James] had been 'thingy' (middle-class) he would have been identified and supported a long time ago as a young person with 'special needs':

They're not bothered if he goes to school or not, because they don't want him in school because of his behaviour [...] now they've put him into 3 and a half days at that community organisation, and he does building college. But he doesn't go, and nobody's bothered about it, never had a letter. I've told Probation that he's not going so I don't know what to do. I don't get support from anybody at all, not ever. Really he is special needs, and this is what gets me mad with his school, they wouldn't help him, they would put him somewhere else but he never gets any help at all, they just move him on. They just wanted him out of school; push him on to someone else. If James were 'thingy' (middle-class) he would get one-to-one tuition, get special needs and everything. But because he was at Crompton School he didn't get no help at all [...] and it isn't because of me, I go everywhere with him, I go to all of the meetings, at school, and everything. He has been diagnosed since he was 5 so they have known, all the way through his schooling. When he went up to Crompton School they properly lost interest ...

During the time of my research James had fallen out of education entirely and had been placed on a tag. He was confined to the house by court order from early evening onwards and during the day his movements were restricted to permitted areas. As such, Elaine had had to assume effective responsibility for ensuring that he met the conditions

of his curfew. She was engaged in a constant struggle to keep him within the home; installing window locks, and grilles on the door, and keeping her keys hidden from his reach. A broken window at the front of the house from which James had 'escaped' remained a sign of how difficult such parental control had become; unrepaired because the Housing Association placed responsibility on Elaine for her child's actions. James' electronic tag was often faulty, leaving her to negotiate and supervise the privatised security firm as they arrived in the night to see if he had broken his conditions. They frequently banged on the door when she was in bed and, after waking her up, they would ask her to escort them around the house with James, as they took readings from his new or recalibrated tag. Elaine knows that it is she who is being punished; in one month alone she was woken in this manner seven times.

James was having difficulties in sleeping, and when he had not found a way out of the home, he had begun to occupy his time through obsessive and increasingly paranoid patterns of behaviour. Elaine's management of an already restricted domestic budget had been intensified by his habit of 'eating and cooking everything' in the night and checking food labels for 'use by' dates and discarding food beyond its designated period. He had also developed the habit of constantly switching off socket points and light switches in case of fire, jeopardising Elaine's freezer 'hoard' against precarity. James's behaviour had become, at times, threatening and violent. Elaine had found herself desperately trying to balance the protection of her daughters who remained at home with her continued care for James:

He's horrible to his two sisters, he's always beating them up, always, all day long; about three weeks ago he hit Lisa so much I had to call police to take him overnight [...] I'm thinking of becoming a judge I've spent that much time in court. He's got done for burglary, arson, breaking into cars and stealing the radios, he tried to set fire to a car, he did a street robbery for a mobile phone, he broke into a house, and this was only in six months; he hit fifteen and his brain just went ...

Whilst the father maintains contact with the other siblings he does not provide any support for looking after James. Elaine takes up all the burdens of visits to the police station, attendance at court, meeting educational workers, paying fines; as well as all the practical and emotional support; 'it wears me out, really wears me out, but he is still your child at the end of the day, no matter how old they are, course they are, you're their parent aren't you?'. All the disciplinary interventions that the youth criminal

justice system applied as their punishment for James fall on Elaine for their effective enforcement. The law had determined that to prove herself as respectable she must take responsibility for his actions and the effective implementation of the punishments they pronounced. She will be punished so that she may learn to modify and correct her son's behaviour.

Elaine's sense of vulnerability, for herself and her daughters, and the powerlessness she felt in trying to care for James had become intense. Although she never felt as though she could reject James, she had come to consider the idea that a prison sentence would serve as a period of relief. When meeting the probation worker he seemed sympathetic to her 'plight,' wanted to do something to alleviate her strain. There were no direct references to her abilities as a mother, just the idea that a parenting course would help her to mediate her son's increasingly erratic behaviour, and help her find time for herself. A non-contractual obligation designed to be very difficult to refuse; after all what mother would refuse to help their children?

The call on resources has always been a conditional and problematic relationship for a working-class woman in a position of economic and social insecurity. Elaine's situation here, however, reflects what Brown identifies as the central paradox of the modern liberal state, one that resembles modern masculinity, 'in that its power and privilege operate increasingly through disavowal of potency, repudiation of responsibility, and diffusion of sites and operations of control' (1995; 194). Elaine's experience of the law as a working-class mother is not unique. Operating within its logics of coercion lie the regulative and normalising discourses of responsibilisation, extending the law's reach into working-class family life:

the 'symbiotic relationship' between law and normalisation means that both types of power are able to extend their terrain: not only does law do so, but 'psy' discourses which rely on self-discipline and self-normalisation are reinforced by their backing in law [...] not only are 'psy' discourses grounded in the truth claims of scientific knowledge, but they are also legitimated by the truth claims of law itself. (Lawler: 2000; 26)

6.4 The out-contextualisation of Elaine

Elaine; map: Look at that (taking out a set of materials for a parenting course from her handbag). It's like a game or something, it's from there (pointing to probation office), fucking shithole, six weeks; I don't want to do it again. It were my time, they were taking it, and I could be using it,

doing something else, but probation got their way with me; coming down and sitting and listening to other people; to me it were more of a hindrance, it were taking up my time, I would rather have stayed in my house and had five minutes to myself [...] because everyone was sat there, you know talking about coping with your kids and saying things - you had to do games, stupid games and stuff like that; sort of parenting help course. He (probation officer) thought I might need it to get a bit of time for myself, it were more of a hindrance.

Elaine's angry response to the course is framed within the context of time. Time for Elaine is a limited resource, as was shown in Chapter 3. When she is not battling with contingency, organising her household, worrying about money and her children, Elaine enjoys present time. This is the time taken up doing things and talking about things that take her away from her concerns; time taken having some fun, having a joke with others. These are the spaces in the present within which she can find respite from the present; respite that she needs. Self-investment for futurity is not something Elaine has much truck with; it is the here and now that holds the interest, difficulties and meaning. Present time is what Elaine most values and it is this which is taken away by the parenting course, in exchange for very little except for the production of 'ugly' feelings; she has been shamed, belittled, and made to feel resentment at the loss of her time.

The parenting course transforms her time into labour, a different type of labour than the one she is used to and is dedicated to performing in her role as a working-class mother. This is the labour of performance, one where she is placed under the evaluation of those who don't know her, where what she most values and invests in is placed under critical scrutiny. The course operates within the frame of time which proceeds from the 'literalising logic of visible effectuality, bourgeois dramatics and lifelong accumulation or fashioning' that epitomises 'the moral science of bio-politics' (Berlant: 2007; 758). It is this logic that Elaine's practices of intimacy must be brought into line with; she must learn to labour to realise its conception of what it is to be a mother; her 'respectability was not enough; she had to learn how to make her family communicate properly' (Skeggs: 2010b; 42).

Within the course materials that Elaine unfolded from her handbag were job descriptions and specifications for being a parent, diary sheets for recording completed parenting tasks, problematical incidents, moments of tension and disagreement, positive examples of negotiation between herself and her son. There was a set of cue

cards from which Elaine and the other mothers on the course could find examples for providing positive interactions and recognitions for their children. There was a laminated sheet entitled 'twenty memos from your child' to pin up in the kitchen: 'Don't correct me in front of people. I'll take much more notice if you talk quietly with me in private' to the final injunction: 'Please keep yourself fit and healthy, I need you'. The 'portfolio' of materials were saturated with hetero-normative and classed clip art images of the family unit, smiling masculine and feminine faces in suit or dress, framed with those of their children.

Parent Person specification

Necessary skills and characteristics:

- Loving
- Flexible
- 1 in a million
- Highly skilled
- Self taught
- A saint at times
- High energy
- A skilled communicator
- A manger
- A negotiator
- Multi-tasker
- Good at mending things
- Patient
- Confident
- Good self esteem
- Clean bill of health - no time for sick days!
- Hopeful and positive
- Ability to pick your self up
- Weapons awareness



The course, delivered within probationary services through the contracted services of a charitable organisation, uses materials developed by a developmental psychologist in America, Dr Gottman. These materials reveal that the intimate relations of knowledge at work in the middle-class construction of the working-class other expounded upon by Octavia Hill are still with us today. Gottman, however, is less concerned with pedagogy and self-investiture through moral instruction and self-help, and more with a focus on emotion and the study of affect as the means to retrain individuals through

instrumentalising behavioural techniques; a promotion of emotional 'literacy' through enhanced self-reflexivity.

The 'scientificity' of his techniques derives from observation and analysis of the pre-reflexive micro-interactions between parents and children. In his 'love lab' funded by the Institute of Mental Health in America, Gottman's laboratory technicians screen, observe, interview and monitor the parent-child relation; the technologies deployed include video, heart-rate monitors, measures of pulse amplitude, skin conductivity. These technologies gather information which in turn informs a 'Specific Affect Coding system,' purportedly providing a mathematical predictive tool for assessing relationship trajectories. The construction of such algorithms create a foundational knowledge that therapists and parenting course practitioners take into their work, focusing on realising, in those such as Elaine, an awareness of the affective elements in their relationships with their children. These become a site for transformation and regulation. Ugly feelings must be first recognised and then managed through self-awareness and the implementation of learned techniques to create positive patterns of behaviour. The algorithm with which the course practitioners present Elaine is the Gottman ratio; the 5:1 ratio of positive to negative interactions you need to make relationships endure (Gottman: 2004).

Elaine, handbag: (Picking up a cue card) 'You're so lucky you have the rest of your life in front of you'; the way he's going he hasn't got the rest of his life in front of him because he's going to be locked up. 'Keeping it positive' (title of course material) It's crap isn't it? To me it was. (Continues to read course information, quoting Dr Gottman) [...] 'Perhaps the most important tool you have for keeping your relationship in good shape is positive flooding.' Fuck that, I get flooded from everywhere (laughter) [...] 'In fact you probably need far more positive interactions than you think.' Yeah I do but there is only so much positive I can do when he is constantly reoffending all the time (Draws her house at the centre of her map). That's my house, it's on fire (laughter) a house with loads of flames coming out, and orange to make it fucking pissed off.

Mark: (pointing to the course materials): Can I take this away with me Elaine and photocopy it?

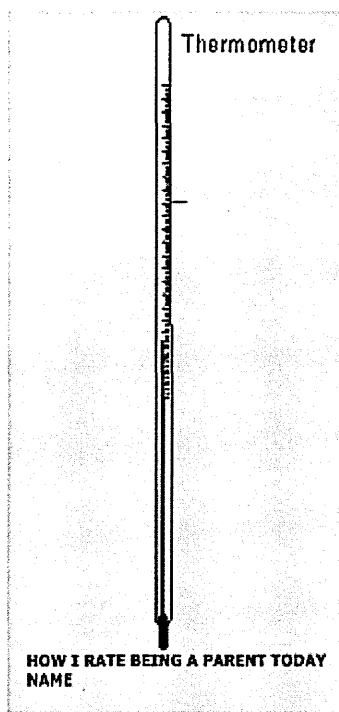
Elaine: Yeah of course you can. Don't you think it's fucking insulting? It's insulting.

The course sets out to 'train' Elaine to become a 'sensitive mother'; she must understand that her relationship with James is the field of action in which they can be delivered of the problems they face. The key strategic dimension of the parenting course is the neurotisation of social intercourse, the focus on the mother-child relation as a

discovered functionalist element of remediation: if only Elaine could learn to better communicate and attend to her son's emotional needs and regulate her own affectual responses in accordance with these. The affective disturbances within her relationship with James, the repetition of negative patterns of behaviour, attention, and language, are construed as the root of emotional and familial problems. To cure these is simply a matter of a re-assignment of self through immersion in various techniques; strained family relations emanate from 'remediable incapacities in our 'interactions' with others' (Rose: 1999; 249).

The probation worker and parenting course view Elaine within the frame of a woman who is vulnerable and in need of support, yet she is paradoxically held responsible for the 'failings' of her child, in need of reformation. There is intrusion and attempted control, but not the offer of real assistance (Gillies: 2006). It is within the context of the protracted effort to get James the help he needs, with the understanding that their positioning as working-class is what prevents her from accessing institutional resources, combined with the material realities of her life, that make the parenting course appear so much as an unnecessary 'game'. With James at the age of sixteen, eleven years after first attempting to find help for him, Elaine is offered a 'voluntary' parenting course that focuses on her inadequacies. The practical knowledge and investments in care that Elaine has made, and continues to make, are unrecognised. The skills and creativity, the nous and perseverance of her life as a parent of six are disregarded. Her social labour and value practices are excluded from view. The stress placed on the measurable unit of the mother-child relationship effaces Elaine as a person with her own rights and needs, erases all considerations of the social and economic inequalities that she, her son, and the rest of her family face.

6.5 The circulation of affect



Elaine showed me a piece of paper with a thermometer drawn on it, asking her how she rates herself as a parent today; revealing the mark she made on the diagram. Elaine has established herself, within the context of the course, as 'just right'; she accords herself in the presence of judgement with a valuation that mirrors the truth of what it means to be a good enough mother, the scientifically calibrated measure of affective normality; 37.0 °C (98.6 °F), neither too hot nor too cold. She knows the game's rules, and defends herself. But the mother-in-Elaine has already been problematized, and the gap remains between this imposition of the 'normative reality effect,' where mothers have to be neither too cold nor too hot, and her own life and

practices. No doubt Dr Gottman's course practitioners would identify at the very outset of her involvement two of his four horsemen of the apocalypse; stonewalling and defensiveness. Rather than probabilistic predictors of affective failure, I take them to be a tactic of resistance.

The course, and Elaine's involvement in it, reveals how the spread of psychotherapeutic techniques inhabits the spaces created from the intersection of disciplinary mechanisms and what Rose calls 'certain modes of subjectification' (Rose: 1999; 245), where 'what is at stake is a reciprocal relationship between the elaboration of a body of knowledge and practice and the production of the self itself' (Ibid; 249). What Elaine's reactions to the course tell us, however, is that this 'reciprocal' relationship is far from being effective in constituting her as the right kind of subject. Indeed rather than turn her into a pliant subject who regulates their affective relationships with others, what it does is to inflame Elaine, makes her feel resentment; it constitutes her as a political subject in opposition to the 'power to regularise life, the authority to force living not just to happen but to endure and appear in particular ways' (Berlant: 2007; 756).

Elaine must suppress such affects; she must put on a tactical and defensive display to shield herself from further exposure through a 'choreographed demonstration of co-

operation' (Kingfisher: 1996; 540). Her anger and resentment cannot be drawn upon to show her worth. It expresses a conflict over valuation that has no moral authority in such a space, it would be misrecognised as a sign of her inadequacy, her lack of understanding of what it takes to be a good enough mother. She would be seen to resist. Elaine has assessed her situation; she has re-learned her lesson not to put herself in the position of judgement by others. This course will not provide her with what she needs, and so she will mimic its demands for the normative as a defence against her own devaluation. She will wait until she gets home.

Elaine's conformity to the rule of the proper may find expression, here, through de Certeau's evocation of tactics. For de Certeau a tactic is determined by the relative absence of power, it is the space of the other, it 'must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organised by the law of the foreign power' (1984; 37). Within my time with Elaine there were many occasions in which she could be said to play on, and within, a terrain imposed upon her by the powerful. One stands out for the way it combined the expression of resentment and anger with the humour and delight of exacting a form of revenge which was informed and expressed through the reciprocity between herself and her son. The constant intrusion of the security firm who monitored James' ankle tag is an obvious example of Elaine's lack of 'proper place'. Her response was to collude with James in ensuring that his feet went unwashed and that he wore dirty socks, to make them as smelly as possible; a minor case of 'vigilantly making use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers' (ibid; 37). It is, however, only a temporary relief.

On other occasions Elaine expressed a different form of dissent. When the police visited her house during the research, and these were regular occurrences, they conducted themselves politely and sympathetically, their activities were carried out routinely, mundanely. At no time would Elaine raise the stakes, she makes a performance of respectability to make 'apparent' an alignment of self with the proper, she understands that to do otherwise would make it all the harder for herself and James; she understands the relations of power she is within. Elaine works through co-operation, a display of politeness, humour, geniality, but above all by silence. Only her physical disposition

belies her commentary of 'not being bothered'. It is here that, as Lovell observes, the ambivalence of resistance may be matched by the ambivalence of submission. Elaine, as she sits at the kitchen table, intensely searching out the sounds in each room, her body tight, her fingers busy with rolling cigarettes, exemplifies that 'what is bodily in speech' may undermine what is submissive in what is said, and 'mask deep resentment' (Lovell: 2003; 12).

