Sheffield Hallam University

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Away from Nothing: An Ethnographic Study of Travelling Sheffield Wednesday Supporters

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
Sheffield Hallam University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

July 2018

Abstract

This study is an ethnography, which explores the actions, purposes, and experiences, of travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters. It's starting point is the argument that it is necessary to interpret these phenomena against the backdrop of *wider* societal changes, which have seen a decisive shift from a stable, confident, producer modernity, to a liquid (Bauman, 2000), uncertain, fragmented, consumer one. By doing so, the study addresses the insular character of much extant research in the sociology of football, whose narrow focus on power differentials *within the game* has thus far limited our understanding of the strategies which are employed by football supporters to combat these de-stabilising tendencies. Specifically, it asks how the collective responses of travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters to these major societal currents and changes within the game, principally, liquid modernity and the post-1989 transformation of English football, are managed via the distinct and oft-competing processes of social spacing in football. The thesis sits within a long line of scholarly output which has interpreted football support as a battle for 'cultural space and territory' (Hall, 1978:31). However, what distinguishes it from more-established Marxist (one-dimensional) frameworks is its critical exploration of the interaction between *aesthetic*, *moral*, and *cognitive* processes of social spacing which can be found within and around English football stadiums. This pioneering approach, which foregrounds the 'interwoven yet distinct' (Bauman, 1993:145) character of social spacing, brings a new focus to the sociology of football, which provides an original and compelling account of the complexity of power and control within this sporting domain.

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Introduction to the Thesis

To Every Season, Turn, Turn, Turn!

> *'Nothing is so painful to the human mind as a great and sudden change'* (Shelley, 2015:183).

Having arrived late, due to being stuck behind a tractor on the A1 and then directed the long way around to the away end by some 'comedian' police officer, Matt and I finally make our way into the intense cauldron that is St James' Park. The noise on this opening day of the season is electric, the atmosphere tense, and the events on the pitch catastrophic. I turn around and see an old friend who is snarling at the Newcastle faithful and jabbing furiously at his left arm, seemingly to draw attention to the bicep which embodies his longstanding commitment to the Owls. His tattoo of the club's crest is underscored with a historical reminder of the durability of the fourth oldest professional football club in England, *'Sheffield Wednesday 1867'*. It would be easy to interpret this emblem as a symbolic marker of stability, in what to all intents and purposes, is a liquid-modern (Bauman, 2000) climate. However, little did we know that some 20 years later this 'crest' would become 'fallen', when the club's new owner took it upon himself to change the badge to herald the dawning of a 'new' era.

…We enjoy dishing out some abuse to the Geordies, self-proclaimed best supporters in the land, when suddenly and without warning, a firm grip on my shoulder brings about an unexpected break in the performance. In an uncompromising tone, the not-so-friendly police constable who is making himself familiar to us, specifies the conditions for our continued participation, "You watch your language and you mind your gesticulation or you're going out". The *moral* undertones of his message rested uncomfortably with the *cognitive* foundations of our well-worn practices and worked to dampen the *aesthetic* enjoyment of our day out in the sun. Was this the beginning of the end or just history repeating itself? Either way, the tables take another inconclusive turn when we hear another old friend shout at the top of his voice...'Fuck Ooooooof' (Memories of Newcastle away, 1997-98 season).

In their analysis of British heritage sites, Blain and Wallis (2007) suggest that at the rudimentary level, contestation surrounds both places and their representation. Football 'places' are no different in this regard, they arouse debate about their appearance, their underlying meanings and the specific aesthetic sensations which one should expect to experience when visiting these locales. Place, of course, always finds itself in a relationship with space. This

ethnographic study of travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters explores the cultural contestation which surrounds the modernisation of English football and the efforts which these individuals make to control football-related social space. The thesis begins from the premise that a sophisticated analysis of these supporters' actions, demands due consideration of the *internal* modifications which have sought to modify the outward appearance of 'the people's game' *and* the wider social-framework which provides a backdrop to these. Correspondingly, attention is directed towards attempts which have been made to recast the cultural codes and aesthetic properties of the football match 'experience', and to the uncertain, fragmented, landscape of a volatile liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000). Specifically, the thesis asks how supporters try to manage social space via an 'interwoven, yet distinct' (Bauman, 193:145) set of *cognitive*, *moral*, and *aesthetic* practices. The multifaceted conceptualisation of power which informs this thesis is *innovative* and distinguishes it from more established one-dimensional Marxist frameworks which, thus far, have limited comprehension of the dynamics of social control within this sporting domain. By bringing an innovative framework to football studies, reconfiguring its focus, and addressing the relative paucity of knowledge on the topic of travelling football supporters, this study will make an original contribution to knowledge. The aims of the thesis are to:

- Interpret how travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters experience and try to manage social space within and around football stadiums.
- Explore the aesthetic, moral, and cognitive perspectives of travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters which shine a light on the wider implications of control within the game.
- Theorise how these supporters' actions and motivations relate to wider societal changes and identity formation.

This prologue to the thesis will begin by presenting a brief overview of the 'battles for cultural space and territory' (Hall, 1978: 31) which have accompanied the game at various stages in its history. This synopsis provides an important forerunner to the remainder of the discussion which identifies the

focus of the thesis, its original contribution to knowledge, its underpinning theoretical framework and structure.

Every Person Has His Place

Neatly defined by clearly-demarcated spatial markers, professional football stadiums have played a meaningful role in separating the 'good' from the 'bad', the 'beautiful' from the 'ugly' - football's logic of consumption, competition, and division, gnawing away at its more palatable communal characteristics. From its humble origins as a 'folk' game, through to the establishment of the Football Association in 1863 and beyond, football spaces have operated both as sites of social exclusion and homes for contrasting styles of support (see Russell, 1997, and Sandvoss, 2003). Significantly, for the best part of the professional sport's history, the 'rough' and the 'respectable' have co-existed within Association football stadiums (Russell, 1997:58). However, and for all the 'emotional, social, and aesthetic' (ibid: 17) benefits which the working classes have gained from the sport, it is the bourgeoisie, rather than the 'people', who have enjoyed its most exclusive characteristics; power and control.

The theme of dominance and subordination is a recurring one within football studies, which has never grown tired of the tempestuous relationship that exists between some football supporters and the game's establishment. From the perspective of writers such as Brohm, and Tischler (cited in Russell, 1997), the game can be understood as a play thing of ruling class manipulation, a mechanism for displacing and dampening working-class frustration (see also Spracklen and Lamond, 2016). At the opposite end of the spectrum, writers such as Jones have interpreted the sport as an object of working-class appropriation, something which has been moulded in line with this substratum of English Society's own particular worldview (cited in Russell, 1997). Vulgar hedonism, vociferous displays of allegiance and contempt for authority have all railed against the 'bourgeois athleticist tradition' (Hargreaves, cited in Russell, 1997: 71). However, for Russell, the extent to which these activities can be seen to have undermined the ideological aspirations of England's social elite remains unclear. This thesis will aim to explore the 'contemptuous' spatial

practices which Hargreaves describes in greater depth, all the while asking the question of who it really is that controls football-related social space.

Issues of 'control' and 'resistance' have been of longstanding concern to football sociologists, best epitomised by studies conducted during the 1970s into the phenomenon of football hooliganism. Early Marxist accounts interpreted hooliganism as a response to the dwindling status of traditional supporters, a rejection of the bourgeois appropriation of the game and the prioritising of spectacle (see Taylor, 1971 and Clarke, 1978). Others, who seemingly took a less sympathetic view, explained the phenomenon in terms of the 'rough' working classes' 'failure'[1] to keep up with the civilising pace of British Society (see Dunning, Murphy and Williams, 1988). This thesis, which explores the cognitive, moral, and aesthetic spatial practices and perspectives of travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters, and their resistance to the post 1989-transformation of English football, adds to extant knowledge on the topic of football contestation, thereby making an original contribution to knowledge.

The eclectic conceptualisation of power which informs this thesis also distinguishes this research from several other studies into the topic of football supporters, many of which, as Crawford (2004) suggests, have adopted a limited 'incorporation/resistance' model. From the consumerist forms which Bauman (2000) describes, through to the disciplinary practices which Foucault (1977) identified, power, as well as its longstanding counterpart, resistance (see Williams, 2011), is understood to be complex and multifaceted. A master shapeshifter, whose form never settles for long enough to allow for easy-categorisation, power seeps through the cracks of any doorway, which lacks the required insulation to protect its 'home' from outside interference. It can be synoptic (Mathiesen, 1997) and/or panoptic (Foucault, 1977), repressive and/or seductive, it operates at multiple sites and levels, it pushes, and it can be pulled (see Bauman, 2008). Regardless, and as the reader will see as this thesis develops, its presence is never far away, even during those glorious moments, when we manage, if only briefly, to give this amorphous 'entity' the slip (or perhaps better, try our hand at wielding it ourselves).

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[1] Note, Dunning, Murphy, and Williams claim that no value judgement was being made here.

The thesis will now present a brief overview of the struggles for cultural space and territory which have accompanied football at various stages during its history, founded as these are upon competing moral, aesthetic and cognitive concerns.

A History of Cultural Struggle

Arguably, contestation regarding appropriate decorum has surrounded the 'people's game' (in all its incarnations) since as early as the 14th century, when a string of successive governments sought, unsuccessfully, to outlaw a compendium of 'folk' games, due to their rowdy and unregulated character (see Russell, 1997, Sandvoss, 2003, Dunning, Murphy and Williams, 1988). By today's standards, 'folk football', was little short of anarchic. The standardised, rationalised, codified, and normalised frameworks which are characteristic of English professional football, were nowhere to be seen, whether best-illustrated by the lack of a recognised referee, the pervasive 'anything goes' policies, the unlimited number of participants, or the violence which was commonplace at these events. Opinion remains divided as to whether *Association* football, which became formally codified in 1863, can be seen as a stage in the evolution of the modern game (see Collins 2015), and the extent to which the working classes influenced the format of the games as we know it today (see Swain, 2016). Either way, what is clear is that given time, this substratum of English society would play a considerable role in shaping the development of the game.

Russell (1997) pinpoints the 1870s as the period when the overall ambience of *Association* football began to change, the country's 'semi-skilled workers' having now been seduced by the game's considerable charms. Aided and abetted by successful campaigns for the introduction of the 'Saturday half-holiday' (see Taylor, R, 1992), an increase in real-term wages (Russell, 1997), and enhanced public transport links (Sandvoss, 2003), the working classes enthusiastically set about the task of returning 'their' property to its 'rightful owners'. Consequently, and as football began to develop as a *professional* sport, the composition of its spectatorship became more 'densely-working

class', to the extent that the game had already become 'the sport of the working class', some years before the turn of the 19th century.

History then, as is often the case, seemed only too happy to repeat itself. However, these supporters' attempts to reclaim the game did not go unchallenged. Those who sought to defend the 'upper class amateur, Corinthian ideal' (Taylor, R, 1992:8) showed little hesitation in characterising professional football crowds as 'dirty' and 'degenerate'. Supporters were also decried for their displays of *partisanship*. This would not be the first time, nor the last, that concerns would be articulated about the *moral* demeanour of English football supporters. As Pearson (1990:29) suggests, concerns about 'football rowdyism', and the deteriorating moral make-up of English society were articulated, not infrequently, during the inter-war years. Both the 'Un-English' (ibid: 30) conduct of the players ('rough play and excessive violence', ibid 29) and the demeanour of the crowds (assaults on players and referees) attracted the scorn of the football authorities. The partisanship of supporters even attracted the attention of the Times newspaper who decried their excessive vocal contributions and 'biased' opinions (Frosdick and Marsh, 2005:17). However, it was during the 1960s, with the development of what would eventually become known as 'football hooliganism' that these concerns really reached their zenith. Significantly, these developments coincided with a shift in the cultural expectations of supporters; expressive modes of support now playing second-fiddle to the new, supposedly more-sophisticated virtues of passive spectatorship. Scholars working in the Marxist tradition (See Taylor, 1971 and Clarke, 1978) wasted little time in homing in on the new blueprint for football that was hurriedly being shuffled from one desk to another by the game's new architects. Principally, these included the celebration of a passive (*aesthetic*) mode of spectatorship, the *moral* castigation of behaviours which were once viewed as frivolous and the *cognitive* drive to exclude the lower echelons of the working class from the sport. These trends, which continue to shape the landscape of English football in the present day, provide a key focus for this thesis. Consequently, this research will aim to build upon the embryonic trends which Taylor and Clarke described.

The 'English Disease' as 'football hooliganism' pejoratively became known, continued to 'plague the streets' of England until the late 1980s, when a series of high-profile events saw its 'popularity' begin to dwindle (see Redhead, 1991). Chief amongst these were the disasters at Bradford (1985), Heysel (1985) and Hillsborough (1989), the latter leading to a public inquiry and a reconfiguration of the English game which would have ramifications for years to come. Since the advent of the Taylor (1990) report into the Hillsborough disaster English football has experienced a remarkable transformation, which has exacerbated the fledgling trends which Taylor (1971) and Clarke (1978) identified. The topographical realignment of the game's stadiums (Bale, 1991, 1993), rising ticket prices (Crabbe and Brown, 2004), draconian legislation (Frosdick and Marsh, 2005), and amplified police surveillance, have all modified the experience of watching English football, leading some commentators to believe that the game has become a much more passive, and less enjoyable experience (see Bale, 1991 and Parry and Malcolm, 2004). However, it is worth noting that some supporters have welcomed these developments (see Crawford, 2004).

This thesis will now discuss the growing trend towards passive modes of spectatorship, the cognitive challenges which this presents to travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters, and their resistance to the aesthetic, moral, and cognitive reconfiguration of the game. These are recurring themes within the thesis and provide a useful backdrop for interpreting the activities of this study's participants.

Consuming 'Us'

In today's (increasingly) consumer-orientated world of football, opportunities to practice 'traditional' modes of football support, founded as these are upon loyalty, collectivism, and partisanship are becoming increasingly scarce. Scorned by the footballing authorities for their expressive mode of support (see Hughson, 2007), football's grand custodians of 'tradition' have found themselves being pushed aside to make way for a new and more-genteel type of consumer spectator. Passive consumption, rather than intervention, has

become *a la mode* in some footballing quarters, despite claims which have been made to the contrary by the game's publicity campaigners. *Cognitively* speaking, this *aesthetic* reconfiguration is problematic as it threatens the taken-for-granted character of football support and the security of knowing 'how to go on', regardless of where one sits in relation to its underpinning *moral* discourses.

Wider social changes have also presented a threat to the collective solidarity of 'traditional' football supporters. The social and economic fragmentation which began to emerge during the 1960s and the political conjuncture, which Hall (1979) described, have all chiselled away at their *esprit de corps*, paving the way for a more individualistic and wavering form of football support (see Giulianotti, 2002). Additionally, it might be argued that football support has fallen victim to the general trend towards individualisation and transience which is characteristic of today's liquid-modern (Bauman, 2000) world. As the great anchors of modern identity - class, nation, and gender - have been cast adrift, so, it has been argued, that liquid-modern (Bauman, 2000) identities have been left to swim against a tidal wave of uncertainty. One could be forgiven for questioning why football fan *identities* should be different to any others in this regard. To repeat what was written earlier, it is important to be mindful of wider social currents when interpreting supporter-related practices.

As can be discerned from the preceding discussion, both *internal* and *external* changes have threatened to undermine the role of the 'traditional' football supporters, their penchant for expressive support and the collective bonds which provide the foundations for their activities. However, not every supporter has been keen to embrace the reconfigured aesthetic vision which has been initiated by the game's new architects. Resistance to, as well as compliance with (see King, 1998), these changes has been noted by scholars including Bale (1991), and Cloake (2014b). Arguably, the actions of travelling football supporters constitute an example of this type of resistance. Persistent standing, vocal communion and alcohol-fuelled solidarity (see King, 1998, Pearson, 2012); all rest uncomfortably with the idea of the modern-day consumer spectator. The post-1989 transformation of English football has also been accompanied by a series of claims and counter-claims regarding the

authenticity of specific-supporter practices (see Parry and Malcolm, 2004, Richardson and Turley, 2006, Pearson, 2012). This cognitive contestation provides a key research focus for this thesis.

Drawing upon the ideas of Alfred Schutz (1967) and Bauman (1993) this thesis will explore travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters' perspectives about the post -1989 transformation of English football, theorise the impact of its disruption to the 'natural attitude', and interpret these supporter's attempts to defend their lifeworld from these latest developments. Close attention will be given to the *cognitive* orientation of these supporters, their *aesthetic* persuasion, and the *moral* discourses which they draw upon to justify their actions. With reference to the ideas of Scott Lash (1994:161) this thesis will also explore the authenticity claims of these supporters, the manner in which they 'consciously pose themselves the problem of their own creation', and the nostalgic yearnings which underpin their activities. The thesis will also ask whether their nostalgic practices can help to reconcile the conflicting priorities of this 'hermeneutic community' (see Blackshaw, 2010) and the games' new architects or whether Ricoeur's (1965:278) 'imaginary museum' has now opened its doors to the football-watching public indefinitely? In doing so, the thesis will bring a new set of working concepts to football scholarship, thereby making an original contribution to knowledge. However, before proceeding any further, the thesis will provide the reader with cursory introduction to the city of Sheffield and one of its two professional football clubs, Sheffield Wednesday.

Sheffield (Wednesday)

An economically and culturally diverse city (see Fine, 1992), Sheffield, is perhaps best known for its industrial heritage and the pioneering role it played in the development and production of cutlery and steel (see Hey, 2010). A former, albeit not renowned, medieval town (see Pybus, 1994), this 'Big Village' as it is affectionately known in some quarters, has experienced its fair share shares of highs and lows over the years. These include the devastation caused to local communities by the neo-liberal economic policies of the Thatcher administration, the financial disaster of the World Student Games, and the latest

round of austerity measures which have seen cuts to public services and growing concerns about anti-social behaviour (Cumber, 2017). On a more positive note, this sprawling metropolis, which had an estimated population of 575,000 in 2016 (Sheffield.Gov.UK), boasts the greatest number of trees per person in Europe, is the birthplace of the first British astronaut to go into Space, and plays hoast to the World snooker championships. Historically rebellious in character (see Mercer, 1997) with a drinking culture which dates back centuries (see Armstrong, 1998), Sheffield has courted controversy and attracted public scorn almost effortlessly; never more so than when its most recent Lord Mayor, the Somalian, Magid Magid, referred to the US President, Donald Trump, as a 'Wasteman' and unceremoniously 'banned' him from the city (BBC News, 2018). Morality, as the thesis will make clear, is a negotiable construct.

Footballing-wise, Sheffield has the accolade of housing the oldest football club in the world, Sheffield F.C. Some scholars have also credited it with a central role in the development of the modern game, although this is hotly-contested (see Collins, 2015). Tragically however; the name 'Sheffield' is also synonymous with the infamous Hillsborough disaster, which claimed the lives of 97 supporters on the 15th of April 1989. Hillsborough, Sheffield, is also associated with a football team which has won the former first division title four times, the F.A. cup three, and the League Cup once. Having taken the decision to branch out from their original incarnation as a cricket team, Sheffield Wednesday Football Club, were 'formed on 5th of September 1867' at the city centre's Adelphi hotel (Vickers, 1992:241). In keeping with the character of the city itself, England's fourth oldest professional football club, has enjoyed mixed fortunes, from the League Championship titles of the early 1900's through to the 'dark ages' of the 1970s/early 1980s, which saw them languishing in the old third division. Following the successful campaigns of the early 1990s, when the team reached three cup finals (including a semi-final victory at Wembley against their most fierce rivals, Sheffield United), the club experienced a lean period, both flirting with relegation to the old fourth division and avoiding financial administration by the skin of their teeth. The start of the 2015/16 season brought a change in fortunes when the club's new owner, Delphon Chansiri, bankrolled a charge to the Championship play-off finals. The following year

promised great things before culminating in a disappointing semi-final defeat to Yorkshire rivals, Huddersfield Town in the same competition. However, this anti-climax paled into insignificance compared to the frustration of the following year, which resulted in the clubs manager, Carlos Carvahal, being sacked and the team achieving a disappointing final position of 15th in the league. As expectations rose and then floundered, a mood of disgruntlement and discord permeated amongst the Owls travelling supporters, as the solidarity of the early noughties became replaced by disharmony and infighting. Every 'community', it would seem has its quarrels. However, as will be made clear, this dissonance is only the tip of the iceberg.

The thesis will now present an overview of the theoretical framework which underpins the thesis.

Theoretical Framework

This thesis will interpret how travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters experience and try to manage social space both within and around football stadiums and explore the *aesthetic*, *moral* and *cognitive* perspectives of these supporters. It will also theorise how their actions and motivations relate to wider societal changes and identity formation. By doing so, it will address the relative paucity of knowledge on the topic of travelling football supporters, which, when it has discussed this subject, has tended to focus upon the more - sensational characteristics of 'football hooliganism'. To achieve this, the thesis will bring a *new* theoretical framework to football studies, thereby, making an original contribution to knowledge. For all their merits, several football studies have been lacking in theoretical insights (see, Duke,1994) or have failed to situate their discussion within a wider framework which acknowledges the social circumstances which surround their participants' activities (see Parry and Malcolm, 1994). The innovative character of this thesis's theoretical framework will be used to interpret these struggles, which ultimately revolve around concerns for identity maintenance, rights to a traditional (stable, predictable, and longstanding) identity per-se and a defence of the lifeworld of the hermeneutic community. The framework which is referred to here is Bauman's

(1993) model, which identifies three 'interwoven, yet distinct processes' (ibid: 145), of social spacing. The first of these, the' *cognitive*', is 'constructed intellectually' via the 'acquisition and distribution of knowledge', the *'moral'* is '"constructed" through an uneven distribution of felt/assumed responsibility', and the '*aesthetic*' is 'plotted affectively' (ibid: 146).

Expressed succinctly, *cognitive* spacing is a function of knowledge control, it seeks to control social space and distinguish between insiders and outsiders i.e. those who do and do not belong. It is not difficult to see how these ideas can be used to help interpret the authenticity struggles of contemporary football supporters, situated as they are within the context of a modernising football landscape. Drawing upon the work of Schutz and Heidegger, Bauman begins his discussion of cognitive spacing by foregrounding the social character of human existence. Put another way, humans share their world with other individuals. Humans rarely reflect upon this knowledge, rather, it has a taken-for-granted character, which exists unproblematically when individuals coast along in what Max Scheler referred to as, 'the natural attitude'. When operating in this mode, intersubjective understandings are taken as a given, life's 'objects' e.g. a football match, with all its attendant cultural codes, being interpreted in the same manner. However, misunderstandings can occur (in this case what constitutes appropriate decorum) which shatter the 'reciprocity of perspectives' which Alfred Schutz speaks of. These occurrences call for a more reflective attitude as the taken-for-granted character of social life begins to slide out of view. Shorn of the tacit understandings which provide a working 'knowledge of how to go on', individuals must now find a way to deal with the source of this a-typicality, a 'conform or be damned' approach, which maintains the archipelagic character of social spacing constituting the typical form of recourse. This thesis will explore the cognitive destabilisation which is associated with the modernisation of football and the discord which exists between travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters and the game's establishment. The *cognitive* foundations which underpin these supporters' outlook and the steps which they have taken to maintain the familiarity of their lifeworld will provide a key focus for this thesis and set the backdrop for an analysis of these supporters' *moral* and *aesthetic* spatial practices.

It is not uncommon for football studies and public discourses to treat football supporters as a coherent homogenous mass. This thesis will seek to debunk these mythical forms of categorisation when it explores the *moral* spatial practices of travelling football supporters. Ultimately, for Bauman, moral spacing is about whom we live 'for', rather than whom we simply live 'with'. It is about a felt-responsibility towards others, which may or may not be those individuals with whom we share a good deal of cognitive familiarity e.g. individual 'traditional' travelling supporters might choose to 'side' with stewards, kiosk staff and non-football supporting train passengers, rather than with the remainder of the travelling contingent. For Bauman, the comparative, evaluative and calculative kills which are central to the intellectual construction of the cognitive space are made redundant when moral spacing kicks into full swing. Emanating from different and independent factors, moral and cognitive spacing are always on red-alert, the possibility of conflict between these two entities being an irreducible feature of their cohabitation. The specific character of morality in today's world also provides a discussion point for Bauman (1993:5), who draws attention to the ambiguity of actions which are 'right in one sense and wrong in another'. As scepticism rather than trust becomes the prevailing attitude towards the idea of a set of universal ethical standards, so individuals must now choose between competing moral sovereignties, without the comforting reassurance of a grand adjudicator e.g. supporters might choose to engage in physical confrontation to protect their 'brothers' or turn a 'blind eye' to uphold the virtues of pacifism. The 'unemotional calculated reason' (Bauman, 1993:33) which once held centre court, has now lost its potency. Impulse and emotion, rather than reason and rational calculation, are the key ingredients to human morality. For Bauman (1993:11), morality is not synonymous with rationality; it is not underpinned by the 'calculation of gains and losses', nor does it revolve around the axis of a set of black and white ethical codes. Rather, morality is 'thoroughly personal' (1993:10), altruism being the 'hub and expression of 'being for'' (the other). The personal autonomy which Bauman foregrounds is important, as it clears a space for a conceptualisation of football supporters which recognises not only their coherence, but also at times, their discordance. This thesis will explore the moral perspectives and spatial practices of travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters. It will also identify the strategies which

supporters adopt to reconcile the competing imperatives of moral, cognitive and aesthetic spacing.

Plotted affectively, by the attention guided by curiosity and the search for experiential intensity, *aesthetic* spacing is the product of playful human activity. Its guiding principles are freedom, novelty and amusement. Less Catholic than its moral and cognitive counterparts, the aesthetic space is a spectacle, 'amusement value' taking precedence over other competing priorities e.g. supporters might choose to enjoy the aesthetic pleasures of a noisy and 'boisterous' train carriage, whilst choosing to ignore, or even revel in, the irritation which this generates amongst their fellow passengers. In a space where the opportunities for 'amusement intensity' fluctuate, a premium is placed upon encounters which are deemed to be 'novel' and 'surprising'; aesthetic spacing expressing no love for anything which lacks finitude. In principle then, moral spacing, which safeguards against a roving eye, is considered boring. Bauman's conceptualisation of aesthetic spacing is indebted to Huizinga's ideas about play. For Huizinga (Bauman, 1993:169) the term *'homo ludens'*, which translates as 'he who plays', better captures the distinctive character of humans than the more solemn expression '*home faber*' – he who works. Play, which serves no 'moral function' (Huizinga, 1993:6) also lacks 'sensible purpose' (Bauman, 1993:170), it is 'fun' (Huizinga 2014:2), 'voluntary' and free. It's gratuitous fragrance and delicious taste of freedom distinguishes play from ordinary life, it opens the doorway to an ethereal world on the margins of that which is normally thought to be the world, quite simply, it is a 'dream order' (Bauman, 1999:172). However, play is also capable of taking on a serious character, a quality which will be familiar to every partisan sports supporter, who at some point has anxiously bitten the odd fingernail or two down to their hyponychium.

This thesis will explore the aesthetic spatial practices and perspectives of travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters. Drawing upon the ideas of Bauman, Huizinga, Turner and Nietzsche the thesis will discuss these supporters' quest for '*freedom*', their love of *'experiential intensity* and their 'Dionysian' use of alcohol. Breaking with the more traditional foci of extant football scholarship, it will also discuss their quest for novel experiences, before identifying perceived

threats to their mode of existence. More philosophically, the thesis will also consider the consequences of these supporters' activities for the human spirit and the brief glimpse which they offer of an alternative mode of being. A more comprehensive outline of these different types of social spacing is presented at the beginning of chapters 3, 5 and 6. The discussion will now present an overview of the thesis chapters.

Thesis Outline

Chapter 1 of the thesis presents an overview and evaluation of extant literature into the topic of football support. The chapter begins by chronicling historical trends within football 'violence'/violence before discussing the resistance which football hooligans displayed towards the alternative aesthetic experience which was being promoted during the 1960s and 1970s. Attention then switches to the *increasing* erosion of expressive support in the wake of the post-1989 transformation of English football and travelling supporters' resistance to this aesthetic modification. From here, the chapter identifies the legislative frameworks and policing strategies which have sought to curb the activities of football supporters. The chapter also discusses the role which moral discourses have played in designing and sculpting the football landscape. Recent trends within football support including the arrival of the 'post-fan' (Redhead, 1997a) and the cognitively-fuelled authenticity struggles which have accompanied the modernisation of football, also provide a focal point. The chapter concludes by considering the destabilising effects of wider social currents upon self-identity and the role of regular support in counteracting these threats.

Chapter 2 discusses the methodological underpinnings of the thesis. The chapter begins by presenting a rationale for ethnographic research. However, it also problematises the implicit assumptions of philosophical naturalism and its attendant epistemological claims. Specifically, homage is paid to the postmodern critique of traditional ethnographic modes of representation and the ensuing 'crisis of representation'. Having contemplated the relationship between prejudice and interpretation, the chapter then discusses my reflexive approach and its compatibility with my ontological position. The chapter then

contemplates the impact of my biographical background and developing fieldwork relationships upon the knowledge produced. A more detailed consideration of the merits of participant observation and semi-structured interviews is followed by an outline of my analytical procedures, the criteria which I used to evaluate my research, and my 'situational' approach to ethical dilemmas.

Chapter 3 outlines the cognitive predilections of travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters, thereby establishing a solid foundation upon which to hang the remainder of the discussion. The chapter begins by outlining Bauman's conceptualisation of cognitive spacing in greater depth, including the latter's attempts to demarcate identity boundaries and control social knowledge. From here, and taking inspiration from the ideas of Agnes Heller, the thesis discusses travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters' quest for 'home', their bund-like qualities, and their operations at the borders of Hegel's absolute spirit. The cognitive bedrock of these supporters 'habitats' and the processes of enculturation which help generate a shared outlook provide an additional focus. The chapter also explores the hermeneutic character of this rambling social network and its relationship to a lack of an underlying societal *arché*.

Having outlined the cognitive predilections of Sheffield Wednesday's travelling contingent, Chapter 4 employs Bauman's ideas to help interpret the cognitive destabilisation which has accompanied the modernisation of football. The chapter explores the impact of modernised football upon these supporters' tacit understandings and the 'reciprocity of perspectives' (Schutz, 1971:11) which underpins their culture. The impact of exclusionary practices upon the aesthetic experiences of these supporters and their strategies of resistance to the modernisation of football also provides a discussion point. Having discussed these supporters' authenticity struggles, the chapter concludes by asking whether these supporters' nostalgic practices can bring a happy end to their quest for 'home'.

Foregrounding the oft-competing character of moral and cognitive spacing, the prologue to *Chapter 5* opens by problematising the preceding analysis, arguing that when read in isolation, its 'findings' are accurate, but misleading. The

chapter proceeds by discussing the historical backdrop to these supporters' moral acts, principally, the abandonment of a search for a universal ethics and the breakdown in traditional practices. It also discusses the character of moral action in a world where individuals are required to forge their own path without the comforting reassurance of grand adjudicators and incontrovertible ethical codes. Drawing upon the ideas of Bauman (1993) the chapter discusses the seductive character of 'native' community in to what to all intents and purposes is an ambiguous moral climate. However, and by way of a rejoinder, the chapter also considers the autonomous character of actions which place supporters at loggerheads with the defenders of a 'residual' (Williams, R, 1977:121) football culture. Having discussed the moral quandaries which supporters must negotiate, principally in relation to women, swearing, children, violence, family and racism, the chapter concludes by discussing the strategies which supporters employ to reconcile competing, moral, aesthetic and cognitive demands.

Chapter 6 explores a third type of spacing, *aesthetic*, which emanates from a different set of priorities to its moral and cognitive counterparts and is perhaps the easiest to recognise within a football context. Drawing upon the idea of Bauman (1993) and Huizinga (2014) the chapter foregrounds the playful character of aesthetic spacing – an orientation which is motivated primarily by human curiosity and the search for experiential intensity. The chapter discusses the liberating character of away days, the freedom which allows supporters to gain access to an alternative 'world', and the consequences of their endeavours for the human spirit. The Dionysian pursuits of these supporters, their relationship with these supporters' aesthetic experiences, and less obviously, the team, also provide a discussion point. The role of novel experiences in countering the insipid character of modern living and the relationship between supporters' aesthetic experiences and moral propriety also add something innovative to football scholarship. By way of a rejoinder, the thesis also considers the importance of familiarity and its relationship with ontological security. The chapter concludes by identifying threats to these supporters' aesthetic experiences and discusses their strategies of resistance.

Conclusion: This section of the thesis presents an overview of my analysis, outlines my original contribution to knowledge, considers the limitations of the thesis and identifies opportunities for future research. It also considers the impact of my own positionality on the knowledge produced. Principally, the chapter reflects on the way in which this new and innovative application of Bauman's ideas, sheds light onto a cultural struggle which has at best been misinterpreted, and at worst, overlooked.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

Introduction

Since its inception, football, in all its incarnations, has been subject to an ideological tug-of-war, which shows no sign of abating. Participants on different sides have strained every last sinew in trying to drag their opponents across the cultural divide. However, to date, neither 'team' has been able to claim a decisive victory. This chapter discusses and evaluates extant literature on this topic and explains the rationale for this thesis. Specific attention is given to literature pertaining to aesthetic, moral, and cognitive processes of social spacing (see Bauman, 1993), the battles for cultural space and territory which have accompanied the game throughout its history, and the identity implications which are associated with these.