Elaine, in her negotiation of her encounters with the courts, the probation services, and the police, positions herself as a mother who is a respectable and responsible citizen. It is her public adherence to forms of value and practice, of knowing what is right and wrong, which inform her respectable defence against any accusation that may be levelled at her as a bad mother. She makes these performances in spite of her understanding of her son's condition, and in spite of her understanding that if they had 'been thingy' then their lives would not be like this. This is a highly contradictory and ambivalent positioning for Elaine when it comes to her relationship with James. Indeed it appears to be a high risk one for him. Through her apparent display of compliance to the proper, Elaine appears to 'tighten the bonds that tie together those with authority and those subject to it' (Lovell: 2003; 13).

Elaine: The police are really good with me because I don't stick up for him in court, like I'd never get him a solicitor. I go 'no he's guilty,' and even the judge is gobsmacked because normally mothers get solicitors. With James, they realise I'm not like that. I know right from wrong. If he's done it, he's done it; he has to pay for it. I say yeah he did it, and they look at me and start laughing. They know I'm not a bad mother, and they know that if he does owt wrong I would say 'yeah he has', he'd want me to lie, but I won't lie for him...

Appearing to be resistive, to try and defend or protect her son, would be misrecognised as the actions of an irresponsible mother. Indeed, appealing to his medical condition as a cause for his behaviour has often, in her experience, provoked a classed response - a mother avoiding her responsibilities; far better to wait for authority to draw upon its own medical evidence. Elaine's apparent forfeiting of any defence for her son is, here, an embodied practice of survival within the cramped spaces she finds herself having to work within, one 'dictated by prudence' but one also 'deeply inscribed in lived subjectivity' through her negotiation and investments in working-class respectability (Lovell: 2003; 13). She inhabits the spaces of the proper as a 'form of double

consciousness,' a 'subjectivity written in and expressed by the body' that is 'equivocal' rather than submissive (ibid; 12).

What protects Elaine, in part, from internalising the ugly feelings the parenting course incur is her sense of worth, and her relationships with those around her who share and understand that their realities are not given their due in such 'a fucking shithole.' Elaine's positioning as a mother within regulatory relationships of class are offset by her immersion within this different economy, one of 'intimate relationships, the gift of love, care, attention and affection' (Skeggs: 2010b; 32). Within such relations Elaine, like most of the working-class women, can vent her anger and her ugly feelings. The affective responses to diminution are shared amongst her friends as Elaine unpacked the course documents from her bag. They laughed, they swore, and they shared their experience of the gap between their experience and the imposition of the normative.

The affects of diminution, however, are not just felt by Elaine, and they do not just subside with the sharing of her anger and her mockery of the course, they circulate and re-form within her domestic economy, and they re-inscribe themselves within her and her son's relationship. It is here that her uneasy working-class occupation of the proper through her respectability becomes a hinge for the generation of pain. The course, a trivial and insulting game, causes damage to her relations with her son; it produces a rift through the inducement of shame. James understands that it is his mother who is being punished, and he understands that it is the values she holds most dear to herself as a respectable working-class mother that are being questioned by the course.

Elaine, handbag: He didn't like it, he hated me going down there, he didn't want me to go, he knew I hadn't done nowt wrong, he saw me down there, he felt guilty, he said 'mum I don't want you down there, when I come out I don't want to see you there, you're being punished for me'. He knew what he'd done...

His shame response, however, does not equate to a successful regulatory inducement to good behaviour. Shortly afterwards, he broke his tag and conditions to go on an offending spree that would finally end in his first prison sentence a year later. It is here that James' shame response to Elaine's attendance at the parenting courses is given a greater complexity: he feels shame because he knows he has placed his mother in a position of judgement over what she has most invested in (her mothering identity). It is

also, however, a sense of shame induced from his sense that this holding on to respectability binds both her and him 'to the scenes of deprivation' in which they find themselves (Berlant: 2011; 188). Whilst Elaine holds on to the promise of respectability, through her practices of working-class care inside the home and her public and protective displays outside, James

the child, the subordinated subject, learns early that relations of reciprocity are likely to be betrayed when the only way to survive in the world is to resort to informal economies and the bribes and bargains of bio-power, with its discourses of untruth [...] and behind the veil of lies, the ruthlessness for survival that anyone on the bottom of class society must mobilise ends up shaking up the intimate sphere as much as anything else (Ibid; 188).

6.6 'Cause and effect'

I now turn to an example of the 'resistive' that stands in stark contrast to Elaine's practices of apparent compliance. Here I focus on the perspective that Tina has upon contemporary forms of rule as they transpire within her family relations. Tina's experience of these 'new' forms of rationality and intervention within working-class family life reflects Skeggs' observation that the 'refusal to play the game or the lack of knowledge to participate [...] is read back onto the working-class as an individualised moral fault, a pathology, a problem of 'bad choice', bad culture' (2004b; 91). Tina, however, provides an example of how marginalised experience and knowledge informs a critique of the morality of the dominant. She speaks from the margins about her own disqualification and her talk, in making visible the assumptions which lie beneath dominant norms of parenting discourses, helps point to 'the dynamic and contingent nature of social structures and systems of meaning' (Kingfisher: 1996; 537). Her overt resistance to the agencies of responsibilisation, however, is not 'transparent'; it is complex, opaque, and contradictory. As such, it does not stand in as the site of liberatory promise. Tina does not offer the truth of the victim of power; an alternative pathway that can stand beside the repressive.

Indeed from the perspective of those who found their notion of the 'working-classes' upon the 'repository of fantasies of otherness and promises of transformation' (Walkerdine: 2001; 13), Tina's resistances to the discourses of sensitive and democratic mothering may provoke the affects of distaste and aversion; she may be 'found wanting

in various ways, as not resisting enough for the left, or too pathological for liberal social democracy' (Ibid; 27). Walkerdine observes that such perspectives leave unexplored 'any debate on or understanding of the practices of living, the process of subjectification and the formation of subjectivities' in working-class mothers' lives (Ibid). Ignoring these concerns leaves Tina in an unenviable position in her call for supportive connectivity, at once socially isolated by the 'flight' of others and at the same time becoming the object for governmental reform without address to inequalities. As I hope to show at the end of this section, it also leaves the working-class experience and values that inform Tina's dissent open to forms of political mobilisation through the annexation of the affective dimension of her life.

Tina's calls for support and recognition for the difficulties she had faced in her life led her to become the subject of direct, compulsory, and intrusive forms of intervention from a complex set of institutional actors. The criminal justice system, social services, and education agencies were all actively involved in her family home. It was a multi-dimensional network which followed the logic of 'injecting a legal and administrative consciousness back into the subject of the household' (Rose: 1998; 158) whilst exerting punitive and legal sanctions in efforts to both responsabilise her as a mother and to protect the rights and welfare of her children. Her children's absenteeism from school, their involvement in anti-social behaviour, and their participation in petty criminal activity were primarily seen by the services as a 'narrative of love gone wrong' (Rose: 1998). Tina is visualised as a failed or flawed subject, a mother who is unable to mother sensitively; who has failed in her task to produce the right kind of citizen. Her life situation is a reminder that behind the flotation of the social within Rose's analysis of emergent forms of 'autonomous' subjects, 'we have a triangle: sovereignty, discipline, and governmental management' (Foucault: 2007; 107).

Before turning to Tina's resistance it is necessary to provide some context. Tina's biography provides a reminder that the material and social advantages that underpin the middle-class 'parenting success' are those that remain unobtainable and unrealisable for a marginalised working-class mother (Gillies: 2006). As I indicated (section 6.1) the middle-class milieu is one where 'the child's 'natural' self emerges

through the cultural intervention of good-enough mothering within a model of a culture which is therapeutically attuned to the demands of the 'natural,' and thus constitutes itself as an enabling culture - enabling the demands of nature to be fulfilled' (Lawler: 2000; 72). For Tina there has been little that has been enabling.

Tina has five children: the eldest daughter is 27, the next a boy of 16, a girl aged 15, and twin ten year old boys. Tina married and became a mother at the age of seventeen before she broke from a worsening domestic environment. Her account is of a marriage hastily entered in to, at a young age, and with stresses and strains emerging from her husband's joblessness and his affair with another woman. Tina wanted to leave what she progressively determined was a bad 'choice.' Her husband and new partner took on the care of the child and she moved to a seaside resort, working her way up from assistant to a manager of a shop. Three years after the initial separation, social services contacted Tina because the relationship between her ex-husband and his partner had raised concerns over the child's wellbeing. Tina took on the responsibility of care, but found that she could no longer sustain her employment. Retrospectively she imagines she would have done things differently, but she was 'swept along' by events, losing her job and then her mortgaged home.

Returning to the city, accommodated in a council flat, Tina became involved with the father of her other children. It was a disastrous relationship that included a sustained period of domestic abuse over the next ten years; 'he were violent and horrible and the least said the soonest mended'. After the birth of her twins, Tina made the final break from the 'family home' but found herself moving from one place to another to escape his abuse, as he continued to stalk, threaten, and assault her. He was arrested and imprisoned for two years, but upon release he tracked her down to her new location in Fenton. This time the police quickly and effectively clamped down on him.

Tina makes clear this institutional intervention in her life, one of the few positive examples of support she gave, was due to the particular relationship between material and social space. Fenton is covered by a police district set within a mixed area of private and socially rented housing with a sizeable middle-class population on its borders. Where she had previously lived, in outlying estates - in various flats and refuges - the

police attitude had been 'like if you weren't having domestic violence you weren't having a good day, serves you right sort of thing.' In the new neighbourhood 'the difference in attitude toward it were astronomic, it were unreal, they locked him up and hounded him like a dog, whereas over there the onus was always on me; in some way I was encouraging this or I wasn't doing my best to deal with it, or get rid of it.'

When Tina discusses the support and intervention in her life as a mother during this period, she highlights the disparity between her experience and material circumstance and the professional workers' emphasis upon her to realise her responsibilities as a reflexive and autonomous adult. These focused on changing her perception and understandings of herself, her children, and her relationship to them; on realising in Tina the practices of 'the preferred 'techniques of self' embedded within middle-class milieus' (Lawler: 2000; 26). The gap between her realities and these injunctions has been a terribly cruel experience for Tina. Tina's lack of supportive sociality, her financial precarity, her forced mobility, her experience of physical and emotional violence, and the labour of care for her children within these contexts, makes the rationality at the heart of such 'advice' cold.

Unlike Elaine, Tina has been unable to draw upon a kin and friendship network characterised by 'trust, obligation and mutual responsibility' (Gillies: 2006; 92). Without these lines of support, and without other forms of capital available to her, she found herself a person subject to circumstance rather than a person with the resources to be a shaper of it.

There were professional people that were paid to deal with me, that were my support network Monday to Friday 9 till 5. And life is not like that; your troubles don't come down the path at hours of nine to five. Invariably they come Friday teatime when you've got all weekend to get through [...] and you know you can only ever realistically talk about things you have experienced, like the support, you know - women who haven't got kids of their own - it's like being a drugs worker but never having taken drugs; yeah you can help, you can empathise and that, but it's not right cos you don't know, you need to tell somebody that does know. They try to get you to think about getting work and things - but it's easy isn't it? In retrospect, but cause and effect are always easy, but how do you move forward? It's alright sitting at home, on your own and lonely and distressed, knowing that you've got to move forward; but how do you do that? You can only make rational choices and have control over your life if you are aware of what is, you just bumble along - get out of bed in the morning, go to bed at night. I think majority of people these days aren't doing what they want, they are just in that cycle of what is [...] When I had small children I had no other choice than to be

at home with them, I had no family and no friend either, I were living in isolation; it nearly killed me.

6.7 A Recalcitrant Subject

Tina's active engagement and calls for help from services comprises situations of continual conflict of interest, of opposing valuations and determinations of responsibilities and codes of behaviour. In such a context her body becomes 'the raw material and the limit of policies and practices destined to produce a self-reflexive project of the self' (Dean cited Carr: 2006).

I lost it in my house one Saturday (laughing) and smashed me living room up while I were on phone to social services, well I didn't know I were on phone, well I did because I'd rung them; but I thought I'd hung up. But then when I'd thrown phone and screamed round me house, I was smashing me fucking room up, half an hour later when I'd calmed down, and I thought 'come on and clean this mess up before kids paddle in it,' the woman was still on end of phone, and do you know what she said to me? 'Are your children alright?' 'What do you think? (raised high voice) you've obviously just heard, you might not have seen, but you've just heard what's gone on in my front room and you can sit down as calm as you like and ask me if my children are alright; because they're not are they?' I wouldn't have been on phone in first place if me and me children were alright. But then to witness you carrying on like that with them; it makes a mockery of it.

Tina, here and in her other accounts of contact with institutions, occupies a different moral position to that of the professional worker she calls on for support; her claim is for help and protection from the state for her and her children as a household which is experiencing acute vulnerability. Tina feels her needs and claims are not recognised by the services she calls upon, her relationship with her children is partitioned off, her lack of restraint as an adult condemned, whilst the needs of her children are activated as a condition for state concern. Like Elaine, but in a moment of acute crisis, Tina finds herself defined in relation to her responsiveness and to her responsibilities toward her children. As we saw in the intervention into Elaine's life, the subject mother is 'constituted on the basis of the category of the child' (Lawler: 2000; 35).

This, within the context of Tina's behaviour, may be viewed as an appropriate perspective to have. Tina is after all an adult; her children are vulnerable, at risk from her loss of control, the worker is committed to perform her duties of 'safeguarding'. Tina wants another perspective upon her and her children's lives, she wants attention to be given to the 'relations already co-implicated in one another' as in the case of

mother and child (Strathern: 2005; 43) and she wants to place these within a wider consideration of the notions of 'responsibilities' and 'responsiveness' with respect to other forms of relationality. Tina (below) is fully aware of how the dominant perspectives she encounters upon her as mother are ones that 'cut out to externalise' (ibid) and she will not have it.

This is a perspective that has an orientation around questions of value and practice that should have much overlap with those who may position themselves as having feminist or left of centre concerns. She draws upon a different notion of relationality where needs and rights are not addressed through the concept of the individual but upon their inter-relation and dependence upon one another. It is this which connects with her appeal for evaluation and distribution of resources and recognitions to be made upon the basis of an egalitarian equivalence, recognition of the shared quality of being human, and of being open to vulnerability. Tina, here, has a strong sense of injustice, an understanding of how dominant perspectives shape her as other, as different, as deficient and how such perspectives provide a value-laden interpretation of her deeds and morality. Tina knows this on a felt level; the differing modulation of embodied and affective response her presence 'inspires' within the institutional settings (expressions of mere indifference, cool contempt, tolerance, outright disgust) register on her person. They hurt, and they are, for her, extraordinary. It is in the gap between her sense of self and her valuation by others that affectivity is expressed as anger and injustice:

I don't know a right lot about class, I don't know; I suppose I'm quite political really because I aren't afraid to challenge anyone. I don't care if I've got a problem, whatever organisation it is, or how high up in that organisation the said body is, I will challenge them - 'Who are you? What because on paper you got a posh job that means you're better than me? Because there's nobody out there that's better than me, there's people out there that's got more money, there's people out there who's better educated, there's people out there who are tenfold happier, there's people out there who's tenfold sadder. But there ain't nobody out there that's better; you strip us all down to bareness and you're all a pile of white bones at the end of it - and that's regardless of age, colour, sex, do you know what I mean? You are all skin and bone and there's therefore nobody could possibly be better than me, or you, or him.

What Bourdieu (1992; 51) calls 'the propensity to reduce the search for causes to a search for responsibilities' marks Tina's experience of symbolic violence within institutional spaces. Tina, however, is not 'predisposed' to be submissive in face of

'silent' intimidation. Indeed, as she outlined at the beginning of my research, 'responsibility' is a word that she understands is used to intimidate her, it is forced back on her circumstances and her life experiences by professionals as if its 'lack' - in her - could account for what is wrong in her family life. She does not recognise the validity of such a position; a position which denies her social approval and the material and emotional support she and her children need. This is one of the reasons Tina is provocative within her engagement with professionals; it is because she appears to 'refuse' to assume responsibility that she is cast as a recalcitrant subject;

I don't take responsibility for them as they've got older; I've had no back-up from anywhere. Education people say 'you need to find a way of engaging them.' I get my kids out of bed in morning and I've told them 'get to school - the law says you will go to school'; education welfare come round and go 'well are you going to school or what? We can't make you come if you don't want to.' Der; if I'd been keeping my Katie home for the last month because I were ill and needed help my arse would have been in court. [...] John and Peter got arrested other week for rolling tyres down field; tyres hit the wall, bounced over into road and nearly knocked a gentlemen off his motorbike; horrendous. Yeah all right I know that; hands up. I'm coming to station and I've gone 'what have I told you two?' 'Here' the police say to me, 'don't you be shouting in here, don't you be having them cry'. What message are they giving my children when I go and try and make out that they've got into trouble; that they drag me back and give them a lasagne dinner and give them a hot chocolate? [...] And then there is Jess; now I've had her last 15 year. Now social services have given her a travel warrant and sent her to her dad's; Mister Wonderful, 'isn't this going to change my life about'. I knew where it would end, in disaster and heartache. Three weeks she were in that man's presence, well he's given her a fat lip and put her on the train home [...] They're full of shit. But oh no, I know nothing [...] I'm just a nobody, just a nobody.