This chapter is organised under six subheadings, each relating to a specific theme. Section 1, '*Support in its Historical Context: Contested Support and the Struggles for Social and Cultural Space',* begins by charting the early origins of the game and the battles for cultural space and territory which accompanied its development. It then discusses the impact of industrialisation upon the sport and the increasingly rationalised climate which sounded its death knell. From here, the focus switches to the formal inauguration of Association football in 1863 and its attendant *moral* codes. Commensurately, the chapter discusses developments within the professional game and the ensuing cultural contestation which followed. The second section, '*Active Support: Hooliganism and the Battle for Social and Cultural Space',* focuses upon the most documented topic within football scholarship, namely, football hooliganism. Having chronicled historical trends within football 'violence'/violence, the discussion then focuses more exclusively upon the resistance which football hooligans displayed towards the alternative aesthetic experience which was being promoted during the 1960s and 1970s, and the accompanying reconfiguration of the supporter role. The increasing erosion of expressive support in the wake of the post-1989 transformation of English football provides the focus for the third section, '*Sit Down Shut Up: Passive Support within the*

Social Space'. The architectural modifications which were made to English football stadiums on the back of the 1990 Taylor Report, and the ensuing sanitisation of the matchday experience, provide the framework for this discussion. From here, this section describes the resistance which *travelling supporters* have demonstrated towards these *aesthetic* changes. The fourth section '*Controlling the Social Space: From Repression to Seduction?'*, discusses the legislative trends and policing initiatives which have circumscribed the activities of football supporters since the 1970s. The role which *moral* discourses and complementary surveillance strategies have played in shaping the *aesthetic* experiences of English football supporters provides a key discussion point. The section then contemplates whether seduction is beginning to replace repression as the dominant form of social control within and around English football stadiums*.* Section 5, '*This Space is Our Space: Reflexivity, Authenticity and the Struggle for Social Space',* describes the *cognitively*-fuelled authenticity struggles which have accompanied the modernisation of football. Recent trends within football support, including the arrival of the 'post-fan' (see Redhead, 1997a) and the 'post-modern' flaneur (Giulianotti, 2002), pave the way for the subsequent discussion which explores supporters' defence of a perceived 'traditional' mode of support. The impact of recent social trends upon self - identity and their relationship with 'ontological security' provide the focus for the final section, '*Clamping the Juggernaut: Spaces of Belonging, Routine, and Stability'.* Consideration is then given to the role of regular support in counteracting these potential threats to self-identity. The chapter concludes by presenting a summary of key themes.

A key contention of this thesis is that the trends within football support are best understood with reference to the historical context in which they emerged. Therefore, this chapter will begin by charting the historical development of the game, trends in modes of support, and the contestation which has surrounded these.

Football Support in its Historical Context: Contested Supports and the Struggles for Social and Cultural Space.

'I cannot consider the game of football at all gentlemanly: after all the Yorkshire common people play it' (Unnamed Etonian, 1831, cited in Walvin, 1994: 30).

Association football was inaugurated in 1863 following a meeting of an 'ad hoc' (Sandvoss, 2003:5) committee in London, England (Russell, 1997). However, earlier incarnations of this sport, which *collectively* became known as 'Folk' football, have existed since medieval times (Sandvoss, 2003). By today's standards, these forerunners to the modern game appear disorganised at best. Neither the pitch sizes, which could sprawl over three miles, nor the 'number of players' which often numbered well into their thousands (Elias and Dunning, 1971:84) were subject to the regulatory practices which are a hallmark of Association football. A lack of any formal refereeing represents an additional departure from the game as we know it today. Tactically speaking, an 'anything goes' policy prevailed, and the events often provided a 'semi-institutionalised' and ritualised outlet for the management of everyday tensions which had developed between neighbouring communities. For Elias and Dunning (1971:85), the 'violent', and 'relatively unregulated' character of these events reflected the status quo of wider-medieval society. By contrast Walvin (1994:15) suggests these carnivalesque events represented a sanctioned departure from the everyday norm, minded as they were to 'turn the world upside down' throughout their duration.

Academic opinion remains divided over the *exact* time and birthplace of this compendium of related games. However, what scholars have been able to agree upon, is the contentious character of these once-popular pastimes. Records from as early as the 14th century document the Government's determination to cleanse England of this perceived social menace (Russell, 1997, Sandvoss, 2003, Dunning, Murphy, and Williams, 1988); 'official attitudes' towards these games being marked by 'distrust and suspicion' (Walvin, 1994:17). However, the sports detractors would have to wait until the 1830s/40s, before they were able to celebrate (bar the shouting) the death of this longstanding 'nuisance'. Subsequent post-mortems have traced the origins

of this demise to a multitude of 'pathogens'. That is, a set of co-morbidities within the wider framework of a rapidly urbanising social landscape. The corralling of recreational spaces which formerly played host to the sport, moral condemnation from religious groups, and perceived threats to the 'social and political order' (Russell, 1997:6) all drove a stake through the heart of this erstwhile 'villain', draining this creature's lifeblood and consigning its associated horrors to the history books. However, traces of the carnivalesque (see Pearson, 2012, and Redhead, 1991), can still be found in today's football world. The subversion of regulatory norms and the ritualised release of local tensions all find their roots in the assortment of games which are nostalgically referred to in some quarters as 'folk football'.

Walvin (1994) and Sandvoss (2003) remain unsurprised about the Establishment's negativity towards folk football, due to its propensity to temporarily subvert the order of everyday life. Injuries, and less commonly, murder, were amongst the less savoury acts which accompanied this carnivalesque activity (see also Bramham and Wagg, 2014). Properties were also damaged as the game's participants scurried through the 'streets', 'buildings' and 'local ponds' (Walvin, 1994:15) which provided the recreational spaces for this riotous endeavour. Criticism of folk football was also rife within ecclesiastical circles. Several individuals were prosecuted for their participation in the sport, due to their violation of the Sabbath (Walvin, 1994). Utilitarian concerns were also expressed by King Edward III who interpreted the playing of these games during feast days as a distraction from the more productive activity of practicing skills with 'bows and arrows or pellets and bolts' (cited in Elias and Dunning, 1971:117). Concerns were also raised about the game's potential to unleash wider social unrest; principally because players were regularly drawn from a section of society which was 'overworked, exploited and generally harbouring a range of grievances' (Walvin, 1994:19)[2]. However, and despite the authorities' better efforts, these games proved difficult to stamp out (Walvin, 1994). Moral condemnation gouged one chink in the armour, legal prosecutions another, however the game showed a remarkable resilience largely because of its 'deep popularity among ordinary people' (Walvin, 1994:16). It would take a

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[2] Here Walvin is referring to London 'Apprentices'.

more seismic shift in the economic, social, cultural and political conditions of a class-based English society to finally put this longstanding issue to bed.

Sandvoss (2003:2) has suggested that 'the rise and fall of cultural practices such as football support' are best understood in relation to the wider 'historical, social and economic conditions' in which they develop. The advent of industrialisation and urbanisation had a significant impact upon the fabric of English life, including the time which individuals were able to devote to a world outside of work. Debilitated by long working hours and overcrowding, working class individuals from the midlands and the north of England initially found their opportunities to engage in folk football more limited. Industrial employers sought to curtail the leisure time of their newly acquired workforce as a way of instilling 'labour discipline' (Walvin, 1994:28) and the sale of land to wealthy investors hurried a shift towards the privatisation of leisure (Sandvoss, 2003). The Enclosure Acts, particularly, the notorious Waltham Black Act of 1723, which had been introduced to reduce acts of poaching, also threatened the existence of traditional leisure pursuits. However, there is some evidence to suggest that the judiciary rarely wielded their full might in cases where games took place 'on enclosed land' (McCardle, 2000:8). Regardless, football became deemed less acceptable in some quarters as the urban landscape began to expand at a rapid pace. The introduction of innovative 'policing systems, policemen on the beat and local Watch Committees' represented an additional hammer blow to the vitality of folk games, which remained 'characteristically plebeian' until their final breath (Walvin, 1994:30). Jarvie and Maguire (2000) suggest that the 'localised', disorganised, and unregulated character of English folk games were in sync with the prevailing temperament of pre-industrial society. However, this situation was about to change dramatically. Chauffeured by the steering hand of an unrelenting middle class, who expressed concern about the supposed moral degeneration of working class participants, recreation took on a new character. That is, one which better reflected the *rationalised* character of the newly-industrialised climate (Sandvoss, 2003). In a nutshell, modern sports became 'more organised, structured and regulated'; bureaucratisation, specialisation, and an emphasis on 'individual achievement', now providing the backbone to these codified and rationalised activities (Jarvie and Maguire, 2000:12-13).

Russell (1997) suggests that connections between Association football and its more traditional counterparts can be found within the 'realms' of public schools like Eaton, where the game had been played since at least the middle of the 18th century. However, the games 'educative value' remained largely unrecognised by teaching staff until approximately 1830, when a group of headmasters made it their mission to modify existing school provision (Russell, 1997: 8). Originally, this modern take on the game was conceived as a tool for instilling discipline into public school boys (Russell, 1997), a contemporary manifestation of what Elias and Dunning (1986) would refer to as the 'civilising process' (Sandvoss, 2003). However, as the years rolled by, the working classes (re)appropriated the game and recast it in their own image.

Several factors contributed towards the widespread growth of working class participation in modern football. If industrialisation and the tyranny of the clock had put a serious dent in the leisure time of the working classes, or perhaps more significantly, I would suggest, had led to the separation of work and leisure, then the increasingly complex character of its production methods had catapulted a skilled labour force onto the political front foot. No doubt buoyed by their newfound 'irreplaceability'[3](Sandvoss, 2003) these workers campaigned successfully for the introduction of the 'Saturday half-holiday' (Taylor, R, 1992:6), even if this did *sometimes* require them to make up these hours during the remainder of the week (Russell, 1997). This, along with a growth in real wages (Russell, 1997), and the excitement and identification that this sport generated, paved the way for increased levels of working class participation (Taylor, R, 1992). More generally, changes to the country's infrastructure, including the inauguration of a national railway system and enhanced public transport links (Sandvoss, 2003), the growth of a 'large urban population' and 'some venture capital' (Taylor, R 1992:10) all broadened the accessibility of the sport.

Russell (1997) has identified the 1870s as the point at which the general ambience of the game began to change (worth noting that Sheffield Wednesday was formed in 1867). Football was no longer the exclusive property of

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[3] My inverted commas

'gentlemen', as both entrepreneurs and 'semi-skilled workers' began to fall for its charms. Keen not to paint too-simplistic a picture, Rogan Taylor (1992) has drawn attention to the mixed composition of football crowds during the 1880s. However, as attendances multiplied, and crushes became more commonplace, the *proportion* of women and middle-class spectators declined. Russell notes that during the 1880s, a 'small number' of clubs in the Midlands and Lancashire had started to charge an entrance fee. The increasing professionalisation of the game was matched by a disproportionate increase in the number of supporters who were drawn from the lower echelons of society. Crowds, particularly in the 'industrial north and midlands', became 'densely working class' (Taylor, R, 1992:8), leaving Walvin (1994:53) to conclude that the game 'had become the sport of the industrial working class', well before the onset of the 20th century.

The developments described here were, of course, situated within the wider context of an emergent British 'mass culture'. The 'seaside holidays, excursions, music halls, spectator sports and ubiquitous public houses' (Cunningham, cited in Bramham and Wagg, 2014:64) all became part of the fabric of British life and may even have had a pacifying effect on their participants. As Cunningham suggests, the English working classes opted to settle 'down within British Culture', rather than attempting to change it fundamentally via revolutionary action. Either way, this working class (re) appropriation of football did not go unchallenged. Cultural contestation ensued as the 'industrial workers of the north' sought to (at the risk of gross simplicity) take back what was (for some), figuratively speaking, originally theirs. Rogan Taylor suggests that the manner in which some supporters were depicted was indicative of the prejudices which some writers held, 'The old-guard defenders of an upper-class amateur, Corinthian ideal', took the opportunity to express their dissatisfaction at this (re) appropriation by portraying football crowds as 'dirty, fickle, and degenerate'. The *partisanship* of these supporters was also described unfavourably, seemingly because it rested uncomfortably with the idea of 'good sportsmanship' (Taylor, R, 1992:8). Taylor also makes the point that contrasting levels of respectability were associated with different crowds, noting Hutchinson's observations of the distinctions which had been made 'between horny-handed working men from Sheffield, "hard as their native

steel"' and their London counterparts, who were predominantly deemed to be of a '"superior social standing"' (Hutchinson cited in Taylor, R, 1992:9). In the context of the present thesis these objections to partisanship are significant, not least because Ian Taylor (1971), whose work will be discussed more fully further on in the chapter, identified an increasing condemnation of expressive support during the 1960s.

Perhaps these cultural battles were to be expected? If the modern incarnation of football was originally conceived as a vehicle for the dispersion of a disciplinary ideal, then its transformation into (or return to) a carnivalesque activity, where 'workers briefly took possession of the city' (Holt, cited in Taylor, R, 1992:8) must have constituted a resounding disappointment. However, if the football crowds of the inter-war period could rightly be thought of as a *relatively* homogenous mass culture, then the same could not be said of these supporters from the 1960s onwards. Frosdick and Marsh (2005:3) correctly assert that 'spectator violence is nothing new'. It is neither confined to England, nor even to football more generally. However, it has fluctuated at various points during the game's history.

Statistically recorded incidences of spectator violence prior to the First World War remain comparatively modest. Whether this was due to a more relaxed attitude towards crowd violence (see Frosdick and Marsh, 2005) or the more prosaic, less-sensationalised character of the contemporary press (see Murphy, Williams, and Dunning 1990) is not wholly clear. The extent of football violence in the first decade immediately after the Second World War has also been subject to contestation. Frosdick and Marsh suggest that the relatively pacific character of the inter-war period continued throughout these years. However, Murphy, Williams, and Dunning (1990) have suggested that the 238 incidents which appear in the FA minutes for the (extended) period of 1946-59, may have underestimated the problem. Notwithstanding this, the same authors have suggested that by the mid-1950s moral panics about the state of British youth were rife. Competition between the tabloid press and 'newly emerging television' (ibid:117) fuelled the desire for evermore spectacular stories about deviant youth, and it was against this backdrop that increased attention became

heaped upon those individuals who passed through the turnstiles at 3pm on a Saturday afternoon.

As can be seen, football violence has accompanied the game at various intervals since its inception. However, Frosdick and Marsh (2005) suggest that it was a specific set of behaviours, which gained prominence in the 1960s and were captured by the term 'football hooliganism', which drew attention from the police, legislators, and academics alike. In part, this label could simply be seen as an emblem of a simplistic repackaging of an ongoing struggle for cultural space and territory. However, qualitatively, aspects of the mode of expression had changed. The increasingly mobile character of football-related violence, aided in no small part by a developing transport network (see Hopcraft, 2013) represented something of a departure from previous forms of spectator misconduct, as the newly emerging soccer crews set out on a path of violence that continued well into the 1980s, before eventually dwindling (without ever disappearing) in 'popularity' (see Redhead, 1991). Incidences of violence, which supporters could now watch at home on Television (Frosdick and Marsh, 2005), increased. Crowds which has begun to decline in the 1950s, fell further, and the rest, as they say, is (a well-documented) history. For Stanley Cohen (2002:138) the 'football hooligan role' was 'ready made' (ibid: 139). The protagonists, and indeed, those who chose to label them, were able to forge their acts and understandings with reference to an extant body of 'folklore and mythology' (ibid: 138). However, society's response to hooligan activity further entrenched its 'normative element'; the actors were, to use Cohen's expression 'now confirmed in their roles'. It was only during the early 1990s that light began to be seen at the end of the tunnel (see Redhead, 1991).

Active Support: Hooliganism and the Battle for Social and Cultural Space

Early attempts to explore the contested character of football support and the attendant battles for social space which gained notoriety during the 1960s, were made by Ian Taylor (1971), Clarke (1978), and Critcher (1979). These ideas are

extremely important to the thesis as they identify a shifting cultural persuasion that continues to affect supporters to this day. Consequently, their ideas will be discussed at length. Additional scholars, including Hall (1978), Marsh, Rosser and Harré (1978) and scholars from the 'Leicester School' also made a significant contribution to the 'football hooliganism' debate. However, their gaze was fixed more closely upon issues which are, *relatively speaking*, less pertinent to this thesis and therefore, their ideas are only discussed briefly here.

For Taylor, the actions of football hooligans represented a frustrated attempt to resist the erosion of their *perceived* participatory rights within a footballing democracy as the sport moved towards a more business-orientated model and the forces of commodification took hold. Passive spectatorship was now the expected protocol and a visible fault line could be observed between a traditional fan base, which prioritised victory over *aesthetic* pleasure, and the 'stand-dwellers' who were 'seduced by the worldly values of spectacle and entertainment' (ibid:367). The struggles for social space which this scholar described are directly relevant to the study of travelling football supporters in the 21st century.

Avidly sociological in his approach, Taylor located the newly emerging forms of hooliganism within the wider social context in which they had developed. The recent trends towards professionalization and internationalisation which had modified the structure of the game and in turn, the experiences of those who watched it, mirrored changes which were taking place within the wider society to which these supporters belonged. Reminiscent of the attempts which had been made by the cinema industry to arrest the decline in attendances which could be observed during the 1950s (see also Cleland, 2010), professional football sought to win back the love of its former admirers (and gain the attention of new ones), by injecting more excitement into their floundering relationship. 'Floodlit games', glossy magazines, marketable mascots and international competition' (Taylor, 1971:356) provided the bait and added some much-needed spice to the more flavourless menu of existing 'bread and butter' league games (ibid: 356). However, as will be made clear, not every supporter was taken in by the charms of these footballing lotharios, and the disregard which they displayed towards loyalty and a perceived 'tradition'.

Issues of social control are central to the account which Taylor presents. For Taylor, any *lingering* sense of a participatory democracy, where supporters, players and the club's directors collaborated in an attempt to influence the game had been well and truly undermined by the processes of bourgeoisification which took place during the 1960s. That is to say, power had become 'alienated' from those, who it might be inferred, ultimately, became classified as a 'subculture' (ibid:362). Both professionalization e.g. the demands placed upon players to exercise discipline in their leisure time and internationalisation were identified as key drivers of these developments. However, Taylor stresses that the processes of professionalization stretched beyond clubs' interactions within the transfer market and the development of sizeable transfer fees. In the advent of an expanded leisure market and 'an increasingly differentiated working class' (ibid:363), football clubs began to turn their attentions towards those who sat outside of what might be thought of as members of the 'traditional' (working-class male) fan-base. Significantly, this latest development had facilitated the bourgeoisification of the game. In the space which had formerly been occupied by the masculine and participatory values of working class supporters - centred as these were upon the victory of the team - now stood a new set of concerns, namely those belonging to the stereotypical middle-class spectator i.e. *aesthetic*[4] 'skill (see Mumford, 2012) and efficient performance' (Taylor,1971:364). And so, the stage was prepared to accommodate a new more discerning type of supporter (see Clarke, 1978). What followed was a restructuring of English football stadia; bars, restaurants and state of the art toilets all made their way into *discriminately located* sections of these once Spartan environments.

Ultimately, for Taylor, football-related violence and other forms of 'hooliganism' amounted to 'the final assertion of traditional values (ibid: 369). Rather than constituting a mindless activity, the phenomenon could be interpreted as a response to the bourgeoisification of the sport. Physical confrontations with supporters from a rival team were also seen as a vehicle for communicating to the team's management what it really meant to be a 'genuine supporter'.

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[4] My emphasis

The contested character of supporter decorum and the associated *battles for social space* were also central to Clarke's (1978) analysis. Clarke opened his account by building on the themes which Taylor first identified in 1971. These centred upon the changing relationship between the working class and the sport and the values which this section of British Society held dear. The latter included masculinity, victory and collective endeavour. Like Taylor, Clarke explains that prior to the Second World War, the relationship between supporters and the sport had centred upon '*collective*[5] involvement in the team and the team's fortunes' (ibid:43). Passion and commitment resided at the heart of this relationship and the swearing, chanting and shouting which could be observed, all added to the excitement of the football match experience. That said, things were about to change dramatically. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, England's entertainment industry experienced an unprecedented boom, as a generation, who were presumably jaded by the horrors of war, threw themselves into escapist leisure pursuits (Kynaston, 2008). However, Clarke suggests that as attendance figures began to drop off from the 1950s onwards and faced with an expanding leisure market (which was accompanied by increasing wages and the availability of consumer goods), English professional football identified a need to re-align itself in order to survive. What followed was a series of initiatives which sought to professionalise and spectacularise the game (including additional seating areas, bars and corporate boxes). Importantly however, these physical modifications hinted at a new way of *being* at the match. Passionate terrace-based supporters were now considered to be out of vogue in some circles and were becoming overtaken in the fashion stakes by a new breed of critical supporter, who consumed their fortnightly slice of entertainment from the comfort of the (seated) stands. Tellingly however, as the new breed of hard-to-attract *consumer* supporters succumbed to the seduction of their would-be courters, behaviours such as swearing and pushing, which were once part and parcel of the football experience, became redefined as 'deviant' or 'hooligan'. Hooliganism, it would seem, was simply a matter of a not-so-simple definition. And so, to the problem: once an emotional, physical and *collective* experience,

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[5] My emphasis

football was now moving in the opposite direction. Those searching for the cradle of football hooliganism, so defined, were advised to locate it at the intersection where 'traditional'[6] modes of support met the latest trends towards professionalisation and spectacularisation.

As an explanation (speculative or otherwise) for football hooliganism the accounts of Taylor/Clarke have been found wanting, O'Neill (2005) making the important point that the football supporters which these scholars describe, were taking their frustrations out on one another, rather than the game's authorities. Dunning, Murphy and Williams (1988) have also taken Taylor and Clarke's to task for failing to support their claims empirically. The work of Hutchinson and Vampew had discredited the idea that British supporters had once been *predominantly* pacific, and Taylor had also failed to substantiate his belief that the working class viewed their clubs as former democracies (see also Giulianotti, 1999). Even if it was the case that supporters felt aggrieved by a sense of loss, the historical precision of Taylor's account remains open to question. Rogan Taylor (1992:6) suggests that some of the earliest football clubs offered their supporters a democratic voice regarding the day-to-day dealings of the club, in exchange for a 'membership fee'. However, this collaborative effort fell into permanent disrepair as football clubs became 'private limited companies' during the late 19th/early 20th century. Wagg (1984: 204) has expressed similar sentiments. Most supporters had never had contact with a player and there were grounds for thinking that the opinions of those who had, had ceased to be taken seriously well before Taylor claimed. Evidence also remained inconclusive regarding the purported resentment which supporters displayed towards the wooing of a 'new' brand of middle class supporter into the footballing domain, and any disconsolation regarding the geographical departure of players into middle class areas. By contrast, for Wagg, hooliganism was best seen in the context of wider social developments, including 'industrial decline', 'rising unemployment', and the dismantling of 'traditional working-class communities', rather than simply a response to the bourgeoisification of the sport. Commensurately, Redhead (1997 b:19) has criticised *one* tendency amongst the political left to treat football hooliganism as

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[6] My parentheses

an expression of 'working class resistance to the "embourgeoisement" of the game, denouncing this as an off-piste 'caricature' (ibid: 18). More generally, Muggleton (2000:3) has taken the Birmingham CCCS (Willis aside) to task, for failing to 'take seriously enough the subjective viewpoints of the youth subcultural stylists themselves'. This thesis argues that an approach which is more sensitive to phenomenological concerns can help to circumnavigate these trappings. This will be discussed more fully in chapter 2.

Notwithstanding these criticisms (and remembering that the focus of this thesis is not post-WW2 hooliganism *per-se*) it is not unreasonable to conclude that the work of Taylor and Clarke demonstrated a remarkable level of foresight. Yes, it would be far-fetched to conceive football hooliganism simply as a response to the bougeoisification of the sport. However, the fledgling trends which the CCCS identified towards the prioritisation of a specific type of passive *aesthetic* pleasure (at the expense of participatory attempts to influence the outcome of the game), the complimentary *cognitive* drive towards the exclusion of the 'rougher echelons' of the working class and the *moral* castigation of behaviours which were once viewed (at least in some circles) as frivolous, are all easily recognisable, albeit in a less truncated form, within today's hyper-commodified, spectacularised and sanitised (see Bale, 1993) world of football. Football hooligans were involved in a struggle for cultural space and territory, even if it is important not to attribute all their activities to a single factor. It is also important to acknowledge the developments which have taken place since Taylor and Clarke first put pen to paper. Giulianotti (2002) suggests that there are also some significant differences between the hyper-commodified world of football as we know it today, and the environment which Taylor (and Critcher, 1979) described, not least the amount of capital which has been injected into the game (see Conn, 1997).

The impact of these aesthetic, moral, and cognitive changes upon the experiences of travelling football supporters provides a fruitful avenue for research, not least because the experiences of *these* supporters have received an insufficient level of academic attention to date. In a decade when supporters campaigned successfully to reduce the cost of admission prices to English Premier League football grounds; when football dances along to the ocular-

centric tune of modern day society (see Gabriel, 2008, Redhead, 1997a), and when the idea of collective influence becomes less pervasive, one could be forgiven for wondering why travelling supporters go to the extremes that they do to preserve these 'antiquated' modes of support? A key contention of this thesis is that the actions of *several* travelling football supporters represent an attempt to stave off the seemingly unstoppable forces of bourgeoisification, and spectacularisation which Taylor and Clarke identified. That is, they represent a defence of a *perceived* 'authentic' mode of support; 'traditional', participatory, and expressive. Consequently, parallels can be drawn between their struggles for social space, and those of other supporters during the game's (in all its incarnations) colourful history.

The collective character of 'traditional' supporters, their declining status, and the drive towards professionalization and spectacularisation also provided a discussion point for Chas Critcher (1979). Notwithstanding the limitations of language, the concept of 'spectacle', suggested Critcher, perhaps best-captured the character of the makeover which football was experiencing at the time. Entertainment was now the name of the 'game' and the spectacle which was rolled out, was done for one reason only – to satisfy the needs of a consumer market. Critcher homed in on the increasingly mediated character of football support and its stifling effects on the role of expressive supporters. In relation to matters which were inaccessible to supporters, the media had taken on the mantle of primary mediator between clubs and their supporters. However, when it came to the media's coverage of the sport, all was not as it seemed. In a passage which could have been written by Baudrillard, Critcher suggests that rather than presenting the reality of football, the media constructs a version of this. 'Highly selective' camerawork, edited highlights, and interpretative commentary, all facilitated this process and diminished the supporter's capacity (or at least provided an obstacle) to construct their own account. Ultimately, Critcher concluded that television had weakened the football subculture. Rather than trying to comprehend or offer a defence of their role, television had tried to inculcate 'traditional' supporters into a new way of thinking. The new pathway which was now illuminated was one of 'technical sophistication and managed melodrama' (ibid:175). Supposedly, the accuracy and desirability of this world

was beyond question. As can be discerned from Critcher's work, a series of aesthetic concerns had already begun to undermine the cognitive turf upon which the game's most ardent supporters had set up camp.

Perhaps the trends which Critcher describes were unsurprising. In keeping with the commodification of leisure which took place from the 1960s onwards (Lash and Urry, 1987) football was left to the mercy of market forces, further aided in no small-part by the laissez-faire economic policies of the 1970s. The consumer mentality which had been adopted by several working-class families during this period and the subversion of working class culture more generally by 'mass popular forms', like television (see Wagg, 1984:206), may also go some way towards explaining the changes that took place within English professional football. However, Sandvoss (2003:9) suggests that a cultural shift towards what Raymond Williams has labelled 'mobile privatisation' - which allowed supporters to bring their favourite sports into their living rooms - pre-dated the arrival of television in the 'mid-to late 1930s. Television, which constituted part of a 'second generation of mass-media' (which itself was situated against a backdrop of 'Fordism, suburbanisation, and mass consumption') helped to cement this cultural shift towards this 'decentralised, private, and mobile suburban life'. However, for Sandvoss, Clarke and Clarke (1982) were correct to interpret the relationship between the media and football as symbiotic, rather than as a form of 'external corruption'. Expressed succinctly, for Sandvoss (who cites Silverstone directly) the advent of communications technology had helped to support the geographical dispersion of members of the populace towards the suburbs. Fittingly, consumption and leisure became de-centralised, radio enabling its followers to consume the sport in spaces other than those in which the match was being played. To summarise, the conditions had already been established for television to weave its way into the 'cultural fabric' of everyday life. Both the rise of modern football and television were an expression of a wider 'standardised practices of mass consumption'.

If by default, Critcher falls prey to *some* of the criticisms which have been made of Taylor's work, then he should also be commended for emphasising the collective character of these supporters and situating their struggles within a wider social framework (see Hall, 1979). In the context of the present study it is

worth recognising that the *battles for social space*, which are implicit within the accounts of Critcher, Taylor and Clarke, re-emerged at a specific point in history. Buoyed by the absence of a credible political alternative, the age of conjuncture which Stuart Hall (1979) describes is one in which *anti-collectivism*, the rhetoric of family, and right-wing tendencies begins to flourish (see also Redhead, 1991). A splintering of working class responses to economic crisis, and arguably, class fragmentation more generally (see Lash and Urry, 1987) were also significant historical developments. The changes to football, we might deduce, merely reflected the political and cultural mood of the country at the time. Modes of support which rested uncomfortably with this outlook i.e. ones which were seen to undermine attempts to create a family atmosphere, were based on *collective solidarity* and so forth, were simply recast as 'deviant'. Redhead's (1997b:15) assertion that 'the notion of the family audience makes full sense only if it is understood to reference the affluent middle-class consumer', provides ample food for thought here.

The topic of football hooliganism continued to dominate football studies for several years to come. Hall (1978:31), who conceptualised hooligan activity as a battle for 'cultural space and territory', encouraged his readership to consider the possibility that football provided these protagonists with the one chance which they had to experience the thrill of winning in a 'lifetime of defeats'. Marsh, Rosser and Harre (1978) also challenged populist media-driven notions of the phenomenon emphasising the symbolic and humorous character of football hooligan activity. However, a less rosy picture was presented by Elias and Dunning (1986) and their colleagues at the 'Leicester School', who identified a 'quest for excitement' as the hooligans' raison d-etre. For Williams, Dunning, and Murphy (1984) the very real violence which occurred was related to the 'positive feedback cycle' (xxix) which permeated throughout the lower working classes, many who remained relatively untouched by the 'civilising process' (Elias, 1982, cited in Dunning, Murphy and Williams, 1988) which had spread throughout Western Europe.

Although there are some significant differences between the modes of expression adopted by present day travelling football supporters, and the football hooligans of the 1960s and 1970s - violence being far more exceptional

– it is still possible to draw some important parallels between their activities. The collective character of the former group, their deep felt emotional investment, and their pursuit of behaviours (alcoholic intoxication, swearing, standing) which have been labelled as uncivilised, or at best, undesirable in some quarters, all represent an attempt to maintain a once 'dominant' and now 'residual' (Williams, R, 1977:121) mode of support which was described so eloquently by Taylor, Clarke, and Critcher. The attempts which travelling supporters have made to defend their lifeworld and modes of expressive support provide the theme for the following section.

Sit Down Shut Up: Passive Support within the Social Space

For several more years, academics focused their attention on the causes and meanings of football hooliganism (see Russell, 1997), inextricably bound as many of these accounts were, to the emergent battles for social space. However, as Redhead (1993) notes, by the early 1990s an additional (arguably related) set of concerns had begun to emerge, namely, 'The Passion and the Fashion' of football support. In some ways, this switch in focus was timely Official and public reactions to the tragic events at Heysel in 1986 and Hillsborough in 1989, where 39 and 96 supporters died respectively, were instrumental in reshaping the landscape of English football grounds during the subsequent decades. Chief amongst these was the recommendation within the Taylor report (1990), to introduce all seater stadia within England's top two flights of English football by August 1994 (Duke, 1994). This recommendation was made mandatory by law in August 1994 'under the [amended] Football Spectators Act, 1989' (Woodhouse, 2018:3), thereby setting the wheels in motion for an extensive modernisation programme that would radically transform the face of English football.

To meet this legal requirement, some clubs chose to redevelop their existing stadiums, supported in part by the Government's 'reduction in the football betting levy' which granted £100million to the Football Trust (Cleland, 2015:106). However, others, driven as Duke (1994:136) suggests, by opportunities to cash in on the competition between supermarket chains for

sizeable 'plots of land' (which in itself was situated against a backdrop of 'changes in advanced capitalism', increased levels of consumerism, and a buoyant retail sector) chose to relocate, sometimes to the outskirts of their respective towns and cities. Arguably, the topographical and geographical changes which emerged, and the vision of support which has been pursued by the games ruling bodies, have further undermined the role of the 'traditional' supporter and diminished the atmosphere within English football stadiums (see Conn, 1997) beyond repair. As such, these changes, which reflect the more individualistic leanings of the contemporary neo-liberal economy, and its unrelenting drive to make a profit, have amplified the embryonic trends which Taylor, Clarke, and Critcher described. The thesis will now explore the erosion of expressive modes of support within English football stadiums and the resistance, if this is not too-simplistic a picture (see King, 1997/1998), which travelling supporters have demonstrated towards this.