Here, rather than taking Tina's stated relinquishment of responsibility for her children's behaviour as a sign of pathology, a deviation from the norm, it should be read within the context of her experience of being positioned as a 'nobody', and this experience should be placed within the context of her own material realities. Tina is actually voicing 'a strong notion of morality and justice' that typifies the narratives of marginalised mothers found in Gillies' research. Like many of these mothers, Tina points to the imbalances in power she finds herself within, and she places them firmly within a register of what she perceives to be right and wrong. Her fight with the institutional interventions in her life are 'a reasonable response to being misinterpreted and attacked unfairly' (2006; 102). Authorised perspectives as they are embodied by the police, school and social services are for Tina based upon theory rather than experience (ibid; 102) and are experienced as the abuse of power through moral judgement.

Tina's refusal of responsibility is a refusal of symbolic judgement, a refusal of its terms for allocating and defining responsibilities as they transpire within the hegemonic norms of contemporary mothering discourses inscribed within regulatory practice and law. Tina does not operate with a 'tacit normativity'; she refuses Bourdieu's assertion that the social and cultural privilege of the powerful is maintained by misrecognition of its basis as natural and right. Where Elaine negotiated her encounters with authorities through silence, deflection, and a positioning that expressed an ambivalent and contradictory form of double consciousness, Tina 'fronts up' to power. The consequences, given her perceived lack of legitimacy and authority, are that she is continually putting herself into a position of judgement. Within the context of her parenting practices, her agency and resistance are repeatedly re-interpreted as a sign of pathology.

Her articulation of dissent (below) draws upon the apparently reactionary and conservative discourses of law and order to critique the 'nanny state' with its 'new' conceptions of child development and children's rights. She moves from scornfully rejecting the Apollonian regulatory model of childhood to invoke contagion and a breakdown in social order, a state of affairs not arising from the bad parenting practices of working-class families but instead from the release of their children from traditional patterns of authority that held them in check. The responsibilities are reversed; the blame does not lie with the mother, but rather with the liberalisation of the state and its agents of choice and self-determination for the child:

Tina: Children are born liars, any children with chocolate on its face will tell you no...

Mark: Were you born a liar?

Tina: Yeah I was, I was; that's your job as a parent because they are all born - children, I used to say this years ago, are born bad - I don't say they are born bad anymore, but I do believe all children irrespective of where they were born, who they were born to, were born bad and it's your job as a parent to teach right from wrong. That's what your job is. There's no fear in children anymore. We are not allowed to do it now like we used to do it because of all these new rules; children got rights and blah-de-blah. I were using naughty step long before Rules are Rules come on Channel 4 or Little Angels or all them programmes. I were doing count to 3 sit there. But when I was young I was terrified of police [...] I would have been getting into big trouble, my mother brayed me before me dad got back to the house and me dad brayed me because me mother had had police round house. I was punished and I knew I wasn't doing it again; children don't learn from not being, not hurt, but most children, but a lot of children don't learn that cooker's hot by being told the cooker

is hot, children learn cooker's hot and it will burn them when they touch it. [...] There's a whole generation of kids growing up out there, and they are starting to have children and they have no law, they've had an upbringing of 'do what you want, when you want' and nobody can touch you...

Tina comes from a background where ideas of autonomy, for child, mother and father, were an anathema. In this respect, her childhood was composed of a different set of kin relationships to the ones which envisage childhood as a space of 'protective liberation'. Her family worked in relation to one another, and they worked hard in an effort to ensure basic material survival, her family 'unit' comprised a set of relationships premised upon obligation to meet present needs rather than on realising the future achievement of their children as persons who could 'make something of themselves' (Ross cited Lawler: 2000; 78).

Me mother worked full-time, I can't remember ever having a conversation with her about anything; nothing [...] A lot of the time she worked in me younger days from home, at one point they were making teddy bears, dad would cut them all out, mum sewed them, and dad stuffed them and sold them to people they knew; and he had an egg farm, he had a wood-yard, he chopped wood. Last job they had were window cleaning, he did upstairs and she did downstairs; and then he had a bad accident in snow; broke his arm and spent nine month getting ready. She wouldn't let him go out again and that's when he started driving for a firm and me mother started working at printer's. She worked shifts, 6 till 2; every second week and I came home and cooked for dad; you know I were as much in house as me mum did, I had no choice - you did it, you weren't asked 'do you mind?' you were told you were doing it. A lot of the time you were seen and not heard, yeah it's just weird when I'm thinking back; there were never any conversation.

Tina's understanding of the social world, inherited from her particular family and social context, sets her apart from the contemporary discourses of individualisation and autonomy that dominate current parenting/mothering and welfare discourses; for Tina there has been a dramatic break in 'the relation between two states of the social, that is, between the history objectified in things, in the form of institutions, and the history incarnated in bodies' (Bourdieu: 1990; 190).

The inculcation of differing and hidden forms of regulation and power by the middle-class mother symbolised for Tina through the language of 'engagement' and the 'naughty step,' the use of reasoning and the opening out of choice for a child's self-determination, belong to a different cultural milieu. Here we can place Tina's inheritance of a 'rule based, external view of society as opposed to the individualised, internalisation of surveillance' (Gillies: 2006; 146) within the context of the immediate material and emotional realities when she was experiencing acute difficulties:

There have been times over past years that I've just been thankful to have gotten back to bed at night without doing one of them or me in; plain and simple, especially when I were with John and Peter because they were twins. I were left with them when they were three week old; the damage they did when they were growing. One time I left them in kitchen for five minutes to see to Beth and Katie who was carrying on; they went and emptied the shopping bags, a week's worth of shopping that were destroyed, rubbed into floor, trodden on, splashed about everywhere, oh funny; it won't be funny when they've lost two pounds at end of week because I've not fed them, I can't afford to go out and shop again...

The middle-class perspective of what Tina's childrearing practices should look like has shifted with the changing socioeconomic needs of capital (re)production. In a now-outdated past, moral instruction and training, and a rigorous disciplining of the working-class child were seen as prerequisite attributes to be fostered within working-class mothering subjectivity. Tina's subjectivity and her mothering practices, informed through a combination of the inculcation of the regulatory ideals of a past middle-class and living with hard practical realities, now seem to represent 'a kind of cultural lag' which progress has made redundant (Rose: 1999). The only thing that authority can hear and see in Tina's articulation of dissent is a reverse discourse that is reactionary; it is disconnected from the classed value orientations and practices that inform its production. Within such a framework of reception her resistance can be, and is, re-cast as recalcitrance and made the subject of increased scrutiny and intervention through the processes of misrecognition and symbolic violence. Tina must be cured of 'her history'.

Although Tina's knowledges and competencies as a mother may be discredited as out of kilter with contemporary narratives of 'good enough mothering', she draws upon them for her own critique of the relations of power she finds herself embedded in. She uses the 'what is' of her life as a reference point from which to question the 'what ought to be,' that she feels is being imposed upon her. Tina does not display a form of social suffering that remains ineffable within her experience of the exercise of power. She refuses the incorporation of shame through misrecognition. Tina feels anger and resentment because she feels she is being treated like a nobody, and nobody backs her up, nobody listens to her, nobody provides the resources she needs. She feels anger because she feels she is disempowered and excluded. She refuses to take the judgement of others upon herself: 'nobody could possibly be better than me, or you, or him'.

6.8 'The return of the repressed'

Tina's expression of affect took on a different form and direction by the end of the period of my research. She had begun to express a shift away from fronting up to power towards operating through the tactics of 'the weak' that Elaine deployed. This is a very different form of adjustment than encountered in Bourdieu's theory because, as we have seen earlier in her negotiation of the language of child development, it is a learnt and self-reflexive practice as much as it is preconscious and corporeally instituted ('children, I used to say this years ago, are born bad - I don't say they are born bad anymore, but I do believe it'). Such a lesson in self-censorship is 'the product of painful work on the body - work which is performed in specific social and political contexts [...] the outcome of inscribing the body with pain in order that it might develop a memory, an internalised sign system, a code of which behaviours to suppress and which to cultivate' (Gatens: 1996; 102). From such lessons Tina had begun to learn to suppress her anger:

Yeah I got angry, and swore like an Irish navvy; it's something I've had to work on over the years, it's something I've finally come to realise that it doesn't do me any good. As soon as I've called that suited booted standing there (laughs).... their ears have gone, I've lost it, and they're not taking any notice anymore...

Five years after my initial contact, Tina had moved away from the acute precarity that characterised her life for so long.²³ She had found herself employment with the help of a community organisation in Fenton. She no longer felt she was at the 'bottom of the ladder'. Indeed Tina expressed a sense of personal empowerment that had manifested itself through enfranchisement and participation in an election; 'You see that was something else about me, I didn't vote, I didn't think it mattered which one got in; they weren't bothered about anything that was going on, we just have to deal with it, but now it's like if I don't go (vote) they won't be voted out'. Her understanding of herself as 'quite political really' at the outset of the research had also begun to articulate itself through identification with the language of class and respectability:

²³ I first met Tina when I was researching for an essay on lone motherhood whilst studying for an MSc.

I'm working-class now, I've got a job. Yeah I was an estate pleb, I used to refer to myself like that. On paper, what am I? I'm a housing estate clerk, do you know what I mean? But that's only on paper; what I actually am, well I'm responsible for one, I've got a job now.

Tina's earlier refusal of responsibility appeared to be undergoing a transformation that New Labour politics would, perhaps, have found both admirable and confirming despite it being couched in the language of class. Her new sense of responsibility, however, had taken a curious route outside of her more immediate commitment and pride in work, and it was one guided by the return of her repressed affect rather than her adherence to the cultivation of the norms of a 'Third Way'. Nor did her experience of social injustice and her call for attention to be drawn to different notions of relationality and responsiveness find its home in left of centre or feminist affiliation; but rather in an identification with right wing politics. Tina had aligned herself with the reactionary and the conservative because it had been the only discourse that she could find that at least in part, seemed to connect with her own 'structures of conceivability'. Importantly, I think, this conversion of her values and vision of the world was made through the ability to draw upon her suppressed resentment of her experience as a mother subjected to 'all those new rules'.

Skeggs (2009) draws attention to how the affects and the ugly feelings of working-class persons can become 'the site for a political mobilisation'. Working-class culture, practice, and value orientations can become detached from source and re-attached to other circuits of value. In Tina's life, the learnt repression of the affects of dissent, have been drawn on by the political mobilisations of the right in the UK. I refer, here, to the form of neo-liberalism that shields behind its appeals for 'common sense'; the return to family values to be supported by the Law through its authority, and its forms of discipline, and punishment. To, as Tina said, 'back her up.'

Why, with all her 'bad experience' where 'feminism has a particularly useful function to name problems, experiences, oppressions and imagine changes' (Skeggs: 2002; 157) has she not found identification with feminism? As Skeggs makes clear, this is a question that includes consideration of her own access points, her own cultural capital, and about the ways she mediates dominant representations of feminism through her own experience. Here, and in relation to Tina, I keep it simple: Tina has not been engaged

by it; it has not entered the spaces of her life. Like all the working-class women in my research, however, Tina speaks feminism without making an easy identification with it (Skeggs: 2002; 142);

What is feminism, where women go 'we're equal' and everything? Well we're not, are we? Oh you don't have equality of opportunity, but that's not just women and mothers, just look at the men round here, and them that are from Asian families. There's not much opportunity for them; they're stuck with what is too aren't they? But with feminism I think of being chained to railings, which wouldn't be for me, I won't be chaining myself to nothing, I've been chained up too long in my house without going to chain myself up to someone else's kitchen sink. I don't know, I can do anything but I've never had choice. If that's feminism then I'm a feminist. I don't know, as I said I've never had choice. I go 'I'm a DIM woman me' and they go 'you are far from dim, Tina'. And I go 'oh no - I Do It Myself.' I live on my own ...

Tina identifies feminism with a presumption of equality; a feminist is someone who is able to assert their equality as a right, they speak from a position of power (Skeggs: 2002). It does not make sense to her, she sees inequality within her own life and the experiences of people around her, and it also cuts across gender through social class and ethnicity. She associates it with a form of political activism that does not address her experience or those she shares identifications with. It is someone else's collective cause. Tina has suffered a sustained experience of emotional and physical abuse, she has been homeless, she has brought up five children on a low income, and she has survived in spite of her isolation; she is not going to be chained to anything. Tina expresses a form of 'individualism,' an independence, a strength of character, a sense of resilience that has made connection to conservatism rather than to the overlaps her experience has with much feminist discourse and concern. It is Tina's experience of isolation, the exposure of her vulnerability to forms of censure, the de-valuation of her mothering practice and her values, and her strength of will in overcoming and coming through her experience of her 'mobility' that informs her perception; 'you live your life for yourself cos nobody else is bothered.'

For Walkerdine (1989) much of the attention of the political left and feminism has retreated from engagement with working-class women like Tina; they have not attempted to back her up. She is seen to fail to conform to the fantasy of libertarian release from structures of authority. She appears to resist in the wrong way, she upholds the reactionary and the conservative, and she is unable to break with tradition.

I am not suggesting that Tina should instead be placed within a project of salvation from 'the ravages of deprivation theories.' The conception of her mothering practices and subjectivity as equal but different to those of the middle-classes 'denies oppression in a liberal endeavour to produce equality out of misplaced pluralism' (Walkerdine: 1989; 7). Ignoring the historical and material conditioning from which Tina's mothering practices and subjectivity are constituted, however, leaves the assumptions of middle-class conceptions of the sensitive mother unexplored; it sets up 'woman against woman, rendering one normal and the other pathological, making one responsible for the regulation and oppression of the other' (ibid; 5). For Walkerdine the recognition of difference requires active engagement, and must 'confront, rather than suppress ...we must listen to those voices, those painful voices which divide us, to understand the specificities of our own formation' (ibid; 2).

6.9 Conclusions

Gillies underlines that contemporary interventions into working-class family life, like those experienced by Elaine and Tina, have been 'driven by a particular moral agenda that seeks to regulate and control the behaviour of marginalised families' by 'reframing issues of poverty and inequality in terms of a disconnection from mainstream values and aspirations' (2006; 283). The rationality at work within these interventions aims at the responsabilisation of the working-class mother; they are 'modes of government that work upon the capacities of citizens to act on their own behalf' (Cruikshank: 1999; 39). Such a focus 'profoundly depoliticises social and political relations by fragmenting collective values of care, duty and obligation and displacing them back on to the managed autonomy of the individual' (McNay: 2009; 65).

Tina's and Elaine's examples show that governmental interventions which rely on the re-shaping of classed subjectivities and 'agents' themselves are far from as efficacious and successful as some theorists take them to be. Cruikshank, for example, has declared that modern forms of governmentality are 'much more than a way of organising interest, [they are] also a way of organising power, a way of acting on people's actions rather than procuring their apathy' (1999; 39). Both Elaine and Tina provide an illustration of the affects of resentment and anger of the 'over-managed'. At no time

do either Elaine or Tina experience the 'price attributable to their bodies' by authority as their own valuation of their social worth (see Bourdieu: 1992; 82). Central to their contestation is how *their* interests and perspectives are excluded from view within relationships of class. The affects produced from such encounters arise from a conflict over valuation, they take different routes and attach themselves to different objects and have different realisations within social and familiar relationships.

Neither Tina nor Elaine possess the requisite symbolic legitimacy to resist power with authority within the context of the relationships established by the instituted interventions into their parenting practice. Their classed and gendered expression of resentment and sense of injustice is not connected to collective forms of political mobilisation. Within this context, and whilst his emphasis upon adjustment must be set to one side, their experience provides a complex gloss on Bourdieu's aphorism regarding accommodation and resistance. They could be said to reflect the 'general truth' of his observation, one that offers

an insoluble contradiction, which is inscribed into the very logic of symbolic domination [...] something those who talk about 'popular culture' won't admit. Resistance may be alienating and submission may be liberating, such is the paradox of the dominated, and there is no way out of it (1990; 155).

Despite the dominance of middle-class projections of what counts as mothering and mothering identity, and the prevalence of middle-class surveillance and regulation in their lives, working-class mothers do not simply incorporate middle-class valuations and practices as their own. These different valuations and practice orientations, however, are not simply 'forms of resistance to the imposed norm' in any simple sense; rather 'they are cultural practices that have validity because they make sense in relation to the government of social relations of working-class life' (Walkerdine: 2001; 119). In the next chapter I explore this point more fully, emphasising how working-class mothers are differently positioned in relation to normative projections of a mother's responsibility to realise an 'exchange value self' or 'subject with value' (Skeggs: 2010; 32).

7. Relations of care

7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I emphasised that the relative 'success' of sensitive enough mothering is something that resides in the complementarities and connections between the psy knowledges and the conditioning of the middle-class family and social milieu. For Walkerdine, middle and working-class women are both 'managers of a domestic economy, but under very different circumstances and with very different modes of regulation' (1989; 8); consequently there is a need to engage with the different 'circumstances and differential meanings of their labour within the contexts and practices in which the families exist' (ibid; 84). She insists therefore on the need for a 'politics of subjectivity' to explore the gaps 'between regulative strategies and people's experience (ibid; 35).

In the first part of this chapter, I draw away from a focus on the experiences of external regulation in working-class lives to turn to the only middle-class mother within my research: Rosie. Here I underline the importance of the differing types of capitals and networks of sociality that underpin the 'successful' practice of sensitive mothering. Like Lawler (2000), here, my intention is not to reverse the conventional dichotomy between middle and working-class mothering practices so as to pathologize middle-class mothers as bad, and working-class practice as good. Rather it is a case of drawing attention to the conditions that are necessary for underpinning the taken for granted success of middle-class practice, and underlining that whilst such practices may appear to be free of regulation they are marked by a subjectification of both child and mother. Here I confine my discussion, for reasons of space, to exploring Rosie's practice in relation to her son's education. This is in keeping with normative evaluations of what it means to be a successful mother, for her duty and her purpose is to enable her child to realise his own abilities; a successful education is a foundation for the future.

In the second part of the chapter I draw upon the contrasting positioning and experience of working-class mothers as they negotiate their everyday realities. My intention here is to understand their parenting practice as being something more than a 'generational

transmission of 'faulty' parenting skills, attitudes, habits and practices' (Lawler: 2000; 46). It is the women's personal negotiation of their material conditions and their historical conditioning of their mothering subjectivity that provides for different realisations and relationships to practices of care and motherhood. Here 'success' is defined from other perspectives as well as being defined in relation to conscribed possibilities.

In the third section I focus upon Joyce's experience of motherhood, returning to the subject of regulation and affect that I explored in Chapter 6. Joyce has made heavy investments in her responsibilities to realise her child's self within the terms of liberalism's contemporary goals of individualism and autonomy. The burdens of class provide a painful example of the gap between possibility and reality; her efforts lead to 'isolation, marginalisation and pathologisation' (Gillies: 2006; 144). She provides an example of how conflicts over value and valuation can become internalised within working-class subjectivities. The affective dimension of class relationships are here, in the life of Joyce, more often than not experienced through contradiction, ambivalence and pain. The contrast between Rosie and Joyce's experience of lone motherhood could not be more acute.

Joyce's experience of class as an individualised form of pathology, whilst sharing common themes with all the other women in my research, is particular and acute. It is an experience that invokes Grosz: 'we need to ask with more urgency now than in the past: if the subject strives to be recognised as a subject of value in a culture that does not value that subject in the terms it seeks, what is that recognition worth? (2010; 102). This is a question that Joyce too asks, but one also that many of the working-class women in this research have worked through in relation to one another, living within their circuits of sociality, recognition and value production, they work to protect and secure themselves from the sense of isolation, vulnerability, shame and resentment that Joyce experiences so acutely. It is to these connections that I turn to in conclusion to underline the production of values within their lives as they extend and emerge from their classed relation to geographies of care.

7.2 A sensitive mother

Rosie, below, is responding to a question about whether she felt there was any stigma attached to the label of single mother, and whether there was a class association attached to it. In contrast to Tina, she found that her movement through social and material space as a single parent had been facilitated with the changes that had taken place during the New Labour administration. Rather than the experience of disjuncture, she evokes a sense of alignment. She points to a new moral climate where changing familial forms are accommodated and supported. Unlike Tina, Rosie avoids the terms of class and prefers to phrase her success in negotiating the difficulties of being a single mother in terms of 'opportunity' (Chapter 2).

Rosie: I'm very aware of it. I've been aware of it for a long time ... I grew up in the Thatcher era, there was a lot of single mother bashing...I thought the media was very negative, there was a lot of topical debate programmes; they were getting single parents to talk about it and you can guarantee that they were the worst single parents, five kids to different fathers, that's how the media would portray it...It's got better now, maybe, as I've improved my situation, but I think it's got better politically as well. Yes, there has been a change, I was certainly financially better off; there's more opportunity for me to do something...I can honestly say without Tim (son) I wouldn't be doing this. I left school not knowing what I wanted to do; I just travelled and travelled, and did various jobs, anything really...when I came here ten years ago, I came here to go to university because I wanted to give Tim something, I've had to make work for myself.

Rosie works as a manager for the community project that Elaine's son James had been 'passed on to'. Tim had been offered a place at Crompton's, the local and predominantly working-class school that James had also attended. In the extract below, she recounts her successful battle to get Tim a place in a 'better' school. Whilst Elaine positioned her son as having 'special needs' in her efforts to get him the support he needed within Crompton, the needs were understood in terms of wanting her son to be helped fit into normality. Elaine did not define these needs as being over and above others' needs. Rosie, however, positioned Tim as clever and sensitive; qualities that she believed would not be given their due at Crompton's. It is her son's projected difference - his promise - that requires that he must be placed within another school. Unlike Elaine, Rosie manages to get her voice heard and her son's needs met.

Rosie: They wanted him to go to Crompton's and at the time it was doing badly and he had no friends there and I just knew he wouldn't thrive there, so I appealed and I got a solicitor onto it, I lost the appeal and I appealed again and lost that and eventually I phoned the education

department and asked if they would send their child to Crompton's. I decided that if he couldn't go to a school of our choice I was going to teach him from home - which I didn't want to do. I felt he needed to be with other children ... but if I had had to have done that for a while until I got what I wanted I would have; so I phoned them up and said send me some information on teaching from home because my son won't be going to that school, the next day I got an offer; I think they bricked it a bit; the threats did it in the end.

Rosie has the cultural and social resources to mobilise her efforts to realise her son's entitlement and these help inform her sense of confidence in feeling able to confront authority directly. As Gillies has observed, marginalised working-class mothers rarely have this sense of being able to control and map out their children's pathway through education. Rosie, too, makes identification between herself and the decision makers, something which working-class mothers rarely do, and it is one in part driven by an implicit divide between 'us' and 'them': whilst Tim 'needed to be with other children' he didn't need to be with those children; 'would you send your child to Crompton's?' Underlying this question is her conception of her son as 'unique and exceptional and distinct' (Gillies: 2006; 77). Her work as a mother, in the selection process and more generally below, compose a sense of entitlement 'founded on a notion of deserving individuality' that must be set apart from the same and the failing (Ibid).

There are noticeable contradictions within Rosie's narrative as we can see below, and it is from within these that we can see what her time and attention realise for her son. Tim would have succeeded in spite of everything, in spite of Crompton. But Tim needed to be with the 'right people', and Tim also needed the right environment to nurture his innate abilities. It is through Rosie's labour that Tim is produced as a person with a 'moral claim of exceptionality' (Gillies: 2006; 77).

Rosie: I'm very liberal, I don't hide anything from him, so if there's an issue going on and choices to be made, he plays a part in that ... His teacher; she was a very old-school teacher, she was fantastic, she really brought them on very quickly in the old-school style, but she didn't have much consideration for the pastoral side of things and I would go and talk to her and say I was worried about this. He could do well in whatever he wanted, he was a bright boy, and he just needed to be with the right people and people he was confident with... He is cleverer than me, so I think he would have been teaching me eventually. He's done well. So the pastoral side of his education was just as important to me as the educational side of it, and I think we've done really well there; now he is going for 'A' levels...

Rosie's role as a mother, as she narrates it here, exemplifies the activities of a parent who fosters the educational capital of her son through establishing a 'relationship of

confidence, of trust, of attentive observation' (Donzelot: 1977; 206). Her carefully managed intervention in school life is a deployment of her cultural and social capital allied to careful scrutiny of anything that may affect her son's educational success. Here it is a matter of not opposing schools in a reactive way, but going along with them 'in a way that would augment the family's role instead of diminishing it [...] to recreate, parallel with the schools, with their horizontality, a vertical dimension of familial behaviour where moral values, higher cultural proficiencies, and emotional assets might claim their rightful place' (ibid; 207).

Rosie emphasises the decision making between herself and her son; just as the school selection process was expressed as 'our choice,' so most situations and events in their daily life will be opened up to 'democratic mothering.' Tim will be inculcated into reason, to becoming a decision maker, to making choices about what he wants; his mother will nurture autonomy within the liberalism of her practices of care. Rosie's conception of herself as a mother rests with her specific understanding of her responsibilities to realise Tim's good self. She displays the sensitivities of the right kind of mother. She assumes the responsibilities for assuring her son's natural intelligence and potential to flourish and announce itself to the world, whilst her own person is disregarded, overtaken in the natural course of things.

7.3 Pastoral care and emotional capital

Rosie's investments in her son's 'pastoral life' are those that she hopes will realise his future self. It is her emotion work that will help foster his social and cultural capital and this will feed into his educational and career success. Such practices are part of her 'emotional management'; 'the quasi-therapeutic role women perform in relation to their children' (Reay: 2004; 59). It should be remembered here that the middle-class women, as daughters, offered a very different perspective upon their parents' practices. They reflected Walkerdine's (2001) and Reay's (2004) findings that middle-class mothering practice can often prioritise the pursuit of educational success for their children, and that this is often at the expense of their child's emotional wellbeing. I will return to the conception and work of emotional capital in more detail when I move on to Joyce's experience. Here, however, it is important to note that Rosie's work to ensure

her son's emotional wellbeing is as much future-facing as it is immediate. It may be projected by Rosie as 'just as important as the education side' but, in practice, it is inseparable from her concern to develop the connections between cultural and social capital and educational capital that will realise future profits for her son.

Chapter 3 emphasised the differences between the middle and working-class forms of 'networked sociality'. Middle-class networking, seen through Sophie's example, was predicated on future accrual and self-realisation. Rosie's concern, below, is not with herself, but with her son; and in particular for her son's future wellbeing. Indeed Rosie attributes all of her own personal attainments, in becoming a manager of a social enterprise for example, to her desire to give her son something more in his life - in terms of meeting his material needs, but more importantly in terms of providing an example of achievement and aspiration. Rosie, too, has been able to draw on people with the required skills and knowledge to invest in his development. We return, here, to Strathern's observations about the connection between class and the relations and connections that are made outside of the family home. The extract below is part of a larger explanation of how Rosie has been able to compensate for the difficulties she has faced as a lone working parent through her development of a social network:

[A]nd he's got Alison as well, and Fiona and Clare, he's got six surrogate mums that will each help him, each one has particular subjects they specialise in. They've all been great with Tim, they've never excluded me because I've had a child and they've always tried to include us in activities; Clare's brilliant at maths, Fiona's really good at geography, Dave's good at music. But they've all taken him into their hearts and they all invest a lot of time in him; so I've been very lucky to have that support.

Rosie's supportive network is part of a process of concerted cultivation, whether conscious or unconscious, that will ensure Tim's advantage through selectivity. Her attention to the pastoral aspect of Tim's development exerts a form of control over his life that her account conceals through emphasis on his freedom and choice, and the liberalism of her mothering practice. His (spare) time - like many of the middle-class children in Gillies and Reay's research - has been tightly structured by decisions about preferred activity and by the connections and contacts he has with others. She has been assiduous, for example, in her efforts to keep him 'off the streets' of Fenton and 'out of danger' by making sure he is engaged in organised activity: 'he's a clever boy and he's

naturally clever but he is lazy and I think if he was in the wrong environment he could very much go the wrong way.’ Rosie reflects Reay’s observation of middle-class mothering, that ‘freedom was perceived to be a consequence of self-actualisation. One outcome was little apparent freedom in the lives of their schoolchildren’ (2004; 66).

The emotional labour of Rosie’s nurturing of Tim, in making available resources for ‘self-making’, the persistence in ensuring institutional access and the building up of the right kinds of social networks, are cultural interventions that succeed according to one’s social location within an ‘enabling culture’. The success of her mothering practices (‘I think we’ve done really well’) is grounded within a middle-class milieu that promotes autonomy, choice, and a particular form of communicative sensibility; these are underwritten by the holding of resources and circuits of exchange that the working-class women do not have access to. In the next section I provide a contrast to the role that Rosie performs in the fostering of her son’s emotional and educational development by drawing upon working-class experience.

7.4 Working-class realities

The sensitive mother who foregrounds the development of choice through reasoning and negotiation is ‘risky in a context where choice and power are limited’ (Gillies: 2007; 146). As we saw with the example of Tina’s relationship with precarity, many of the working-class mothers live within difficult circumstances, they bring their children up with limited financial resources. Within these material realities ‘democratic mothering’ ‘may simply have little meaning for working-class women [...] [they] have little investment in performing mothering work which obscures regulation since they are very well aware of the overt workings of power and regulation in their own lives’ (Lawler: 2000; 80 citing Walkerdine). The contrast between Rosie and some of the working-class women is no more apparent than in their radically different conception of their roles as mothers in the development of their child’s relation to sexuality and gender.

Rosie: When he was little he used to love Barbie, he adored Barbie. He wanted a Barbie so I bought him a Barbie; my mum’s reaction was you’ll make him gay. No, you can’t make somebody gay; he wanted a Barbie so he got a Barbie, he wanted a dress at one point but it was nothing to do with gender. He was just interested in what was out there...you could say he was exploring himself. He wanted that toy, it was just a toy to him. I think he is quite sensitive, intuitive and I think that’s

because he has had quite a lot of feminine influence; but he has never had a big girly experience around him because he has not been surrounded by women like that...I would say a lot of it is to do with being surrounded by women and not having a lot of male influences, he's not a namby-pamby boy by any means, but he is not your rough and tumble go and get dirty boy.

It is of course 'about gender,' but it is about gender in ways that align themselves to the new forms of individualisation as they are produced through the process of familiarisation within a 'new economy'. Whilst apparently at some distance from traditional patterns of engendered reproduction the 'naturalness' of Tim's explorative development through innocent play is marked by particular forms of intervention and management. Tim will not be 'namby-pamby' because he has not been surrounded by 'girly' women, but neither is he a conventional boy. Gender becomes detached from sex, the desirable and valuable attributions are attached to Tim's real self, outdated requirements are de-natured and left behind. The point here, to re-emphasise, is not to disparage Rosie's 'progressive' and 'sensitive' mothering but rather to highlight that her practices do not operate outside of power, rather they comprise differing forms of regulative and productive knowledges than those at work in working-class lives. The evaluation of their success and appropriateness is context-dependent.

The engendered realities of the working-class mothers' lives can stand in contrast to Rosie's cultural milieu, which she describes as 'metro-sexual' and 'cosmopolitan'. Where she may conceive of her child as engendering himself through experimental play and through 'self-discovery,' some of the working-class mothers saw their own task as passing on their hard lessons about the expectations and norms of a sexed identity and its classed relationship to care and heterosexuality. For Jane, below, the preparation of her daughter for adult life as a woman runs counter to the 'liberal fantasy' of removing power from view. Some of the working-class mothers are aware of the dangers of allowing 'their little girls to believe they can do and have what they want' or that they can be 'an agent of choice, of free will,' and this is engendered through their own experience of 'an oppressive and unjust order' (Walkerdine: 1989; 138). As Reay (2004; 70) observes, at 'the interface of home and school, processes of female individualisation are rendered both complex and conflictual as contemporary notions of 'living your own life' clash with conventional expectations of being there for others';

Jane: Chelle is doing really well at school; teacher's pet. I need to do a lot more things with her; I need to stop shouting at her 'go upstairs, run bath, go do this, and go do that'. I say 'I'm teaching you for when you leave home and you've got a boyfriend and you have to run a house' and she'll say 'well Brett (brother) doesn't have to do anything' and I'll say 'well he's a boy, boys don't do nowt'; I really do.

Such realities are not the only ones to impede working-class mothers from establishing the productive links between familial behaviours and education that Rosie achieves for Tim as he moves to take his place in the 'new economy'. Most of the women had come out of education with minimal qualification and experiences of diminution. Failure at school is their working-class experience, not success. Investment in their children's education often invokes questions of relevance and value for both child and mother, and these are anxiously and painfully felt and worked out in their relationship to one another. The 'lack' of legitimated competencies to 'play the game' of investment in their children's educational development within and outside school produces confusion for Tina, below, and informs a 'sense that she should not be expected to act as an educator as this merely compounds a cycle of disadvantage' (Gillies: 2006; 98). Like many of the other working-class women she finds it hard to generate the emotional resources for her children to draw on in their relationship to the classroom, or to their homework (Reay: 2004; 63).