It is well recognised within the sociology of football, that the game is capable of arousing high-spirits amongst its supporters (see Bromberger, 1993, Ben-Porat, 2010). However, studies conducted during football's post-1989 modernising programme identified a series of concerns about these developments. The subjugation of passionate spectatorship which Taylor, Clarke, and Critcher identified went into overdrive in the wake of the 1989 Hillsborough disaster, dramatically transforming supporters' aesthetic experiences in the process. Crabbe and Brown (2004) suggest that this event, in tandem with the 1990 (HMSO) Taylor Report, is commonly viewed as a landmark moment in English Football. Historically, the game's most passionate and vocal supporters had been housed within the cheap and sizeable terraced ends of the football stadium. However, for several individuals, the introduction of all-seated stadia had resulted in 'increasingly subdued and dispassionate forms of spectating' (ibid:29). The 'collective forms of expression and physicality' which were once part and parcel of the match-day experience had also diminished due to the restrictive character of recently-introduced, pre-allocated seating arrangements. Increased ticket prices, and commercial attempts to woo supporters from a wider social spectrum had only served to exacerbate these trends. Similar themes were identified by Parry and Malcolm (2004) who traced the purported

decline in expressive support to the economic makeover which English football experienced in the aftermath of the Heysel (1985) and Hillsborough (1989) disasters. As the ensuing clamour for safer and better facilities gained momentum, a newly emerging 'business' class seized their opportunity to commandeer the game and subjected it to a process of bourgeoisification. The new vision of football was one in which supporters would become more like consumers, the implication being that the enhanced facilities would be enjoyed by those who were better placed to pay for them (King, 1997 cited by Parry and Malcolm, 2004). From Parry and Malcolm's perspective there was little to suggest that the demographic makeup of football's fan base had changed dramatically. However, the increasing incursion of the legal system (see Redhead, 1997a) and the introduction of panopticon-style surveillance (think Foucault) had radically diminished the autonomy of English football supporters. Participatory self-expression, a longstanding feature of football support, had also been curtailed, leading several authors to conclude that this pastime had fallen victim to a dual process of sanitisation and anesthetisation.

The link which Parry and Malcolm make between the erosion of expressive support and the (cognitive) tension which exists amongst football's fan base is significant. Parry and Malcolm's foregrounding of a heightened consumerist mentality amongst the game's 'newly emerging business class' is also pertinent. However, more could be done to locate these developments within the broader political and cultural climate of the late 1980s/early 1990s. Britain's seemingly unstoppable shift towards a full-blown consumer society (see Miles, 2009) and the neo-liberal policies which underpinned this, provided the bedrock upon which these latest trends in English football developed. As the 'rich got richer', and admission prices went through the roof (see King, 1998, Conn, 1997) football began to haemorrhage some of its more longstanding supporters at an alarming rate (see Duke, 1994). The exclusionary effects of an unregulated admissions policy will be discussed more fully in chapter 4 of the thesis.

A lugubrious interpretation of the modern English football ground has been presented by John Bale (1991/1993/2000). Emphasising the topophilic character of football grounds (whilst also acknowledging their topophic potential), Bale suggested that contemporary developments had threatened to

erode the 'sport-place bond' which had customarily linked football clubs to the neighbourhood of their geographical location (Bale, 1991:130). Modifications to the architectural appearance of the game's stadiums were listed amongst these developments, a product of the modernising programme which had been set in motion during this period. A general trend which could be observed both within football and society at large was a movement towards the manufacture of '*anonymous*[7] concrete spaces' (ibid:132). Places of distinction it would seem were on the wane. This trend is significant as their existence, particularly for away supporters, has been identified by Duke (1994:139) as part of the 'fabric of supportership'. Bale contends that the love which supporters have for their team's stadium is not based upon an appreciation of its architectural accomplishments. Rather, and following Relph, these stadiums are infused with an 'authentic sense of place'. This authenticity describes a pre-reflective sense of belonging, an attachment to one's place in the world, individually and communally. However, the latest architectural changes which were modifying the appearance and the site of English football stadiums worked against these feelings of authenticity. Put succinctly, the demolition of traditional football stadiums, and their replacement with newly sited and placeless 'bowls', reduced the sense of gratification which could be derived from these sporting landscapes. Robson's (2000) account of Millwall's relocation to the 'New Den' downplays the *relative* importance of architectural *cosmetics* to supporters. Rather, football grounds represent something much deeper and symbolic. Namely; historical continuity and 'a particular cultural tradition rooted in a specific place' (ibid:111). Articulating an appreciation of the wider social context in which these changes have developed, Robson (ibid:110) suggests that the architectural modifications at Millwall football club and the declining sense of 'vibrancy and cohesion', reflect the 'increasingly fragile and tenuous' character of 'atmosphere, spontaneity and community', that can be found in contemporary society. Unsurprisingly, not every supporter has willingly embraced these changes with open arms. Charleston (2009:146), who conducted a survey with 461 supporters from 26 English professional football clubs, found that 90% of these participants considered their team's football ground, to be a 'special

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[7] My emphasis

place' ('to some extent'), whilst 66% suggested that they would be upset by any move to a new stadium. However, in some cases the position was less straightforward. The 51 female Leicester City supporters in Pope's (2010: 480) study expressed 'complex and often contradictory' attitudes towards their team's relocation. Kennedy (2012:345) also found that some Everton supporters were willing to support their team's proposed relocation, and even adopt 'the language of commerce', if this increased their team's chances of success on the pitch. Therefore, a multi-dimensional reading is required to fully-grasp the nuances of this complex issue.

For Bale, the decreasing sense of satisfaction which football now provided was in keeping with what Relph described as 'the paradox of modern landscapes' (1991:132). On the face of it these landscapes were advantageous. Greater levels of comfort, cleanliness, and safety were associated with their development, and yet paradoxically, they were also infused with fewer opportunities for spontaneous action. Overall, they were 'over-humanised' and associated with a reduced 'quality of life'. The references which Bale makes to *standing* are also important. In a later (1993) publication, Bale (1993) cites Inglis, who contends that supporters still revere the traditional atmosphere of the British football ground. For Bale, the all-seater stadiums which had been introduced following the 1990 Taylor report into the Hillsborough disaster were marked by constraint (Bale, 1993:47). Fewer opportunities for 'dialogue', 'interaction', 'group cohesion' and a 'sense of camaraderie' existed since the abolition of the terraces. Moreover, even if it was the case that these newly seated stadiums were more comfortable, which was not, indisputable (see also Duke, 1994), it was debatable whether they were 'more enjoyable'. Characterless, boring, and unwelcoming, (or derivatives of these) were amongst the adjectives which supporters had used to describe these stadiums, many of whom articulated a preference for standing (see also Duke, 1994:144). Comfort then, did not necessarily equate to more enjoyable experience. Bale makes the important point that supporters cannot be prevented from standing up in seated areas (1993:50). However, in an earlier paper Bale (1991) concluded that football grounds have become sites of 'surveillance', 'containment' and, following Foucault, 'disciplinary partitioning'. Commensurately, 20th century

sports stadiums are increasingly marked by 'enclosure and spatial segregation' (Bale, 1993:50). From the perspective of the game's travelling supporters, fewer opportunities existed to associate with supporters of the opposing team, due to increased levels of segregation (Wadmore, 1988, cited by Bale, 1993). Like Bale, and Robson, Duke (1994) drew attention to the importance of tradition within English football and the 'intimate relationship' that exists between supporters and their team's stadiums. For Duke (1994:145), campaigns to resist all-seated stadia represented, in part, 'the defence of a century of working-class communal tradition' (see chapters 3 and 6). Supporters also expressed disdain for some of the ubiquitous architectural modifications which had been made to their club's stadiums on the back of football's modernising programme (see chapter 6).

The stifling effects of modern football stadiums, which Bale, and Duke anticipated/identified, continue to reverberate throughout England's professional football grounds. As Duke (1994) suggests, the 1990 Taylor report had called for 'greater consultation with supporters', a recommendation which, it would seem, has largely been ignored. In an interview with Martin Cloake (2014a), Phil Thornton commented on the relationship between the topographical changes which Bale (1991, 1993) described and the erosion of 'passion' within English football stadiums. Not only had stadiums become all-seated affairs in the wake of the Taylor report, but also several of the newly built ones were located far and away from the 'old terraced estates' which formerly provided their club's place of residence (see also Duke, 1994). Indeed, for Thornton, the Premiership had totally transformed the experience of watching the game at 'home'. The arrival of 'new fans' and 'shirters'[8] had alienated the football casuals (a distinct group of supporters who were characterised in part by their reverence for designer sportswear and a desire to 'be the best'- see Redhead, 1991) and the hard-core of English football support was now made up of the *away supporters,* who 'always make more noise because they are grouped together'.

The resistance which supporters have displayed towards the topographical realignment of English football stadiums, to some extent, justifies the negative

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[8] Adult supporters who attend football matches wearing replica football shirts

tenor of Bale's work. However, Bale's suggestion that football grounds have now become sites of 'surveillance', fails to recognise the disciplinary role which these stadiums have played since their inception (even if certain behaviours were less frowned upon). Additionally, as Pope's work indicated, not every supporter has interpreted the architectural modifications which Bale describes in negative terms. Duke (1994) has also detailed some of the more positive comments which some supporters have made about the absence of segregation fences and the enhanced catering facilities (see chapter 6).

An early attempt to explore the impact of the changes which Bale, and Duke describe, was made by Anthony King. King's work is important in foregrounding the struggles for cultural space and territory which have accompanied the post-1989 modernisation of football. King (1997:329) opened his account by charting some of the modifications to English football which had developed during the 1990s. These included the endorsement of 'lucrative television contracts' and the provision of all-seater stadiums. King asserts that these architectural modifications had enticed a new breed of supporter to the game i.e. wealthier and 'familial'. They had also transformed the opportunities for 'the ritualistic expression of identity and solidarity'. Drawing upon Durkheim's interpretation of aboriginal ritual practices, King suggests that the communal activities such as drinking and singing, enabled a group of 'masculine' supporters, who he referred to as the 'lads', to develop a sense of euphoria. Both their solidarity, and the team which provided the catalyst for this mode of expression, granted these supporters, who communicated their feelings orally through song, with a source of love. The 'lads'' particular mode of support also furnished them with a great deal of pride. Fighting, singing, and regular attendance, all helped to ensconce these feelings. However, the 'lads'' opportunities to practice their favoured mode of support had been threatened by the introduction of *all-seater stadiums*. An unparalleled increase in ticket *prices* (222.9% between 1988-89 and 1992-93), had accompanied the provision of enhanced facilities and the reduced capacities which followed (see also Conn, 1997). Such a practice was interpreted by some of 'the lads' as a deliberate attempt to exclude them. As if this was not enough, the topographic characteristics of Old Trafford had also been overhauled by the introduction of all-seater stadia. Practices which had

once been routine, including swaying and jumping had become delimited by the new architectural arrangements. The 'lads' also found that they were unable to congregate in the same way as they once did.

The processes which King described are also of direct relevance to the present study. Arguably, no group of supporters pursues the ecstatic styles of support which King portrayed with more energy, commitment and enthusiasm than the game's travelling supporters. Fighting aside (in most cases/situations), the characteristic behaviours of King's 'lads' can all be observed amongst the travelling contingent. Singing, jumping, drinking and so forth are all mainstays of the away match experience, even if the climate in which these activities take place has become less favourable. As such, they line the innards of this community with a degree of historical continuity and ultimately, help them to establish the type of bonds which are so hard to find within the atomistic outposts of an unforgiving liquid modernity (see Bauman, 2000). Methodologically speaking, King also deserves credit for sitting at the ethnographic coal face. That is, for making the decision to engage with his research participants, to live the lifestyle, to become 'one of the lads', so to speak (see chapter 2). King's (1998:78-7) whole-hearted sociological approach (in contrast to that of Armstrong, 1994, whom he criticises) is also commendable. The references which he makes to the 'strong state' of the Thatcher administration[9] and the role of family-centred discourses in maintaining social control are both thought-provoking and insightful. However, more recognition of the increasingly fluid character of the quotidian would have added to King's analysis. The destabilising effects of a modernised football landscape on *identity* (rather than just the class position of these supporters), needs to be considered in relation to the increasingly contingent character of his participant's day-to-day existence.

What might be inferred from Crabbe and Brown's, Bale's, King's, and Parry and Malcolm's analyses is that the 'controlled de-controlling of emotions' which Elias and Dunning (1986:44) refer to, has shifted its emphasis to meet the demands of a new consumer market. However, there are grounds for thinking that *away*

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[9] Margaret Thatcher, British Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative Party held office between 1979 and 1990.

matches can offer a temporary reprieve from these latest developments. One supporter in Crabbe and Brown's (2004) research offered some insight into the attraction of this pastime. Not only could a greater 'buzz' be found at 'away days', an opportunity to stand, laugh, drink and so on, but they were also populated by a 'better class of supporter' than the 'day trippers' who turned up at Old Trafford. Seemingly, for this supporter, a good degree of overlap existed between the cognitive and aesthetic dimensions of a pleasurable day out. Crabbe and Brown (2004:31), and Pearson (2012) have also noted that some home supporters have been known to stand up in the seated sections of this iconic stadium. However, for Crabbe and Brown, 'passionate spectacles of fan behaviour' were especially prevalent at *away matches*. The passionate displays which these authors describe are of key importance to the present study as they are indicative of a symbolic rivalry (see Blackshaw, 2017, on Bourdieu) between the various extant cultures within English football stadiums. That is, a search for distinction (Woolsey, 2010) amongst the faceless mass.

The *battles for social space* which Hughson (2007) describes are also directly relevant to the present thesis. Homing in on the erosion of expressive support within football stadiums, Hughson argues that forms of rationality which were traditionally associated with the workplace have now crossed over into leisure spaces which have links with capitalist enterprise. Such a trend has been marked by a clampdown on the right to pursue 'subterranean values' within these domains; abject surrender to this new etiquette being the only fool proof safeguard against the imposition of a hooligan tag. However, Hughson maintains that there are a minority of 'expressive fans' who refuse to surrender to the 'formulaic type of support decreed by soccer officialdom'. Supplementing Maffesoli's neo-tribal concept with references to Soja's 'third space', Hughson explains that these 'emotional communities' seek to express their specific identities via the requisition of social space. In the pursuit of their subterranean values (Matza and Sykes, 1961, in Hughson, 2007), centred as these are upon thrills and excitement, these supporters stretch the officially sanctioned boundaries of appropriate decorum as a way of enjoying the game on their own terms. As such, suggests Hughson, it is advantageous to draw a line between football supporters that might best be described as 'expressive' and those better

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thought of as 'submissive'. It is not hard to find examples of the type of expressive support which Hughson describes, nor the cultural practices which help to ignite these performances.

Redhead (1991:156) suggests that during the late 1980s and early 1990s football experienced a cultural shift, carnival, rather than fighting, becoming the new flavour of the month. Traces of the 'carnivalesque' (ibid:155) culture which Redhead describes can still be observed amongst travelling football supporters to this day. Pearson (2012:41-42) has suggested that the hard-core of travelling supporters which he encountered were driven primarily by a desire to experience the kind of release which according to Bakhtin had been a feature of the carnivals which took place in 'early modern Europe' (see also Rojek 1995). These 'carnival fans' would often arrive at an away game in plenty of time to enjoy the pleasures of the public house (see also Armstrong, 1998). Some supporters also chose to bring the kick-off-time a few hours forward so to speak, ingesting alcohol on the journey itself. The Manchester United supporters in Pearson's (2012:47-48) study also considered away games to be preferable on the grounds that they were 'less routine, less regulated, and provided for greater incident'. The number of 'tourists' and 'casual'[10] supporters were also deemed insufficient to 'dilute the atmosphere'. Half-time provided an opportunity to meet fellow supporters who were located elsewhere within the ground, to drink, and smoke in the toilets. Standing was also a persistent feature of away games and the rowdiness of the whole affair was a source of pride, even if this had resulted in smaller allocations for the team's supporters at subsequent away games.

Pearson's research findings resonate closely with those articulated by Hughson. Although we hear little from the 'subjects' in his study, Pearson provides an instantly recognisable description of the attempts which travelling supporters make to organise the social space in line with their own aesthetic blueprint. Seemingly, what can be observed amongst these supporters is a desire for a thrill-based sociality, one which is unfettered by the rationalistic constraints of the consumer-based environment which professional English football grounds

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[10] Used in the sense of irregular supporters rather than to describe a specific subculture

have become (which themselves reflect wider social trends towards a consumer-based neo-liberal economy). Pearson's decision to engage with his research subjects should also be applauded. However, more could have been done to test these ideas against 'the things themselves' i.e. the object as experienced by his research participants (see chapter 2).

Arguably, the actions of travelling football supporters represent (one) form of resistance to the perceived (see King, 1998) modernisation of football. Persistent standing, vocal communion and alcohol-fuelled solidarity (see King, 1998, Pearson, 2012); all rest uncomfortably with the idea of the modern-day consumer spectator. A key contention of the present study is that ''away days'', as they are commonly known, provide an opportunity to pursue a form of football support which has become increasingly difficult to maintain on 'home' soil. As such, playful and 'familiar' as many of these acts are, they come with knowledge of 'how to go on' (see Bauman, 1993). This thesis will aim to build upon the work of Crabbe and Brown, and Pearson, by exploring supporter's own interpretations of their activities, and using Bauman's ideas as a theoretical framework for interpreting these. In doing so, it will seek to redress the relative paucity of literature on the topic of *travelling* football supporters. The thesis will now discuss the strategies which have been deployed to control travelling football supporters.

Controlling the Social Space: From Repression to Seduction?

The issue of how best to 'control' the game's travelling supporters has presented a longstanding concern to football's governing bodies. As Pearson (2012:2) suggests, the 1960s bore witness to a growing body of travelling football supporters and as their ranks began to swell, the potential for violent altercation became less exceptional. The train wrecking activities of Liverpool and Everton supporters during this decade (see Dunning, Murphy and Williams, 1988) constitute but one in a long line of incidents which have caused alarm. Still, it is worth making the point, as Pearson does, that a large number (not all) of those who were referred to as hooligans were probably guiltier by association, rather than anything more sinister. Legal and sporting responses to the perceived hooligan threat have ranged from the draconian e.g. The Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol etc.) Act (1985) to the more bizarre e.g. British Rail's 'League Liner' disco train. However, *in the main*, responses have tended to be of the less liberal variety.

Increasingly however, there are grounds for thinking that seduction is *beginning to* supersede repression (see Bauman, 1992) as the dominant form of social control within and around English football stadiums. Bauman (1987:167) explains that for Bourdieu the 'enthronement' of consumer culture is accompanied by a shift in the 'mode of domination' in contemporary society. For Bauman, 'Seduction', 'public relations' 'advertising' and 'needs-creation' all come off the substitutes bench and give 'repression', 'policing', 'authority' and 'norm-imposition' (ibid:168) a well-earned breather. In itself, this transformation might be considered seductive, as there is no need, suggests Bauman, to 'police' and 'repress' an individual's 'natural drives' in a consumer society. Rather, and following Attali, the market instils an 'auto-surveillance' society that increases the individuals 'needs'. In a footballing context, these techniques are a far cry from the policing strategies which were commonplace during the 1970s, strategies which Wagg (1984) claims had been encouraged by the Labour Home Secretary, James Callaghan, during the back end of the 1960s. The large TV screens that are situated around the stadium, the advertising hoards that drill home the message, the replica merchandise and the never-

ending expansion of refreshment options. All of these exert a more subtle form of social control. However, it is also worth noting that these seductive strategies have been accompanied by a body of legislation which Frosdick and Marsh (2005:169) have described as 'draconian' (Bauman noting the existence of both the 'repressed' and the 'seduced' in contemporary society). Surveillance techniques, which as Redhead (1997b) suggests, were facilitated in part by the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975, have also been instrumental in fashioning the morally infused spaces which football grounds have become. Part of a wider shift towards the kind of disciplinary society which Foucault (1977) describes, their impact upon sections of the footballing fraternity has been close-felt (see Blackshaw and Crabbe, 2004). Mobile camera units, police photographers, 'Hoolivans' and CCTV (ibid) have all added to the armoury at the disposal of the police, no doubt motivated by the potential which this technology offers to catch hooligans 'in the act' (see Armstrong, 1998). However, some supporters have interpreted the use of hand held video cameras to record their activities as 'intimidating and provocative' (Frosdick and Marsh, 2005: 173). Additionally, for Redhead (1997b:13), this legislation played a role in steering football crowds in a more middle-class direction and as such, should be seen as part of the 'repackaging of soccer'. Therefore, the situation is complex and multi-faceted. Crawford (2004) and Frosdick and Marsh (2005) have presented a useful overview of the legislative trends and policing initiatives which have circumscribed the activities of football hooligans since the 1970s. Given, the propensity for hooligans and travelling football supporters to be treated as one and the same (see Pearson, 2012), it is worth outlining these trends in a little more detail.

As the preceding discussion has demonstrated, concerns about football hooliganism can be traced back to its early origins as a professional sport (see Crawford, 2004). However, during the Thatcher-era (1979-1990) these concerns paved the way for a new approach for dealing with this longstanding menace (see Redhead, 1991). A growing intolerance towards hooliganism (see Allan and Naylor, 2008), saw the introduction of a whole series of legal initiatives which were designed to stymie the activities of these 'animals'. These included the Sports Events (Control of Alcohol etc.) Act (1985) which prohibited

the consumption of alcohol in vehicles which were heading towards a football stadium and, attempting to pass through the turnstiles whilst inebriated. With the introduction of the Public Order Act (1986) it became possible to place a legal incursion on supporters from entering a stadium via an 'Exclusion Order'. The act also debarred supporters from possessing fireworks. Racist chanting, the throwing of missiles and pitch incursions were also outlawed by the 1991 Football Offences Act[11] (Crawford, 2004). For Redhead (1997b:16) these legal incursions into the footballing sphere 'reflected' a Thatcher administration (1979-1990) which embraced 'free-market-strong state' remedies to social ills. Seemingly, I would add, the concerns which surfaced during the late 1940s about lawless 'lower class youth(s)' (Wagg, 1984:204) had re-emerged, an 'easy and popular' target, as Redhead (1997b:17) suggests, for a political victory.

A concern to eradicate the hooligan problem also spilled over into the subsequent Labour Government's period of office. No less than 54 recommendations could be found in the Home Office's (2001) Bassam report (Frosdick and Marsh, 2005). The Football (Offences and Disorder) Act 1999 and the Football (Disorder) Act (2000)[12] added to a body of legislation which Frosdick and Marsh (2005: 170) described as 'increasingly draconian'. Importantly, the restrictions on travel and banning orders which these acts introduced can be imposed upon any supporter who is suspected by the Police of presenting a potential threat to public order, regardless of whether they have any existing convictions or otherwise (Frosdick and Marsh, 2005).

Policing strategies which have been designed to kerb the hooligan problem have also been subject to contestation. Frosdick and Marsh (ibid) have suggested that an attitude of negativity towards football supporters has pervaded the British Police force. Regularly labelled as 'animals', these supporters have been treated accordingly. For the best part of the 1970s and 1980s travelling supporters were commonly 'herded like cattle' from their point

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[11] N.B. The 1991 Football Offences Act was introduced during the Conservative Prime Minister, John Major's period of office.

of arrival to the stadium, Redhead (1991) suggesting that 'heavy policing' was firmly institutionalised by the late 1970s. Police officers (both pedestrian and mounted) and police dogs provided these escorts, a practice which can still be observed at locations which are considered to be 'higher risk' (Pearson, 2012: 50). Still, it is worth noting that only a minority of supporters (20.7%) in a survey conducted by Middleman in 1993 (cited in Frosdick and Marsh, 2005), expressed their opposition to police escorts. In the eyes of many, they provided an effective form of security for the game's travelling supporters.

Increasingly, it has become harder for some travelling supporters to gain admission to their team's away games due to an escalating demand for tickets, a reduction in ground capacities following the Taylor report, the growth of corporate facilities, and the propensity of clubs to prioritise the needs of their own supporters (Frosdick and Marsh, 2005). Still, this has not made the travelling hordes any easier to 'Police'. Football specials[13] (subsidised in some cases) have become a thing of the past, meaning that the proclivity of supporters to arrive *en-masse* has declined. For Frosdick and Marsh the trend towards independent travel might explain the change in police tactics which can be observed around English football stadiums. The 'less confrontational' (ibid: 156) practice of situating police personnel at specific locations on the way to the stadium could be interpreted as a response to the changing situation of the game's travelling supporters, rather than a tactical decision per-se (ibid).

From the literature presented thus far, it would be possible to draw the conclusion that expressive football supporters (best typified by the game's travelling supporters) have been treated harshly by the game's ruling bodies. However, as Stott and Reicher (1988, cited in Waddington, 2007) suggest, there are dangers associated with romanticising the perspectives of such boisterous supporters. For some supporters, 'traditional' forms of 'passion' threaten their ability to enjoy the 'nation's favourite game' (see Garland, Malcolm, and Rowe, 2000). Crawford (2004) has picked up on this point, suggesting that the social controls which have been introduced into English football stadiums have fostered a benign environment where individuals feel

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[13] Trains assigned solely for football supporters

able to celebrate and enjoy the entertainment which is on offer. Introduced on the back of growing concerns about football hooliganism, *these controls have circumscribed the activities of both violent and non-violent supporters alike* (Greenfield and Osborn, 2001, cited in Crawford, 2004).

Not every supporter has interpreted the introduction of advanced police surveillance in a negative way (see Frosdick and Marsh, 2005). Crawford (2004: 97) has suggested supporters now willingly accede to the social controls which have been introduced in and around English football stadiums-the 'rhetoric of maintaining a "family" environment' seemingly having won the day. Moreover, knowledgeable of the fact that they are being monitored (again we might recall Foucault), supporters have started to regulate their own actions (Brown, 2008). They have also begun to regulate the actions of others, chanting in opposition to supporters who have entered on the pitch, restraining supporters who are pushing too hard against the margins of socially sanctioned etiquette, and taking some degree of responsibility for the outward appearance of their club (although it could be argued that hooligans also showed a concern for the latter, albeit in a very different way). Consequently, their morally infused actions have a flavour of the synoptic (Mathiesen, 1997), as well as the panoptic i.e. the many are now watching the few.

The erosion of expressive modes of support within English football stadiums is also complex. As noted earlier, for Crawford (2004) football's power relations are fluid and multi-directional i.e. the stifling of specific forms of social action creates a safe playing field for the expression of others. Crawford (ibid:99) has also taken Bale (1993) to task for failing to support his claim that 'sports' most sincere supporters would feel unhappy about the 'dehumanized', 'inauthentic' and 'disneyfied' environments which modern sporting arenas have become. Moreover, the idea that 'docile audiences' would result from the installation of surveillance technology disregarded this equipment's capacity to generate entertainment and *spectacle*[14]. Not only did people enjoy seeing their face on the large screens which had been installed in some sports stadiums, but they also revelled in the opportunity to participate in the Mexican waves which this

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[14] My emphasis

technology facilitated (although it is worth noting that travelling England supporters have sometimes refused to participate in this collective act – see Perryman, 2001).

Crawford's work is both challenging and thought-provoking and offers an important rebuke to some of the more one-sided accounts of expressive support which have been forwarded by the likes of Taylor (1971), Clarke (1978) and arguably, Hughson (2007). It is also helpful in identifying some of the more salient processes of social spacing which have circumscribed the activities of football supporters. Drawing upon the ideas of Bauman, it is possible to trace the justification for these processes, to the sense of 'felt /assumed responsibility' which individuals have towards others (Bauman, 1993:146). There are clear examples where a process of *moral* spacing ('we must protect the rights of families') has been used to justify the legal acts and policing strategies which have affected the outward appearance of the *aesthetic* domain (see chapter 6). It is also possible to detect a move towards that most subtle form of social control which Bauman (1992) describes, namely; aesthetic consumer seduction. However, it is important to remember that the strategies of seduction which are described here have been accompanied by a body of legislation which some scholars have described as 'draconian'. As Bauman (1993:168) has suggested, the aesthetic 'theatre needs its usherettes' and in the case of football, this role has been carried out dutifully by the police personnel and stewards who monitor the game's supporters (see O'Neill, 2005). The thesis will now discuss the authenticity struggles which have accompanied the modernisation of English football.

This Space is Our Space: Reflexivity, Authenticity and the Struggle for Social Space

Identity, suggests Jenkins (2008), is founded not only upon notions of similarity, but also those of difference. Every time we create a '"we" we must leave out or exclude a "they"' as Gilroy (1997 cited in Jenkins, 2008:21), so neatly puts it. A salient theme within the sociology of football, and subcultural studies more generally, is the issue of 'authenticity' (see Williams, 2011). At a time when expressive modes of support became increasingly under siege (see Hughson,

2007) debates about the meanings and purposes of football support gathered a new level of momentum within academic/supporter communities. The source of these disputes can be traced to a perceived loss (King, 1998) of a more traditional mode of support as a variegation of supporter styles began to flower. As will be made clear, for writers such as King (1988), this agitation represents mourning for the loss of what Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983) have labelled, an 'invented tradition'.

As football began to re-align itself following the 1990 Taylor report, Giulianotti (2002) drew up a typology of ideal-types which ranged from 'traditional/hot' supporters, who were characterised by an unswerving loyalty towards their team; through to the 'post-modern' flaneurs that practiced a more detached and wavering form of support. Characterised by their long standing affectual commitment, the *traditional/hot* supporter's relationship with their club holds parallels with those shared 'with close family and friends' (ibid:33). Enculturated by their parents or more senior peers, these supporters demonstrate their *esprit de corps* by chanting, participating in rituals and tattooing their bodies with their club's emblems. Culturally contracted to their club, the traditional fan sees their support for the team as a duty, the idea of transferring their devotion to another team, unthinkable. Such loyalty is rewarded in the form of 'subcultural capital', with more status being reserved for those who have followed their team through thick and thin. By contrast, the flaneur's relationship to the club is one of detachment. Predominantly bourgeois, the bonds which they desire with their fellow supporters are relatively lean. Fittingly, traditional supporters are viewed *by these supporters* as 'regressive figures from the past' (Giulianotti, 2002:40), perhaps unsurprising, given the flaneurs proclivity to switch allegiance to other clubs, nations and sports? Unhindered by the sort of topophilic attachments which circumscribe the activities of the traditional supporter, the flaneur's natural environment, suggests Giulianotti, is a virtual one - television and the internet providing the 'sensations of football', which they desire. Having considered the impact of commodification upon the identities of the game's supporters, including the seduction of affluent supporters and the exclusion of poorer ones (see also Duke, 1994), Giulianotti concluded that: 'The broad trend in sports identification is away from the supporter model… and towards a more

detached, cool, consumer orientated identification with clubs' (Giulianotti, 2002: 25).

Parallels can be drawn between the general shift towards a more 'detached', consumer-based form of support which Giulianotti describes and Redhead's (1997a) concept of 'post-fandom'. Drawing upon Baudrillard's ideas about 'hyper-reality' and Virilio's concept of 'disappearance', Redhead explains that the concept of post-fandom does not symbolise the end of the road for a mainly male "terrace" soccer culture'. Rather, it recognises that the meaning of support has increasingly taken a 'fragmentary, self-conscious, reflexive', and 'mediated' form (ibid:29). Writing in the wake of the heavily-mediatised USA 94 World Cup and having identified the 'endless' opportunities which TV and video provide to football fans, Redhead suggested that the shift towards a more passive mode of fandom was fast-approaching maturity. Redhead acknowledged that live audiences had not, and contrary to the playful toying of Baudrillard, fallen into the abyss. However, he maintained that TV revenues and the commercial exploits of football's most successful clubs had, economically speaking, displaced the need to draw supporters in through the turnstiles. Importantly, for Redhead, and not unlike King (1997), the notion of an 'authentic', working class support constitutes a 'myth' that was populated by 'the press and electronic mass media', ultimately resulting in its reproduction and 'popular cultural '"history"'. Seemingly, Redhead is describing what Baudrillard might refer to as a simulacrum, a copy of something that never really existed. Redhead has also sought to deconstruct the rigid passive-participatory supporter dichotomy, suggesting that supporters can often straddle both categories e.g. when live audiences watch action replays on electronic monitors.

In keeping with the ideas of Giulianotti and Redhead, some scholars have argued that supporters now attach less of a premium to attendance at live football matches. Weed (2010) epitomises this perspective, arguing that the meaning of 'being at the match' has changed. Significantly, Weed suggests that the cultural capital which can be derived from attendance at specific matches (see Weed, 2008) is beginning to dwindle. Perhaps reflecting the increasingly ocular-centric character of present day society, Weed, cites Frew and McGillivray's (2008) belief that a concern for the particularities of participation,

it's a-typicality and the *possession of images* which evidence this, have superseded the more simple matter of 'being there'. Moreover, pub-based support can offer many of the benefits which can be derived from live attendance, including what Urry (2002 cited in Weed, 2008:105) describes as 'intense moments of co-presence'. Additionally, some supporters believe that pub-based support offers an experience which is *more* authentic than that which can be derived from attending the match itself. Unfettered by the social controls which can be found within stadiums, the experience of being in the pub has presented an attractive alternative to these supporters (David and Millward, 2012, cited in Dixon, 2013:392). Crabbe and Brown (2004:33) have made a similar point, one supporter in their study claiming that their local pub in Salford provided a 'better match atmosphere' than that which could be found at the game itself (see also Redhead, 1997a).

Not every supporter has interpreted 'authentic' football support in the same manner. Building on the work of Weed (2010), Dixon (2013), who conducted 56 in depth interviews with supporters of largely, although not exclusively, Premier League teams, has suggested that new forms of football consumption, such as watching the match in the public house no longer carry the same level of stigma as they once did. Citing Giddens (1984), Dixon suggests that routine and continuity can help individuals to maintain a sense of 'ontological security'. However, subtle modifications to these practices facilitate the evolutionary character of culture. For Dixon, these 'patterns of structuration' (ibid:387) can be seen at play when we examine live televised football's conversion into a culturally acceptable product. Gradually, and 'often without a conscious appreciation' (ibid:390) of their transformation, mediated forms of support have shaken off their negative connotations; many supporters now enjoying the opportunities for social interaction and participation in the 'craic' which can be found in the public house. Moreover, 'cultural security' (ibid:388) was said to flow from the communal laughter (and in turn bonding) of its customers - see also Gibbons and Dixon (2010:599) who, following Crawford (2004), have sought to break down some of the more 'rigid typologies' which were founded upon 'supposed norms of "authentic" fandom practices'.

Both Dixon and Weed can be lauded for homing in on the changing attitudes towards authenticity which can be found amongst some supporters. There is little doubt that the growth and widespread availability of live televised football, rising ticket prices and the reduction in ground capacities, have impacted on the mind-set of some of the game's supporters. As Boyle and Haynes (2004:16) have suggested, the plethora of live televised games is a 'relatively recent phenomenon'. Such has been its impact that it cannot and should not be ignored. However, there are grounds for exercising caution when interpreting their work. For example, one might question, how many of the supporters in Dixon's study would content themselves with mediated forms of support were live games to become more accessible, both in terms of the cost of tickets and, in some cases, seating availability? Redhead can also be commended for discussing the increasingly reflexive and mediated character of football support. His attempt to deconstruct the rigid - passive-participatory supporter dichotomy also brings a welcome degree of subtlety to the debate. Reassuringly, he acknowledges (in passing) the existence of a more 'authentic' mode of support, noting the presence of more 'traditional' supporters at USA 94. In the context of the present study this recognition is important, as it stops short of heralding the death of active, live, and participatory modes of expression. However, as with all Baudrillardian-inspired analyses, doubts remain about the, if not exaggerative, then at least partial picture which is presented. The present thesis' focus on the more 'traditional' modes of support which Redhead mentions in passing; provide a useful rejoinder to his work on 'post-fandom'.

Cleland (2015:108) has suggested that for Crawford (2004) changes to supporter-related practices are to be expected in view of the development of mass media, and the 'opportunities to consume mass goods'. However, not every supporter has embraced the modes of support described by Giulianotti, Redhead, Weed, and Dixon. The work of King (1997/8), Richardson and Turley (2006) and Robson (2000), provide a necessary 'addition' to the ideas presented by these scholars of consumer 'post' – fandom.

An important issue within King's (1997/98) work (see earlier) is the 'lads'' perceived inauthenticity of some of the game's supporters. King acknowledges the success of the game's 'new directors' (post-war entrepreneurs) in

reorganising the game along entrepreneurial lines. However, he also suggests that the transformation of the 1990s had been the subject of a good deal of contestation. The 'lads', suggests King, were not averse to acts of mockery, condemning the 'new consumer fans' for their ersatz cultural practices. Amongst these was the latter's proclivity to travel to away matches on official club transport, a practice which earned them the tag of 'train spotters'. King suggests that the 'lads' rejected official club coaches to away games because they were overly 'protective and restrictive' (1998: 154-5). Stymied by the lack of drinking time which accompanied such trips (coaches arrived at their destination shortly prior to kick off) and still loaded with inhibition, the 'lads' felt unable to recreate their sense of 'ecstatic solidarity' and 'visceral sense of togetherness'.

However, for King (1997), the 'lads'' authenticity claims were predicated upon shaky ground. First and foremost, their notion of tradition was misguided. In the 'lads'' eyes, football had traditionally been a 'working-man's sport', and as such, these supporters considered themselves to be the rightful heirs to its throne. For King, there are several reasons to reject such a position. Firstly, it is too simplistic to see the game simply as a working-man's pastime, even if historically, the bulk of the professional game's supporters have been drawn from this substratum of society. Secondly, the tradition of which the 'lads' spoke should be interpreted as an 'invented' (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 2013) one, on the grounds that their 'ecstatic style of support' developed mainly during the 1960s (1988:164). Railing against the trend in sociology to view football support as a form of hegemonic acquiescence or conscious resistance (see Russell, 1997), King insists that the 'lads'' activities are 'paradoxical' (ibid: 342). Although aspects of the club's commercial operations rankled with the 'lads', their 'emotional attachment' to one another, which was tied to their love of Manchester United, had enabled them to accept some of the changes which threatened their cultural practices.

A disdain for casual supporters (as distinct from football casuals) was also noticeable amongst the travelling Manchester United supporters whom Pearson (2012) studied. Stigmatised for asking their fellow supporters to sit down, their desire to take photographs, and their unwillingness to back the team vocally,

these supporters sometimes found themselves on the wrong end of a dose of bullying. Their negative impact upon the atmosphere within the stadium, and their role in preventing 'proper fans' (ibid:76) from gaining tickets was a particular source of antagonism.

King can be applauded for drawing attention to the complex and oft-paradoxical character of football support, thereby presenting a useful alternative to the 'hegemonic' and 'resistance' models of football which Russell (1997) describes. His depiction of the erosion of expressive support within English football stadiums also strikes a chord and provides an important forerunner to the subsequent scholarship of Parry and Malcolm (2004), Crabbe and Brown (2004) and Hughson (2007). The drive towards a new consumer-friendly social space will also be instantly recognisable to many football supporters. However, aspects of King's work are problematic, including, his rejection of the 'lads'' claims to tradition. Firstly, King claims that the 'lads'' ecstatic styles of support which have been stymied by the introduction of all-seater stadiums developed mainly during the 1960s. However, as was discussed earlier, concerns about the fervent character of supporters and their attempts to influence the game can be traced back to a much earlier period. King's *implicit* belief (given that it is characteristic of this kind of support) that the consumption of alcohol, only emerged during the 1960s is also questionable. Even the most cursory of glances at Dunning, Murphy and William's (1988) text *The Roots of Football Hooliganism* indicates that this is not the case. The drinking habits of some members of Britain's industrialised working class, the pre/post-match visits 'to the pub' of the late 19th/early 20th century (Russell, 1997: 59) and the feast days on which folk football was often played, cast doubt onto any rose-tinted view of a more 'virtuous' pre-1960s golden period (see Geoffrey Pearson, 1990). Consequently, King offers a partial view of history which cannot be substantiated empirically.

Despite these objections, King's work clarifies the historical circumstances of modern-day travelling football supporters. There are notable parallels between the 'lads'' compliance with and resistance to the modernisation of football, and the activities which are pursued by 'traditional' travelling football supporters. There can be few supporters who contribute more to football's capitalist

enterprise than this group of supporters, alternatively, there can be few supporters who have upheld the 'tradition' of expressive support with more vigour. As already noted, jumping, singing and alcoholic consumption are all mainstays of the away match experience (albeit not for every supporter who follows their team's travels on the road). Attendance at away games also provides these supporters with 'subcultural' capital and pride and serves as an additional marker of distinction (see chapter 4).

Richardson and Turley's (2006) study of Cork F.C supporters also provides a good example of the 'intra-group' tensions, and cognitive dissymmetry which exists amongst football's supporter base. The Cork F.C supporters who participated in their study wasted little time in deriding the 'barstool supporters' who expressed a preference for watching the English Premier League from the comfort of the public house, to practicing participatory forms of support at Turner's Cross Stadium. From the perspective of these participants, a true supporter was one who made an atmospheric contribution to the occasion. Hierarchies of authentic support were constructed along these lines, with particular aversion reserved for those who could be found lower down the perceived pecking order. Failure to support one's local team and a preference for mediated forms of support were distinct no-no's in the eyes of these supporters (see also Pope, 2010).

Additional studies which have explored the topic of 'authenticity' include those conducted by Giulianotti (2005) who found contrasting opinions amongst supporters towards the issue of consumerism and a consumer identity, and Williams (2012:434) who documented a group of Liverpool supporter's attempts to maintain 'traditional' modes of support by 'addressing concerns about integrity, localism and supporter "authenticity"'. Concerns to practice a more 'authentic' mode of support were also identified by some of the participants in Robson's (2000) study of Millwall F.C supporters. As a priority, the success of the team took a back seat to the more pressing matter of 'participation', supporters from some larger clubs being derided for their glory hunting tendencies.

Scott Lash's (1994:161) ideas are useful for understanding some of the community formations which concern themselves with the issue of authenticity. The reflexive 'taste communities' which he describes entail a 'transgression of the distinction between consumer and producer' – all the more significant in light of everything which has been written about the erosion of supporter's 'rights' to practice *participatory* modes of support and the attempts which they have made to resist this. Also noteworthy is Lash's assertion that these communities 'consciously pose themselves the problem of their own creation' (ibid:161). At a time when 'authenticity' issues weigh heavily on the minds of some supporters; the reflexive character of football supporter communities seems more conspicuous than ever. Interestingly, Lash identifies the travelling supporters of Manchester United, Arsenal, and Leeds as exemplars of these community formations (see chapters 3 and 4).

Clamping the Juggernaut: Spaces of Belonging, Routine, and Stability

If it is accurate to suggest that football once 'helped' supporters to identify their 'place' in the world (see Dunning and Sheard, cited in Russell, 1997), then this picture undoubtedly became muddied by the social and economic fragmentation which began to emerge during the 1960s. The postmodern age, writes Delanty (2003), is one which is characterised by uncertainty. The certitude which modern categories including; nation, class, and gender once bestowed has now been replaced by contingency. The erosion of modern suppositions has paved the way for multiple avenues of belonging and yet at the same time, it has 'made the problem of belonging more and more acute' (ibid: 131). For Delanty, the insecurities which are endemic to postmodernity give fuel to the human quest for belonging. However, the way individuals belong has now changed; fluidity, rather than fixity, being the defining characteristic of group-affiliation during this period. This situation has had a bludgeoning effect on community, saturating it with contingency, as certainty vacates its former position on centre court. Identities now flounder in their attempts to locate stable referent points and so too it would seem, communities. However, for Delanty, postmodernity does not herald the death of community, rather, its form changes, contingency, openness, and liminality now finding their place in the world. Nomadic,

communicative, emotional and highly mobile, these dislocated communities are propped up by '*aesthetic*[15] sensibilities' and 'mass culture' (ibid: 132). A similar conceptualisation of contemporary society and its attendant forms of belonging can be found within Bauman's (2000) discussion of 'liquid modernity'. Drawing upon the ideas of Ulrich Beck, Bauman suggests that 'liquid' modernity is marked by a lack of solidity and certitude. That is, a world where work, community, human bonds, and identity all become increasingly unstable. Bauman suggests that contemporary identities are only capable of appearing 'fixed and solid' when 'viewed in a flash, from outside' (ibid:83). 'Fluidity', is characteristic of liquid-modern identity, any solidity which individuals might consider when reflecting upon their own lives, now taking on the appearance of a 'fragile' and 'vulnerable' entity.

An enduring theme within football scholarship is the role which support plays in fostering feelings of ontological security. Mumford (2012) makes the important point that for the idea of allegiance to make any sense; it must 'extend through time'. Arguably a sense of commitment fuels the regular attendance of some supporters, which in turn bestows feelings of belonging and security (see also Dixon, 2013). In the context of the present study, this is important. In a consumer society where every commitment is 'until further notice' (Bauman, 1998:81), football constitutes one of the few stable anchors of identity that remain available to liquid modern individuals. Sheffield Wednesday football club, which was formed in 1867, has a degree of constancy about it. The raucous crowds of yesteryear may have been replaced by a more passive experience, until recently the club was on the brink of administration, and the kop did eventually get a roof which changed the aesthetic appearance of the ground. However, there is something reassuringly stable about it, a partner for life; an unbreakable relationship. Ben-Porat's study of Israeli football supporters and Robson's description of 'what it means to be Millwall' capture these feelings well.

Ben Porat (2010) opened his account of Israeli football support by drawing attention to recent work on the topic of identity which has emphasised its

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[15] My emphasis

increasingly unstable and transient character. The great anchors of modern identity; gender, nation and class, these authors claim, have been cast adrift, meaning that the habitus has become marked by uncertainty, rather than solidity. However, for Ben-Porat the inimitable characteristics of football support lend it a solid and recurrent quality, which throws down a gauntlet to 'the "end of identity" thesis (ibid:278). Robson (2000:7) has also conceptualised routine football support as an antidote to the uncertainty of the contemporary era, emphasising the more durable character of the habitus. Robson suggests that football provides the context for the expression of deep-rooted, 'personal experience'. Despite some level of geographical dispersion, the supporters who make up Millwall's 'expressive subcultural community' are united by a particular interpretation of 'local history', 'masculinity' and 'class'. At clubs like Millwall, characterised as these are by an intense localism, 'declarative acts of belonging' provide the foundation for the rituals which the club's supporters participate in i.e. they are the source rather than the outcome of these cultural expressions. Belonging, then, should not simply be seen as the culmination of an expressive act but rather as something which is permitted and given form by the 'embodied identity' and the 'varieties of social consciousness' which are common to and activated in these supporters. Those looking for the emotional kernel of the ritualization which can be observed at Millwall, should look beyond the painted faces and banners which are being hurled aloft, and direct their attention towards the 'drama of lived identity' which emanates from the intensely 'personal experiences' which are described above. Consequently, Robson suggests that, the 'imagined communities' which Anderson (1983) describes, and Hobsbawm and Ranger's (2013) 'invented traditions' have little explanatory capacity in this context.

A common theme which emerged during Robson's interview analysis was the 'preference' which his participants expressed for 'collective experience' (ibid: 142). Like Hughson, Robson appears to be describing a set of *affectual* ties based upon face-to-face interaction and common experiences. For committed supporters, explains Robson, the club, should not be understood as an external entity. Rather, when these supporters describe their feelings and commitments it becomes apparent that they are referring to 'something that is a constituent

part of themselves' (ibid:138 see also Ben Porat, 2010). Not only a constituent part, but also a stable one. Seemingly, football support can help to offset the destabilising tendencies of contemporary society – i.e. the episodic character of the quotidian which Bauman (2001b:127) describes. Robson's discussion centres upon the role which 'being Millwall' played in helping a supporter called David, to create a bridge between their former life as a working-class boy and his new one as a successful six-bedroom property-owning diplomat. Occupying a somewhat anomalous position, David, who Robson describes as 'happily prosperous', is also able to maintain a connection to that part of his self which he considers to be 'core', by making regular visits to his childhood playground and participating in ritualistic chants. Robson (2000:150) suggests: 'He remains, despite the changes in his life, largely who he was. His identity seems not to have spiralled off into a postmodern stratosphere of flux, ontological anxiety and multiple personhood'

There is much to applaud and denigrate with Robson's analysis. Robson's understanding of belonging hinges upon his belief that this form of social connection is already lying in wait, ready for activation, rooted in common experience and understanding. The Bourdieusian character of his work provides a useful refutation, or at least a rejoinder, to those who have homed in on the more or less arbitrary modes of football support. However, the strength of this is also its weakness. In today's liquid modern world (Bauman, 2000) there are grounds for thinking that the habitus which Robson refers to, has become less durable. The nostalgic thread which runs throughout his account, is no bad thing in itself and Robson is correct to not over-emphasise the 'invented' character of the traditions to which he refers (although more could be done to acknowledge the explanatory potential of Hobsbawm and Rangers' concept and the symbolic functions this serves in perpetuating an 'imagined' community – see Russell, 1997). However, and whilst acknowledging that football support can help to offset the destabilising effects of liquid modernity, it is hard to believe that supporters such as 'David' who have experienced such high levels of social mobility really can reconnect and maintain their sense of biographical continuity to the extent Robson claims they can. Robson's recognition of the steadying character of football support and the continuity which it lends to the

game's supporters is not without credence. Even in today's world of fluidity and uncertainty it is still possible to locate some stable identity referents, including football. Yes, the destabilising effects of liquid modernity *upon the habitus* are not sufficiently acknowledged. However, like Mainwaring and Clark (2012) Robson can be commended for foregrounding the *search for* stability in a rapidly changing social milieu. Could it be that the actions of travelling football supporters, annexed as they are for many supporters by a degree of routine and regularity (see chapter 6) are in some way tied to a search for ontological security? If we remain open to the idea that the gift of stability constitutes an important part of the attraction of *regular* football match attendance, then we may have taken one step closer to understanding the latest in a long line of battles for football-related cultural space and territory (see chapters 3 and 4).

The benefits of routine support which Robson identifies and his references to 'ontological anxiety' resonate closely with the theoretical ideas of Giddens (1991). Giddens suggests that continuity plays an important role in ensconcing feelings of 'ontological security' (Giddens, 1991:35) - knowing 'what one is doing and why one is doing it' is part and parcel of human life. As reflexive agents, humans monitor the context in which their actions take place and, when questioned, can usually articulate their underpinning rationale. However, Giddens suggests that human knowledgeability is not reducible to a form of discursive consciousness; rather it also operates at the practical level. Tacit in character, this 'practical consciousness' is intrinsic to the 'reflexive monitoring' of behaviour which underpins daily activity. It is not the kind of knowledge which might be considered unconscious, nor however, do we hold it 'in mind' (ibid: 36) whilst carrying out our everyday tasks. Rather, it is 'non-conscious' i.e. it has a 'taken for granted' quality, which allows individuals to focus on what they are doing at any chosen moment.

In the context of the present thesis the significance of this cannot be overstated, for it is this practical consciousness which provides the 'cognitive and emotive anchor of the feelings of ontological security' (ibid:36). Giddens suggests that practical consciousness and its attendant 'day to day routines' which stem from this, play a role in bracketing any potential anxieties about the 'frameworks of existence'. Behind the seemingly mundane components of daily life, lies the

potential for chaos. To be able to function in life – to answer simple queries and react to perfunctory comments we need to 'bracket' the infinite array of possible responses at our disposal. As such, a suitable response is dependent upon a shared 'framework of reality'. However, the 'natural attitude', is both solid and delicate at the same time. When the conventions of everyday life become disturbed, anxiety swarms all over its victims, sweeping away the defensive floodgates which were once provided by the prominence of the natural attitude. Existential questions of 'time, space, continuity and anxiety' (ibid:37), normally taken for granted when operating under the conditions of the natural attitude, all contain the potential to create psychological 'dread'. Worth reiterating then that it is this practical consciousness and the routines of daily life which help us to avoid such unwelcome interference.

Mainwaring and Clark (2012) have presented a shrewd account of the relationship between football support and ontological security. However, and in contrast to Dixon (2013) who has also discussed this (see earlier), their emphasis is upon regular attendance at live football games rather than mediated forms of support. Reminiscent of Bale (1991, 1993) their discussion focuses upon the placeless character of the modern-day football stadium, the impermanence of a runaway modernity, and the role which football support plays in diffusing this. For Mainwaring and Clark (2012) the transformation of English football had eroded the place-related identities which once provided the bedrock for several clubs. Internal changes, such as directives pertaining to the appearance of English football stadiums and the transmission of televised matches from around Europe had contributed to this attrition. External economic changes had also had an impact on identity, rendering it less certain than in days gone by. These changes included the decline of traditional industries and the growth of the service sector, enhanced mobility, and a more 'effective redistribution of wealth' (ibid:118). In sum, the construction of non-descript stadiums, the introduction of satellite television and the development of replica landscapes had all exacerbated the contemporary drift towards 'placelessness' (ibid:119). At this point, Mainwaring and Clark turn to Gidden's ideas for theoretical inspiration. The ascribed and stable identities which could be found in early modern society have given way to ones which are more consumer

oriented, liquid, mobile and individualised. Faced with a less certain sense of self and a loss of direction, individuals become increasingly susceptible to the perils of ontological insecurity.

For Mainwaring and Clark, the erosion of traditional 'collective industry based' and 'place-related' identities' (ibid) has corroded the sense of belonging which can be experienced in late modernity. However, individuals can offset these destabilising tendencies by re-asserting 'a collective past' (ibid:120). Late modernity positions each and every one of us as individuals. However, by attaching themselves to the place-related identities which are associated with their football clubs, individuals can infuse their urban centres with 'a sense of collectivity and security' (ibid:120); a counter to the loss of identity which has been brought about by the omnipresence of the service sector.

Summary

This chapter drew together a body of literature which has chronicled the contestation surrounding appropriate football decorum and its competing cognitive, moral, and aesthetic imperatives. The chapter began by documenting the historical trajectory of football-related cultural struggles. Subsequently, attention was devoted to the battles for cultural space and territory which gained prominence during the 1960s, 70s and 80s and the increasingly 'spectacularised' environment in which these took place. From here, the chapter focused more closely upon the post-1989 transformation of English football, noting that for several scholars this reconfiguration had dampened the aesthetic experiences of the game's supporters. However, it also acknowledged that for others, these developments had created a safe environment where supporters could enjoy the spectacle on display. This section of the discussion concluded by identifying the efforts which some supporters have made to pursue an alternative aesthetic vision via the conduit of what colloquially are known as 'away days'. From here, the chapter turned its attention to the mechanisms of social control which can be found both within and around English football stadiums. These include a body of legislation which has been described in some quarters as 'draconian', advanced surveillance techniques which are designed to foster self-regulation, seductive spectacles which dazzle and entertain, and synoptic supporter-based forms of discipline where the 'many now watch the few'. The arrival of the 'post-fan' and the authenticity struggles which have accompanied the modernisation of English football provided the focus for the subsequent discussion, foregrounding both the reflexive character of contemporary football supporter 'communities' and the manner in which they 'consciously pose the problem of their own creation' (Lash,1994:161) The chapter concluded by considering the role which routine fandom plays in counteracting the destabilising effects of a volatile and capricious liquid modernity, intimating at the need to see these (in part) as a quest for stability and cultural congruence in an atomistic and uncertain world (see chapter 4).

Methodological issues also provided a discussion point. The chapter suggested that for all their merits, several football-related studies have failed to engage

with the experiencing subjects who they describe, preferring to impose an outsider 'expert' opinion. Correspondingly, this thesis will seek to avoid these pitfalls (see chapter 2) by building upon the exemplary work of King (1998), Robson (2002) and Pearson (2012) who made it their business to engage with the 'subjects' of their study. Specifically, the thesis argues for an approach which is more sensitive to phenomenological concerns. The thesis will now discuss my methodological approach.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Introduction

The previous chapter presented a critical discussion of extant literature on the topic of football support and called for an approach which is more sensitive to phenomenological concerns. For all their insights, the theoretical and politically-motivated contributions of the Birmingham CCCS (see Muggleton, 2000) and the methodologically-vague accounts of scholars such as Bale (1993), Parry and Malcolm (2004), and Weed (2010), raise as many questions as they answer. Yes, the Birmingham CCCS can be congratulated for foregrounding the declining role of the expressive supporter and the contested character of football support; whilst the sanitised experience of football which Bale describes also has more than a whiff of credibility about it. However, a nagging doubt remains. Namely, how closely do these theoretical accounts resonate with the experiences of the supporters who they describe? What distinguishes this present thesis from these theoretical and sometimes-vaguely-contextualised approaches, is its engagement with empirical research, an explication of its underlying ontological rationale, and more recognition of the social and cultural frameworks which provide a backdrop to contemporary football support. Consequently, the thesis aims to build upon the empirical work of King (1998), Robson (2002) and Pearson (2012).

This chapter outlines the methodological underpinnings of the thesis. I open the chapter by presenting a rationale for ethnographic research and discussing the limitations of traditional data-collection methods. In keeping with the 'humanistic model of social research' which Brewer (2000:37) describes, I start from the premise that human beings are knowledgeable actors who are able to interpret their social worlds and imbue these with meaning. Drawing upon the methodological precepts of naturalism, I then argue that much can be gained from trying to experience what it is like to be a football supporter and to 'feel' their aesthetic, cognitive and moral sensations first-hand. However, I then problematise the implicit assumptions of this perspective, deliberating both the postmodern critiques which have been made of this and the implications of the 'crisis of representation' which followed. Having discussed the relationship

between prejudice and interpretation, I then offer a justification for my reflexive approach and explain its compatibility with my ontological position. The chapter proceeds by discussing my personal biography and evolving fieldwork relationships. I then expand upon the rationale for the use of participant observation and interviews. The remainder of the chapter discusses my methods of analysis, the criteria which I used to evaluate the research and my 'situational' approach to ethical quandaries.

Game Over? Ethnography and its Crises

It is with some trepidation that I have chosen to label my research 'ethnographic'. As Wolcott (2008:201) suggests, finding a 'thread' which is common to *all* forms of ethnographic research is no easy task. However, I would add that commonalities can be found amongst *various* studies, meaning that the label 'ethnography', which can broadly be defined as, 'writing about people' (Madden, 2010:16), still retains *some* degree of utility. Madden (2010:1) suggests that characteristically, ethnographers seek to gain insight into group cultural processes and practices by 'systematically observing' and participating, to varying degrees, in the activities of their chosen 'subjects'[16]. Formal interviews are also amongst the data-producing methods which are available to the ethnographer (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Collectively, these methods and procedures provide the methodological backbone to my research. However, debate abounds as to the epistemological claims which can be made about this type of research and the representational forms it should take.

Stylistically and substantively this research bears several of the hallmarks of a 'classical ethnograph*y*' (Adler and Adler, 2008:4). Its commitment to a deep immersion within a specific culture, its opportunistic use of my own biographical history and location, its attempt to plug a gap in extant knowledge, its use of 'persuasive rhetoric' (ibid:5) and its willingness to draw pragmatically from a disparate stock of methodological tools (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) all fit the mould well. However, the critical-realist outlook of several ethnographic studies is sidestepped in favour of a more phenomenological

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[16] My inverted commas

emphasis. A commitment to a reflexive approach, particularly the inclusion of a dialogic relationship between the researcher and the text, marks a further point of departure from the classical tradition and, *stylistically speaking*, moves the research closer to a *'postmodern ethnography'* (Adler and Adler, 2008). Somewhat pragmatically, my own approach draws from both perspectives, meaning that my research might properly be thought of as a post-postmodern ethnography (Brewer, 2000). That is, one which acknowledges the limitations of a humanistic approach, but stops short of going down the route of complete relativism (see Brewer, 2000).

Brewer (2000:37) suggests that the rationale for ethnographic research derives primarily from the 'humanistic model of social research' and the methodological position of 'naturalism' upon which it is predicated. In some respects, the underpinning precept of humanistic ethnography was simple. Humans, as Brewer (2000) suggests, were characterised as active, meaning-making individuals (see Layder, 2006) who were not only capable of interpreting their social milieu, but also, were endowed with the discursive capacity to articulate their understanding of these meanings. Correspondingly, it was claimed that ethnography offered researchers unparalleled levels of insight into participants' perspectives and the meaning-making processes which underpinned their construction of the social world. This outlook can be detected within the writings of Blumer (1969:73-74) who called upon researchers to take the role of the other in order to 'see his world from his stand-point', and Jorgenson (1989:20) who waxed-lyrical about the opportunities which participant observation presented to understand social life from the perspective of 'a member or insider'.

'Unproblematic' edicts for social research were also derived from philosophical 'naturalism'. Inspired by the scholarship of symbolic interactionists, phenomenologists and hermeneuticians, philosophical naturalism drew a sharp contrast between 'physical' and social 'phenomena' (Hammersley, and Atkinson, 2007) and implored social researchers to respect the distinct character of the *social* world. Therefore, rather than searching for the type of cause and effect relationships which were characteristic of natural-science research, the task for social researchers was to understand the actions and

interpretations of those meaning-making individuals who made up these worlds. The social environments which were an outcome of these individual's actions were also to be studied but, *crucially*, in a manner which remained true to their character i.e. undisturbed by the presence of the social researcher (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

The ethnographic tradition is well-established within the sociology of football (see Armstrong, 1998, King, 1998, Pearson, 2012) for good reason. As Cresswell (2013:94-96) suggests, ethnographic methods are useful when the researcher wishes to '… describe how a cultural group works and to explore the beliefs, language, behaviours and issues facing the group, such as power, resistance and dominance'. Marsh, Rosser, and Harré (1978:119) also make the important point that it is not sufficient merely to observe any unfolding interactions within the field. Rather, benefit can also be derived from trying to 'feel what it is like to be in a particular situation'. Consequently, this type of research appeared suitable for the task which I had set myself, particularly my desire to describe the aesthetic, moral and cognitive experiences which can be found on away days and travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters' strategies of resistance to the modernisation of football. In time honoured fashion, I sought to engage in activities which Brewer (2000:37) suggests are characteristic of humanistic ethnographic research. I immersed myself (or perhaps more accurately in some cases, remained immersed) within the world of this study's participants, I tried to get/remain 'close to the inside', 'give an insider's account', leave the natural world undisturbed and make good use of what Gilbert Ryle (cited in Wolcott, 2008:219) referred to as 'thick description'. I drank 'early-doors' on trains, chanted fervently at the match, joined in with card-games, and enjoyed the warmth of friendship and camaraderie. I was quizzed by the police about my intentions, argued with friends, ate culinary disasters at half-time and woke up with happy memories and the occasional sore head. However, what distinguishes my own research from the catalogue of football scholarship described earlier in this paragraph is a more cautious interpretation of the value of traditional ethnographic methods. That is, my research, which draws heavily from the humanistic tradition, also problematises the character of its well-worn data-producing tools and associated epistemological claims. To make my

position clear, this thesis starts from the perspective that humans are active meaning-making individuals and considers participant observation to be a useful tool for exploring the lifeworld. However, it is not seduced by the idea that this method provides a transparent window into participants' lives (see Brewer, 2000). Rather, it recognises that, *in the final instance*, any knowledge which emanates from social research is influenced by the researcher's positionality. This understanding is influenced in part, by the scholarship of postmodern writers who have criticised the 'idealised' character of humanistic ethnography and philosophical naturalism (see Brewer, 2000).

For Brewer (2000), the 'crisis of representation' as it became known, was premised upon a renunciation of the idea that the 'thick description' made popular by Clifford Geertz, was able to grant 'privileged and special access' to social 'reality'. Fittingly, naturalism's implicit belief that it was possible to depict the social world in a 'literal fashion' (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:10), walked squarely into the beam path of these critics' radar. Brewer (2000:41) suggests that any belief that the world can be represented 'as it is', free from the influence of the researcher's 'theoretical presumption or prejudice' is simplistic. This conception can be traced back to the writings of Gadamer, who, in foregrounding the inescapable influence of historical and cultural prejudices upon human interpretation, contested the premises of Dilthey's hermeneutics, which had provided a source of inspiration for naturalism. Seemingly, it was now implausible to see ethnographic research as presenting 'social meanings in their own terms' (Hammersley, and Atkinson, 2007:12). Rather, ethnographic research was better thought of as a social construction, which is influenced by the researcher's cultural and historical location (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). The thesis will now explain Gadamer's ideas in greater detail.

Living with Prejudice: On Interpretation and Understanding

Long before it became fashionable to talk about 'reflexivity' and its benefits to social research, Gadamer, a student of the phenomenologist, Heidegger, described the relationship that exists between prejudice and human understanding in detail. Ever since the onset of the Enlightenment, suggests

Gadamer (1975), the idea of prejudice has been castigated as an unwanted demon; a tormentor which needs to be kept at arm's length to protect human 'reason' from the contaminating effects of 'tradition'. However, 'prejudice', in the genuine sense of the word, Gadamer helpfully informs us, refers to an adjudication which is made prior to the final examination of every piece of evidence which informs a decisive outcome. Correspondingly, in German legal vocabulary, the term 'prejudice' describes a 'provisional legal verdict' (ibid:270) i.e. one which is made prior to the establishment of a final judgement. Consequently, suggests Gadamer, *there is no good reason why this term should automatically equate to an erroneous judgement*. The Latin terms 'praejudicium' might well refer to an 'adverse effect, disadvantage or harm' (ibid:270), however, 'prejudges legitimes' also exist. The term prejudice therefore need not simply denote a negative value, but also might describe a more positive one as well. Prejudgements then, suggests Gadamer, can be 'legitimate' (ibid:277), they are also *indispensable to human understanding*. Unable to escape the historical context into which they were born, humans set about the task of understanding the world with a foreshadowed set of ideas. In keeping with the ideas of Gadamer, I did not consider my preconceptions to be *necessarily* problematic. Nor did I view them as phenomena which could be eradicated by adhering to strict methodological guidelines. As Gadamer suggests, there is no barrier cream which individuals can rub on to protect themselves from the supposedly contaminating features of their position in culture and history. More precisely, as Anderson, Hughes and Sharrock suggest, for Gadamer, this is 'an ontological condition of understanding' (1986:72). Like an irritating pupil who turns up at the school gates despite the head teacher's best efforts to exclude them, an individual's position in history cannot be kept at arm's length, as something which can be ignored due to its 'disruptive' influence. Rather, its presence is always felt, moulding the way in which individuals experience the world in the present. Having accepted the central tenets of this argument, I concluded that it was appropriate to take a reflexive approach to my research, that is, one which tried to understand and explain my own influence upon the knowledge which is produced. The thesis will now explain the rationale for a reflexive approach in greater depth.

Reflexivity

Altheide and Johnson (cited by Brewer, 2000:43) have suggested that 'anti-realist ethnographers' have sought to respond to the 'crisis of representation' by embracing a reflexive approach. Aull-Davies (2008:4) suggests that in the case of social research, reflexivity refers to the impact of the 'personnel and process of doing research' upon the findings which are produced. For Hammersley and Atkinson (2007:15) the concept of reflexivity recognises that all research is moulded, in part, by the researcher's personal biography and the 'wider society' in which this is conducted. Put succinctly, reflexivity acknowledges that one's research does not take place in an 'autonomous realm'. It recognises the role of the researcher in the production of knowledge or, as Gobo (2013:43) expresses it, it refers to the 'way in which the researcher's positioning impacts on the research process'.

The benefits of adopting a reflexive approach (one which acknowledges the researcher's impact upon the production of knowledge) have been discussed by several authors including Fine, Weis, Weseen and Wong (2000), Pink (2007), Angrosino and Mays de Perez (2000), Aull Davies (2008) and Reinharz (1997). Fine et al (2000) suggest that the self of the social science researcher has long been viewed as an unwanted influence, a hazardous substance in need of an airtight container. Consequently, attempts have been made to minimise, neutralise, standardise and control this entity; separation, rather than marriage, constituting the default position. However, as Angrosino and Mays de Perez (2000) have suggested, a belief that ethnographers and research participants occupy a position of considerable distance can no longer be assumed. Sarah Pink (2007) makes this point well, emphasising the co-constructed character of qualitative social research. For Pink (ibid:367), all knowledge which is derived from this activity needs to be interpreted as 'the product of a specific interaction between researcher and informants'.