Tina: I've found a lot of the times especially as they get older I've got no idea what they are on about, and if you don't know it, how are you going to help - I think that discourages them from learning cos they think if mum can't do it and she's getting by why do I need to be able to do it, which isn't good; but I don't know, I don't know what I can do about it if I don't know it, I don't know it and even when I've gone to school and asked them to explain it me - god, right complicated things you know actually. I did pounds, shillings and pence [...] it's just weird and it don't make no sense to me; so I try to show 'em the way I know which is confusing.

Reay emphasises that the lack of the 'right kind' of educational and cultural capital does not mean that working-class mothers, as a rule, take no interest or spend no time trying to help their children at home with their educational development. The educational environment and the school curriculum, however, work to foster a sense of exclusion for both mother and child. Here it is not just their material realities that are ignored but also their heritage and social milieu, creating a sense of 'dislocation, with many aspects of working-class culture routinely devalued and disrespected' (Gillies: 2006; 97). Elaine, for example, expressed a moment of satisfaction in her engagement with her daughter's

homework but her pride and enthusiasm turned to disappointment and anger. The assignment had been to write about the contribution of different cultures to British history. It was an opportunity for Elaine to pass on her knowledge of working-class life in the Belfast docks and the building of the Titanic. Her daughter's work, however, was questioned for its validity in the classroom; the teacher asserting that the Titanic had been built 'here' by 'us' and therefore did not qualify as an example of the contribution of a 'different' culture. She was supposed to be learning about the multicultural contribution of the Diasporas of empire, of which the white working-class Irish, apparently, were not an example.

As Elaine's example regarding her efforts to get James the help he needed showed, working-class mothers who attempted to engage educational services to gain support, and sometimes to defend their children, did not have similar success stories to set beside that of Rosie's. Gillies (2006; 93) observes that 'mothers that lack sanctioned middle-class cultural capital struggle to exert power or influence in such institutional arenas'. Jackie, below, clearly articulates how her positioning within relationships of class impact upon her as a mother both inside the school with the teachers and outside in the playground. She is aware of how she is evaluated through the perspective upon her perceived lack of cultural capital, and linguistic currency; 'painfully aware that in the school environment [she is] positioned as problematic and inferior, and as a result can feel that [she has] little alternative but to fight hard' (Gillies: 2006; 99). The contrast with Rosie's ability to make identifications with authority and make careful managed interventions in Tim's school life is sharp:

Jackie: It's like the teachers, I had it with that Head the other day. They judge people, you don't judge until you know the person and understand what they are saying [...] I will always stand up for myself, I will talk, and say what I think, just let it run off my tongue. They beat about the bush and say things better. I'm more open-minded and straight up front about what I have to say. Does it intimidate people because you are telling the truth? I don't think they know the meaning of the word.

Sayer may identify, here, a response to the refusal of recognition, a refusal of deference to hierarchy and dominant values that 'involves a radical reductionism in that it merely inverts the conflation of the posh and the good and the common and the bad, so that the respectable becomes bad and demands for respect automatically valid' (2005; 177).

The display of contempt and ridicule for middle-class pretension and valuation, however, is accompanied by the refusal of her and her child's 'invisibility,' and of the evaluation she feels is made of her person. Skeggs, in referring to working-class women's response to such diminution, notes that such resistance, for example 'fighting outside schools and linguistic indignation' is 'not enough to generate a coherent oppositional politics' (2002; 93). Indeed such responses are invariably misrecognised by dominant perspectives and serve to reinforce classed pathology. Within Jackie's personal relationships and networks, however, this 'shared' experience of affect, motherhood and class is re-iterative and it informs a sense of solidarity that provides for a re-evaluation and a sense of 'belonging-to' (see later).

Gillies (2006) underlines the strength working-class mothers find through their sense of responsibility and duty as mothers to create opportunities and material/emotional resources for their children to draw on. These practices are not often recognised because they are about day-to-day survival; about establishing and maintaining material and emotional 'gains' against a backdrop of disadvantage and insecurity. As her research testifies, working-class mothers garner strength, pride, satisfaction and pleasure from their identities as mothers. The difficult contexts for their mothering, symbolic and material, often make these values stronger and inform connection with others 'like them' through respect and reciprocity. The women's emotional investments in their children, and the circuits of sociality their children are brought up within, contrast sharply with middle-class parenting practice. They draw upon and produce differing forms of emotional resources for their children; they foster a different relation between mother and child than found within middle-class milieu. Rather than investing their emotional energies in their children for them to realise future profits in systems of educational, cultural and economic exchange, their support has a use value in the present and is produced for specific circumstances (Gillies: 2006).

Some of the mothers were acutely aware, for example, of the sense of shame and disquiet felt by their children induced by the inequalities of self-expression within the school environment. The pressures of consumerism within the playground are fierce: children build their sense of self through possession of the right kind of things, wearing

the right kind of clothes, and the participation in the right kind of cultural and sporting activity - in this they are their society's children. Class, as emphasised throughout this thesis, makes a difference to what type of self can be produced and displayed. The spatial frame of the school and playground is an intense site for inducing class anxieties and defences. When Jackie, Donna, Elaine and Joyce's children return from school, their mothers work to repair their self-esteem, to deflect them from feeling as though they are failures; or lacking in the things that others find readily available to them. This can be seen as an example of what Gillies calls the 'forging of emotional capital to survive symbolic violence' and the need to foster strength and endurance. It also serves to provide relief (Gillies: 2006).

Care is offered as something over and above what they take to be the forced practices of middle-class mothering; such practices would offer only the promise of an unobtainable future, not its realisation; they would be cruel. Most mothers expressed a simple desire that their children were happy and talked in terms of providing a buffer between home and school to provide protective warmth. Elaine defines the value of care in her mothering practices in the now, in present time; 'If they can't do it (homework) they can't do it can they? You can't force them, make them, force them, and make them miserable.' Tina, too, belies her apparent authoritarianism with her care and concern for her children's wellbeing. Her perception of school is that it is a place where her children may not be treated fairly, that they will be the ones who are signalled out for blame. Her antagonism stands out for public scrutiny and evaluation, but beneath it lies a value practice:

I've got one at home today cos of bullying, I pulled him out today and told them (the school) I aren't having it. Two on one and it's he who gets punished. I'm not having it, he's been up all night worrying about it, it's not good for an 11 year old having to worry about going to school.

As Gillies observes, emotional investments to foster a child's abilities for day-to-day survival, or for obtaining the short-term benefits and relief from diminution is not a deficit model. A preoccupation with educational attainment does not make sense within their particular contexts (2006; 126). Indeed many of the working-class mothers found it both difficult and sometimes harmful to 'divert their emotional involvement into generating academic profits for their children' (Reay: 2004; 65). Some, like Katy, who

invested huge amounts of emotional energy in their attempts to foster their children's enthusiasm for school and for educational attainment, provided the most painful examples of living aspiration. As Reay (2004) suggests, such investment, given the structuring inequalities within which they are made, may provide for small returns and can often have harmful consequences for them both. Here, in a different form to that expressed within middle-class experience, 'emotional capital disrupts neat links to profit'.

Tina, below, is reflexive about the limits that are placed upon her abilities to create a cultivated environment of protected liberation that Rosie is able to establish for Tim. Rosie could draw upon her social networks and her cultural capital to establish relations for Tim that would keep him 'busy'. For Tina these advantages are difficult to accrue, indeed those networks that she might want for her children seem premised upon exclusion;

Tina: I think a lot of it's to do with where they live, you're on a housing estate, and you're a single parent, you're on lowest income known to man, and when you're bringing kids up, if you've got funds you can let them run with the in-crowd that go bowling one night a week, go to pictures on Friday, they've got a Wii in the bedroom. If you haven't got all the things - well I found with mine that I couldn't afford to be having them running around with in-crowd; alternative to running with in-crowd is running with out-crowd.

Other working-class mothers like Donna, however, own the responsibility to keep their children safe and 'in check.' She makes it her business to regulate her daughters' movements. Whilst she works to instil discipline and a desire for aspiration in her children she also understands the limits that are placed upon her. She knows, too, that if she lets her supervision slip, then the consequences will be a loss of respectability for both her and her daughters.

Donna, walk: That's where all those lads hang out, there by the pizza place; one of them - Dazz, he nearly ran Debbie's daughter over, ran over pavement, and she dived out way and banged head on concrete, he'd sped up as a kind of joke, you know to frighten her; so I was saying to them all last week, 'No you can bloody listen to what I say - at end of day you're just stood there on this corner opposite Domino's', and I say 'I'm going to beat your faces and backsides.' I said 'It makes you look like tarts,' I said 'I'd rather you be at home; at least I know you are not on a corner, at least I know you are not going to get run over by some lunatic'. Mind you those boys don't know what they're doing, they can't handle a car. But here, I mean down here (pathway through estate) there's a lot of pissing about; they're just gangster wannabes but I won't let mine near them, and if I find them hanging out here ... I don't want them to go down that road, 'oh well I'm just knocking

about with my friends. I'm fine' but not doing anything constructive, not doing anything that's making them think [...] but they never really get the chance to get stuck into something; you know like horse-riding for some kids, for some kids it's like rock-climbing at the weekends...

The mother-child relation often has to be negotiated and maintained, fostered and supported where 'instability, struggle and unfulfilled desire are unavoidable facets of life' (Gillies: 2006; 146). The concept of the passive Apollonian child at the heart of Rosie's narrative and Elaine's parenting course; dependent, in need of protection and continuity, to be safely harboured within a stable family, ignores these material and emotional realities of working-class life. Within these realities, working-class children are active social agents. The need to provide the comfort and warmth in their lives to protect them from diminution is often set within their experience of precarity and their children's own struggles to realise themselves as a 'somebody'.

For Donzelot, possessive individualism casts suspicion on the family of origin and has replaced it with 'the concept of the family as a horizon for individuals to conquer, a place where they might steady their trajectories and inscribe their results' (1977; 233). The classed experience of living out this relation is markedly different in Rosie and Karen's family homes (below). The extension of the period of schooling (and the duration of childhood as a site for the proper nurture of innocence) allied to the changes in housing allocations, welfare and educational allowances has rendered children economically powerless within a culture that holds the ability to be an 'individual' and to spend and to consume so highly (Bauman: 2005). A single mother on benefit payments finds herself and her dependent child in a very different situation to a professional woman like Rosie. Their child's educational disadvantage inside the classroom is matched by their lack of economic power to consume and produce the 'right' kind of self outside of it. The mother and child relation bears these strains:

Karen: Jake just walks all over me now, swears and everything. I asked him, I come in last night, and I said take the bike out and he says I can't be fucking arsed, and I thought what, wait a minute what you swearing at; but oh he is rough. We had one big bust-up in the kitchen because he beat Annie (sister) up so I said, 'If you can hit her, I can hit you,' so we were fighting and all sorts, I had to pin him down. Oh he called me a fucking slag and everything, and I'm leaving home and ain't coming back from school; and he even goes right I'm phoning police. I didn't send him to school the next day cos I thought he wouldn't come home; well he knows he's got me under wraps, and the money, money, that's all that comes out of his mouth, that really pisses me off in the situation

that it's only down to me what can give him the money, and he said he wants the Child Benefit which is like only 18 pounds but ...

As Bauman (2005) observes, those who cannot meet the call of consumerism are branded as inadequate, deficient and substandard and those that attempt to avoid such judgements without adequate means are labelled as materialistic and feral. Working-class mothers are responsabilized for the control of their children's behaviour; they are blamed when their children 'go off the rails,' when they dare to desire that which their situation denies them, or show disdain and violence for that which rejects them and for those who love them. As respectable working-class mothers, most of the women take up this burden as their own, but it is a burden of regulation that creates enormous tensions within their relations with their children, as I have shown with Elaine in the previous chapter.

The working-class women are acutely aware that their responsabilisation for realising the 'good child' sidesteps the questionable values that inhere within wider social processes, where the actual valuation of care, of women, of children, is excluded from consideration:

Joyce: You know it's not everybody, it's not everybody on benefits - stop taking the frigging piss out of people who are actually trying ... women get a lot of blame; it's like sometimes you see these kids in papers and it's like blame the parents ... women in particular get a pretty hard doing, and women get grilled but women are actually undervalued. I do actually believe that, and I believe that all our children get treated like second class citizens, they do; all children all over the world. That's why we're not bothered about babies dying in Africa, not unless we watch it while we are eating our teas, this is why children are allowed to hold toy guns ...

The literature surrounding working-class motherhood, and particularly that which focuses on marginalised single mothers like Joyce, highlights the ways in which reverse discourses are used by working-class women to counter their pathology. Respectability, for Skeggs, is the prime example of how working-class mothers draw upon their own classed investments in care and attention for their children to deflect evaluatory judgements. I won't provide extensive commentary here, for reasons of space and because it is ground extensively covered in the work of Walkerdine and Lucey, Gillies, and Reay. The following extracts are from Joyce as she re-positions herself as a respectable, responsible mother, as a mother who is selfless, devoted, who mothers intensively. Joyce re-appropriates the spaces of the proper across a range of sites, both

marking out her own propriety as a good mother and critiquing middle-class practice and value orientations. In this she is no different to many of the working-class mothers within my research; all of their transcripts contain similar passages:

As a single parent I can't afford to have babysitters in; so I don't have time to myself at the weekend as in going out partying, or as in my daughter staying over somewhere and I've got the night off. I haven't had a night out for years; really funny thing were Lucy used to say to people when they asked if I'd go for a drink: 'I don't have babysitters,' she used to say that to people 'my mum stays at home with me' and she knew that, and I think that made her feel quite safe.

... but the whole thing is you'd be at work and your hours are so much more cut down; by going to work you don't get to spend that time. I remember when Lucy were three and four and I used to love taking her to nursery and I could see her happily playing. I used to stand back from the nursery and I used to help out with the other children, with setting up tables, with clearing up stuff like that. But being at home just felt, you know that I could watch my child develop, and notice things for myself.

Sometimes it's easier, easier if you've got money coming in; you can buy your kids something at weekend, do you know what I mean? ... but you know, you look around and you see some people and they have got their 9 to 5 job, they are home at the weekend with their kids, their kids are doing whatever cos they can bung them a load of money or buy them a computer; and that is it – pacified [...] you know sometimes it's easier, easier if you've got money coming in, do you know what I mean? But where's the interaction?

In the next section I explore more closely the particular experience of Joyce, and the contexts from which these efforts to retrieve and find value for both herself and her daughter are made. As I will emphasise, whilst Joyce critiques dominant value orientations she also remains trapped by them. It is here that her disidentification from class through her particular recourse to respectability realises itself in the most painful and personal of ways, within her mothering subjectivity. It is important to stress that unlike many of the working-class women, she has not been able to mediate her relation to, and re-working of, respectability through the positive evaluation and experience of her familial working-class relations (both historical and present). It is the complex processes of class dis-identification and experience of misrecognition within the spaces of Fenton and the wider symbolic that realises so much pain and contradiction in her life.

7.5 The struggle to be a valid human being

Joyce is 35 and has lived in Fenton since she was three; her life however has not had any of the securities of belonging and stability that rootedness to place for over thirty years may be expected to provide. Joyce has experienced extreme transience and hardship.

Joyce; walk: Right it starts from here in that corner, Mark. I used to squat in one of these with my mum and our Dave and a couple who had a boy called Peter; right honest to god because when me mum had Benny, Dave got kinda fostered out to Dawn and I went off with Thelma (adopted auntie) because I can remember seeing light out of that window of the pub and knowing that the shop was there cos we were wanting sweets and stuff [...] it were when Benny were born, I must have been about five. We got back together with mum and we squatted on Blythe Road as a kid, squatted somewhere else, squatted on St Peters road, right as a kid, and then we got a house with a hostel - there - and then we got a house in Newfield's which used to be back-to-back houses in the 70s; they got ripped down in 1980 and we moved over to Foden's Court, over there where we've just come from, a new council estate, and we thought woo that's amazing, and like we got a bathroom cos we hadn't a bathroom up until 1980, we used to use outside toilet area up the street, that's how we'd have to get washed every week, that's how we'd have to get fucking washed every Sunday.

Shortly after moving into her new home on the council estate, at the age of 15, Joyce entered local authority care and was separated from her siblings, who were also placed in children's homes. It was a culmination of a childhood that had seen malnourishment, abuse and severe poverty. Her 'biography' here is remarkable, it is a story of strength and agency, survival and resilience; but not just for herself. Prior to the family break-up Joyce, as the eldest sister, had taken on the role of caring for her three younger siblings as her mother had acute mental health problems, providing what food and material resources she could find, getting them dressed and into school, and making it in herself; occasionally. For Joyce, though, education was

An embarrassment, plus getting mum into trouble; you know we were always starving, hungry, worried. When we started middle school what were the duty then? Why did I get detentions? Because I had to drop Dave and Benny off at other schools, and then run to school. And Social Services knew; they knew, they knew all the fucking while. And I'm getting detentions.