The 'active' role which the researcher plays in the construction of knowledge has encouraged some scholars to call for a more transparent account of the researcher's positionality. Pink (2007:367) has offered her support for this view,

stressing the need to 'understand the subjectivities' which help to shape the research and the knowledge which it produces. Pink explains that, 'When doing research this means being aware of how our own experiences, knowledge and standpoints inform our behaviour with and interpretation of our informants. It involves not just analysing our informants but our fieldwork relationships' (Pink, 2007:367).

Consideration also needs to be given to the researcher's demographic characteristics. Caplan (1993), and Angrosino and Mays de Perez (2000) have both discussed this issue, suggesting (between them) that the researcher's, gender, class, age, race and nationality can all have a bearing on the research process. Even the most cursory glance at an average football crowd would suggest that football stadiums might only be 'open to all' in the most technical sense of the word, the sceptre of racism refusing to slip away quietly (see chapter 5).

Perhaps most important of all, are the prejudgements which influenced the course and direction of the study. As a football supporter, sociology lecturer, and member of the human population, I came to the study with a significant amount of theoretical and personal baggage, however embryonic some of this might have been at the time. These included ideas about belonging and ontological security in a liquid modern (Bauman, 2000) world, prejudgements about 'authenticity' and 'subcultural capital', and preconceptions about aesthetic abandon and the joys of 'escape'. However, and in keeping with the ideas of Heidegger and Gadamer (see later), I wished to test my preconceptions against the ideas of the research participants in my study. Put another way, I talked to this study's participants to see how *they* experienced the phenomenon at hand. As I encountered an increasing number of competing perspectives, my own understanding of the phenomenon developed - the hermeneutic circle of understanding functioning in the manner which Gadamer (following Heidegger) describes (see later).

One advantage of a reflexive approach is that it brings the 'subject and object back into the same space' (Hertz, 1997, viii). An alternative way of looking at this would be to say that this relationship is now acknowledged. There is no

need to draw a line between the consciousness of the experiencing researcher and the object of their study. Quite simply, the two are related. This conception can be found at the heart of Husserl's description of the *intentional* character of human existence. Anderson, Hughes, and Sharrock (1986:83) suggest that, from a phenomenological perspective, 'all knowledge begins in consciousness'. However, Overgaard and Zahavi (2009:94) also note that for Husserl, the human mind should not be seen as an 'inner, self-contained realm'. Rather, for Husserl, *all consciousness is '"consciousness of" something'* (Schutz, 1970:58). Our minds are always focused towards the objects within our milieu, whether these are a 'soccer game' a 'new bicycle' (Overgaard and Zahavi, ibid: 94) or something completely different. Husserl, following Brentano, used the term 'intentionality' to describe this relationship (ibid). Buoyed by his belief that consciousness always has its referent (see Idhe, cited in Langdridge, 2007), Husserl sought to dismantle any artificial distinction between the experiencing individual - and the 'object' (ibid:15). As Psathas (1973:14) suggests: 'The world is not filled with objects which have appearances independent of humans who experience them, nor does subjective experience exist independently of the objects, events and activities experienced'. Recognition of this relationship denies the possibility of researcher detachment in any meaningful sense of the term. There are no good grounds for supposing that our subjectivities can be incapacitated by establishing a set of criteria for sound practice.

Madden (2010:20) suggests that reflexivity can help to bridge the gap between understandings emanating from an 'etic' 'outsider' perspective, and those derived from an 'emic' (insider) perspective. This thesis will now discuss my own personal biography and fieldwork relationships.

Introducing the Author: Positionality and Relationships

Langdridge (2007:59) has compiled a useful checklist for scholars who wish to adopt a reflexive approach to their research. From my own perspective, the most pressing of these is the question *'Who am I'?* In time honoured fashion, I will start at the beginning…

My name is Ian Antony Woolsey; I am a Sheffield Wednesday season ticket holder. Shortly, after my birth my great uncle presented my mother with a (half-literate) letter. The letter began as one might expect, by congratulating my mother on the birth of her first son. However, it quickly switched its attention to the circumstances surrounding one of my other relative's recent incarceration. Seemingly, my uncle, a Sheffield Wednesday supporter, had been locked up for fighting at an away game against Hull City. The letter explains that my uncle was very unfortunate, as several other supporters had been involved, but only some of these had been arrested. I could not comment with any accuracy on the significance of this, other than to say that I have never felt the need to condemn those who have been labelled as 'hooligans', to the extent which some commentators do. My mother's instruction if I was hit, was to 'hit them back harder', even if I usually felt unable to live up to this demand. Perhaps this outlook has left me open to the sympathetic accounts of hooliganism presented by the likes of Hall, Critcher, and Clarke?

By contrast, my father, a gentle man, was not sympathetic to 'yobbish' behaviour. I can always remember the sense of annoyance he would feel when drunken adults arrived on the terraces a few minutes prior to kick-off, usually displacing others who had been waiting patiently for the game to commence. I also remember his insistence that we sometimes leave the game early, to avoid any hooligan activity. In cases where we felt the temptation to stay and trouble developed outside the ground, his advice was to 'walk not run'. To run would indicate to the police that we were 'involved'. That said, my father was also bemused and amused by some of the more draconian policing which we observed on our travels. Sometime in the mid to late 1980s during an away game at Aston Villa, a supporter was ejected for holding two fingers aloft in the air. I cannot recall whether the intended target of abuse was the referee, rival supporters, or someone different. However, as another supporter made his way into the midst of the crowd he asked one of the supporter's friends what had happened. 'He just did this', said the supporter and proceeded to copy his act of gesticulation. This supporter was also then ejected! My father could not stop laughing and enjoyed repeating the tale to anyone who would care to listen. The common reaction to this incident amongst the travelling contingent was one of

surprise. To this day, this action still surprises me, but perhaps less so than it once did in an era when football environments appeared to be a little more accommodating of these types of behaviour.

Additional questions which Langdridge poses are; *'What is my relationship to the topic being investigated?', 'Am I an insider or outsider?' and 'Do I empathise with the participants and their experience*?' As somebody who has attended football matches every year since 1978, and visited 71 football grounds, I consider that I had acquired a sufficient degree of cultural capital to be tolerated, if not always 'accepted' by this study's participants. In some contexts, for example when amongst supporters whom I had known for several years, acceptance, trust and rapport were already firmly established. My demographic characteristics were also advantageous in some respects; a cursory glance at Sheffield Wednesday's travelling contingent reveals that it is largely made up of white males. Given the negative encounters which some non-white supporters, have experienced at football grounds (see Cleland, J and Cashmore, E, 2014), it is not unreasonable to think that my demographic makeup was advantageous in facilitating access to the field of study. I also empathise with several of this study's participants. I strongly object to the systematic attempts which have been made to exclude certain supporters from the game via inflated prices. Broadly speaking, although my position has softened since taking my young son to football matches, I resent the accompanying drive to make supporters' viewing experiences more genteel. *However, my position in the research was far too-fluid and complex to simply describe myself as an 'insider'.*

Aull-Davies (2008) suggests, on closer inspection, the term 'participant-observation' turns out to be oxymoronic - the pursuit of one endeavour, hampering the accomplishment of the other. Such an outlook is implicit with the writings of Angrosino and Mays de Perez (2000:683) who have drawn attention to the fluid roles which ethnographers and research participants occupy. These positions are neither 'fixed' nor 'fully defined', but rather are 'part of a dynamic process that continues to grow'. My own experiences were no different in this regard. As a researcher my role varied by the time of day, my contrasting levels of enthusiasm for the joys of participation, and most noticeably, the group of supporters I was travelling with. When travelling on trains (my usual *modus*

operandi), with all the established relationships and the familiarity of this routine activity, I participated more, and probably noticed less, than I did when travelling with a much less-familiar group of supporters via a coach/minibus. This former role was advantageous as it provided me with an opportunity to try and *feel* the aesthetic space. However, at times, this level of participation also made it difficult to 'observe' and to record my fieldnotes in the level of detail which I would have liked. Whereas the former mode of transport and its attendant relationships offered a comfortable level of familiarity which one might associate with Adler and Adler's (1987) 'complete-member-researcher' role, the latter felt much less cosy, natural and reassuring (see Kawulich, 2005). The contravention of tacit cultural codes, unfamiliarity with some of the participants' leisure activities, including games of cards and dominoes, and occasional feelings of isolation and rejection all represented a stark contrast to the feelings of membership which I enjoyed in my more familiar habitat. Schutz's (1944) 'stranger' I was not. However, generally speaking, *and notwithstanding the fluctuating levels of participation mentioned earlier*, my position was more akin to that of Gold's (1958) 'observer- as-participant'- a helpful reminder that a common social status e.g. ethnic background, age, and so forth, offers no assurances in terms of the accomplishment of 'shared understandings' (Aull Davies, 2008:111).

My position within the research also raised challenges, most notably the problem of how to 'make the familiar unfamiliar' (see Chambon, 1999). It is now inconceivable that newcomers to the field might have noticed things which I simply took for granted, and therefore, overlooked. However, as a sociologist and cultural intermediary I was able to embody different identities, and to look for things that non-sociologists might not have. I consider that the benefits of cultural sensitivity, intuition, and the ease of access which my position afforded, offered several advantages. That said, it is worth repeating that I adopted several different roles within the field, each of which offered their own insights.

As can be gleaned from the preceding discussion, an 'insider-role' comes with benefits and disadvantages. Correspondingly, social *unfamiliarity* need not always amount to methodological disadvantage. Within a research context, cultural ignorance can work in the favour of the anthropological 'stranger'

(although it would be disingenuous to describe myself in such extreme terms). This perspective is implicit within the writings of Zahle, (2011:56) who suggests that the researcher can develop their understanding by observing the reactions of a 'competent *assessor*'[17] to specific modes of behaviour (including those carried out by the researcher). Researchers can also gain insights by observing the actions of 'competent *performers*'[18]. This approach was helpful when trying to gain deeper insights into the cognitive forms of social spacing which Bauman describes. By observing the approval and disdain which was awarded to specific actions, including my own, I was able to develop my understanding of the tacit cultural codes which underpinned the practical activity of these social actors. Breaches of these codes and the disdain which followed, were instrumental in allowing me to understand the emergence of Heidegger's 'Vorhanden' – that reflective mode of being which disrupts the 'natural attitude' and its associated sense of practical knowhow (see Bauman, 1993). Despite a good deal of familiarity with the aesthetic and moral terrain of the football world, there were times when my actions were met with disapproval. Such *faux pas* were helpful in throwing the tacit cultural codes of group members into sharp relief (see chapter 3).

Methods

The thesis will now discuss the data - 'collection' methods which I used during my research (interviews and participant observation), my sampling procedures, and analytical approach.

Interviews and Ontological Issues

Fetterman (2010) suggests that of all the data-generating methods which are available to the ethnographer, the interview stands out as being the most important. The thesis will now discuss my reasons for this choice of method, the types of interviews conducted, an explanation of how my approach was similar

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[17] My emphasis
[18] My emphasis

and different to other extant studies, and an indication of some of the themes which were covered during the interviews.

In his introduction to '*The Phenomenology of the Social World'* (Schutz, 1967), George Walsh asks a series of questions which present a clear rationale for the use of the interview method in social research. The message which can be *extracted* from this is clear. Simply, that by itself, observation is incapable of granting the researcher a comprehensive understanding of the meaning(s) which underpin an individual's actions. At worst, the interpreter risks replacing the 'world of social reality' with a fictitious one i.e. one which has been 'constructed by the scientific observer' (Schutz, 1970:271). Therefore, when individuals seek to interpret human action, much can be gained from consulting the individuals who provide the focus for their research.

Gadamer and Heidegger also intimate at the use value of interviews (although Heidegger appeared more concerned with ontological issues). Drawing upon his schooling from Heidegger, Gadamer develops his discussion by recounting his teacher's depiction of the hermeneutic circle of understanding. At this point Gadamer (1975:266) chooses to cite a passage from Heidegger's own classic text '*Being and Time'*. In this extract, Heidegger explains that the circle of understanding is not something which we must 'tolerate', nor should it be thought of as 'vicious'. Rather, concealed within this circle is an opportunity to access 'the most primordial kind of knowing' - a salutary lesson for all those engaging in acts of interpretation. True to his phenomenological roots, Heidegger then suggests that it is only by recognising that we must resist the temptation to permit our 'fore-sight' and 'fore-conceptions' to be gifted to us by 'fancies and popular conceptions' that we will be able to access this type of (primordial) understanding. Instead these fore-structures must be worked out with regard to 'the things themselves'.

This conception was instrumental in shaping my decision to consult the 'things themselves' – away-support - as experienced by the study's research participants. *Consequently, I decided to conduct semi-structured interviews* with the study's participants. Although I considered foreshadowed ideas to be indispensable, and even desirable, I rejected the idea of relying on these alone.

Nor however, did I rely solely on the perspectives of the study's research participants, something which I considered to be impossible due to the existence of my own historically-bestowed prejudices. Rather, the task was to engage in an interpretive exercise, one which merged my own experiences of the object 'in its appearing' (derived from my previous observations as a supporter and those gained as a researcher) with those (gained via interviews) of the research participants.

In some respects, Schutz's way of thinking was a product of its time. As discussed earlier, *all* research, to some extent, is best thought of as a social construction. However, this is not to say that everything which my participants said in their interviews had no substance outside of that encounter. Certainly, a lot of what was said during these interviews resonated with my own experiences, my interactions with these participants and, in some cases, the moments we have shared together prior to the commencement of this research. The conduction of interviews also allowed for multiple voices to be heard, rather than simply relying upon a solitary one in the vein of say, Critcher, Bale, Taylor, and Weed. Gary Robson's (2000) study of Millwall supporters benefitted greatly from this approach. Gritty, persuasive, and shrewd, this scholar's willingness to consult those who provided the focus for his study, adds considerably to the more-theoretical contributions of the Birmingham CCCS. The same might also be said of the work of Anthony King (1998) who made good use of the interview method in his study of Manchester United FC supporters. In contrast to the highly theoretical efforts of Taylor and Critcher, King made it his prerogative to engage with the viewpoints of those who provided the focus for his study. The interviews (along with the year-long participant observation which he undertook), represent a welcome attempt to ground the theoretical ideas which were presented in the 'things themselves' i.e. to *try* and understand the world as it appears to others. My own approach is inspired by the writings of Robson and King and contrasts markedly with the purely theoretical attempts of writers from the Birmingham CCCS and Bale, Parry and Malcolm, Weed, Taylor etc.

Having emphasised the value of the interview method, Fetterman (2010) advises researchers to familiarise themselves with the advantages and disadvantages of different interview formats. Ultimately, I decided to conduct

semi-structured interviews. Fetterman (ibid: 40-41) suggests that these (along with structured interviews) are at their most helpful 'when the fieldworker comprehends the fundamentals of a community from the "insider's" perspective'. The point being that the questions which are included in these interviews 'are more likely to conform to the native's perception of reality than… the researcher's' (ibid:41). From my own perspective, this statement must be treated with caution. Ontologically speaking, one might question how it is possible to get closer to another individual's reality than their own. However, it is easy to see what Fetterman is driving at. Chiefly, that some prior understanding of the field gained from 'community' membership should help the researcher to formulate questions which are relevant to the research participants. Given my own history as a 'lifelong' football supporter, this approach seemed appropriate. Moreover, as has been recognised by several scholars, a semi-structured design allows participants to raise issues which are pertinent to them (see Barbour, 2014). No amount of cultural knowhow is able to equip the researcher with a prior understanding of *all* the relevant issues.

A series of formal pre-arranged interviews i.e. ones which did not take place during my participant observations, were conducted with 17 participants. However, two of these supporters preferred to do the interview together. The latter interview required sensitivity to the possibility of one supporter leading the other. However, in practice, possibly with one exception, this failed to materialise. The 'thematic' design of these (see Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009) drew upon Bauman's (1993) concepts of social spacing, insights gained from the literature on football support, and ideas derived from my previous experiences in the field. Interviews were used to explore participant's *aesthetic* experiences, including their understandings of what constitutes a favourable atmosphere. Supporters were also invited to identify any actions of the travelling contingent which they disapproved of. This proved helpful when exploring the *moral* perspectives of the study's participants. Group 'obligations', the processes of enculturation which supporters had been party to, and the strategies which they employed to fulfil their moral commitments to the club and to one another, also provided a focus. Supporters were also invited to discuss whether the live-broadcast of Sheffield Wednesday matches on television

affected their decision to attend these games, the reasons for their participation, and the challenges which they had experienced in achieving their goals. They were also presented with an opportunity to reflect upon the modernisation of football and to articulate their readings of 'traditional' modes of football support in relation to their own identity(s). These questions developed my understanding of the *cognitive* predilections of these supporters. A sample of some of the questions which were asked during the interviews can be found in the appendices (appendix 2).

Twelve of the interviews were conducted in public houses. The remaining four were conducted in the participants' dwellings. In both cases, given that these locations were chosen by the participant, I deemed these dwellings to provide the necessary degree of comfort required for a successful interview. It is important to recognise that participants who chose a public house as their preferred venue were *not* inebriated. They have also participated in a drinking culture which has built up their capacity to maintain a clear perspective when drinking the odd pint or two. Participants were also given the opportunity to read and modify their transcript/withdraw from the study should they wish to do so (see ethics section). Therefore, the contrast in these locations was not deemed to have had any significant negative impact upon the knowledge produced.

Interview Sample

Interview participants were initially drawn from a *purposive* sample of travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters. These were chosen based on their extensive common experience of the phenomenon at hand. Each participant has followed Sheffield Wednesday away from home for years and has such, had a good deal of familiarity with the topic. Such a strategy was advantageous as a level of trust (see Fetterman, 2010) and rapport had already been established with *some* of these participants. Subsequently, a snowball sampling technique was used to identify additional participants who matched the theoretical requirements of the project. Convenience sampling was also utilised. Somewhat pragmatically, I explained the purposes of the study to individuals who I met on my travels and invited interested individuals to provide me with their telephone number. Of

course, these different relationships came with contrasting levels of rapport, trust and all those other factors which can affect an interview. Access to an additional group of strangers who travelled on independently organised coach trips, was facilitated by a 'gatekeeper', who was aware of the purposes of the study and offered to help.

The final interview sample consisted of 17 participants. Of these 16 were men and one was a woman. Most of the participants were in employment, and without wishing either to reveal too much information or to ignore the *somewhat* fluid character of class membership in liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000), might loosely be described as skilled-working class/lower middle class. The youngest of the participants was in their thirties, the eldest their sixties. The thesis will now discuss the use of my second primary data-producing method, participant observation.

Participant Observation

Historically, football grounds have been recognised, to employ Bauman's (1993:146) terminology, as sites of 'experiential intensity'; passionate *aesthetic spaces,* where adrenalin, despair, exhilaration, and adoration ebb and flow in unpredictable measure (see Hopcraft, 2013, and Bromberger et al, 1993). How best then to explore the 'sensate', 'emotional' and 'creaturely' characteristics of the *aesthetic* space i.e. one which is left *relatively* unscathed by the confines of 'rationalist thought' (see Highmore, 2004:312)? The thesis will now discuss my use of participant observation and explain the reasons behind this.

Within scholarly texts it is not uncommon to see the terms 'ethnography' and 'participant observation' being treated synonymously. However, writing in 2007, Hammersley and Atkinson noted a recent proclivity amongst qualitative researchers, including those whose work might be described as 'ethnographic', to base their studies solely upon interview findings. Such an approach seems unduly restrictive, not least, as these authors correctly suggest, because of the 'distinct advantages' which can be derived from amalgamating this type of data with findings from participant observations. Expressed succinctly, 'data from each can be used to illuminate the other'.

The perceived advantages of *participant observation* are well-documented. Grills (1998) suggests that participation in the social world of a specific group can help the researcher to develop an understanding of its members. Accordingly, the same author has called upon researchers to thrust themselves into the 'action', to facilitate comprehension of 'the practical accomplishment of everyday life' (ibid:6), (see also De Walt and De Walt, 2002). Fetterman (2010:37) continues in a similar vein, suggesting that an extensive stay in the field can help an ethnographer to 'internalise the basic beliefs, fears, hopes, and expectations of the people under study'. Gobo (2013:5) has even gone so far as to describe observation as the 'pivotal cognitive mode' in ethnography, intimating at the necessity to bridge a perceived gap between what individuals *say* they do, and the actualities of their behaviour in practice. Most persuasive of all however - given my intention to explore the aesthetic experiences of travelling football supporters - is the idea that participant observation enables researchers to *feel* the world of the group that they are studying (De Walt and De Walt, 2011:92).

Robson (2000) has identified one additional reason why it is unadvisable to rely on interview findings alone in this context. Yes, this scholar's work contains several informative accounts from 'interviewees', however, the point which he makes is that a lot of that which is meaningful, is embodied. The subject of 'bodily hexis', to use Bourdieu's (1992:69) terminology, has long been of interest to phenomenological scholars. Citing the work of Levin (1985), Carol Becker (1992:17) suggests that 'all of personal and interpersonal life, past, present, and future, are held in the body'. During the study, attention was given to supporters' bodily fervour, their gesticulations, forms of embrace, and other expressions which are not reducible to linguistic expression. The importance of this cannot be overstated. As Giddens (1984, cited by Elliott, 2014) suggested, a distinction can be drawn between the discursive consciousness of actors i.e. that which can be readily articulated regarding one's actions, and the practical consciousness, the day-to-day knowhow, which cannot. Whilst interviews are helpful in 'accessing' the former, there are grounds for thinking that the latter can only be accessed via other means, participant observation being an

obvious choice. I considered that access to the third level which Giddens speaks of, the 'unconscious', to be beyond my skills as a researcher.

Presented in these terms, the rationale for participant observation is seductive. What better method exists, we might ask, for exploring the *aesthetic* world of travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters and the tacit knowledge which helps to generate this? Without feeling these emotions, knowing what is at stake, experiencing the pain and the exultation of these supporters first hand, what hope is there of understanding their aesthetic encounters? Where and how else might we witness the enactment of their moral codes and be party to their cognitive tension as it unfolds? Moreover, how else might we experience and understand the playful character of these supporters' activities i.e. those pursuits which move them beyond the animalistic activity of survival (see Huizinga, 2014) and the fettered straightjacket of the working week?

Participant observations were conducted during 24 'away days' between the 2012/13 and the 2015/16 English football seasons. My research and love of football took me from places as far and wide as Middlesbrough and Bournemouth. However, I also collected data from local derbies, where the atmosphere tended to be more acute. I attended weekend and midweek games and considered everything to be a potential source of data; the excited text-messages I received willing the weekend to arrive quickly, the interactions between supporters in train stations, the watchful eyes of police officers, the 'high-spirits' in local hostelries, the laughter, the disagreements, the tom-foolery, and the tension.

Initially, my observations were relatively unfocused. I sought to observe the environments in which the 'action' unfolded and the routine activities which are characteristic of this pastime. Participants' relationships with other groups and 'typified' individuals (see Schutz, 1970), including fellow and rival supporters, the police and non-football supporters, also provided a focus for the study. The perceived impact of these relationships upon group solidarity and the manner in which they create a sense of 'otherness' constituted an additional interest. However, as my thinking developed throughout the project I narrowed my gaze and began to focus more closely upon the processes of cognitive, moral, and

aesthetic social spacing which travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters engage in. Put another way, and in keeping with the ideas of De Walt and De Walt (2011:89) the questions I asked were influenced by my own 'theoretical approach'.

Fetterman (2010:37) suggests that the observation of rituals can help the researcher to understand 'how people use their time and space'. Observations conducted in, around, and en route to football stadiums helped me to interpret how these supporters enact their moral codes, maintain their sense of cognitive congruence via ritual, and pursue the aesthetic pleasures which have come to dominate the social space in recent times (Bauman, 1993). I (continued) to participate in the early morning rituals that 'set the day up nicely'; the taxi-rides (best to travel in style), the purchasing of alcoholic beverages 'first-thing', the chants on arrival, and the *occasional* downing of spirits to 'get up' and ready for action. I also engaged in acts of what DeWalt and DeWalt (2011:87) call 'active listening' and took every available opportunity to learn from the incalculable number of informal conversations I participated in about football support. Topics of conversation included ticket prices, player selections, stories of funny escapades, and fragments of supporters' memories 'lost' in a hazy sea of drunkenness.

These observational activities provided no shortage of data. However, as De Walt and De Walt (2011:92) suggest, there are occasions when it is beneficial to switch off from the task of observing in order to *feel* and 'experience events'. This was the task which I set myself, to experience, however fleetingly, the agony and the ecstasy, the trials and tribulations and at times, the 'drag' of incumbent moral imperatives. In addition to the activities described earlier, I chanted in local hostelries, dived around frenetically when the ball hit the back of the opposing team's net, did not blink an eyelid on the train when one supporter baited the police with the words "What did your mom tell you about hanging about outside public toilets?", tried to look undisturbed when in the vicinity of violent confrontations (although these were very rare) and, to repeat, drank on trains early in the morning. Methodologically speaking, I considered this willingness to engage in alcohol-infused consumptive practices to be important, both in terms of gaining access to the study's participants, and in

terms of developing my understanding. Just as the 'visible consumption of alcohol' helped to legitimise Palmer's (2010:426) presence in an Australian Rules football setting, so I deemed the consumption of alcohol to be necessary in order to gain acceptance from a group of supporters who I was largely unacquainted with. I also considered that any decision to abstain from the consumption of alcohol would have caused surprise and possibly suspicion amongst those supporters who I have known and drank with for years. I would add that if researchers are serious about catching 'the process of interpretation' to use Blumer's (1969:86) well-worn phrase, they cannot do anything but participate wholeheartedly in the cultural practices which are integral to the group whom they are trying to understand (see chapter 3). Critics might object that such a practice affects the researcher's capacity to recall events accurately, but this is the price to pay (just as supporters do in their own contexts) for *meaningful* cultural insights. It is also appropriate as the cultural memory of travelling football supporters is not one which is forged out of sobriety. Overall, and in *some* ways, I did what I have always done, although my position as a researcher meant that anything which I wrote never simply came from an 'emic' insider-perspective (see Madden, 2010).

Within research textbooks it is common to see a distinction made between covert and overt fieldwork (see Bryman, 2008). The British Sociological Association (2017) have emphasised the desirability of informed consent when conducting fieldwork and in one sense they are correct to do so. However, short of walking around with a billboard declaring 'I am an ethnographer', it is difficult to understand how researchers who wish to observe crowd interactions can avoid engaging in *some degree* of covert research. This should not mean that those within the immediate circle of an ethnographer remain unaware of the latter's intentions but is more to acknowledge that it is 'not always possible' to gain consent for observational work (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:211). Consequently, my research was a combination of covert and overt research, or perhaps more precisely, what Gobo (2013) has called 'semi-overt'. I made several individuals aware of my research intentions (the character of the research, my intentions to study for a PhD, my publishing ambitions etc) and am grateful for the help which they gave me in providing ideas about the character

of football support. However, it would be incredulous to state that every supporter whose actions are described in the study, was party to the same level of information about my project. How could they have been? The thesis will now outline the analytical processes which I engaged in.

Analytical Procedures

Interviews: Analysis

An adaptation of the procedures of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis was used to analyse the interview data (see Langdridge, 2007). Principally this involved looking for three levels of meaning within the text (see Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009:84), a) 'descriptive comments' i.e. 'the content of what the participant has said' b) 'linguistic comments' i.e. the 'specific' 'language' which participants use during the interview (noting for example, instances of laughter and the tone in which things were said) and c) 'conceptual comments'. As Smith, Flowers and Larkin suggest, this third level of coding might best be thought of as an interpretive exercise. Here the researcher engages in a form of 'Gadamerian dialogue', between their 'preunderstandings' and their 'newly emerging understandings of the participant's world'.

The analytical procedures which I describe below tell only one part of the story. Initially, I intended to take a systematic and somewhat mechanical approach to my data analysis. However, as I developed as a researcher I began to realise that the production of knowledge was a much more complex affair. Not only had my tacit knowledge helped to shape the course and direction of the research, but also, my choice of theoretical framework led me to focus more closely upon specific aspects of the away day experience, at the expense of others. Ultimately, and in keeping with ideas pertaining to the hermeneutic circle of understanding (see earlier), I realised that my analysis was an ongoing endeavour, something which I thought about regularly, and something which I had thought about for several years prior to the research.

I began the thematic analysis by listening to and personally transcribing verbatim the audio recording of my interviews. At various stages during the PhD process I reflected upon these interviews and their broader theoretical

relevance. As I proceeded to gather and transcribe my data, I began to assemble a chronological inventory of initial themes using Nvivo 10 software. These included a combination of pre-ordained themes e.g. 'morality', derived from the *theoretical framework* underpinning the study, and inductive in-vivo (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013) themes which were identified during the initial analysis e.g. 'freedom'. Key themes and sub-themes were organised into a series of 'tree nodes' and themes which could not be subsumed under a wider theme were listed as 'free nodes'. Analytical memos were added to the transcripts to facilitate comprehension of the theoretical relevance of specific passages of text. Themes were then ordered and restructured to reflect links which had been identified between these. This procedure was in keeping with the hermeneutical slant which I wished to give to my research i.e. the themes were based upon a combination of existing and emerging knowledge (see earlier). Given the inclusion of pre-ordained codes in the analysis (see Brooks, McCluskey, Turley and King, 2015 on 'template analysis'), the procedures described here are best viewed as an *adaption* of the procedures of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis which Langdridge (2007) describes, rather than a rigid application. From here I pieced together a coherently-organised set of themes. Each of these themes was linked to relevant sections of the interview transcript and those which offered little or nothing to the overall analysis were omitted. Care was taken to ensure that idiosyncratic perspectives were not lost under the weight of more commonly held ideas. However, the overall aim was to move beyond a fragmented presentation of individual perspectives and towards a more cohesive set of typical understandings i.e. the 'patterns in the subjective experiences of individuals' (Psathas, 1973:13).

Participant Observation: Analysis

Knowing what to document can be a difficult task when conducting participant observation. As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007:142) suggest, 'it is not possible to capture everything'. In this section I discuss the approach which I took to analysing my participant observations and describe how my strategies evolved over the course of the study.

Data was analysed with a view to providing a 'description', and an overall 'interpretation' of the research participants who provided the focus for the study (Wolcott, 1994:12). To achieve this, I employed several well-established analytical techniques. Following Wolcott, (1994:33), I searched for 'patterned regularities in the data'. Drawing upon the ideas of Fetterman (2010) I began by comparing chunks of data, looking for similarities and differences and trying to identify some general themes. De Walt and De Walt (2011:183) use the term 'coding' to describe this process i.e. one in which the researcher develops (emic) categories which 'emerge from the data'. As suggested earlier, there is a sense in which the idea of themes magically emerging from the data is spurious, as the researcher usually has a set of ideas about what they are looking for. However, and influenced in part by my interview analysis, I developed several categories in this way, including those which were labelled under the headings of 'togetherness' and, 'bad policing'. As the study progressed and mirroring my interview analysis, I narrowed my focus and began to concentrate more closely upon issues relating to the processes of moral, cognitive, and aesthetic spacing which Bauman (1993) describes. Suffice to say, that I organised a lot of the data via a process of 'indexing', which refers to the use of '*a priori* categories drawn from the initial theoretical framework' (De Walt and De Walt, 2011:183). Here, I took a broad-brush approach and organised some of the data under the more general categories of 'aesthetic', 'moral' and 'cognitive' spacing. I drew my data analysis to a close when I began to experience what De Walt and De Walt (2011:191-192) refer to as 'diminishing returns' i.e. when analysis failed to generate any fresh ideas.

Ultimately, data from my participant observations and interviews were *synthesised* with theoretical insights in a painstakingly-assembled, analytical logbook. This *lengthy* procedure not only provided reassurances regarding the rigour of the project but also helped to generate insights that appear in the final analysis.

Writing the data

As suggested earlier in the chapter, stylistically speaking, this research bears several hallmarks of a 'classical ethnograph*y*' (Adler and Adler, 2008:4). However, and in keeping with the post-postmodern ethnography which Brewer (2000) describes, it also recognises the value of a reflexive approach. Following Gobo's (2013:298) characterisation of reflexive writing, this research aims to make clear my 'theoretical knowledge' (principally, Bauman's ideas about social spacing), my 'affective relations and… cultural and ideological background' i.e. my 'emotional attitude to the topic', the 'techniques' used to gather data, and the 'indexicality of the research report' i.e. the contingency of my findings. Put succinctly and following Ellis and Bochner's characterisation of reflexive ethnography (2000:740), I have described my 'personal experience' (s) to shed light onto 'the culture' that I studied. The inclusion of personal narratives helped me to try and bring the study to life and to describe what it 'feels like' to be a football supporter. Notwithstanding everything which has already been said about the 'crisis of representation', these first-hand accounts were particularly useful when trying to convey my sensate-emotional i.e. aesthetic experiences. It could be argued that in the last instance, these narratives say more about my own lifeworld than that of any other supporter. In this regard Crotty (1998) was right to suggest that phenomenology might most profitably be conducted as a 'first-person exercise'. However, it is also worth remembering that these experiences took place in a *shared* social world, a world based on tacit understanding and inter-subjectivity. Moreover, I sought to test my ideas against 'the things themselves', the object as experienced by the supporters from whom I learned so much.

In several respects, the approach described above sits comfortably with the 'confessional' narrative forms which Van Maanen (1988:75) describes. My research tries to establish an 'intimacy' with its audience, it discusses my 'personal biases' and 'character flaws'; it considers my role to be that of an interpreter. It also discusses some of my 'blunders and social gaffes' (ibid:77). However, in the last instance, it considers that although the research contains 'flaws and problems' (ibid:79) it 'still remains adequate'.

Reading the Data: Epistemological Status

The epistemological status which can be granted to different types of data has been discussed by several authors including Denzin (1997) who has recounted the helpful distinction which Eason makes between 'realists' and 'cultural phenomenologists'. Whereas the former believe that it is possible to represent reality in an 'accurate' manner, the latter consider the reader and author of ethnographic accounts to be mutually complicit in the 'creation of reality' (Eason, cited in Denzin,1997:140). As will be explained, my position falls somewhere between these two extremes.