After leaving care, Joyce found herself a council tenancy and took two of her younger siblings into her home until they too found their 'independence'. In her early twenties she moved to London with her then boyfriend, who she had a child with. The relationship broke down and Joyce returned to Fenton after a year to be near her siblings.

Joyce's subjectivity today, and practice as a mother, displays a high degree of receptivity to contemporary political, social and institutional goals, and she is fiercely attached to the idea of realising the autonomy of her child. In the passage below she shows her adherence to these principles; she takes them as an imperative, she must realise her child's ability to become an independent and economically interested adult; for Lucy to be able to get out, as she says, from 'this shitty little box and this shitty little benefits system' and 'get your job and have your wage.' The intensity, passion and urgency of her devotion to Lucy's self-realisation is fundamentally expressive of her class positioning and provides a contrast to the 'relaxed and nurturing facilitator' found in middle-class theories of mothering (Walkerdine: 1989; 83). Joyce's labour of aspiration for her child cannot be hidden - it's a job, she has to push, put the time and effort in, and push herself and her child forward.

Joyce: being a parent is not just having a kid and watching it grow up; it's a job, you have to teach your child the right and the wrongs, you have to teach your child how to bring out the best, you have to sort of push them, encourage them, so that they are going to be, they are going to have opportunities open to them, they going to have, be, so much more enlightened than you were, they're going to have so much more than what you had. I want her to do the things, the things I weren't able to do as a child, I want her to do the things I were unable to do as an adult. I'm not going to get that unless I put the time and the effort in with her; children need understanding, they need parents to speak to them and explain things and to be there; that gives your child a lot of emotional and mental stability regardless of everything else that's going on like 'oh we're poor, we haven't got enough money for the bills,' shit like that. I've always spoke to her and I've always, I might not have explained things FULLY, but I've explained things to the point where it's a basic understanding. I've said to her so many times: 'you do need to have sort of a plan Lucy; you do need to push yourself forward ...'

Rose's (1999) articulation of the idea that techniques of government work through aligning an individual's pleasures and desires with liberalism's goals, within the context of Joyce's experience, is thin; it does not give expression to the pain and hurt, the contradictions and the limits placed upon her life as a working-class woman aspiring to be the 'right kind of mother'. Joyce's mothering practices and emotional energies are geared up to enabling her daughter, as a subordinated subject, to claim for herself the privileges of the powerful. She takes upon herself the project of inclusion and rescue for Lucy through the burdens of her classed labour of care whilst at the same time recognising that the very value orientations that she attempts to make Lucy 'fit in' with

and 'adhere to' are the ones that have refused her recognition and access to the resources required to be a person of value (below).

Indeed her heavy emotional investments in her mothering identity and responsibilities are painfully contradictory when set besides her reflexive understanding of the symbolic and material constraints placed upon their lives. She is positioned by the narrative of autonomy and good enough mothering and is radically excluded from realising its ideals by her and her daughter's location in social space; creating a critical and unbearable contradiction in her sense of self.

Joyce: I just believe it's been so hard trying to do right things by your child. It's left me crumbling; basically at times I felt as though I could just crumble. I've had no life, no real enjoyment for myself, but drop that aside; I can deal with that self-sacrifice cos I know that my daughter's going to grow up and she's going to have opportunities that weren't open to me...I'm going to make sure that she gets somewhere you know within life; sort of like certain structures that we are called to have to adhere to, you know in order to be 'cha-cha,' a valid human being.

Mark: One of the writers that I'm reading about - they talk about the capitals that are available to people [...] he talks about educational, cultural, social capitals as well as economic capital (yeah) and he talks about how it is very difficult for people from working-class backgrounds to get anywhere, to trade up

Joyce: Yeah; there is nothing to exchange, there is nothing as a base to even start you know to build upon, cos this is why I'm saying to you, it's better to know your place. No Mark - know your place and resolve yourself, not for your own good but for your children's being; to help them so that they are not stigmatised, that they are not within the same sort of classification or class. So that's what I have to do. Lower class; yeah I know where it is, I know where I am within it...

For Joyce it is 'the financial,' the not being able to afford things for Lucy, the inability to take her child out in the way other people do, not being able to purchase carpets for the house, not being able to pay the bills to keep her warm, it's about the cyclical problems of debt and then self-denial, of a future blocked. This inability to access resources for Joyce, however, is always framed within an understanding of who she is taken to be, of what valuation is placed upon her body; that which she puts so much effort in trying not to be. She is acutely aware of the categorisations and representations of political and societal discourses surrounding the single mother as welfare subject. She constantly referred to her experience of being evaluated as 'a second class citizen,' 'a twat,' 'a bit of a bludger,' 'a bit of a fuck it you know,' 'the scum bag, doley scum bag class.' These experiences of misrecognition envelop her, they seep into her own sense of self, and

they provide for a powerful sense of her and her daughter's exclusion from material and symbolic circuits of recognition and exchange.

The conception of childhood innocence and the correlative and normative emphasis on the development of the autonomous self through the nurturing activities of the good enough mother have been deeply embedded in narratives of self-identity in contemporary western societies (Lawler: 2000). As referred to earlier this can act as a mechanism for the pathologising of mothers in the public sphere without paying attention to the material and symbolic restraints upon their and their children's lives. It also serves, however, to sensitise and activate and promote particular claims by the 'adult-child' within the family relation. It is a narrative of childhood as the 'cradle of the self' which profoundly shapes the way we view ourselves, providing a logical and sequential plot from which 'later events are understood as a culmination and actualisation of prior events' (Lawler: 2000; 35). When things go wrong, claims to injury may be made, and the mother becomes the intense focus for feelings of affective blame and hurt. Joyce, more than all the mothers in this research, feels and embodies the burdens of this double movement of pathology:

And there's that other thing you know like there was once a study done in America about single parents and how generation after generation, they just seemed to have children that ended up on benefits that have children that end up on benefits; well I saw my mum not just struggle on benefits but with her personal life - she just popped all of us out, she didn't have a good time being a parent, and she wasn't a particularly good parent either. And I've had to struggle with my personal life and I've had to be on fucking benefits, but my daughter's not going to do that; I'll fucking kill myself before that happens, and I'll give my child away to somebody who has got everything to offer to my child...

Joyce's heavy investment in her mothering practice and identity are a way for her to define herself against her own mother and the classed stigmatisation that she feels when she enters into institutional and social spaces. Her 'blaming' of her mother is understandable given her experience, but it realises a recurring and re-iterative psychic scene from which she is constantly affected and from which she then has to attempt to reconstruct herself again. When Joyce experiences forms of classed misrecognition from others in social and institutional spaces as marking her as lacking and deficient, it returns her to this locus of pain. She experiences the misrecognition of her person as that what she most desires to dis-identify from, her mother.

This is incredibly sensitive because it is personal, because there is so much investment in the figure of the mother. I am not suggesting for one moment that Joyce can simply leave her pain and take on board a socio-political analysis that would enable her to see her mother and herself in relation to this dynamic. What is apparent however is that there are similar processes, but for differing purposes and interests, at work within political and media rhetoric that seeks to defend the purity and respectability of its subject middle-class audience (its sense of ontological security, its sense of propriety and moral worth) through its constitution and expulsion of the pathological welfare mother as its 'Other', the unrespectable, indecent.

Joyce internalises such a dynamic through class disidentification, by defining herself as other to her mother. By investing so heavily in 'doing it differently,' she takes upon herself all the burdens of a middle-class normativity and dis-identification from her class positioning without the necessary resources that go along with it. It is here that Joyce's experience of misrecognition runs side-by-side with her classed resentment. For Joyce, it is the failure of state institutions to act on behalf of her as the child, the lack of proper penetration into the domestic realm, the failure to protect her from her mother's 'failings' that provides another acute site for claim to injury, a claim that never receives recognition:

It's the story of my fucking life, nobody wants to fucking deal with you, nobody wants to help you, but as an adult they all want to point a finger and say 'well you shouldn't be doing this, you shouldn't be doing that, you should be doing this'. Well they knew that we were malnourished, they knew that, they wrote it down on the social services report love, because I've gone right back to when I were six. So I've had them ignore my health for ages as a child, and now as an adult I'm supposed to all of a sudden look after myself, be concerned about myself. Ha: you left us all that time, you knew we were eating fucking cat biscuits. Mark, it were either that or pickled gherkins, you know - take your choice. All the time social services and educational authorities calling round to our house, 'your children aren't at school, your children are undernourished, they've not got a dentist.' Nowt ever happened, they just fucking left us. At every point in my life it's a social worker saying the fucking obvious - 'the house is a mess' - but if you had gone through to the other rooms you would have seen the real fucking shit we were living in. All kinds of stuff; nobody ever turned round to my mum and said you are going to lose your kids, unless you do this and if you don't do it we are going to take them. Maybe years ago she would have got her fucking act together and we could have had a mother.

Joyce, today, without the requisite and authorised forms of cultural, economic and educative capitals to 'progress' in a culture of individualised interest and autonomy

carries with her the burdens of emotional injury from these childhood experiences alongside her sense of classed resentment at the failure of authority to protect her from them. As an adult, and as a working-class woman, her vulnerability is perceived in terms of dependency and failure. The injuries she incurred, and the inequalities within which she lives, are simply unacknowledged. Joyce the adult cannot be vulnerable, in need; and if she is, then she must cure and care for herself. Both Joyce's claims for injury (as a neglected child) and her claims to be recognised as the right kind of person (a sensitive, responsible and respectable mother) are limited and transfigured by her class position - a situation which is compounded by and inevitably linked to the limits that are put on her for accessing both economic and material resources as well as emotional support for enabling Lucy to move into those circuits of exchange that will realise her person as a 'valid human being'.

Throughout the period of research Joyce refers to any attempt to make a claim (for recognition, or entitlement to resource) as something that 'knocks you'; it is always an experience that realises a physically embodied psychic injury. 'It knocks you,' 'and that's how you get knocked back,' 'Lucy and I got knocked back for that,' (Community Care Grant), 'I got knocked back from the government,' (welfare sanction), 'it does knock you back, it really does,' 'I got knocked back from Options, I got knocked back from the Co-op, one time I got knocked back from the Pound shop,' (employment), 'it really knocked me back,' 'you get knocked by people in your immediate area,' 'you do get knocked, you really do Mark, you get knocked,' (social recognition); 'all these things knock you down': 'stay there, know your place'.

It is a constant theme of my time with Joyce; complex subject positions reconfigure themselves, reverberate through her speech and body, they hold her from outside and inside, put her in place, determine her movement, categorise her, deny her, knock her back. She can find no exit, she is left with a sense of being fixed, of being bounced back when trying to move through space. This is the pain of her embodied relation to class (like crumbling, 'I could just crumble'). She has the experience of accruing to her person 'negative value,' it is an experience that provides for 'a systematic undermining of value' and one that closes down 'the possibilities for exchange' (Skeggs: 2002).

Joyce, below, returns the analysis to the description of Fenton that Mandy gave in Chapter 3. Indeed she appears to have 'fallen into the zone of enduring social liminality' where she is effectively isolated 'from neighbouring categories' and where a sense of 'community' and the subjective sentiment of having a place of her own is 'eroded by feelings of insecurity and the distinctly negative experience of fixity' (Wacquant 2008; 12). For Joyce this insecurity is true 'at the level of the structure and texture of everyday social relations' and creates a 'muted sentiment of guilt and shame whose unacknowledged weight warps human contact' (ibid; 239).

Joyce, map: I quite like this route (outlines a walk) because it's quiet and I don't know people and I'm not bumping into people I know and I'm not bumping into their problems; and I'm not having to fucking explain mine ...

Mark: Do you get that a lot ...

Joyce: Well you've just seen, I've just come over from there and I've bumped into Steve; you know, you are on the way home and you bump into somebody, it's like a ten minute discussion. It's just like when you've got to explain... and you just sound like a bum; and let's face it, it doesn't matter what they think, I haven't got anything Mark. The world looks at me and thinks I'm a fucking bum; I'm claiming a benefit that puts you straight on the bum list ...

Mark: But a lot of people claim benefits...

Joyce: Yeah and why do you think that they call us all dossers, doley fucking scumbags, sluts that just keep on popping out babies so they can have extra money? ... I fucking hear it all (marks a cemetery on her route) ... the St Mathew's cemetery... but you can't let Bessie off (her dog) because some of the students are like that: 'Rottweiler!' and I just think to myself 'get over it,' but yeah St Mathew's cemetery we sometimes walk over there, it's quite nice, and I tell you what, we go to the St Cuthbert's cemetery me and her and sit at back of there; and round the back of (local church)...

The relations of propriety that Joyce feels constrain her through judgement of her person entail that she searches for respite from the proper; her spatial practices operate through a tactics of evasion (de Certeau: 1988). The local cemetery offers a temporary resting place, a place which, until those students step into its spaces, interrupts conventional time and evaluation. It is a space where she finds common ground with all that is unwanted and unrecognised and pushed out onto the margins of material and social space, a site for the expulsion of the truly abject in modern life; those subjects which have ceased to be productive, the permanently unemployed, those that are on the 'bum list'. In incorporating herself within such a space of 'deviancy' Joyce provides a horrid twist to Goffman's observations of how stigma serves to produce counter

identities from 'the aggregate of persons who are likely to have to suffer the same deprivations as (they suffer) because of having the same stigma' (cited in Shields: 2008; 247).

For Sayer, Joyce's particular experience of class would perhaps emphasise that 'one cannot, in fact, without contradiction, describe (or denounce) the inhuman conditions of existence that are imposed on some, and at the same time credit those who suffer them with the real fulfilment of human potentialities' (Sayer: 2005; 207). There is, though, something more to be said of Joyce other than this failure to realise 'potentiality'. Her life, rather, is an expression of values that can have no neat summation. Like the other working-class mothers in my research it cannot be over-emphasised how much of an investment Joyce has made in her care for Lucy. She, like the other working-class women, defines herself through her relation to her child and through the roles that she takes on for her wellbeing, she considers her mothering as a work role bound by love. Such a labour of love is considered non-negotiable and beyond valuation, it cannot be exchanged for anything else, it cannot be given up. In her life 'the caring self, lived and produced on a daily basis is a gendered and classed self, produced through care of others, generated through self production and denial' (Skeggs: 2002; 65).

I conclude this chapter by turning away from the 'absences, failures, degradations, injuries and defeats' of class experience to focus upon the relations of care and attention present in many of the other working-class women's lives as they emerge from their classed relation to their attachment to geographies of care and responsibility. It is here that Wacquant's analysis of working-class anomie fails to capture the moral and social values that circulate within the women's circuits of relationality in Fenton. Indeed whilst they, like Joyce, could be said to be 'durably marginalised' by wider symbolic processes (Wacquant: 2008; 244), their lives and sense of relation to one another have not declined or fragmented to 'individual strategies of 'self-provisioning' (Wacquant: 2008; 244). So whilst they may be subjects compelled to form their subjectivity out of their objectification by others, they are also able to turn towards each other and away from the denigration and devaluation that Joyce experiences so acutely.

7.6 Care-taking

In this respect there is an inversion of Elias' study of established and outsider relationships (1994) within Fenton, at least in terms of face-to-face relationships. It is the relatively un-integrated and newly arriving (and soon to depart, but be replaced) student and young professional population that embodies the greater power differential and influence over its trajectory and spaces. Yet it is the integrative function of belonging to dis-established groups and the experience of living within conditions of material precarity that many of the working-class women point to as cementing their relationships and establishing a sense of belonging and value for self and other.

I would not be so bold as to claim theirs is a 'collective identification' of one group in relation to another, and it certainly does not express 'the gratifying euphoria that goes to a group of higher value' (Elias: 1994; xviii) established through a contempt for other groups that perhaps defines the middle-class sense of distinction within the wider symbolic. I hold with the view that 'no automatic spirit of conformity, consensus or agreed standards flow from experience of deprivation and external disapproval' (Day: 2006; 113). Nonetheless, and as a 'generalisation', identification between the working-class women, and articulations of belonging and community were prevalent, ubiquitous, even as they asserted their autonomy and independence. That this identification does not take on, self-consciously, the language of class should be no surprise. Without the recourse to wider political institution to voice their situation, and disqualified from using the language of class through prevalent pathologisation, the women turn to their everyday lives and forms of sociality to find value amongst each other and make sense of their realities:

Elaine, map: I get a tremendous sense of pride, I've grown up here, and people, it's hard to explain, the people who've struggled throughout their lives living here, they know your struggles and you see them going through struggles so it makes you have compassion for them - like we are all in this for good; together. It's like certain groups and certain places give it a certain family feel or you know - I know that person, and you do, and you say hello to them going down the street. You know - maybe something's happened and you spread the word ... we tell each other and have our gossip. I know that people respect other people, people respect each other ... it's like over there Mark, you know, in that house where the alcoholics go in; over there where we stopped yesterday at the door. They are the loveliest people you can talk to, they are lovely, and I can get on great with

them all when we sit and talk, they are nice to talk to. You see you can't judge people; you get to know them first...