The question of whether interviews facilitate access to participants' deep-felt subjectivities or whether these encounters simply constitute a set of context-dependent performances, is an important one. The position adopted here is heavily indebted to that of Holstein and Gubrium (1994) who have attempted to marry a traditional concern for data 'collecting' with a more nuanced approach which recognises the socially-generated character of interview 'findings'. In doing so, these authors have sought to avoid the pitfalls of regarding interviews as conduits which provide untrammelled access to participants' worldviews; whilst stopping short of concluding that all we can ever know from an interview is that which is presented in an interview. In sum, whilst this method is unable to provide a transparent window into research participants' worldviews, it does move us a step closer towards understanding their experiences and motivations.

Epistemological questions also surround the interpretive act of participant observation. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 204) have suggested that the 'crisis of representation' drew attention to the 'authorial perspective' which 'conventional ethnographic accounts' imposed upon their data. As suggested earlier, they also note the role which Gadamer played in undermining the view that the social world could be understood in its 'own terms'. Interpretation as Heidegger recognised, always plays its hand and in the last instance, this is what the study amounts to, an interpretive ethnography. However, and in keeping with the ideas of Barrett/Koroseik/Parsons (cited in Stavropoulous,

2014: 243), 'some interpretations are more convincing than others'. In the same way that interviews cannot be seen to provide a transparent window into the world, so participant observation must also be understood to be influenced both by the researcher and knowledgeable participants who ultimately help to shape the analysis. It is left to the reader to decide whether this research can be considered sufficiently rigorous and methodologically astute to have said something meaningful about the world. The thesis will now discuss the criteria which I used to evaluate my research.

Evaluating the Research

Brewer (2000) suggests that, what he refers to as 'postmodern' scholars (understood in this context to describe scholars who have challenged the epistemological status of 'realist' ethnography) have sought to 'deconstruct' some of the more well-established criteria for evaluating ethnographic research, including constructs such as validity, reliability, and generalisability. The recognition that researchers are unable to represent reality in a 'pure' sense (see Atkinson, cited in Pearson, 2012:15), has, suggests Brewer (2000:46), led to a 'crisis of legitimation'. Scholars working within the 'postmodern reflexive' tradition have sought to respond to this crisis in different ways. Rejecting the wholesale relativism of the more extreme school of postmodern ethnography, 'post-postmodernists' have acknowledged the need for and sought to develop new forms of evaluative criteria (Brewer, 2000). Brewer (2000:53) has suggested that for Atkinson, 'the ethnographic imagination' requires an 'openness in people's attitudes towards ethnographic data', which respects that this may have some degree of 'validity, usefulness and import' (Brewer, 2000:53).

I am broadly sympathetic to this latter position. In keeping with humanistic ethnography, the ethnographic imagination views people as active meaning individuals whose accounts must be analysed if we are to understand their worlds. However, it also acknowledges the influence of the researcher upon the knowledge produced. Throughout my research I sought to adhere with this principle, most notably in my attempts to consult 'the things themselves' i.e. the

objects as experienced by supporters, when conducting interviews. Secondly, whilst acknowledging that an ethnographic text can never describe a social world in its entirety, the ethnographic imagination suggests that field notes and 'extracts of recorded talk' can be used to 'reliably represent' these worlds. However, a reflexive approach is required if the researcher is to have any hope of doing so. As suggested, I consider research to be an interpretive act. The reflexive approach which I adopted is premised on the belief that there is still some value in *trying* to describe participants' social worlds. It also considers some interpretations to be better than others. Finally, the ethnographic imagination maintains that 'microscopic events' can shed light onto 'broader social processes'. However, the researcher must make plain the grounds upon which any generalisations are made. During my observations I encountered several travelling supporters from teams other than Sheffield Wednesday. Some were slightly more hostile, some less so, (although it is worth recognising the impact of results, alcohol, the time of day and so on), some were more 'boisterous', others more 'refined'. However, the similarities between these supporters suggest that some level of generalisation is reasonable (e.g. see 'Tango's' account of his encounters with a group of Millwall supporters/a different group of supporters in a secret location-chapters 3 and 6). The 'Dionysian' pursuits of these supporters, their attempts to claim social space, and their *esprit de corps*, are a *shared entity* rather than an idiosyncratic characteristic. This is not to identify a set of phenomenological essences, but rather to recognise similar patterns of behaviour and shared value systems. The same might be said of several travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters who I encountered i.e. supporters who I did not interview or spend any great length of time with, but who are, nevertheless, integral components of the hermeneutic community. The accounts of King (1998) Robson (2000) and Pearson (2012) also indicate that several of the practices which travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters engage in are not an idiosyncratic characteristic of this group.

Ethics

Ethical propriety, I have learned, is not something which is easy to legislate for, nor, and despite all the voluminous texts which have been written on the

subject, is it easy to accomplish in practice. Ethics committees cannot make time stand still, they have no crystal ball in which they can gaze, and they cannot always anticipate the wants and demands of the research participants whom they seek to protect. The thesis will now discuss the moral dilemmas which I negotiated during my fieldwork and the limited value of ethical guidelines in helping me to resolve these.

To meet the demands of the British Sociological Association (BSA), I began my research by striving to comply with standard ethical codes of practice. For example, and in order to abide by the BSA's (2002, section 16)[19] directive to (when possible) obtain the 'freely given informed consent' of my research participants, I issued each of my 'interviewees' with a participant information sheet and invited them to sign and date a consent form which granted permission to use the data from the interview in accordance with the conditions specified within these documents (see appendix 1). As well-intentioned as my actions were, during the early stages of the research, I began to develop an understanding of the limitations, and even in some cases, the undesirability (see Walford, 2005) of these ethical specifications. As Gobo (2013) suggests, part of the problem with professional ethical codes of practice, is that they are often too-general, or prove to be of little use to researchers, due to their abstract character. Put a different way, they cannot legislate for the social nuances and contingencies which arise during fieldwork encounters (something which the BSA, 2017, acknowledge). The thesis will now discuss some of the problems I encountered when trying to comply with the BSA's (2002) directives and the 'situational' (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) approach which helped me to 'resolve' my ensuring moral dilemmas.

There is a simple reason why ethnographic research often requires a 'situational', rather than a 'de-ontological' (see Bryman, 2008:116) approach to moral impasses, namely, because social life contains a degree of unpredictability, which cannot always be neutralised by following pre-ordained ethical directives. For example, and despite adhering with the BSA's (2002) recommendation to gain the 'informed consent' of my interview participants and

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[19] All of the BSA directives referred to in this section can be found in the updated 2017 version of these guidelines.

safeguard their wellbeing, doubts remain regarding the extent to which I was able to fully prepare these individuals for the ensuing encounters. As a form of social interaction, semi-structured interviews will always contain the potential for harm. To waiver structure is to open the door to chance, impulsivity, and caprice. It presents an opportunity for meaningful dialogue and insights into another individual's lifeworld, but it also takes a leap into the unknown. To quote Angrosino and Mays De Perez (2000:694), 'The fact is that we do not know and cannot know all the possible elements in any human interaction, and the idea that we can predict - and thereby forestall - all harm is naïve in the extreme'. 'Ethical' propriety then was not seen as something which could always be established in advance of my research encounters, but rather, something which had to be negotiated *in-situ*. This perspective rests comfortably with Rock's (1979:178) notion of knowledge as an 'ongoing practical activity', a conceptualisation which respects the fluid character of social life. However, and to accommodate the 'erratic' character of qualitative research, each participant was invited to read and amend their interview transcript as they saw fit. In some ways this was problematic as the *one* participant who chose to do so, 'polished' their sentences, leading to a less 'natural' and 'earthy' feel. However, the overall tenor of the discussion remained largely intact and any 'idealized' (Goffman, 1959:49) data was omitted from the final analysis.

Gaining informed consent for the observational strand of my research also presented moral dilemmas. As noted earlier, it was not possible to gain this 'agreement' from every supporter, police officer, steward and so on, who was present within the research setting. Once again, ethical guidelines proved to be of limited use. The BSA's (2002: section 16) recommendation that: '*As far as possible*[20] participation in sociological research should be based on the freely informed consent of those studied', is nebulous at best. The same body's suggestion that covert research should 'be resorted to only where it is impossible to use other methods to obtain essential data' (section 32) is equally tenuous. It is also worth making the point that I did not view informed consent simply as something which could be obtained at the beginning of a research activity and then forgotten about. Rather, *and where possible*, I regarded it as

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[20] my emphasis

an ongoing process which required repeated affirmation during the study (see BSA, 2017, section 19). As Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) suggest, having established a degree of familiarity with the researcher, research participants may forget that they are party to a research encounter. One might assume that this problem is exacerbated when some of the research participants happen to be the researcher's close friends. This presented me with a recurrent headache and decisions which needed to be made on the hoof. Sometimes, I sought to re-affirm the participants' consent for my presence by dropping subtle reminders of my researcher status e.g. by mentioning my research in passing (see BSA, 2017, section 19). However, on different occasions, to raise the subject felt 'intrusive', and it is worth remembering that some participants had bigger issues to think about than my research, ethical protocol, and what I would write in the ethics section of my thesis. Consequently, to keep badgering people and imposing on their time felt more immoral in some cases than to remain silent.

Additional challenges presented me with dilemmas which needed to be resolved during, rather than prior to, the commencement of the research. These included issues of 'confidentiality', 'fidelity' to my data, 'passivity', 'representation' and the use of pseudonyms.

Bingham (2018), who conducted ethnographic research into urban exploration, has emphasised the importance of showing fidelity to those individuals who are being researched, even if at times this means contravening standard ethical codes. In one sense, it might be argued that this allows the 'story' and 'voice' of a study's research participants to be heard. However, and whilst broadly agreeing with the overall sentiment of Bingham's position, fidelity of this kind is not *always* easy to achieve. Firstly, there is the issue of 'confidential information'. During one interview, a participant stipulated that some of the activities which they were describing were not for public consumption. This example illustrates the ambiguous character of morality which, to employ Bauman's (1993:5) turn of phrase, can be 'right in one sense, wrong in another'. To comply with this demand would be to leave part of the story untold, to apply a hard-wearing gloss which protects the narrative's more fragile elements from penetration and erosion. However, to ignore this request would have felt like a betrayal of the participant's confidence. Ultimately, in this case, I chose the

former option, thereby contravening the BSA's (2002, section 6) directive to stay 'true' to the interview data and to present this 'accurately'. However, and more in keeping with this body's guideline, I also made it my business, to not only describe (unless directed otherwise) the research participants' more 'sordid' activities but also the more 'virtuous' ones as well (see Walford, 2005). In this way I sought to avoid treating these individuals as 'monsters' or alternatively, to use Derrida's expression, turning them into 'pets' (see Bingham, 2018).

Fittingly, and in keeping with John Stuart Mill's assertion that individuals should be treated as 'thinking, willing, active beings who bear responsibility for their own choices' (Root,1993:19), I sought to refrain from casting judgements, taking the moral 'high ground', and wallowing in my own virtuosity. That said, and as if to 'prove' the point that every researcher brings their own preconceptions to the field (see earlier), there were occasions when my 'felt sense of responsibility towards the other' (Bauman, 1993) required me to make choices which were 'right in one sense, wrong in another'. For example, and possibly having been influenced by Duneier's example of an educated academic 'intervening' on the part of their 'participants' (see Dean, 2017), I 'acted for the other', when I tried to reason with a police officer on behalf of a supporter, who was deemed to have *potentially* committed a 'hate crime' (for chanting 'we all hate Leeds scum'). I also felt an *impulsive* (Bauman, 1993) need to act 'for the other' when I witnessed one Sheffield Wednesday supporter interacting 'inappropriately' with an elderly woman in a train carriage. As he chanted in her face, arms outstretched, I intervened, and encouraged him to reflect upon his actions. Certainly, this would fail to satisfy Mill's (see Christians, 2000) call for a form of 'value-neutral' research that would maintain the moral autonomy of one's research 'subjects'. However, and whilst my intervention *did* compromise this individual's autonomy, my decision to act 'for' the other, rather than simply 'with', if one were to follow Bauman's (1993) line of reasoning, might also be deemed moral. Suffice to say, that I do not regret my intervention in either case.

My desire to adopt a reflexive approach presented additional 'representational' issues. Fine et al (2000) make the important point that to saturate the research narrative with one's own personal thoughts and feelings can work to 'silence' the voice of research participants. Conversely to simply, include a brief

overview of one's personal biography can also serve 'to establish and assert the researcher's authority' (ibid:109). Critics might argue that my research could have been more reflexive in places, not least because I identified this as a key plank in my research approach. However, the morality and benefits of foregrounding one's subjectivities is not always as clear cut as might be assumed. The issue of 'whose' voice to present the research narrative in (ibid: 119) also presented me with a difficult choice. My desire to describe the intensity of the aesthetic space, made it seem prudent to include an auto-biographical component, however, for methodological (see earlier) and moral reasons, I also sought to ensure that the participants' voices featured prominently within the narrative.

Perhaps, the real elephant in the room was the question of who this research might benefit. Had I acted in a manner which was out of kilter with Bauman's (1993) characterisation of morality (see chapter 5)? Had I always acted 'for' rather that 'with'? Had I always put the needs of the 'other' before the defence of my 'native' community? Had I acted without concern for rational calculation and reward? Could I, metaphorically-speaking, be considered a 'Saint'? To neither of these questions could I answer with a resounding, 'yes'. Occasionally, I *did* ignore morally repugnant behaviours, either to maintain my 'acceptance' amongst those who I was studying, or for fear of retribution (see Heller, 1988). My ambition to remain immersed within the culture, and even to enjoy its more sordid trappings, meant that I fell some distance short of being a 'Saint', or even at times, a concerned individual. Moreover, my desire to gather data and to gain a PhD, hardly rests comfortably with the lack of concern for personal 'reward' which Bauman (1993) refers to. Even my attempts to avoid out-and-out 'academic imperialism' by buying my research 'interviewees' a pint as recompense for their time, seemed little more than tokenistic. And yet, even this simple gesture, might be interpreted in some quarters as a form of bribery - 'right in one sense, wrong in another', as Bauman (1993) would have it. The same might also be said of my decision to share my own personal experiences and feelings during interviews. Yes, this might go some ways to addressing Behar's (1993) concerns (cited in Fine et al, 2000) about the inequitable exchanges and power relationships within these encounters. However, could

this same practice also be interpreted as a way of gaining a participant's confidence, enhancing rapport and massaging away any suspicions and doubts which they might have about the researcher's integrity?

Other, well-established ethical practices also proved problematic. The use of pseudonyms is standard practice within some research quarters, its desirability seemingly unquestionable. However, as Walford (2005) suggests, not only is the process of ensuring anonymity often a futile one – individuals demonstrating an uncanny knack of being able to 'detect' the 'protected' party - this practice also fails to acknowledge the substantial contribution which participants make to the research. Therefore, and following Walford's suggestion that participants should, if they so wish, be named in the research, I gave participants the option of being so. Only one, of the participants, 'Sid', asked for a pseudonym to be used. Others, having discussed the 'pros and cons' of doing so, preferred their identity to be made 'public'. Perhaps it is unsurprising, that having given up their time to participate in a study, participants should wish to have their efforts acknowledged in some form or another? If social life was simple we would not need ethics boards. Whether they can deal with the required level of complexity or whether it is reasonable to expect them to perform this superhuman task is a moot point.

Permission to conduct this study was granted by Sheffield Hallam University's Faculty of Health and Wellbeing Research Ethics Committee (Sports and Exercise Research Ethics Review Group) on the 12th of June 2014.

Summary

In this chapter I have described my methodological approach and presented a rationale for ethnographic research. Stylistically and substantively, the research bears several of the hallmarks of a 'classical ethnography' (Adler and Adler, 2008:4) However, and drawing inspiration from Gadamer's work, I also called for an approach which recognised the role of the researcher in the production of knowledge. Having discussed the 'crisis of representation', I then presented a rationale for my reflexive approach and discussed my own positionality and fieldwork relationships. This was in keeping with my ontological position which

views the subject and the object as inextricably tied. From here I discussed the reasons behind my use of participant observation and interviews. Principally, participant observation was conducted in order to 'feel' the intensity of the aesthetic space. It also helped me to understand how supporters enact their moral codes and gain insight into their cognitive predilections. However, this chapter also highlighted the benefits of an approach which is sensitive to phenomenological concerns. My decision to check my prejudgements against the 'things themselves' – the object as experienced by those who provide the focus for my study – sought to overcome some of the trappings of the purely theoretical work presented by, amongst others, the Birmingham CCCS. To some extent, the interviews which I conducted helped to reassure me that the findings presented were not simply a 'product of my own imagination'. However, I also dismissed the idea that the methods which I employed were able to provide untrammelled access to participants' worldviews. From here, I identified the criteria for evaluating the research, paying homage to the 'ethnographic imagination' which Atkinson describes. I concluded the section by outlining my 'situational' approach to ethical quandaries.

The thesis will now present my research analysis. The next chapter begins by discussing the cognitive spatial practices, experiences, and perspectives of travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters.

Chapter 3: Cognitive Spacing

Introduction

At this juncture, it seems sensible to take stock and to outline the theoretical framework which has been instrumental in guiding the study in greater detail. Its premises provided a set of tools for gaining some traction as I grappled with making sense of the struggles over social space which have accompanied the modernisation of football. As noted in the introduction, for Bauman, social space is best seen as a 'complex interaction of three interwoven, yet distinct processes' (Bauman,1993:145). This chapter begins by outlining Bauman's ideas about cognitive spacing which is 'constructed intellectually'. The significance of these ideas may not be immediately apparent. However, by the end of chapter 4 the reader should be left in no doubt as to their relevance for interpreting the struggles for cultural space and territory, which provide the focus for this thesis. An outline of the remainder of the chapter can be found at the end of this subsection.

Cognitive Spacing: An Outline

> *'If cognitive space could be projected upon the city map …it would take the shape of an archipelago'* (Bauman, 1993:158).

In the last instance, cognitive spacing represents an attempt to control social space, that is, to distinguish between those who do and those who do not belong. As such, these practices, which are based on inter-subjective understandings, can be seen as a function of knowledge control. Drawing upon the phenomenological teachings of Schutz and Heidegger, Bauman begins his discussion of cognitive spacing by reminding us of the social character of human existence. That is to say, we share our world with 'others' who are 'like us' (Bauman, 1993:146). Our understanding of this fact is seldom reflected upon or scrutinised for its validity. Rather it is taken 'for granted' and, as such, sits neatly alongside all of the other 'background knowledge' which exists un-problematically when we coast along in the mode which Scheler (cited by

Bauman) referred to as the 'natural attitude' When operating in this mode, intersubjective understanding is taken as a given i.e. we expect other people to interpret the world's objects in an identical fashion to ourselves – 'what I see, you see, the objects of seeing being the same for whoever looks at them' (ibid: 147). That said, misunderstandings can occur which awaken us from our cosy slumber, forcing us to reflect upon the reasons for these 'abnormal' occurrences.

In the case of human existence, misunderstandings render the 'others' in our world as different, shattering the 'reciprocity of perspectives' which Alfred Schutz speaks of. No longer are we able to assume that our vision of the world is shared by all, instead we must negotiate the clash of worldviews which threaten to destabilise our cognitive equilibrium. Employing Heidegger's terminology, Bauman explains that society's objects shift away from the *zuhanden* (pre-reflective) mode to their *vorhanden* counterpart. Their *a-typicality* calls for a greater degree of reflection than that which is required when residing in the natural attitude. It is the distance between the subject and these 'abnormal' objects which brings the latter more sharply into focus. No longer able to blend into the background inconsequentially, these objects must now be understood in order to deal with them.

Pushing the argument further, Bauman suggests that distance between the subject and the object, whether the latter is human or otherwise, is created by (or demolished by) the extent of one's knowledge. The depth of the chasm that exists between these two entities relates directly to the *biographical background* of the experiencing subject. At the 'intimacy pole' the subject and the 'other' share a considerable degree of biographical experience e.g. loyal supporters who have endured their team's highs and the lows together over a considerable period. However, at the opposite end of the 'anonymity pole', it becomes erroneous to refer to social distance. As Bauman suggests, the 'other' who is genuinely anonymous is 'beyond social space' (ibid:149); we have no real knowledge of them of which we can speak. Occupying the middle ground however, are groups of humans who have been classified and categorised according to specific criteria. We think of them not as individuals with their own peculiar traits, but rather as members of a specific category. As we develop our

knowledge we assign these individuals to different categories e.g. 'glory hunters' or 'part-timers'. Still, we only really 'know of' these individuals, rather than having any appreciable knowledge about who they genuinely are. That is to say, they have been subjected to the 'processes of typification'.

Importantly, Bauman suggests the propensity to classify somebody as a 'stranger' increases with every step which they take towards the anonymity pole (presumably before encroaching upon the territory of those who are 'beyond social space'). Stripped of the *tacit understandings* which enable them to *'know how to go on'* (ibid:149) unable to predict the outcome of any would-be encounter and stymied by their overriding sense of disorientation, individuals seek to avoid any interaction with these outsiders. As Bauman so neatly puts it; 'Avoidance of contact is the sole salvation' (ibid:149).

This chapter draws upon Bauman's ideas to make sense of the cognitive struggles for cultural space and territory which travelling football supporters engage in. Its findings are the most obvious and banal of all the chapters, but they are necessary nonetheless. The discussion begins by presenting three different ideal-type homes which provide a springboard for the remainder of the discussion. The chapter begins by discussing travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters' quest for 'home' and the emotional forms of solidarity which binds them together. From here, the chapter focuses on the cognitive bedrock of these supporters' 'habitats', and the processes of enculturation which help to foster these shared understandings. This chapter provides an important precursor to chapter 4 which discusses modern football's erosion of these supporters' mental mind-maps i.e. the foundations of cognitive spacing, and the potential significance of this would-be 'demolition', for supporters' feelings of ontological security. It is within the more salubrious surroundings of these supporters' 'home-spaces' that the current chapter begins.

On Belonging and Home

Writing in 1995 Agnes Heller posed the simple but thought-provoking question – 'Where are we at home?' Having recounted a tale of her exchanges with two very different types of individual, a geographically 'static' Roman trattoria owner and an infinitely 'mobile' international trader, the author showcased a suite of ideal-type (in Weber's sense) 'homes'. These habitats included those which rotated around the axis of place - loaded as these were with their occupiers' personal histories - through to those of a more transient nature, where the visitor's sights were fixed firmly upon the 'absolute present' (ibid:2). That is to say, the visitors gaze was temporal, rather than spatial: *'The kind of culture she participates in is not the culture of a certain place; it is the culture of a time'* (ibid:2). Significantly, for Heller, 'temporal home experiences' are now the flavour of the month, overtaking those of a more spatial character in the fashion stakes.

A third ideal-type which is significant here, draws upon Hegel's concept of the 'absolute spirit' - a 'metaphorical space' (ibid:7), located in the 'High Culture' of modern Europeans. Philosophy, Art, and Religion, suggests Heller, were all capable of providing a shelter to those who found no comfort in the depthless character of the 'temporal home experience'. By contrast, the absolute spirit, an alternative residence, for these European malcontents, was 'sensually dense'. Any return visits to this domain, would bear the hallmark of novelty, but not of the kind which might be considered alien, or unique. Rather, European pursuits in this field were better thought of as 'a quest for *novelty within the familiar*' (ibid:8). Carbon copy experiences were no more attractive, than those without any previous history. Regardless, modern Europeans felt compelled to return to these cultural domains, due to the *nostalgia* which they held for their previous encounters in these spheres. Their rewards for taking these trips down memory lane (albeit ones with modified itineraries, and new surprises) were not limited to sensual gratification but, rather, extended to those which might best be thought of as 'cognitive'. Significantly, for Heller, both the body of works which adorned this home and its would-be occupiers have increased dramatically, adding fuel to Nietsche's/Adorno's apocalyptic predictions for its prospects of

survival. Football, it might be proffered, represents but one in the latest line of additions to the cultural galleries once reserved for the likes of Plato, and De-Vinci. Whether it would have been welcomed with open arms by the elitist curators of the Frankfurt School and their ilk is a redundant issue - the distinction between high and low culture now bearing a striking resemblance to the sleeping night-watchman who once kept guard over the museum's prized artefacts (see Bauman, 1993/Heller, 1999, Redhead 2007a). However, for now, and regardless of form, what remains clear is that humans have a need to feel at home, whether that be in the Roman ruins of one's birthplace, the moment of the 'absolute present', or the 'territory of the absolute spirit' which Heller speaks of.

Numerous writers in the field, have discussed the warm feelings which emanate from a sense of being at 'home'. For May (2013), who is mindful of their oft-'romanticised' character, these types of understanding lie at the heart of any notion of what it means to 'belong' - a feeling which is associated with similar gains, including 'a sense of wellbeing' (see May, on Miller, 2003). Several participants in this research discussed the feelings of 'togetherness' and 'belonging' which existed amongst Sheffield Wednesday travelling support. The 'home' of these supporters emanates from a geographical locus, but is found on the road, it is the home of a mobile *community,* whose search for belonging takes them far and wide. A desire for belonging and one might argue, 'home', was particularly apparent within the 'communitarian' narratives (see Jarvie, 2012) of Gaz, 'Sid' and Eileen. As such, their voices feature more prominently, within this subsection. However, the readership is asked to remain mindful that these feelings were articulated less vociferously, by some of the remaining supporters in the study (with varying shades of grey in-between), whose quest for belonging took them to the less -traditional outposts of the aesthetic space. The following subsection discusses the desire for belonging which exists amongst these supporters, and the character of their sociality. The section begins with a reflection on my experiences during a game at Rotherham in the 2015/16 season. The aim of this personal narrative (see methodology chapter) is to offer insight into the forms of togetherness which exist amongst the

travelling contingent. That is to say, this *personal* account describes a *mutual* social relationship.

Family Values: Finding home

Freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose (Kristofferson, K, 1969)

I have felt the warmth of Sheffield Wednesday's 'mobile community' (see Urry, 2000), heartfelt, well-intentioned and, comforting. I felt it most keenly at an evening match in Rotherham, Friday, the 23rd of October, season 2015/16. As the match kicked-off, the soil on my Dad's grave was still fresh, the wounds to my heart, still heavy. Friends, colleagues, and acquaintances had all offered their condolences, done everything that they possibly could to ease my pain. I felt genuinely grateful, but I also felt lost and bewildered, disorientated and confused. Richard Ashcroft, the former lead singer of Wigan's 1990s 'Britpop' sensation 'The Verve', once said that 'we all cry, but some people have better tear ducts don't they?'[21] He was of course, correct in this regard. Generally speaking, I'm not a 'cry-baby', a throwback to the 'masculine' expectations of my childhood maybe? However, the pain of the situation described here was no less intense. At times like these we need all the help that we can get, and on that cold blustery night in Northern England, I found it in the most remarkable place - a football match. The metaphorical arm around the shoulder, the sharing of similar experiences and the simple, but heartfelt, 'I'm really sorry mate' type-exchanges meant something beyond the words themselves, something deeper, something indescribable. If decades of traipsing up and down the country watching a perennially disappointing football team had given me one thing, it was this - a 'connection'. As I write this, the tears still refuse to parachute themselves onto the page, clinging defiantly as they always will to the safe-haven of my eye-lids. However, the memory of that night in South Yorkshire is still vivid, the memory of warmth, a warmth from people I know but don't know, a warmth from humans who on the one hand are just like me, but then on the other, quite different.

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[21] http://www.thevervelive.com/1997/09/face-dark-star.html last accessed 25/05/2016

'Community', 'belonging', 'home', whichever term we might choose, should not be so hard to find, but more often than not we find that it evades us. Amongst the many reasons which can be identified for this, two principle ones stand out. The first problem is an age-old one, which Freud discussed in his well-known text, '*Civilisation and its Discontents'* (cited in Bauman, 2001b). Put simply, the security which is gained from living in a society comes at a cost, namely, the restriction of human freedom (the same might also be said of living in various types of 'community'). Bauman (2001b: 42) is clear that this 'compromise' should not be thought of as a 'choice between good and evil'. Rather, the situation is ambivalent. By themselves, neither of these entities is sufficient to grant human happiness, and yet frustratingly, nor can they co-exist harmoniously. Heller (1999:193) captures this ambivalence beautifully, describing the relationship as one of the 'paradoxes of modern life': '…such as the fear of freedom and the fear of unfreedom, the desire for independence and the desire to belong, of individualism and communitarianism'. Entrance into any longstanding relationship we might glean, is always accompanied by some degree of trepidation.

The second barrier to belonging, a much more recent problem, has been brought about by the transition from a solid phase of modernity, to its more liquid counterpart (see Bauman, 2000). *Identity*, it would seem, has not remained impervious to the uncertainty, stability, and indeed reflexive character of present day society. In a nutshell, the traditional anchors of early modern identity-class, gender, 'race' etc, have diminished in their influence, meaning that individuals must now play a much more *active* role in forging their identities through the reflexive construction of biographical-narratives (see Giddens, 1990, 1991 and Bauman, 2000, 2001a, 2001 b). This onus which has been placed upon individuals, brought about in part by the stultification of these early-modern 'zombie categories'[22] (Beck cited in Bauman, 2000) has received a mixed blessing. Compared to Giddens (1991:34), who maintains that this form of social fracking 'is not only a situation of loss', Bauman's (2001b:46) take on this transformation appears relatively bleak - 'individualization is a fate, not a

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[22] Beck (cited in Bauman 2000) uses this term to describe the deteriorating, but not absent influence of these categories. They are neither 'dead nor alive'.

choice', as this Polish scholar so eloquently puts it. Either way, two things remain clear. Firstly, that sources of 'belonging' *are* harder to come by, accomplished, rather than given. Secondly, that the universal tendency amongst humans to establish relationships of belonging (see Calhoun, cited in May, 2013), shows little sign of diminishing. What this might tell us is that humans feel the need to pursue these bonds, regardless of the toil which their accomplishment demands. The path to happiness is just as cluttered by absolute freedom as it is by absolute security (Bauman, 2001b). Suffice to say, that neither of these two *separate* walkways leads to Eldorado.

In as much as their sense of belonging is *achieved* rather than ascribed, Sheffield Wednesday's *travelling* supporters can be thought of as '*bund*-like' (see Urry, 2000:142). The concept of 'bund', originally developed by Schmalenbach in the 1920s and given a new lease of life by Hetherington in 1994 (see Urry, 2000), is used to describe the emotional type of solidarity which exists amongst small groups. Urry (2000:142) suggests that the majority of these 'communities' do not revolve around a 'geographical propinquity' or perhaps more specifically, one which is *given*. However, there are occasions where this closeness is accomplished, 'at "sacred moments" of kairological time' (ibid). Just as the character 'Anny', in Sartre's (1965) novel *Nausea*, bathed in the sunshine of what she referred to as 'perfect moments', so we might infer that these groups, reach their epiphany, self-actualise, and transform into something above and beyond, in these 'Greek moment(s) of decisive action or *Kairos*[23] (see Dreyfus, 2004: 273 ((endnote 7)).

Amongst the various mobile communities which can be classified as bunds, the 'soccer crews' which Hetherington identifies (see Urry, 2000:142) have the closest relationship to the supporters who are described here. Of particular interest is the 'intersection of belonging and travelling' which is a feature of their existence. So too, their 'cultures of resistance' (Urry, ibid:142). Hetherington's (cited in Urry) example of an early German movement, *The Wandervogel*, who overcame an absence of youth hostels and established routes through the German countryside in order to resurrect the long-departed *Gemeinshaft* which

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[23] I am using the term here in the way in which Kierkegaard uses the term 'Augenblick' i.e. to refer to moments of transformation.

Tonnies describes, gives some insight into the specific character of these 'loose sociations' (Urry, ibid, 142). For Urry, these bunds are engaged in a relationship with community, but not of the kind which are forced or unconscious. Rather, their 'mobile communion' (ibid) is 'chosen on the basis of *mutual sentiment and emotional feeling'*. As such, parallels might be made between these *mobile*, *affectual* networks and Maffesoli's (2000) neo-tribes. What might be read from the conscious character of these associations, will be considered in due course. However, for now, the thesis will focus upon these affectual relations and *shared* outlooks.

The relationship between football support and belonging is well-documented in academic circles. As Spracklen (2013:113) suggests, 'The sports fan is an important social identity in modernity…being a sports fan gives one a sense of solidarity, a sense of belonging' (see also Robson, 2000, and King, 1998). However, it is the *intensity* and character of the relationship amongst Sheffield Wednesday's travelling support which is of interest here. My own biographical background had sensitised me to this type of sociality from an early age and as such, it would be disingenuous to say that the theme of belonging magically 'emerged' (see Hastie and Glotova, 2012:313) from the data. Rather, the idea that a sense of belonging provided a key attraction of away day support, ranked highly amongst my preconceptions. Still, and in keeping with the edification of Heidegger (see chapter 2), I sought to 'test the origin and the validity of these ideas against 'the things themselves', that is, the object as experienced by those who I wished to describe. Gaz, a supporter in his late forties, gave a lucid account of the kind of mobile communion which Urry describes. Of all the participants, Gaz, *probably* celebrates the virtues of belonging more than any other. As such, his narrative can be viewed as a 'pure' example, rather than necessarily representative of the entire group. This is not to say that the issue was not significant for several other participants, quite the opposite. Rather, it is the degree of emphasis which marks Gaz's narrative out as being 'quintessential'.

I first met Gaz, at an away day against Leeds, in October 2013. Richard, who I knew from the halcyon nightclub days of my youth, had introduced me to him and his friends on this trip. Keen to look for potential participants and mindful of

ethical issues, I declared my position as a social researcher from the off. Hours later as we sat across from each other, staring through the melee of empty pint pots that the party had devoured, and conscious of my social curiosity, Gaz emphatically stated that football is 'about belonging', a theme which recurred time and time again during his interview some 18 months later. With a characteristic mixture of humour and intensity Gaz recalled the first time he experienced the sense of belonging which had motivated his attendance for the last three decades or so. Having been introduced to the pleasures of alcohol whilst on a coach journey to his first away match, (a drug which had 'sharpened ((him)) up for the experience') the participant, who was '12' or '13' years old at the time, came face to face with a hostile set of local rivals. It was at this moment, whilst situated on one side of a police escort and observing the 'snarling' faces of the Leeds faithful, that he first began to conceptualise the 'Owls'[24] travelling support as a 'family thing'. With added emphasis Gaz suggested:

> **Gaz**: What I *really loved* about it was that I was with people that I did not know, but they treated you like you were part of their family'.

> **IW**: One of them kind of a thing?

> **Gaz**: Yeah they treated you like you were one of their family. I can remember some really fat grizzly dude just putting his arm round me and saying ''You'll'' be alrate son''. Like you know, "follow me", like "alright, we're altogether **we're all Wednesday** and that kind of thing" and you know? Just great.

The words 'We're all Wednesday' are significant here. Local folklore has it that the phrase was originally coined by a notorious Sheffield Wednesday hooligan who used it to differentiate between 'friend' and 'foe' when entering local hostelries on match days. In recent times however, the club has appropriated the meaning of this phrase, and an acronym of the compound 'WAWAW' ('We're all Wednesday, aren't we?') now sits proudly embroidered onto the shirts of players and supporters alike. Worth remembering here that identity, as Jenkins (2008) recognised, is founded upon a sense of similarity and difference.

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[24] Sheffield Wednesday football club's nickname

Which side of the relationship an individual chooses to foreground might, of course, ultimately rest upon their motives. Either way, Gaz's epiphany ('I knew then that that was it for me, that was it for me, watching Wednesday was everything'), his transformation into a 'family man', born out of 'emotional sentiment' and located at the 'intersection of travelling and belonging', is characteristic of the bund-like qualities of this mobile social network. These *moments* of revelation, kairological opportunities, breathe life into an 'affectual form of solidarity' which is out of step with present-day society. As such, these 'sacred' episodes can be thought of as beyond time, recalling something more akin to the type of sociality practiced by these supporters' forefathers who, collectively, made it their business to fly the club's flag indefinitely. Of course, the relationship which Gaz describes is a *complex* one. Granted, he felt an almost *immediate* sense of belonging amongst a group of supporters from the same geographical locale of his birthplace. However, there is a sense in which these moments of self-actualisation might also be said to transcend the narrower confines of a *given* 'geographical propinquity', rooted as they are in the *hard-earned*, rather than given, right to 'belong'. This is to acknowledge, that there are *different degrees of belonging*, special 'memberships' being afforded to those who have attended away matches regularly over the years and demonstrate the correct level of cognitive 'competence' i.e. those who have accumulated the necessary degree of subcultural capital (see chapter 1). In this sense, 'home' can resemble a newly-acquired residence. However, as my extract from Rotherham indicates (I needed the group, and, in some respects, they were always 'there'), 'home' can also feel like a dwelling which has belonged to the family for years, a home which fosters an intense sense of belonging. These feelings of stability take on extra-significance in the context of a fluid and uncertain liquid modernity (see Bauman, 2000, chapter 1), they become something worth fighting for, something worth the effort.

Gaz was not the only supporter to take pleasure from the comforts of Sheffield Wednesday's extended 'family'. Eileen gave a heart-felt description of the 'really deep, loving relationships' which existed amongst the supporters who she travelled with - a 'family' who 'know each other inside out', despite the lack of 'blood between (them)'. For Chris, a friend of Gaz's, the regular patrons at a

local hostelry which ran trips to away games, had become a bit of a 'family', who not only met up on match days, but also during the pre-season as well. The trips to the races, charity events, and Northern soul night which Richard, Chris, and Dave referred to, all helped to cement the bonds between this group of supporters, pushing them beyond the more fragile affiliations which are characteristic of the age. Matt, a close friend of mine, offered further insight into the character of the ties which he shares with some of his fellow-supporters. Although some friends come and go, with others, the relationship was understood to be more of a 'life thing'. The attraction of these longstanding relationships, riddled as they are with compromise, is not hard to understand. As Giubernau (2013:28) suggests, loyalty to a group, for all its associations with a denial of freedom, provides people with a 'home', '…an environment in which they matter'. Seemingly, in these examples, Heller's pendulum has swung temporarily towards the seductive comforts of security, freedom's 'feared adversary', as Bauman (2001a:70) expresses it.

A desire to enjoy the pleasures of friendship – 'a significant source of belonging' (May, 2013:115) - provided a key motivation for some of the regulars amongst the travelling fan base. Nick, Matt, Richard, Jon, Owen, Chris and Eileen, all discussed their desire for a deeply-entrenched and durable form of sociality, or perhaps less poetically, to 'spend time with friends'. For Nick, away matches were a 'social event' - football, he proffered, was simply, 'a bi-product of seeing your mates and having a drink and a laugh'. Similarities could be found in the accounts given by Richard, who suggested that football presented 'a great vehicle for spending time' with his 'circle of friends', and Jon who maintained – 'it's a social thing really, it's just a social thing'. For Paul, (who is better known within footballing circles as 'Tango'), a desire to meet 'the people', fostered a compulsive type of sociality- 'it doesn't matter what time it is, you know you've got to get there'. As can be seen, the wider football 'family' which Gaz described is founded upon a set of small-scale relationships, which are both deep-felt and durable. A staunch counter, it might be argued, to the ephemeral and vacuous character of the liquid-modern lifestyle.

The significant outcome of all this is a form of togetherness amongst Sheffield Wednesday's traveling support, which extends above and beyond that which

can be found at home games. Several supporters discussed the intense 'camaraderie' which existed amongst this 'nomadic' collective. In one of his more boisterous moments Matt explained:

> **Matt:** it's kind of, you're on a mission, you know it's good camaraderie, but you're on a mission, sort of taking over somebody else's city and somebody else's pub, and someone else's ground.

Although this Viking style 'plunder', a playful colonisation of the rival supporters 'territory', was not foremost amongst the minds of most of the supporters, the desire for 'togetherness' was. Eileen, who described herself as a 'community-activist', spoke of the 'togetherness' and 'closeness' amongst the travelling support, so too, 'Sid', an away season ticket holder, who having been asked to describe a good away atmosphere, suggested that there was a 'camaraderie with away supporters, it goes wider than the atmosphere in the ground'. Having discussed the long-standing friendships which exist amongst the travelling supporters, one which extended over half a century, the participant added that, the 'away supporters at Wednesday, particularly the regulars, they'd do anything for you'. These altruistic gestures ranged from those of a more disposable nature, such as offering advice on 'where to get a reliable car', through to the physical donation of furniture to a desperate couple who had just bought a new house together – 'by word of mouth within a fortnight, they'd more or less got enough furniture (laughs) to sort of start a new home'. Other examples included people offering to help decorate, and tradesmen donating their services at reduced rates. Perhaps the most sensational, if not altogether typical example which the participant presented, was the story of a group of local builders who came to the rescue of an ex-Wednesday player who had lost his roof in a storm. The player, who was in his eighties and had insufficient buildings and contents insurance, managed to get the repairs done 'at cost'. For the participant, this intimacy stood in stark contrast to the relationship that existed between this former-player and the club, the latter simply offering the player a signed shirt. With a charming dose of Yorkshire stoicism, and in an unyielding tone, the participant half-quipped, '*That's the difference*…what he was going to do with a signed shirt when he needed a roof I'll never understand myself'.

Both explicit and implicit within the 'communitarian' narratives described in this subsection is a disdain for individualism and its atomising tendencies. Unfulfilled by liquid modernity's diet of isolation and loneliness, these participants prefer to order from a menu of bonding, connectivity, and togetherness. Gaz spoke about his distrust of people who were resistant to buying into a collective, Eileen, the 'community activist', saw football as an opportunity to make a difference to the community, and 'Sid', a supporter of some 60 years, emphasised the importance of what Bauman (2001a:86) might call a 'collective solution to individual troubles'. With a nod to the reflexive character of his support, the supporter suggested:

> **'Sid':** I just, it's a way of life that many years ago I opted for, and, for me it's about values, it's about shared values, it's about encouraging people, you know, kids, to share those values and it's about regarding each other as, you know, as equals, so that you know, we do things together, you know. Anybody can do something on their own, you know, why can't we do things together?

Such a declaration provides a (not altogether satisfactory) rejoinder to Bauman's (2001a) bleak appraisal regarding the current political mood towards the effectiveness of collective action – a last line of resistance maybe, to the seemingly unstoppable forces of individualisation, individualism, and all that it entails? And yet there is more to it than this, for what else is an away day, if it is not the realisation of freedom, some might say, escapism (see chapter 6)?

Interestingly, the camaraderie which is described here intersected with the *aesthetic* intensity which could be found at away games. For Gaz, the togetherness which could be found on these adventures helped him to overcome the boredom which came with following a team which had enjoyed relatively little success in recent times.[25] Eileen also spoke of her preference for away matches on the grounds that there was a better atmosphere amongst this smaller, more tightly knit group. A more unusual explanation for these acts of collective purpose which originally attracted him to football was presented by Richard, who made the point that his was the first *distant* generation which had

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[25] These interviews were conducted a few months before the 'successful' 2015/16 season which culminated in a play-off final loss at Wembley.

not been involved in a war in the last 200 years. In contrast to the 'pals gangs' in world war one, which had been plucked from a village (and) sent off to France together', Richard's peers, had not been 'thrown together' and asked 'to go off and do summat ridiculous and all be in it together'. For Richard, this blend of absurdity and connectivity constituted part of the experience of being a travelling supporter. A sense of collective purpose tinged with more than a dose of the 'ridiculous' is captured well in Richard's recollection of the infamous 'Exeter-trip'. This tale was recounted by several participants in the study, and as such, is worth relaying at length.

Exeter Away

As well-intentioned trips go, this orchestrated 'grand-finale' would take some beating. Conscious of their friend's impending departure to more distant shores, the lads from a local hostelry took it upon themselves to give this longstanding Wednesday supporter a memorable send-off. With this in mind air-tickets from Manchester airport were booked for the game and champagne was to be laid on to symbolise the significance of the occasion – 'proper billy big bollocks' as Richard described it. Unfortunately, and due to torrid weather conditions, the flight, which was the last one on the evening before the game, was cancelled. Having endured a 10 hour wait in the airport, and mindful of the snow storms which had already put paid to some of the remaining fixtures in their team's division, Richard and company were faced with a difficult choice - to retreat back home across the Pennines or to push on regardless. Richard's account gives some indication of the depth of the connection between the group, a mobile communion and resilience forged at the 'intersection of travelling and belonging'. Having held a consultation, which resulted in the decision to identify all of the available options, one of the organisers of the trip returned with the following news:

> **Richard**: He said "I've got somebody that will take us but it's going to be a grand. Put it to the lads, see what they say. And we got everybody together and said look, you've two choices. We've got a minibus, it will either take us home or it will take us to Exeter what do you want to do? And everybody went, "we

go, we go to Exeter". And we got to Exeter at 7 o'clock in the morning, having stopped on the m5 for about an hour because of the snow. But we all tanked up. We managed to get last orders in the off-licence in Manchester airport, we all got stacks of wine and crisps and stuff like that and we did it, and it was one of the best days out I have ever had.

Perhaps these findings are unsurprising, Guibernau (2013:34) making the seemingly obvious point that belonging can help an individual to stave off the perils of anxiety, clearing a pathway for 'the emotional warmth of friendship and camaraderie'. However, and like the participants in Robson's (2000) study, this 'togetherness' is central to this group of supporter's raison d'être. It is this notion of collective solidarity, paid homage to so affectionately by Clarke in 1978, which binds the participants together, driving them to attend, feeding their emotional connection, and ultimately, facilitating the 'mobile communion' of this 'bund'. However, and as Bauman (2001a) reminds us, today's world is one where 'community', must satisfy the demands of freedom. For all his love of belonging, collective purpose and camaraderie, Richard remains resolutely individualistic. An attitude which is summed up neatly in the following quote:

> **Richard**: I do what I do for myself; I don't do it for anybody else. I do it for my own particular gratification, whatever enjoyment. I do it because I have to, to make me feel comfortable in myself, which is, which is odd I guess.

For Matt, however, belonging was more a matter of duty, an early-modern form of sociality founded primarily upon a spatial connection:

> **Matt**: You stick with the team you are born, it's like family, innit, Wednesday are just part of the family, you know, I'm kinda stuck with it, (IW: yeah) but you know, they might come good and that would be brilliant.

The resignation in Matt's statement ('I'm kinda stuck with it'), tempered only by an unrelenting hope, demonstrates that his motivation extends beyond the pleasure-seeking thrills of Heller's 'absolute present'. Rather, Matt's 'home' rotates infinitely around the axis of place, the place he was born, Sheffield 6, Yorkshire, England.

Significantly, the camaraderie which exists amongst the travelling contingent is not only founded upon an emotional connection, but also a *cognitive* similarity. In contrast to the more archipelagic character of the home support's outlook, a common cognitive framework fuelled the former's connectivity:

> **Gaz:** So like say Plymouth on a Tuesday night or whatever, there will be 300 Wednesday fans there, that will create an atmosphere that's absolutely out of this world, because its, because you **all feel exactly the same**[26]. Whereas you are very disparate at an home game.

It is to these common cognitive frameworks that the thesis now turns its attention.

On Interpretation and Shared Understandings

Natural Attitude: The mental stance a person takes in the spontaneous and routine pursuits of his daily affairs, and the basis of his interpretation of the lifeworld as a whole and in its various aspects. The lifeworld is the world of the natural attitude. In it, things are taken for granted (Schutz, 1970:320).

Central to the current analysis, is a conviction that the 'home' of Sheffield Wednesday's travelling support is not only founded upon an affectual solidarity, but also what Anthony Cohen (1985:101) might call, a common set of 'cognitive maps'. This subchapter will begin by discussing the hermeneutic character of modern communities, and the common stocks of knowledge which help to 'fashion' these. Subsequently, attention will be given to the processes of enculturation which help to engender a shared set of understandings amongst Sheffield Wednesday's travelling contingent and the common cognitive framework which underpins their activities. This discussion provides an important forerunner to chapter 4, which explores the erosion of these cognitive frameworks and the usefulness of Bauman's ideas for interpreting this.

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[26] my emphasis

Hermeneutic Communities

Association football, whose rules were formally inaugurated in 1863 (Sandvoss, 2003) is a distinctly 'modern' phenomenon. As such, any 'community' which we might associate with this sport is, by its very nature, an *interpretive* one. The reason for this can be traced to the transformation of community, which accompanied the onset of modernity sometime during the 1600s. Blackshaw (2010:26) suggests that in contrast to its pre-modern counterpart, the modern world is not predicated upon the axis of a 'singular community', 'the *arché*, or the underlying source of the being of all things human'. Rather, what can be inferred is that community, and by extension, what it means to be human, is now a fluid and negotiable construct. Not only did 'freedom' - that great pillar of modernity (see Delanty, 1999) - rob this pre-modern steering mechanism of its co-ordinating powers; it also cast the modern world into an endless cycle of transformation. One outcome of this, suggests Blackshaw, is an unabashed *nostalgia* for community. A second is a determination amongst the modern populace, to give this entity meaning. That is to say, community has been transformed from something which is given and fixed, into an entity which might be best thought of as a 'hermeneutical exercise' (Blackshaw, 2010:27).

The great beneficiary of this wholesale transformation is the human imagination. Modern individuals not only displayed a willingness to deliberate what the term 'community' meant, but also, what it should look like in practice. For Blackshaw (2010:27), the death of community as a 'thing in itself' instilled this former *arché* with an unprecedented level of meaning. Shorn of its matter-of-fact qualities, community now had to be decoded and made sense of, or put more simply, *interpreted.* Significantly, modern 'communities', entities which are captured satisfactorily by Amis' expression, the 'unknown known', are *deepened* by their members' interpretive acts. This adds majestically to their 'aura' and fuels their admirer's nostalgic outpourings towards these cultural artefacts (Blackshaw, 2010 on Amis, 2006). As if all this was not enough, for Heller, this 'meaning', and the lure of 'the unknown known', 'nostalgia and/or' 'closeness' elevate community above and beyond time to the apex of the 'modern hierarchy of culture' (Blackshaw, 2010:27). The lofty position which community now enjoys

can partly be explained by its malleable character, a flexibility which allows its exegetists to interpret the meaning of this entity *ad infinitum*. In a nutshell, for Blackshaw, hermeneutics breathes life into the dead corpse of community, conjuring up 'feelings of nostalgia and closeness' (ibid:28), and yet, tantalisingly, we can never truly know it's 'secret'. The best we can ever hope for in this scenario is to *sense* its presence, to sit by the fireside of 'community' and bathe in its ethereal warmth.

If this condition is endemic to modern forms of community in general, then football communities, being the modern phenomenon that they are, cannot escape the interpretive acts which are characteristic of this period. Football, has, and (despite the underlying presence of a prevailing dominant culture) always will, mean different things to different people – the Victorian stand-dwellers which Russell (1997) speaks about at length, *sometimes* expressing a contrasting set of views, to the lumpen masses who occupied the terraces (who themselves could be differentiated by their disparate levels of willingness to gamble, swear and engage in acts of violence). Whether born out of socio-economic status or something altogether more/less complex, different interpretations of the 'people's game' abound. The travelling supporters of Sheffield Wednesday are no different in this regard, forging their alliances around a set of *shared understandings* about what it *means*, to be a football supporter. The role of narrative in maintaining the 'tradition' becomes central in this regard. That is, hermeneutics reminds people of who they are and offers individuals insights into 'how' they might belong. However, perhaps, what marks post-war English football supporter communities as different - and even more acutely, those constructed in the aftermath of the post-1989 'watershed moment' which Crabbe (2008:428) refers to - is the *extent* to which the wider football 'community' (supporters, legislators, owners) has engaged with these hermeneutic practices. As discussed in the literature review, seemingly, the *meaning* of football support and its associated 'community' is now well and truly up for grabs, the time has come for these supporters to 'consciously pose themselves the problem of their own creation' (Lash,1994:161) (see chapter 1).

To say that moderns (in this case, supporters) must interpret community, fashion the interiors of their 'homes', and forge a set of common

understandings, is not to say that they do so as 'blank slates'. Humans or *Dasein,* to use Heidegger's terminology, are 'thrown' into a world which is not of their own choosing (see Becker, 1992), that is, a world which contains a pre-existing set of cultural recipes. These recipes or 'common stocks of knowledge' as they are sometimes known within phenomenological circles, equip the inhabitants of these worlds with 'knowledge at hand' (Schutz, 1971:306). Their role in orientating human action should not be understated. As Schutz suggests: 'All interpretation of the world is based upon a stock of previous experiences of it, our own experiences and those handed down to us by our *parents and teachers,*[27] which in the form of knowledge of hand functions as a scheme of reference' (Schutz, 1971:208).

Importantly, for Schutz (1970:74), these 'stocks of knowledge' provide individuals with a 'scheme' for interpreting previous, current, and future experiences. From this, we might read that football supporters will anticipate a degree of constancy on match days, a prediction that their support, their community and their environment, will remain more or less the same. However, Schutz (ibid:75), is at pains to emphasise the mutability of these schemes of reference, noting the role which 'supervening experience'(s) play in their modification. Where a *'synthesis of recognition'* can be identified between a newly emerging experience and a previous one, that is to say, a common thread of similarity runs throughout, then the former experience can be thought of as 'familiar'. However, in cases where this synthesis is absent, that is, where the experience is 'strange', it cannot be understood with reference to the existing stock of knowledge. The outcome of this, we might assume, is a period of destabilisation and contemplation. Put metaphorically, the apple cart of the 'natural attitude' has been well and truly upset in this scenario.

The remainder of this chapter begins by discussing the role which the 'parents and teachers' which Schutz refers to, play in enculturating younger supporters. That is, providing them with a scheme of reference with which to interpret the football terrain. Subsequently, attention will be given to the shared understandings i.e. the common cognitive framework which helps to bind these

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[27] My emphasis

supporters together, and their association with Hegel's 'absolute-spirit'. However, before doing so it is worth making one final point, namely, that when individuals operate in the 'natural attitude' (Schutz, 170:320), their orientation towards the world is 'practical' rather than 'theoretical'.

Fostering Shared Understandings

If community is interpreted, aided in no small amount by a pre-existing stock of knowledge, then the role of the parents and teachers which Schutz refers to in facilitating this process, cannot be underestimated. As Cohen (1985:101) suggests, the 'cognitive maps', which provide a starting point for social interaction, are 'accumulated over generations and, thus, heavily scented by the past'. This of course is not to say that a specific cognitive orientation is 'given' in this context; some supporters may reject their teacher's edification, others may modify it (see for example, Clarke, 1978), however, what is clear, is that these custodians of knowledge, who themselves are actively engaged in the interpretive process, play a significant role in shaping the outlooks of their apprentices. Graham, who I met on a trip to Cardiff in the 2014/15 season, spoke of his desire to school his teenage son in the ways of being a travelling Wednesday supporter. This was not simply a case of trying to cultivate his son's addiction - 'hopefully he'll get hooked and want to carry on', as this supporter put it. Rather, the more meaningful task was to familiarise him with the hardship that is part and parcel of following this team. For Graham, unlike a lot of supporters in this study, the joys of 'having a laugh' played second fiddle to the more pressing matter of the game itself. However, he also expressed a desire to pass on the cultural wisdom which he had accumulated over the years:

> **Graham:** I suppose it's a football, first and foremost I think it's a football thing, and then, you know trying to, trying to educate my son into what it takes to be you know a Wednesdayite, you know it's not, it's not an easy road, being a Wednesdayite, it's a long way from being an easy road[28].

To support a team that disappoints more than it excites, demands a particular mental outlook. Loyalty, for all the restraints which it places upon freedom,

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[28] This interview was conducted before the relatively successful 2015/16 season commenced.

cannot be tossed aside at a whim. As such, a basic requirement for this form of support is the ability to cope with the disappointment of defeat. Arguably, this cognitive orientation is founded upon a specific morality which shall be discussed in more depth further on in the thesis. Either way, a degree of resilience is required if one is to successfully venture down the 'road' which Graham described. 'Sid' discussed some of the less-nihilistic strategies which he employed to help his younger family members to overcome the pain of defeat, including the playful recital of 'always look on the bright side of life' (a rendition which was usually met with a chorus of disapproval). Such an act he explained was intended to 'build them up. Others of course, take to more self-destructive forms of behaviour e.g. the heavy drinking described by Jon, which helped to salvage something from the day (see chapter 6).

Fellow supporters also play a significant role in initiating younger supporters into the customs and practices of the travelling contingent. However, in some cases this is more the result of inadvertent modelling, than a conscious attempt to socialise the younger spectators. Gaz, who as we recall, was introduced by his fellow 'nomads' to the pleasures of alcohol at the age of 12 or 13, explained how simply being amongst the travelling contingent had taught him to fear the police less than he might have otherwise. Despite, being 'a little bit intimidated' by the baton-wielding constabulary during one of his earliest away games at Everton, the supporter (in a comical tone) explained how he developed his new-found confidence – 'the hairy arsed bastards around you, it kinda rubs off on you, you know what I mean?'. To reiterate, the role of parents, friends, and fellow supporters in shaping the cognitive orientation of this group of supporters, cannot be overstated. What their actions help to facilitate, whether consciously or otherwise, is a process of enculturation, *the outcome of which is a particular form of knowledge control*.

The remainder of this subchapter will, identify the cognitive orientation of these supporters and their manoeuvres at the border of Hegel's 'absolute spirit'.

Knowledgeable Actors and the Absolute Spirit

Previously I intimated that in their quest for 'home', the travelling supporters of Sheffield Wednesday can properly be thought of as operating at the borders of the 'absolute spirit'. The 'sensually dense' (Heller, 1995:8) forms of gratification which their activities provide, their repetitive fortnightly forays into oft-previously unchartered stadiums which satisfy their lust for 'novelty within the familiar', and the 'nostalgia' which they hold for their previous encounters in these spheres, all fit the bill well. The role which their conversation and reflection plays in maintaining their 'vision of this home' also situates these supporters at the borders of the absolute spirit. Technically speaking, only their associations with 'mass', rather than 'high' culture, debars them from full access to this elite cultural domain, and yet, as Heller (1999:122) maintains, the division between these two cultural realms is 'no longer self-evident'. Everything, it might be proffered, is up for grabs in liquid modernity, including the thrones of its cultural galleries best-loved artists (see Redhead, 1997a for a discussion of football's convergence with 'elitist' cultural forms).

Perhaps most importantly, the rewards which these supporters receive for 'taking their trips down memory lane (albeit ones with modified itineraries and new surprises)', are not limited to sensual gratification but might best be thought of as *cognitive.* Rewarding as an occupancy within this 'third home of European modernity' might be, it does require its tenants to make best use of their 'judgmental and reflective powers' (Heller, 1995:10). In the last instance, for Heller, a home resembles something like a 'community', a human locale, incorporating a 'network of bonds and ties'. Critically, Heller suggests that when operating in their respective homes, individuals are able to speak 'without footnotes'. However, this is dependent upon the recipient of the communication e.g. a fellow supporter, match official etc. being able to comprehend the intended message. The ability to understand the messenger, via the transmission of various symbolic gestures, presupposes a *'common cognitive background'*. Just as Blackshaw's (2003:91) leisure lifeworld lads were able to finish '…each others' sentences, and communicated, more remarkably, without speaking at all', so the community of Sheffield Wednesday's travelling support

hinges upon a set of shared-understandings. In other words, this hermeneutically-crafted 'community', presupposes a degree of *cognitive congruence* (see Heller,1995). The remainder of this chapter is substantive and aims to shed some light on the specific character of this study's participants' shared understandings.

To provide an exhaustive list of every shared understanding which makes up the common cognitive outlook of Sheffield Wednesday's travelling contingent is an impossible task. As such, I will not aim to do so. Rather, I will identify some key orientating principles, which, as will be explained in the next chapter, have been somewhat undermined by the modernisation of football. The first of these, a desire for 'collective experience', has already been spoken about at length. The remaining preferences which will be discussed are as follows: 2) Traditional 'working-class' cultural practices 3) Loyalty and Authenticity 4) Expressive support 5) Standing and 6) Heavy drinking.

Speaking Without Footnotes: Tacit Understandings within the Social Space

Much as the role of conversation, that mainstay of the absolute spirit, is important in preserving the travelling Sheffield Wednesday contingent's vision of 'home', it is also important to recognise that some of this habitat's underpinning rules are best thought of as tacit. Only a contravention of these rules, results in them being pushed into the discursive domain. Despite a good deal of familiarity with the aesthetic and moral terrain of the football world, there were times during my fieldwork when my actions were met with disapproval. As noted in the methodology chapter, I have been derided for making an 'unauthentic' choice from the snack bar at Manchester City, reminded by a fellow supporter at Cardiff to show more sensitivity to context when using 'industrial language', and paid a heavy price at Burnley for my lack of sartorial elegance. Such faux pas were helpful in throwing the tacit cultural codes of this 'hermeneutic community' into sharp relief. Importantly, some of these 'rules' are not the exclusive property of the group of supporters who are described here. Rather, the rich tapestry of intersubjective understandings, which provides the backdrop for their

activities, is woven on a communally-owned set of looms which have been lovingly preserved and passed down from one generation to another. An expectation that clearly defined social boundaries will be respected provides one example of the 'rules' which are referred to here (which is not to say that supporters always adhere to these rules).

> **Jon:** If you are looking from the outside it doesn't make sense but there's like a I think there's like er, there's like certain rules, sort of social rules I think in football that you follow, you know what I mean? If you are in that sort of situation you keep your head down and you just try and get out do you know what I mean? Done it before when I've walked in a pub, and literally the pub's gone quiet, you know what I mean, Stoke we did this, and we walked in, and like went to the bar, ordered a drink there was like three of us, and literally everyone's like looking at you, so it was like "right, just finish your drink and then we'll go out again".

What this indicates is that the *wider* hermeneutic community, i.e. football supporters more generally, have a distinct set of cultural codes whose transgression is not always taken lightly. The key point in all this would be that, cognitively speaking, the supporters who provide the focus for this study do not live in a hermetically-sealed bubble. Rather, the 'world' which they occupy, is one which is shared.

The remainder of this subchapter will focus upon the cognitive orientation of *this* study's participants, which is not to say that they are necessarily the exclusive property of these supporters.

Tradition – a working class cultural thing?

Several of the travelling supporters in this study expressed a desire to uphold what they saw as the 'traditional' cultural practices of their collective. That is, to protect them from the savage acts of change which threaten to undermine their cognitive stronghold (see chapter 4). Jon for example, articulated his desire to maintain the traditions which are part and parcel of his group's culture. Although none of his friends would probably be deemed 'working class', due to the fact

that they did not have a 'proper job' i.e. one which required them to 'make stuff', Jon suggested that to many individuals in the outside world, this lifestyle was seen as a 'working class cultural thing'. Significantly, Jon suggested that this was 'part of your culture you want to keep'. Although the participants in this study appear to have little in common with the 6-bedroom property owning lifestyle of the diplomat 'David' who features in Robson's (2000) study, what they do appear to share is a desire to cling to a set of cultural preferences, which (rightly or wrongly) are traditionally associated with the 'working class' (see chapter 1).

Loyalty: Familiarity within the Novel

High amongst the hierarchy of cultural preferences which emanate from this community's cognitive orientation is the kind of unrelenting loyalty, which Richardson and Turley (2006) describe (see also King, 1998, Chapter 1). Owen, an away season ticket holder in his late 50s expressed this in the following terms.

> **Owen:** Well I think I'm of the opinion that if you are a football fan, you, you pick your side, and then you stick with them.

The 'Well I think', in Owen's statement could be read to indicate a degree of uncertainty, but his commitment to the club would suggest otherwise. Like Matt, Owen's loyalty was unquestionable - it was unthinkable to only support the team during its more successful periods. What marks Owen's account as different to Matt's, is the references which it makes to a reflexively chosen lifestyle ('you pick your team'). Owen appeared sympathetic to the idea that it was still possible to support the team even if one was unable to attend. However, the cognitive orientation of some supporters precluded any warm feelings towards those who were disparagingly referred to as 'part-timers'. As Jenkins (2008: 102) suggests, 'Defining "us" involves defining a range of "thems" also'. Warren was keen to make the point that he and his friend Stuart, who were both away season ticket holders, were 'not armchair supporters'. 'Sid', another away season ticket holder, even went so far as to suggest that he actually quite liked it when Sheffield Wednesday games were broadcast live on the television, as it

discouraged the 'part-timers' from attending. Nick, who despite suggesting that he 'wouldn't necessarily put too much importance on having to feel loyal' (whilst tempering this with the acknowledgement that he wouldn't ever change his loyalty) also drew a sharp line between those supporters who he regarded as genuine and their less 'authentic'[29] counterparts:

> **Nick:** There's a certain smugness sometimes. You might be out at work and you get talking to someone about football and whoever they support and you ask them "Do you go to the match?" [and they reply] "I sometimes go to the big games" and inside you are thinking "Yes, yes, you are one of them wankers then aren't you".

The repeated trips which these supporters make to their cultural galleries, journeys which position them at the borders of the absolute spirit, appear to be motivated by different factors, including duty, haughtiness, and equanimity. Such an orientation throws some doubt onto Dixon's (2013) claims regarding today's acceptance of mediated forms of support. Clearly, at least from the perspective of some of these supporters, a degree of stigma *is* still associated with such practices. However, the question remains as to whether this loyalty is primarily towards the club or their lifeworld? That is, a loyalty to Sheffield Wednesday or to the defence of a wider 'actively residual' (see later) football culture whose very existence is threatened by the modernisation of football. Either way, and in keeping with the ideas of Giulianotti (2002), the associations which can be made between this brand of loyalty, and the subcultural capital which can be acquired from this, are clear (see Chapter 1). I would be lying if I were to say that I had never bathed in my own self-righteousness, the reassurance of being a 'proper supporter'. Sanctimonious as it might seem, I particularly enjoyed attending the games at Rotherham, Hull and Derby during the 2015/16 season, not least, because the transmission of these games on Sky TV meant that my 'authenticity' (whatever that might mean) was beyond question. The following extract from my field notes, 'captures' this feeling well:

> 1980s-style pissed up lads on the train. I get a text from a mate who invites me to the pub to watch it on Sky T.V. and feel a bit smug when I inform him that I am on my way to the match (with Richard and his

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[29] This is my own choice of word, not Nick's

> mates). Perhaps this says something important about what, I and several other individuals, consider to be a 'genuine' mode of fandom? Perhaps I'm just being sanctimonious? Either way, you can't beat this aesthetic. That warm merry feeling, feeling a bit rebellious, feeling part of something…the younger lads on the train are chanting, we're getting closer (Rotherham away, 2015/16 season).

Of course, the existence of the non-attending 'other' is necessary for 'us', the attenders, to maintain our sense of identity. They give 'us' something to distance ourselves from, the necessary sense of 'difference' which underpins identity formation (see Jenkins, 2008). As can be gleaned from the extract, I also enjoyed the intense atmosphere of these occasions, a warm sensate, emotional i.e. aesthetic experience (see MacDougall, 1999), where 'fans are able to interact with others *similar to them*'[30] (Charleston, 2009:145, on Melnick, 1993). This theme provides the focus for the following subsection.

Expressive Support and 'Banter'

> **Graham**: I don't even go to Hillsborough anymore. I think the atmosphere is horrendous, absolutely horrendous.