When Elaine talks of compassion she is not invoking 'the subject of compassionate action' which works to displace attention away from 'social interdependence' as a structural phenomenon to move 'our' attachments to a 'faith that binds to itself a visible, lived community' (Berlant: 2004; 3). Neither is Elaine talking about compassion as something bestowed upon 'those lacking the foundations for belonging where we live,' (ibid; 3) that was perhaps implicit in middle-class accounts of their care and attention. In this sense compassion is not a private response to a scene of suffering, it is not a value which can bestow significance upon the one who gives to someone who lacks what the giver has (Berlant: 2004). As a form of 'social training,' Elaine's evocation of compassion has links with the historical generation of her engendered and classed relation to care, but it is also rooted in present circumstance and within the shared understanding and experience of a form of restricted agency, from which the value practices of reliance, obligation and relationship with others is informed. They are 'all in this for good; together' and it is this that makes it familiar, that which extends its form of sociality and form of 'sympathetic agency' beyond the boundaries of middle-class perspectives.

The women's compassion, their care and attention, is owned by no one person in particular; it circulates within a different economy. It holds a use value that helps the women to ameliorate their experiences of being haunted by their precarity in present time (Skeggs: 2011). Processes of evaluatory judgement of 'worth' here find a different register within the contexts of the working-class women's lives; value judgements arise from understanding others' circumstances. When Elaine says 'you can't judge people, you get to know them first,' she is talking from her working-class experience of being judged by others 'who have got no bloody idea'.

Sayer is right to observe that working-class pride takes many forms, but is wrong in assuming that it 'is generally more common amongst men than women' (2005; 181). The pride that Elaine points to in her life is present in the strong sense of the term amongst many of the working-class women. They embody, display and share their pride and respect for one another through their mutual recognition of their capacities for 'making do' in the cycle of 'what is' and for their social labour and caring about others

within the constraints they face. Donna, below, provides an illustration of this shared labour of care and attention within her social milieu that informs such pride and respect. It should neither be read as an exception nor as eulogy, but rather as a reflection upon their everyday practice.

Donna, working-class: This is like a café this house, everyone comes to this house, and say, like if someone's here, I can't eat my tea on my own, they come round here and have a chat, tell their worries, and things; they do, honest, it's weird ... you see we all work together, money, food and tea. Like for instance if people phone me and say can you pick my kids off from school even if it's pissing down with rain I'll go do it, or 'Can you watch me kids?' – 'oh go on then'. If people phone me up and ask me to do summat for them I'll do it. I feel you ought to be tret how you are tret, same as you want to be tret and that's how I see it. Like if people shit on me I'll shit back on them; that one up the road, if I see her I'll say hello, but she shit on me - but mostly we all work together; money, food and tea...

Wellman asserts that in an age of networked individualism, a person's agency is both freed and problematized by release from traditional forms of sociality. At the same time he assumes that in 'older,' more 'traditional' forms of community it 'is easier for people in groups to sit back and let group dynamics and densely-knit structures do the work' (2001; 234). The labour involved in maintaining, repairing and fostering the working-class women's forms of sociality is de-valued through such a perspective. It is a perspective that carries with it assumptions established within normative notions of the subject; a view of agency defined in relation to self; it only recognises the individual work of subjects in terms of accruing value to their selves. The working-class women never 'sit back and let group dynamics and densely knit structures do the work'. They establish relationships with others that provide a barrier to the material and emotional threats they face in their lives; they work at replacing individual vulnerability with collective forms of agency that help and support one another emotionally, physically, and materially.

Donna's reference to the consequences of breaking ranks warns against idealised accounts of working-class inter-dependency and highlights the need for an account of the micro-practices of power that operate within their spaces, including their gendered realisation. But she, like Elaine, and most of the other working-class women, support each other in the best way they can; within the formation of their social relationships they 'work together; money, food, and tea'. The working-class women, then, are

embedded within social relationships that are far removed from any conception of 'networked individualism' or forms of associational belonging that typify the middle-class women's networks of sociality. In distinction, they are relational parts in the production of a larger and open form of sociality for which their time, energy and attention is given over to producing and maintaining, but also transforming their circumstances within the present material and symbolic constraints they face. Their relation and sense of belonging to 'Fenton' and each other, here, is akin to 'care-taking' as opposed to the 'stewardship' of middle-class practice (Cooper: 2007).

7.7 'The trouble is to be expected'

The pathologisation of the working-class family and forms of working-class sociality as symbolising the fragmentation of society and cause of its ills, neglects this register in defence of its own forms of propriety. Indeed it is frequently the nature of these relationships as either 'extended' or as embedded in forms of 'bonding' capital that become the focus for intervention and reform as well as symbolic assault. Even the most 'sympathetic' of the social research which focuses upon the social capital of the 'poor' has had a tendency to treat its object of study as the 'excluded' or the 'disadvantaged' and thereby frame its findings within an analysis of lack. Social capital, here, is not regarded as an active property generated within a relational dynamic that encompasses the 'whole' of social space. Instead it is perceived as the production and the property of the individuals or groups themselves within their material and symbolic spaces of limitation;

The pervasive use of strong ties by the poor and insecure is a response to economic pressure: they believe themselves to be without alternatives, and the adaptive nature of these reciprocity networks is the main theme of the analysts...the heavy concentration of social energy in strong ties has the impact of fragmenting communities of the poor into encapsulated networks with poor connections between these units; individuals so encapsulated may then lose some of the advantages associated with the outreach of weak ties. This may be one reason why poverty is self-perpetuating. Certainly programs meant to provide social services to the poor have frequently had trouble in their outreach efforts. From the network arguments advanced here, one can see that the trouble is to be expected (Granovetter: 1983; 213).

The perspective that focusses upon the social capital of the poor as a cultural factor in the reproduction of inequality and poverty are an illustration of Foucault's grid of intelligibility of homo oeconomicus being applied through social 'theory' to evaluate the

lives of working-class persons. Social relations become eviscerated, the 'individual' is conceived in terms of (future) capital-ability, defined in terms of its nature as an enterprising self. This is a subject unencumbered by obligations and ties other than to its own self, a self who enters into relationships premised upon exchange as a form of accrual. Such a framing of relationships is inadequate for understanding the significance and value of the working-class women's forms of sociality; their love and intimacy, reliance on, and care for, one another becomes envisaged as the block to their fulfilling and optimising of 'self,' a self that gives over its time to align itself to those normative and productive activities of capital accrual. The limitations of these values, and the limited access to the circuits of exchange that make them realisable, the way they work through exclusions to produce the logic of inequality and its 'game of differentiations,' are ignored (Foucault: 2010; 142).

Such perspectives are, in Bourdieu's terms, performative acts of symbolic violence. The 'disadvantaged' are seen to move within social networks that reproduce and maintain their poverty; it is their own relationships that close down possibilities of escaping the conditions of social exclusion. The 'excluded' suffer from a narrowing of vision and lack of awareness of other choices, they lack aspiration. Indeed their 'fixity' in place derives, in part, from the fact that they see 'no reason to leave'. Perspective needs to be broadened to focus upon the ways in which the working-class women in my research are excluded from entering those social spaces that middle-class persons are able to travel through, and the way they are framed within the institutional spaces that they are drawn. Here it can be seen that questions of aspiration, capacity, will and achievement are not to be answered by a focus upon individual agency and determination of choice but through understanding them in terms of positioning in relation to power.

Here the boundaries and exclusions of classed relations permeate everyday forms of sociality. The advantages of middle-class networks of 'weak ties' are, in Tina's life, as much predicated on her classed positioning as they are on her 'unwillingness' to 'reach out';

Tina: I do feel uncomfortable; it's because ... I'm socially inept on account of how I ain't been there for so long. It isn't because I feel inferior to them it's just that I haven't got the topics of conversation; so once you say hello, my name's Tina, I'm a single parent with 5 children - what else

have you got to talk about? ... and you tend to end up sitting there while they're all talking about this and that, especially the arts, oh god or just summat that's as everyday as music.

Donna, too, identifies how such processes are instituted and given authority within Fenton on a larger scale. She highlights the inequalities that inhere in the relationship between the middle-class involvements in 'community' encountered in Chapter 4 and her own working-class milieu. Like Sophie in Chapter 4, she points to the conflict of interest in Fenton; but in different terms. Ethnic divisions between the 'poor whites' and 'ethnic others' are replaced by a social analysis of the processes of exclusion and entitlement at work in the reshaping of her neighbourhood spaces;

Donna: It's changed, people still have a sense of community but I think a lot of people have cottoned on to this area, that it's a money spinner...a lot of people use this area for that, there might be some good things that have come out of it but there is also some shit ... it's been a way for the government to throw money and make out they've been doing something when really they haven't... there is obviously the police and people making money from the area; people that might not be criminals but they are educated criminals really - not your just typical go out and thuggerise, smash bottles and get done for criminal damage. They know the laws, how to get things by putting the wording right, or picking up the right piece of paper sometimes. They've gained all this knowledge of how to use their brains, they go and get the jobs; when anything comes up like an opportunity they always comes along and scoops it up, instead of like distributing it to people who need that distribution, need that peg up...

Donna works on what Willis calls 'double edges'; she uses reversals and unexpected combinations, and repositions them within the context she believes me to be establishing for the discussion of 'problem people, problem places'. The 'bad guys' are not the pathologized amongst her community, they are the police, the councillors, and those involved in the community organisations that have established themselves in Fenton. She uses her apparent subordinate position to 'exploit the slippery grounds between signifier and signified not as analytic exercise but for practical purposes on the profound grounds of history' (Willis: 2010; 13).

Her feelings are not unique amongst the working-class women; they are expressive of the 'proper envy' of persons who do not get access to that opportunity for a 'leg up' (Sayer, citing Steedman: 2005a; 150). The affective arises from a sense of dispossession, a classed response to felt inequality, but the moral claim is not right to ownership or sole possession of Fenton's spaces. What is central is how her perspective and interests – and 'those like her' – are excluded from the right to participate in defining its spaces.

Donna understands that she cannot accumulate the required disposition, resources and goods to be recognised as a legitimate player in the social fields of Fenton. This does not mean that all the women share is their 'common excommunication' (Bourdieu: 2010; 129). If Fenton has an exchange value for middle-class selves, a space from which they can accrue cultural, educational and economic capital, as well as moral and ethical worth through relation to 'community', then it has use value for the working-class women.

8. Conclusions

This thesis has applied a relational theory of class to the empirical study of the experience and practices of working and middle-class women resident within the same neighbourhood. In doing so I have marked the differential access the working and middle-class women have to the processes of 'individualisation' and 'de-tradition' through recourse to property and propriety, emphasising that it is the women's respective positioning within relations of class that conditions what type of choices for self and self-making are available to them. These differences in positioning are embodied and lived out in the spaces of Fenton through contrasting classed and engendered relations to self and others, and are expressive of differing ontological relations to space, time, and value. By exploring the respective positioning, perspectives, and practices of the women within these relationships of class I have highlighted the differing circuits of value based on appropriation, loss, conflict and exploitation. Here, and as Bourdieu observes, the 'real' is the 'relational', a relation that manifests itself in the spaces of Fenton and the lives of the women of this research as one of embodied class (dis)entitlement.

One of the privileges of being able to undertake a PhD is that it provides opportunity for relative shelter and protection from what Savage identifies as the normalisation of academic disciplines within an audit culture. For Savage this culture, and the politics of method and the changing research techniques that are produced within it, has been implicated in a broader process of building a representation of a modern, rational, post imperial nation to produce 'new understandings of time, change, space, class, and gender' (2010; vii); ones that have in themselves contributed to the assumption of the weakening of the importance of class as an explanatory concept for understanding social relations. Ethnographic research that attempts to detail and embed itself within study of situated experience and cultural practice is key to providing a counter to such narratives. My thesis confirms that contemporary academic voices which posit a weakening of the salience of 'class in general and of working-class formation, in particular, rely on other kinds of evidence' than local ethnographic data (Savage: 2005; 101).

A contribution of my thesis, here, has been the use of an ethnographic approach that has deployed a carefully thought through and designed set of mixed qualitative methods. These methods, conducted alongside relations established over time, embedded the interview within the materiality of Fenton and the respondents' lives. They were essential in drawing out the importance of locality in the study of class formation and subjectivities, the ways in which social identities are performatively produced in relation to place and to the networks of sociality that they are immersed in. They helped elucidate the women's divergent 'geographies of loyalty and affect', but they also evidenced that these emerge from classed and engendered legacies rather than freedom from 'ascriptive ties'. In doing so they underscored that those 'new understandings of gender, class, space and time' have an uneven and unsatisfactory application for understanding the women's experience and practices.

Whilst the methods focussed upon the 'everyday' they provided insight into the differing forms of social labour and reflexivity the women practice in their lives. Katy, in talking through her 'tat bag' in conjunction with negotiating her real and imagined dialogic others and the emotional and material realities of her life within Fenton, provided example of the benefits of making a qualitative interview less abstract, a method able to elicit reflexivity by 'thinking through things rather than thinking them through' (Connor: 2002; 347). My analysis of the data that emerged emphasised that Katy, as a working-class woman, expresses 'forms of consciousness and behaviour' that are not 'spontaneous' or 'resolutely single levelled', without depth of thought and value (Skeggs: 2004; 176).

Here my analysis departs from Savage's analysis of class, place and 'identity' (2005, 2010). His use and reliance upon Bourdieu's concept of habitus leads him to mark working-class practice with the lexicon of 'dwelling' as opposed to the (sociologically critiqued) self-reflexivity he identifies in the practices of the middle-classes. The practice of reflexivity is not the sole possession of one class over another. The working-class women in this thesis are reflexive about their lives and the conditions in which they find themselves living in. Their reflexivity, however, takes up different forms to middle-class practice, ones that do not express 'a capability of the fortunate (or the sociologically

inclined), a regulatory form of self-presentation, or a transformative process of identification' (Adams: 2006; 524).

Their reflexive practices are connected to their awareness and fear of being judged by others, and informed through their differing relation to history and positioning within relations of class and gender. It is a reflexivity expressed through their embeddedness in 'a differentiated resource context' to the middle-class women's, bound up with the complexity of their material and emotional lives, structured by different relations to insecurity, and by lack of access and entitlement. Reflexivity concerns itself not with projects of future attainment and accrual but with present survival and relief, with deflection and re-evaluation; and with concern and care for others more often than presentation of 'self'. What I would emphasise here is that within the 'cramped' material and symbolic spaces they negotiate they express forms of subjectivity that are active, creative, critical and analytical of their 'situation'; mobile, ironic, and 'sharp' in their perception.

Chapters 3 and 4 marked the presence, production and performance of aesthetic, ethical and omnivorous 'selves' in middle-class narratives. In Foucauldian terms, the display of reflexivity and 'agency' found there would be the subject's production and incorporation within changing normative requirements of bio-political power. Bourdieu's thought retains a focus on relative positioning, access to resources and symbolic legitimisation. These are persons whose self-constitution is marked by privilege and who rely on the resources of 'time, knowledge, information, bodily investment, mobility across cultural boundaries and social networking' (Skeggs: 2004; 144).

As Chapter 3 emphasised, the middle-class women carried with them into Fenton the social and cultural inheritances and embodiments of privilege, they were loaded through generational transmission with those types of capital that are required and recognised within its social fields; allowing access to circuits of exchange that were framed in their interests. It is in these terms that they resemble Skeggs' middle-class subjects of embodied entitlement and appropriation who are able to move across social space and enter the fields of education, consumption, employment, and welfare for the conversion and accrual of value.

A focus upon working-class experience provided an understanding of the limits to reflexive individualisation, and the presumptions hidden beneath the theories of governmental selves; 'the most fundamental marker of class [in their lives] was that of exclusion' (Skeggs: 2002; 162). They were, in this sense, not 'self-owning', they did not have the resources to propertize themselves. Their transition from youth to adulthood was for the most part brief, relative to middle-class experiences, and mediated through the take-up of motherhood within the circumscribed material and symbolic possibilities for alternative forms of 'self-realisation'. The forms of cultural and social capital they inherited, their forms of sociality and the value practices they embody were not recognised within symbolic systems of exchange; their abilities to move across space circumscribed.

Theories and assumptions of an epochal transformation of social relations, and of subjects cut free of ascriptive ties of class and gender need testing not just through the study of working-class experience but also middle-class (Chapters 3 and 4). The middle-class women are not the simple subjects of self-interest and accumulation found in Bourdieu's theory, nor can they be simply described through the grid of Homo Oeconomicus assumed within some theorisations of governmentality. Whilst they may be aligned more favourably to the 'logic of capital' and, as privileged governmental subjects, remain 'free' of externally imposed forms of regulation, they nonetheless bear the burdens of liberty through their contradictory and ambivalent positioning as women within the 'new economy'.

It is here that accounts of both sides of the class relation require attention to 'the deep embeddedness of the production of subjectivity in the social and cultural'; it is 'the situated and specifically local character of how people live and transform their lives that is important' (Walkerdine: 2001; 15). Skeggs may be subjected to the criticism that her work ignores these particularities in middle-class experience. There is a danger that her use of Bourdieu to understand middle-class practice 'can appear reductive because it appears to link values, taste and perception' too directly to class interests through exclusive attention upon the ways in which economic, cultural and social capital are deployed instrumentally for self-advancement (Savage: 2005; 13). So whilst her

empirical work draws attention to the lived experience of working-class subjective formation as being processual, ambivalent, contradictory and configured through complex values, the middle-class appear tied to her reading of Bourdieu's habitus as an instrumentalising exchange based self.

It may be argued that I have fallen into such a trap; that I have not given due weight to middle-class experiences of living within times of 'transformation', that I have not been sensitive enough to the heterogeneity of the middle-class women's lives. As I emphasised in Chapter 1, however, my concern has not been to evoke the irreducibility of their 'difference'. My analysis has not focused on middle-class women as individuals, nor on middle-class experience per se, but upon the ways such experience impacts upon and helps inform and reproduce relationships of class. It is here that I applied and explored the validity of Skeggs' own theorisation of class, and her conception of middle-class proprietary evaluation and embodied entitlement (aesthetic, moral, ethical, cultural) through an empirical exploration of middle-class perspectives and practices of encounter with working-class persons (Chapter 4). Considered within the perspective of class relations, I found it an adequate, if uncomfortable, account of middle-class practice.

I underscored the ways in which class was made and functions in proximate relations as a productive source for the constitution and consolidation of middle-class selves through the pragmatics of propriety, property and affect; emphasising that 'what we read as objective class divisions are produced and maintained by the middle-class in the minutiae of everyday practice, as judgements of culture are put into effect' (Skeggs: 2004; 118). Class was realised in their lives as a 'performative statement of value' to produce a sense of distinction and worth, but also to secure their sense of unease and anxiety. It was constituted through its citation within and through the discursive registers of space, femininity, sexuality, ethnicity, citizenship and care. The perspective lens established by the performative inscriptions of previous and historical class inscriptions determined and influenced the ways the women saw and understood their social others and informed their sense of place.

It was here that they were able to fuse 'the rational and acquisitive self' with the 'caring and attentive self' through their performative identity production in relationship to their social others. Underlying their claims upon, and investment in, the spaces of Fenton and the social field of welfare were ideas about community borrowed 'from a stockpile of cultural resources and socially acquired impressions' (Day: 2006; 185). These were drawn upon in an attempt to bring Fenton's spaces and residents in line with dominant representations of community, a particular understanding of what its 'desirable social and ethical qualities' should be (ibid; 185). The affective dimension behind their work of boundary formation was expressive and productive of specific forms of classed caring practice. The ideal relation of openness and generosity towards others was circumscribed by the asymmetrical valuation of other bodies, by the way social norms and values determined which bodies were recognised as 'possessing property that can be given and which bodies are devoid of property and so can only benefit from the generosity of others' (Diprose: 2002; 9).

Classed judgements arise through affective and transformative dimensions that are socially produced from within unequal relations of power. Class, here, is about the work of inscription but it is also about the authorisation and valuation of particular perspectives; issues of distribution and access to resources are complexly tied to, and determined by the ways in which recognition and legitimacy are conferred. The individualisation of class entails that social inequalities are 'made to inhere within the person, so that it is persons themselves who can be judged and found wanting, and persons themselves who can be made to bear the 'hidden injuries' of inequality' (Lawler: 2003; 113).

The experience of misrecognition is re-iterative in the working-class women's lives (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). It is an experience which is accretive; where many have the sense of being 'not listened to, interrupted, not taken seriously, or patronised or viewed [in a way that is] insensitive to [their] social disadvantage' (Sayer: 2005). In this sense the working-class women are exposed to the 'collective disgrace' (Elias: 1994; 103) attached to them by more powerful groups, whether through the micro-practices and relations of everyday interaction (Chapter 5), or the more intensive regulation and disciplining of

their persons within institutional spaces (Chapter 6), or through stigmatisation within wider circuits of cultural production (Chapter 7).

In some cases, perhaps in many cases, the 'standard invectives and stereotyped blame gossip' of middle-class projections anchors itself in 'the personality structure' of the working-class women (Elias: 1994); and the losses that lead to grief become detached from the social relations which generate them (Frost: 2008). Misrecognition as a form of oppression which imprisons someone in a false, distorted and reduced mode of being is one aspect of working-class experience. In this thesis, however, I have emphasised other experiences, ones that are more complex, reflexive, and resistive; though still painful, contradictory and ambivalent.

The working-class women are not simple subjects of shame, they do not simply internalise the values of the dominant symbolic nor indeed the contempt that 'others' express towards their persons; they are not 'dominated' in those terms. They are acutely aware of the perspectives and negative evaluatory judgements of their classed others and they resist the 'performative power of designation' in significant ways. In this sense the classed representations that they encounter and that circulate with authority within the dominant symbolic have their own 'substantial political reality and effects' (Skeggs: 2002; 160) because they work to position the women; but they are not 'descriptive' of their lives or subjectivities, but inaugurative' (Butler: 1997; 33).

Whilst the middle-class women 'were able to navigate themselves through classification of others, the working-class women had to negotiate these classifications to defend themselves from de-valuation' (Skeggs: 2002; 74). It is here that they manifested a very different 'positivity of interest' for advancing an everyday ethics and sense of self in relation to others as they moved through the spaces of Fenton. As Katy and Theresa highlighted in Chapter 5, their negotiation of material and symbolic space reveals 'movements in systems of value which [they entered] at a disadvantage, in which access to positive valuations were limited or closed, but in which [they are] forever trying to make the best out of limited resources' (Skeggs: 2002; 161).

Butler's celebration of the possibilities of the 'injurious address' as the 'initiating moment of counter-mobilisation' that enables and produces 'a scene of agency from ambivalence' (Butler: 1997; 163) needs, here, to be explored in relation to this working-class experience. As detailed across a range of sites, they are excluded from circuits where they can be seen as legitimate, proper selves, where moral disagreements 'that you feel you should be able to air, you can't even air ...because they say that you are being this way, that you've got an attitude; all the fucking time' (Katy, Chapter 5). This experience of class is well described by Berlant (2001). The pain that arises from the experience of diminution by others is a knowing pain, for it carries with it the understanding that the 'affects' induced from misrecognition by others are used to re-inform the propriety and sense of value of those who de-value them:

if the pain is at the juncture of you and the stereotype that represents you, you know that you are hurt not because of your relation to history but because of someone else's relation to it, a type of someone whose privilege or comfort depends on the pain that diminishes you, locks you into identity ... Pain thus organizes your specific experience of the world, *separating you from others and connecting you with others similarly shocked (but not surprised)* by the strategies of violence that constantly regenerate the bottom of the hierarchies of social value you inhabit. In this sense subaltern pain is a public form because its outcome is to make you readable, for others. (Ibid; 72, my emphasis)

Most of the working-class women in my research make the connection Berlant highlights through *shared recognition* of their experiences of this 'pain' and their restricted material circumstances, but these connections allow them to move beyond their 'suffering' to give them a sense of belonging and value within their own circuits of sociality. It is these relations that serve to protect many of the women, to a degree, from that sense of shame Sayer (2005) believes endemic within the experience of class by persons ensnared by the cultural discourses and norms of a social that has embraced individualism and individualisation.

The working-class women are acutely aware that they are excluded from the circuits of exchange that make the 'selves' of 'capital-ability'. They do not believe that society is meritocratic, they do not believe they are able to compete on equal terms. Such understanding provides for a re-evaluation of classed norms and values rather than the simple desire to emulate them, or the experience of shame at not being able to 'live up' to them. Indeed the resentment induced from encounters with those that 'have no

bloody idea' in this thesis does not arise from invidious comparison, nor solely from the anger of being judged for living in conditions not of their own making, but from the sense that their own worth, and value practices are being misrecognised.

Whilst I drew upon Skeggs for her insights and analysis of the labours of and for respectability (Chapter 5), I have also tried to draw out some of the differences of emphasis I found within my own research. Although many of the working-class women evidenced the 'emotional politics of class fuelled by insecurity, doubt, indignation and resentment' they were not all, and always, the subjects of 'an imagined (and sometimes real) superior other' that entailed that they policed 'themselves and open out every aspect of their lives, their bodies, the appearance, their homes, their caring practices and their emotional attachments to others, to judgement and scrutiny' (Skeggs: 2002; 162). There was less evidence of the anxiety and insecurity that was realised from 'attempts to pass' as middle-class than found in *Formations*. Indeed most know that efforts to 'pass' or to 'improve' in terms established by middle-class normativity will be thwarted, as much as they know they have limited time, money and energy for such attempts.

Within the preface I pointed to some of the limitations of this thesis in terms of scope. Here, in particular, I would like to highlight that there has not been space to develop a fuller description of the working-class women's relation to, and re-evaluation of, their relations with men. I have left out a large amount of material that would have extended discussion found in Chapter 5 to these areas. It is here that my analysis would have marked their independence and strength and emphasised the ways through which they are actively engaged in re-interpreting and re-negotiating normative inheritances rather than being trapped by them. These omissions provide an area for further research.

Byrne insists 'context matters' and 'knowledge is intrinsically local in its range' (2005; 810). As a socially, ethnically and culturally differentiated space Fenton is at some remove from the more 'conventional' spatialisation of class where segregation from the two sides of the class relation are more common features. Studies, such as MacDonald et al (2005) that have focussed upon white (ex) manual working-class populations resident in de-industrialised and isolated neighbourhoods have pointed to their

respondents possessing 'strikingly little awareness of their subordinate place in wider class structures' and made a connection with this to their respondents positive valuation of their neighbouring relationships (2005; 880). The first part of this argument is very different to the experiences of the working-class women in this thesis. It might be argued, here, that the women's keen awareness of their social positioning, and expressions of resentment, anxiety, and pain are a consequence of the 'opportunities for comparison with more 'successful' or affluent biographies' that the respondents of their research did not have (Ibid).

I do not want to overstate the case for this. I believe that studies such as those conducted by MacDonald may be taking their respondents at 'face value' and leave unexplored the processes of 'identification, differentiation, including recognition, disidentification, dissimulation and subjective construction' that, as Skeggs underscores (2002; 4) are crucial to the study of class and not necessarily reliant upon the direct presence of 'social others'. The notion that being fixed geographically in an isolated neighbourhood prevents an awareness of social positioning, or of dominant classed representations of that positioning, seems to me to be a weak proposition. Indeed Gwen, the only working-class woman in my research to come from such a neighbourhood, pointed to the reach of the 'extra-local' in realising her own painful sense of class when she had heard the word 'seeout' emerge from the TV set. It should also be re-iterated that in my own research the effects of proximity and close contact with 'social others' appears neither to have weakened the working-class women's sense of identification with each other nor diminished the 'unequal life chances' they have in their lives.

This thesis does not lay claim to exceptionality in its contribution toward building theory. Throughout the analysis chapters, however, I have sought to understand the applicability of different theoretical perspectives for understanding the experience of the women and to provide a fine-grained analysis of the particularity of that experience in relation to these theories. The final analysis that has informed this reading can be characterized as 'Skeggsian' because I found her work to have the most practical adequacy. The theory building of Skeggs has been challenging for me as a researcher

who was new to the discipline of social science and, in addition, with little knowledge of feminist and cultural studies. It will be plain from reading this thesis that I am in considerable debt to her work, and to the work of many others that she introduced me to. Importantly this work has provided me with a language for class and a conceptual framework for re-interpreting and understanding my past experiences and relationships with the working-class women prior to and during the research process. In this respect it has provided a 'dialogic' bridge for my analysis of working-class experience that other theorists have not been able to provide. It is of course my perspective that has informed such a reading, and any shortfalls in understanding should not be displaced.

Part of my research contribution is, I hope, that it has provided the particular perspective of a male would-be academic upon 'others' lives that has taken methodological issues seriously through incorporating them reflexively within my research design and practice. Whilst I stressed in Chapter 1 that all knowledge production is situated, that the research relation is a social relation, and that researching class and gender is also 'doing' class and gender, I have not provided as much reflexive comment as I would have liked regarding these matters. I hope that the limited space I gave to reflections upon the effects of the 'differences' between myself and the researched in terms of class and gender will not be read as mere gesture but rather point to their fuller consideration within my research. Here, I would like to emphasise that within this process I did not ignore issues of power or pretend that I could 'equalise power'; rather I have tried to 'take responsibility for not producing powerlessness' (Skeggs: 2010; 434).

I made clear that my research emerged from my experience of coming to know many of the working-class women within this thesis, but in Chapter 1 I explained the reasons why I chose not to make such 'experience' the central subject for elaboration. I emphasised that whilst reflexive practice is a crucial element in the production of accountable and responsible research, this does not entail that the researcher must necessarily make themselves the main subject/object for their public narrative. My concern in this thesis, rather, has been to attempt to elicit in the reader a partial connection to the experiences of lives other than my own. A contribution of my research, I believe, has been to provide an exploration of working-class women's experience in relation to the affective to 'make

space' for an understanding of the material and emotional realities of those who remain silenced within public spheres.

Byrne remarks that the term working-class has become 'increasingly reserved for the study of the dispossessed' (2005; 809) and that research has tended, as mine has, to focus upon this 'group' at the expense of those who would occupy a less marginalised positioning in Bourdieu's 'space of differences'. This is, as Byrne underlines, 'an absence' that requires addressing within the wider research community. Here, however, I can only emphasise that the working-class women in this thesis are not '*the working-classes*', rather they are a number of individuals who find themselves positioned in the most marginal of social spaces. Within the production and circulation of dominant representations these women have become a 'permanent demonstration project in the theatricality of power ... a dispensable subject of political representation and an indispensable object of political disposability (Connolly 1991: 206-8). It is crucial, therefore, to make space for understanding the particularity of their experience, to emphasise that whilst they provide example that the current economic order, and what is left of social contract, do not work, that they are not abhorrent, abnormal, pathological or 'lacking'.

The 'ethics of address' and questions of audience and reception, accountability and responsibility within my research are complex. I hope that, with respect to these working-class women, they would not find my reading of their contributions to this research unfounded, or feel my use of academic language and theory obfuscates their experience. I hope, but I can also sense their laughter. A constant difficulty I have struggled with, here, has been the need to balance an emphasis upon hard material realities and the complex emotional burdens of class with a representation that can convey the vitality, strength, humour and sense of self-esteem and value that exists within many of their lives. This has been especially difficult for the simple reason that it is these aspects that I have been privileged enough to experience and participate in. That is, my commitment to writing against deficit models of working-class culture and persons arose from being the 'beneficiary' of their generosity and friendship and my bewilderment that 'people like them' should be the target for so much vilification and

blame. I hope that the analysis and the selected and edited excerpts of 'voice' in this thesis has given justice to their sensibility, intellect and creativity.

The material and emotional pressures these working-class women negotiate in their lives today are even greater than they were when this research started. Life *is* hard; they are living within worsening material conditions, conditions that become increasingly legitimated through the force of symbolic violence that hides behind the discourse of individualisation and self-responsibility. So whilst class is subtle and complex it is also stark and deadly (Walkerdine: 2001), and emphasis must be given to this experience of deprivation. What is remarkable is the tenacity of refusal to be 'defeated', but also the ability to enjoy and find value through their practices and relations with others in conditions that some, who have no experience of material hardship or daily denigration, would find intolerable.

To remark upon this tenacity of resilience and adaptability, the abilities of the women to cope under stress and live within conditions of constraint and 'lack' of conventionally valued capitals is not to displace attention away from the need for social justice. As Berlant observes, 'projects of compassionate recognition' can incur 'a habit of political obfuscation of the differences between emotional and material (legal, economic, and institutional) kinds of social reciprocity ... recognition all too often becomes an experiential end in itself' (2004; 182). The women's generosity in sharing their time, their thoughts and feelings in this thesis should not be lost in this respect; they are persons of value, they are women who care, and they are women whom we should all care about by striving for more equitable forms of distribution and a structuring of social relationships that understand our responsibility for our implicatedness in others' lives.

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