Generally speaking, the atmosphere at Sheffield Wednesday away games is appreciably more acute than that which can be found at Hillsborough,[31] aided in no small part by the cognitive persuasion of the travelling contingent, and their preference for expressive modes of support (see Crabbe and Brown, 2004, Pearson 2012). Collectively, Stuart and Warren explained that there was a better atmosphere amongst 'the hardcore', born in part out of a struggle for ascendency - 'You want to out-sing your opponent', as Warren expressed it. Eddie articulated a similar sentiment, describing the atmosphere at these matches as 'more intense', a mood which Nick attributed in part to the alcoholic intake of the travelling contingent, and the role which this played in negating the 'reserved British thing'.

An appreciation of the subtleties of working-class 'banter' (see Skeggs, 2011:11) also had a hand to play in allowing these participants to create the

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[30] My emphasis
[31] The name of Sheffield Wednesday's stadium

kind of experiential intensity, which they deemed preferable. That is to say, the cognitive predilection of these supporters and their communally-generated aesthetic, were mutually-intertwined. For Tango, chanting, a flow of adrenalin, and banter were all prerequisites to a 'good' atmosphere. The latter was considered to be a harmless activity, but critical nonetheless, as it gave 'everybody a buzz'. The importance which 'Tango' attached to 'banter' is in keeping with his self-positioning as a traditionalist, an egalitarian ('I'm nothing special'), who simply wished to enhance the atmosphere at the football games which he attended. Tango was not alone in his love for this type of mutual-repartee. Eileen also derived a good deal of pleasure from this form of entertainment, whether the rivals happened to be the 'Wezzy's (West Yorkshire) supporters from Leeds, 'Cockneys', or Sheffield Wednesday's longstanding neighbours and rivals the 'Piggies' (more commonly referred to as 'the pigs'). So too, Chris, who suggested that this mutual exchange made for a 'good atmosphere'.

Here we are reminded of the tacit cultural codes which Jon referred to at the beginning of the chapter, a *largely* unspoken language which is somewhat characteristic of those operating in the absolute spirit. I say, 'somewhat', rather than 'fully' characteristic, because these cultural codes do crop up in conversation from time to time. Tango described his relief at the appreciation which he received from a group of travelling Millwall supporters for previously engaging in, what to an outsider, might be read as a series of 'hostile' verbal exchanges. Making the best use of his theatrical skills, the participant recounted a conversation with a member of this south London contingent:

> **Tango:** (puts on a London accent) "You're fucking great mate", says er, "You were there the other night, he says everybody comes down to the Den", he says, "and we give it them, they shit themselves", he says "Your keep giving it back at us", he says… absolutely fantastic and they appreciated like the banter, which they knew what it was about, thank God.

Ancillary benefits to the kind of unswerving loyalty and raucous backing which is characteristic of Sheffield Wednesday's travelling contingent were also identified. From Eileen's perspective, the Owls away support did not 'get on

players backs as much', a persuasion which facilitated a closer connection between these two groups than the home support enjoyed. How closely this might approximate the traditional player-supporter relationships which Taylor (1971) describes remains unclear. However, there is some indication that this study's participants welcomed this greater level of intimacy, an affection which is born in part out of an appreciation of this rambling network's efforts. Gaz expressed this enhanced relationship in the following way:

> **Gaz:** There's a difference between when a player comes over and applauds the away end, or scurries off at an home game after another dismal defeat. It's different, because they are respecting the fact that you've turned up.

Eileen's account, which celebrates the joys of banter and a raucous atmosphere, was also useful in highlighting the oft-competing demands between the three different types of spacing which Bauman identifies. Her *cognitive* outlook which made certain songs which she did not like 'acceptable' at football matches, is necessary to maintain the intense *aesthetic* atmosphere which can be found within these locales. As such, *moral* concerns must take a back seat, that is, certain misdemeanours need to be overlooked if these sensate, emotional pleasures are to be enjoyed. This is not to say that from the perspective of Eileen 'anything goes', as demonstrated by her willingness to reprimand a group of younger males for singing 'get your tits out for the lads' at a teenage cheerleader, but rather (for aesthetic reasons), in most cases, that the aesthetic should not always surrender to the moral (see later).

As can be seen, the overriding interpretation is that this hermeneutic community should be 'loyal' and generate the kind of atmosphere which some scholars have suggested is becoming increasingly difficult to find within English football stadiums (see Parry and Malcolm, 2004, chapter 1).

An intentional flouting of stadium regulations, including directives to sit down, enhanced the aesthetic intensity which could be found at away games. For all the concern which standing arouses amongst the game's legislators, a sentiment I can identify with, there are strong grounds for thinking that this traditional way of being at 'the match', enhances the *aesthetic intensity* of these sporting occasions (see Bale, 1993 – chapter 1). 'Sid' considered all seated

stadiums to be somewhat problematic, suggesting that home supporters sat down, and tended to be 'quieter, by contrast the atmosphere was much more 'acute at a decent away game'. Similarly, Owen suggested that standing 'at away matches creates a better atmosphere' (see Crabbe and Brown, 2004-chapter 1). This theme provides the focus for the next subsection.

Standing

It is hardly ground-breaking to state that travelling football supporters show a preference for standing at away matches (see Pearson, 2012, and Crabbe and Brown, 2004), but it is an important characteristic of this study's participants nonetheless. It is also important for understanding some of the frustration which these supporters feel towards the modernisation of football, a topic which will provide the focus for the subsequent chapter. Nick, who described away matches as a reason to 'spend time with likeminded people' suggested that travelling supporters displayed a different 'understanding' towards this controversial act. The supporters speculated that any decision to stand at a home game would likely be met with disapproval/requests to sit down from his fellow supporters. By contrast, at away games there was 'almost an acceptance' that the match would be enjoyed from a standing position. Eileen made the point that despite being instructed otherwise, away supporters tended to stand up, a choice which helped to generate an atmosphere which couldn't be found amongst Manchester United's 'Prawn' (sandwich brigade)[32]. Occasionally however this predilection had turned out to be regrettable. During a game at Charlton in the 2012/13 season, some of the travelling contingent chose not to comply with a request to sit down which was relayed over the club's P.A. system. Nick, who displayed a better memory for this incident than I, recalls that the travelling contingent's immediate response to the club's request was nothing short of hostile – 'I remember us all saying, "fuck off"'. However, it transpired that the reason for this request was to enable a group of disabled supporters to view the action on the pitch, something which the standing

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[32] A disparaging term which the media used to summarise the comments of former Manchester United player Roy Keane who criticised the lack of vocal support from some sections of the club's **home** support (in contrast to their away support which he labelled 'fantastic').

majority had not registered due to the poor quality of the transmission – 'you did not really hear that much except "sit down"'. Evidently, what might easily be interpreted as a dubious sense of morality, can simply be attributed to a misunderstanding. 'Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings which these things have for them' as the symbolic interactionist Herbert Blumer (1969:2) once suggested.

In all of this, it is important not to paint too-simplistic a picture; for example, Craig suggested that he 'generally' preferred sitting down. However, and positioning himself as a knowledgeable actor, he also acknowledged that 'when you go away, you don't sit down', something that did not really 'bother' him because he understood 'what it's like'. However, 'Sid' was less accepting of the current scenario, calling for the introduction of traditional standing areas (with reduced capacities), which would then create a space within the seated areas for younger and more senior supporters who currently struggled to observe the events which were taking place on the pitch. In keeping with his commitment to equality, the participant suggested, 'It's fine if you are able to do it, but what about the social mix, what about the kids, do they not matter, you know?' (see chapter 6).

Getting 'Leathered'

> **Richard:** '…it's not unreasonable to say we are drinkers. Difference between drinkers and non-drinkers isn't there?'

If there is some 'truth' in the old adage that 'work is the curse of the drinking classes' then the belief that the weekend provides a much-needed source of relief from this anathema also has some credence (see Brown, 2008). Even the most casual observer would be hard-pushed not to notice the heavy drinking culture that releases the creative hand of Sheffield Wednesday's travelling contingent. The joys of alcohol, that great conqueror of inhibition, will be discussed more fully in chapter 6. Suffice to say for now, that a desire to drink heavily, and the right to do so, is a predominant concern for many of the travelling faithful. A comment made on Nick's Facebook page following an

unexpected encounter with former Wednesday 'legend' David Hirst, illustrates this point well. To begin with the encounter itself:

> Everyone is buzzing at half time, but things get turned up a few notches when former supporters favourite 'David Hirst' enters the concourse. Within minutes cameras are flashing everywhere and Nick and I manage to get a photograph alongside this 'all time-legend'. 'Hirsty' looks quite bewildered as he is mobbed by a gaggle of supporters, each of them keen not to miss their opportunity to obtain a lasting memento which they can show to their friends. 'All I wanted was a pint' he suggests. 'Give him your pint' a fan implores me'. The atmosphere is buzzing, and everyone has reached a maximum high (Bournemouth 2014/15 season).

The Facebook conversation which ensued is telling and resonates with the cognitive outlook of the vast majority ('Sid' being a notable exception) of the supporters in this study:

> **Friend**: Fantastic… Quite simply the best ever.
>
> **Nick**: … And all he wanted was a pint!
>
> **Friend**: Nowt new there then. That's why he is our hero **because he is one of us[33].**

Once again, we are reminded of the relational character of identity, an 'us', but ultimately also a 'them' mentality, which is central to the construction of any human collective (see Jenkins, 2008).

You did what? On Being Different

In the last instance subcultures, however we choose to define them, are constructed in opposition to a perceived 'mainstream', the differences between supporters being less obvious than their difference to the general non-football supporting public. Problematic as the idea of a 'mainstream' is (see Williams, 2011); it provides an important benchmark against which some of these supporters forge their identity(s). Jon explained 'I think you do feel that you are just sort of a little bit different', a sentiment which resonates very closely with my own ideas. In the same passage of conversation, he also proffered that on paper, for a man in his late 30s, his antics might seem inappropriate - a

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[33] My emphasis

situation made no easier by the difficulties which he sometimes experienced in getting other people to understand. 'They'll go like, you did what?' Jon added that it was 'very difficult' to rationalise his ways of being to those who did not share the same cognitive outlook. Put simply, 'it doesn't always make sense to people'. And this is the point, to many supporters, match day officials, pundits, and non-supporters, the Carnivalesque (see Pearson, 2012, chapter 1) actions of the travelling contingent *do not* make sense, the desire for change which the former express is problematic for several of these travelling supporters, determined as they are, to keep things *largely* 'the same'. That is, to cling onto the 'novelty within *familiar*' of the absolute spirit. These supporters wish to 'repeat the unrepeatable', but their quest is not solely thwarted by temporal barriers, or logical cul-de-sacs. Rather, conflicting cognitive imperatives also present a stumbling block. Chapter 4 explores the threats to the travelling contingent's 'hermeneutic community', their cognitive orientation, and associated cultural practices. By the end of that chapter the significance of Bauman's ideas for interpreting the associated battles for 'cultural space and territory' should become clear.

Epilogue

In summary, football can be seen to provide a 'home' for the travelling football supporters who are described here. In part, the origins of this home can be thought of as spatial i.e. Sheffield 6, Hillsborough. As such, they bear some resemblance to the first type of home which Heller describes. However, in the last instance, the belonging which is described here is earned, rather than given. This is a 'mobile-community' (see Urry, 2000), whose members build-up their portfolios, both in transit, and in the 'novel', but 'familiar' (Heller, 1995:8) spaces of their opponents' stadiums. The 'affectual form(s) of solidarity', the transformation from an atomistic existence to one which is saturated in the blissful connection of 'mobile communion', is, first and foremost, accomplished in those moments of kairological time, which step beyond the more-earthly anchorages of chronological time, and the type of ascribed 'geographical propinquity' which Urry describes. As such, their roots cannot be pinpointed to the place of one's birth, nor can they be located solely in the 'live for the minute'

philosophy of the 'absolute moment', rather, in their embrace of the 'novel within the familiar' they can be thought of as operating more closely at the borders of the 'absolute spirit'. The 'sensually dense' character of these supporters' activities, and the nostalgia (see chapter 4) which they hold for their previous encounters in their cultural field also fit the 'criteria' which Heller identifies. Perhaps most importantly of all, their rewards for these repeated trips down memory lane, are not limited to sensual gratification but might best be thought of as cognitive i.e. supporters are required to make judgements about the meaning of their support and home, and 'speak without footnotes'. *Such a condition is to be expected*. By virtue of its position in history, the hermeneutic community which is described here can be thought of as *interpretive.* Like every other modern 'community' which survives without 'an underlying source of the being of all things human' (Blackshaw, 2010:26), what Heller would refer to as an '*arché*,' this study's participants are required to decode and make sense of their community. However, they do so with the aid of a common set of cultural recipes, which have been handed down lovingly from previous generations. Whether consciously or inadvertently, the parents and teachers (in some cases fellow supporters) which Schutz refers to, play an active role in facilitating the enculturation of younger supporters, the outcome of which is a particular form of knowledge control. Such practices help to engender a common cognitive outlook amongst their apprentices, which provides a basis for their ensuing cultural practices. Both implicit and explicit within the largely 'traditionalist' narratives which are presented here, is a preference for 'loyalty', 'standing', 'heavy drinking' and 'expressive support'. These preferences provide important identity referents, markers for distinguishing between the 'in' and the 'out' group. However, not every member of the wider football community, including club owners, the game's legislators, and 'new' consumer spectators share this view of the ideal football space. This has significant implications. The common 'stocks of knowledge' which Schutz refers to, provide their incumbents with a 'scheme' for interpreting previous, current, and future experiences. When a common thread of familiarity runs throughout these experiences then a 'synthesis of recognition' can be said to exist. However, where the experience is strange it cannot be understood with reference to the existing stock of knowledge. I suggest that a period of contemplation and cognitive

destabilisation is the likely outcome of such friction. This theme will be taken up in chapter 4 which explores the erosion of this study's participant's cognitive frameworks and the usefulness of Bauman's ideas for interpreting this denudation.

Chapter 4: Applying Bauman: Threats to the Cognitive 'Community'

Redeunt Saturnia Regna: Authenticity and Nostalgia

The Latin phrase 'Redeunt Saturnia Regna' which appears in Virgil's poem, 'The Fourth Eclogue', refers to a vaunted 'Golden age' of history, 'a kind of Roman version of Eden', as the historian Butcher (2016:29) puts it. Translated into English, the phrase means 'The dominions of Saturn Return', a sort of homecoming for nature, which in the absence of war and sin, rediscovers its 'original automaton aspects' (Versnel, 1993:192). Some parallels can be made here between the battles for cultural space and territory which this study's participants engage in, and the longing for Eden which Vergil describes. Generally speaking, the hermeneutic community who provide the focus for this study, express a desire for a return to the 'good old days', a return to Eden and the *automated* character of the 'natural attitude' (Schutz, 1970). However, first, the war which they wish to leave behind must be won. Struggles regarding 'authentic' football support (even if these are the magical product of an earnest imagination) are central to this battle. Victory must be absolute.

This chapter will begin by discussing these supporters' interpretations of the modernisation of football, paying close attention to the impact of this transformation upon their cognitive stranglehold. Subsequently, Bauman's ideas will be used to interpret their struggles and the 'authenticity wars' which are a feature of English football in the 21st century. As such, it will aim to build on the existing work of King (1998) and Crabbe and Brown (2004). The chapter concludes by discussing the nostalgic yearnings of the study's participants and their desire for a return to the natural attitude.

The Salesman Cometh - on Modernisation and Strangers

'Spoken of… community', writes Bauman (2001a:12), 'is a contradiction in terms'. To articulate it is to recognise its inoperative character, that is, to draw attention to a paucity of *shared* understandings. Communities which exist 'matter of factly', explains Bauman, do not require their members to track them

down, nor are they required to fight for the intersubjective understanding which underpin these. Rather, this understanding is a given. With shades of Heller, Bauman explains 'we understand each other 'without words' and never need to ask, apprehensively, 'What do you mean?'. Lash (1994:148), who, like Bauman, draws upon Heidegger, makes a similar point. The functioning 'workshop', which Heidegger refers to, a metaphor for the world; community, is dependent upon a set of tacit understandings. When all is rosy in the garden individuals engage themselves in 'routine' i.e. 'pre-reflective' (ibid:151) practices. Signs and signifiers do not attract attention but rather are interpreted instantaneously as 'meaning' (ibid:148). However, when cracks begin to appear in the cognitive bedrock of these communities, that is, where shared understandings start to erode, other human beings and their signifiers move more sharply into focus. As Lash (ibid) suggests, 'the movement to subject-object modes of thought takes place only with the breakdown of shared practices and shared meanings of the 'we''. That the participants in this study were able to speak so readily about their 'community' is testament to the discord which exists amongst the English football 'community' (supporters, owners, legislators) at large. Such a development is reflected by, and necessitates, an abandonment of the 'natural attitude' (Schutz, 1970), shifting the football 'community' away from its pre-reflective backstage role and placing it onto centre stage. If this is common to all modern communities, then its relevance to football supporters has become *exceptional.* Ever since the architects of modern football tore up the existing templates and designs for living which had been utilised by previous generations who, to a greater extent, operated in the 'practical attitude', a state of 'Vorhanden' has prevailed. That is to say, the 'taken for granted character' of these supporters' activities, is now anything but that. Rather, their orientation is increasingly reflective; their attitude 'theoretical' (Schutz, 1971:208) rather than 'practical'.

Don't you want me baby? Exclusion, Sanitisation, Community, and Tradition

The post-1989 transformation of English football presents a threat to the natural attitude of the hermeneutic community which is described here. There are

several reasons for this, including the celebration of passive 'middle-class' consumer-based support, and the related denigration of more 'laddish' ways of being. Increased ticket prices, and the methods of social control which are employed both within and around football stadiums are amongst the practices, which exclude/stigmatise those who are unwilling/unable to meet the demands of the new regime. Unsurprisingly, several of this study's participants articulated their contempt for these developments, choosing instead to salute the virtues of 'tradition', and, we might infer, the joys of a more *automated* way of being.

A disdain for modernised football and its financial imperatives, ran throughout the 'traditionalist narrative' which Stuart and Warren presented. Stuart lamented the increasing admission charges at football matches, suggesting (with the help of Warren) that three of his fellow supporters had 'dropped-out' for financial reasons. He also articulated his support for the Football Supporters Federation's 'Twenty is plenty'[34] campaign, reasoning that £20 amounted to only half of the current admission fee at Norwich and Leeds. The cost of attending the latter match has been a source of consternation to Sheffield Wednesday's travelling contingent for some years now. Despite being more welcoming of *some* of the more recent developments in English football than Stuart and Warren, Craig expressed a degree of cynicism about the decision to relocate away supporters in the John Charles stand at Elland Road. Such a practice, he argued, allowed the host club to charge these supporters more than it had previously, given that clubs are prohibited from charging a higher admission fee to away supporters, than the price of the most expensive 'home' ticket. Jon, who regularly travels with Craig, explained that he no longer attended this game due to (what is arguably a prohibitive) pricing policy, a situation which he considered regretful as he 'used to love Leeds away' because of the aesthetic thrills ('rivalry', 'needle', and 'getting in and out of pubs') that he associated with this fixture. In keeping with this line of reasoning, Jon made a link between the recent trends in the pricing policies of English football clubs and what he referred to as the 'sanitisation' of football (see Bale, 2000). Increased admission charges, he suggested, were pricing out 'people

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[34] A campaign initiated by the Football Supporters Federation to limit the price of away match tickets to £20.

who did not have a very good job but are very passionate about the club' i.e. those who 'maybe wear their heart on their sleeve a little bit more'. The exclusion of these supporters was deemed problematic as it presented a threat to the *aesthetic* experience of watching football. For Jon, sanitisation and the dampening effects which it had on the 'atmosphere' and the 'needle' would result in the loss of 'the buzz' which he associated with football; a sport which to all intents and purposes was 'becoming like a middle-class pastime'.

Eileen expressed an additional reason for disliking some of the more recent financial trends in English football. Capitalist imperatives, she reasoned, had undermined the community-feel of Sheffield Wednesday Football Club. Like King's (1998) 'lads', Eileen did not reject the need for these altogether, expressing her gratitude to the club's former chairman Milan Mandaric (who made no bones about his business motivations) for saving the club from financial administration. However, she also suggested that to remain competitive, clubs were now courting 'wealthy owners' including 'Arabs and Thais', a development which resulted in an uneven playing field between cash-rich clubs and their economically-disadvantaged counterparts. A decision to increase the admission fee at Hillsborough represented a departure from the community spirit which had once been pervasive, perhaps no surprise then that she held a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards any possible promotion to the Premier League. Eileen was also sceptical about the entrepreneurial exploits of SKY television, suggesting that their financial input into the game had 'made folk greedy'. She added that the live transmission of football matches via satellite had impacted negatively upon attendance figures. Put figuratively - 'people don't bother going to matches'. However, this was not the only reason for this newscaster's lack of popularity. Stuart and Warren also felt aggrieved at SKY's decision to broadcast matches at a time which was out of kilter with *tradition.* With more than a small dose of nostalgia Warren suggested:

> **Warren:** I know we are going back in time but that's how it were, that's football (IW: yeah, yeah, yeah) everything 3 o'clock, now (SP it's like) it's like SKY just dictate everything.

Expressing his contempt for the midday kick off times which have become increasingly commonplace on the last day of the season, Stuart (in a combative tone) added, 'why not 3 o'clock on a Saturday afternoon, like it should be'? The 'like it should be' in Stuart's account and the 'back in time' in Warren's, hark back to a perceived 'golden period'. An age when customs and practices were set in stone and the natural attitude reigned supreme. The theme of nostalgia will be discussed more fully towards the end of the chapter.

To summarise, capitalist enterprise and its pursuit of higher profit margins, had resulted in the exclusion of some members of Sheffield Wednesday's travelling contingent. This, along with the decreased attendances which accompany the live transmission of football matches, had impacted negatively on the experiential (aesthetic) intensity which could be found at English football matches. Capitalist imperatives had also taken their toll on the community-feel of the club. These developments had wreaked havoc with tradition, disturbing the natural attitude and the pre-reflective mode of being which is associated with this. This issue will be taken up more fully in the following sub-sections, which discuss the themes of supporter allocations, control, banter, drinking, and the use of 'foul' language.

It's Not Church- Allocations, Control, Banter, Boozing, and Swearing

As discussed in the literature review of this thesis, there are solid grounds for thinking that ''away days'' present a degree of respite from the modernisation of English football (see Crabbe and Brown, 2004, Pearson, 2012). For Chris, the character of professional football had become a 'lot more corporate' and 'mainstream', that is, less 'working class', in orientation. However, he reasoned that away matches were 'probably' different, as the supporters who attended these tended 'to be like the hard-core'. Having suggested that the 'commercial' side of football appeared to be geared towards home supporters, Chris added that some supporters refrained from attending matches at Hillsborough, as 'they tend to feel its soulless'. From these utterances we might read that Chris sees the hard-core of Sheffield Wednesday's support as working class, his identification of a 'mainstream' 'other' as an identity referent is also noteworthy

(see previous subchapter). Similar sentiments were articulated by Jon, a friend of Chris's who was currently enjoying a 'self-imposed' ban from Hillsborough. [35]Jon suggested that the atmosphere which could be found within football stadiums was largely attributable to the presence of away supporters. Consequently, more measures were needed to facilitate their attendance, including the affordance of a 'proper *allocation*'. Access issues were also foregrounded by Eddie, who called for a reciprocal pricing policy that would facilitate the attendance of travelling football supporters. However, he appeared downbeat about the likelihood of this, suggesting that – 'I generally think police don't like big away support because it puts a lot of pressure on them'. This situation poses a threat to the routine attendance, togetherness, and subcultural capital which are emblematic of these supporters.

To say that 'away days' provide some respite from the 'soulless' experience of watching football at Hillsborough, is not to say that these relatively intense experiences come without a struggle for cultural space and territory. From the perspective of some supporters, those who had been charged with maintaining *social order* lacked the *cognitive* knowhow, to facilitate an intense *aesthetic* experience. Owen, a thrill-seeking pacifist who had little time for the trappings of violence, suggested that stewards within football grounds lacked the requisite empathy to handle a sporting occasion – 'they don't appreciate that… feelings are running high, emotions are overflowing'. To employ Bauman's terminology, what we might say is that the cognitive outlook of these 'strangers' i.e. stewards, is incompatible with the expressive modes of support which this study's participants favour. Expressed in a different way, it would appear that the disparate biographical backgrounds of these two groups, who reciprocally locate each other at the more distant end of the anonymity pole, show little sign of salvaging the 'reciprocity of perspectives' which Schutz speaks of. Reflecting on the propensity of travelling football supporters to stand at away games, Owen lamented the inflexibility of some stewards, who 'aren't potentially football fans that have knowledge of what it's like… to be a fan'. Similarly, Nick argued that the juxtaposition of 'potentially drugged up, boozed up, pissed off'

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[35] Jon made this comment prior to an away game at Rotherham in October 2015. His interview took place a few months before this.

supporters, with a set of stewards who 'work on a door at night' and 'kind of play the big man inside a football ground' amounted to a 'recipe for disaster'.

Interestingly, Nick suggested that issues of social control had been exacerbated by the propensity of football clubs to employ stewards rather than police officers (see O'Neill, 2005). However, other participants described a more fractious relationship between football supporters and the more traditional custodians of match-related order. Gaz suggested that 'particularly intellectually you'll probably find most football fans have a dislike for the…police', an aversion which, he proffered, was reciprocated. So too, Richard, who spoke of an 'us and them' culture which had developed over time. However, for 'Sid', the depth of this chasm hadn't always been so wide, but rather, took a more negative turn during the 1970s, when supporter violence became more commonplace. Time will tell whether the increasing change towards a friendlier and relatively inconspicuous mode of policing (see Frosdick and Marsh, 2005-chapter 1), will help to heal some of the scars of this tempestuous affair. However, what can be said for now, is that prevailing attitudes toward *'banter'* (see Skeggs, 2011) have done little to dampen the flames of this combustible relationship. A lack of cognitive congruence was manifest at Hull, where a supporter, who had positioned himself in front of the travelling contingent was forced to miss the best part of the match for engaging in a game of 'verbal tennis' (see Woolsey, 2010):

> The supporter soon takes to the task of singing directly at the Hull supporters that are situated in the adjacent block. The home contingent responds with cries of "Have you ever seen your dick, have you ever seen your dick?" The supporter strikes back by placing his forearm under his raised back leg and moving his clenched (upturned) fist up and down (as if lifting a weight in one hand) to signal his purported possession of a supersized 'manhood'. Almost immediately he is ejected, and as a woman supporter remonstrates with the police, cries of "If you wear a yellow jacket you're a cunt", can be heard ringing out from the away end (Hull, 2015/16 season).

Incompatible cognitive attitudes, what some might consider a lack of empathy, could also be observed on the journeys to and from away matches. Following an away match at Birmingham, I made a plea to a member of the British Transport Police to refrain from arresting a supporter who had found himself in

hot water for chanting 'We all hate Leeds scum'. The Officer suggested that he had repeatedly asked the supporter to calm down, and that latter's actions amounted to a 'hate crime'. However, the supporter, who was deeply immersed in what Turner (1995) might refer to as a 'liminal' episode (see chapter 6), suggested to me that he was 'not bothered' what the police officer thought, adding that 'He is probably from Leeds'. Tentatively, it is possible to speculate that incidents like this will become more commonplace. In 2015 the head of the British Transport Police, Paul Crowther, claimed that football-related 'casual thuggery', which included being 'threatening', 'loud', and 'sometimes racist', was 'occurring just about on a weekly basis' on the railway network (Rucki, 2015). Speaking during a summit on the issue, the officer expressed a commitment to protecting the general public, arguing that the effect on other passengers was 'unacceptable'. Such a statement is testament to the contingent and contestable character of social propriety.

One arm in the current strategy to maintain social order is the provision of designated 'dry trains' which forbid passengers from consuming *alcohol* during their journey. My companion and I experienced this type of ban whilst returning from a game at Bournemouth on April the 18th 2016. Much as we felt dismayed when we realised that the police were smelling passenger's bottles at the platform entrance, I can empathise with their reasons for doing so. Whilst making a journey to a game to Watford, I became increasingly aware of the 'idiosyncratic' outlook of travelling football supporters. My companion 'Geordie' Dave'[36], an away match 'virgin', felt hugely embarrassed about the idea of drinking alcohol on a train at 10 o'clock in the morning (he even toyed with the idea of pouring his lager into a coffee cup). He also suggested that the type of 'boisterous' train atmosphere which my fellow supporters revel in, could be quite intimidating for other passengers. As May (2013) suggests, loud conversations can be used to indicate to others that a group possesses a specific space. That these might be intimidating, rather than simply annoying, had, up until that point, never *really* crossed my mind (although *some* of my companions go to great lengths to remain within what they consider to be the boundaries of social propriety). Reflexively and theoretically, this development is important. Not only

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[36] A different supporter to the 'Dave' who was interviewed for this study

had this conversation, along with my developing theoretical knowledge encouraged me to think more deeply about the morality of specific actions which the travelling contingent engage in (e.g. chanting on trains, heavy drinking in a public space) it also said something important about how travelling supporters are sometimes perceived by 'outsiders'. This collision of ontological worlds (see Blackshaw and Crabbe, 2004), however innocuous, underpins the contestation which surrounds the activities of travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters. However, once again it is important not to paint too-simplistic a picture. For every supporter who was reprimanded by a female conductress on the return train journey from Reading (she informed a group of teenage supporters that she had received complaints about their language and did not want to 'have to ask them to leave') there were countless others who were relatively innocuous. Moreover, several supporters in this study articulated their concerns for the wellbeing and enjoyment of the 'general public' who made use of the national railway system (see chapter 5).

Dry trains are not the only tool in the armoury of those who (rightly or wrongly) seek to regulate the actions of travelling football supporters. The restrictions on alcohol consumption in vehicles that are travelling towards a football ground (see chapter 1), have, in some cases, been supplemented by policies inside these stadiums which prevent supporters from becoming further intoxicated. During my fieldwork, and as a longstanding supporter, I have observed several blanket bans on alcohol e.g. Watford or partial bans e.g. Derby, where supporters have been prevented from drinking at half time. If Richard was right, as I think he was, to suggest that 'we are drinkers' then he was also wise to draw attention to the cognitive difference between members of his collective, and those who sat outside of its boundaries. During one away match at Hull, I participated in an interesting discussion with a steward who expressed some degree of trepidation about the decision to serve alcohol at half-time. When I questioned whether this policy really made a difference, he suggested that I 'wouldn't believe' the extent to which it did, continuing that - 'It's the difference between him taking a swing at me, him getting a banning order and so on'[37]. As an individual who has previously been employed as a steward, I have some

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[37] Or words to that effect

degree of empathy with this position, so too, 'Sid', who advocated a ban on the sale of alcohol during half-time. The old adage about 'walking a mile in someone's shoes', before you judge them, rings 'true' in this case.

One additional issue which is worth considering is the 'rights' of football supporters to use *foul and abusive language* at football matches. Supporters articulated varying degrees of tolerance for this, often seeing it as a question of 'the right place at the right time'. Despite his staunch views about the rights of fellow train passengers (see chapter 5), Matt offered a defence of the rights of supporters to step outside the boundaries of 'polite society' when inside a football ground.

> **Matt:** We got told off for swearing (laughing) and gesticulating, in a footy ground, I mean come on, you know, I mean its football, it's not church, you should be able to swear, and it's not like we were, we were not sat in the family section.

However, and despite his advocacy of the use of what he referred to as 'industrial language', that well-oiled vehicle for 'letting off steam' (see Brohm and Tischler, cited in Russell, 1997), Matt offered a staunch critique of those who displayed a lack of respect for women and children who were travelling via public transport. This type of outlook challenges the existence of any cultural monopoly and highlights the sometimes-heterogeneous and complex character of football support. This will be discussed more fully in chapter 5. Suffice to say for now, that internal turmoil is as much a threat to cognitive harmony as the intrusion of those who might be situated towards the opposite end of the anonymity pole.

The Fifth Column: Colonisers and Subversives

It would be interesting to know what Ian Taylor (1971), a Sheffield Wednesday supporter who wrote at great length about the escalating disconnection between supporters and their clubs' owners/players, would have made of the sense of detachment from their club/sport which some of this study's participants described. Critics might object to any attention which is drawn towards this issue. As indicated in the literature review, any sense of connection which

supporters had with the team's players, had disappeared well before the writings of Taylor i.e. any feelings of disconnection are nothing new. However, both implicit and explicit within some of these supporters' accounts is a desire to feel 'connected'. Although some participants sensed a greater level of connection between the travelling contingent and the team's players, than their fellow home supporters, the crevasse remains wide. Eileen, who remembers seeing a former player (Tommy Craig) in the funfair and 'Sid', who recalled the time when the team's players actually lived in Hillsborough, both reflected romantically on the (golden) period when players and supporters enjoyed a greater degree of physical proximity. However, the introduction of what Warren described as 'daft wages' had driven a wider wedge between supporters and players. Owen spoke about the 'silly bitches' at the 'top end' of football who 'hadn't got the brains they were born with', so too Gaz, who made references to the 'overpaid tossers' who play professional football for a living. And yet the love for their team remains. Less popular however, was the club's former chairman, Dave Allen, who became something of a hate figure when he threatened to sue some of the clubs' supporters who had voiced their criticism of him. One supporter felt that his loyalty to the club hadn't always been reciprocated 'effectively he was calling people like me scum', another referred to him as an 'idiot', and another remembered his refusal to conform with this local Businessman's ill-fated away supporters 'ID' card - 'I'm not being dictated to by the chairman of the club, whether I can go to an away game or not on official transport'. One supporter captured this tension well, when he suggested that the chairman had not only referred to some of the supporters as 'cretins', but also compared them to the 5th column. Pardoning my ignorance, the supporter explained that the 5th column was a term which 'the Germans' used to describe the 'subversive ones' who were trying to 'undermine whatever they were doing'. It is important to note, that relations between the club's owners/supporters have improved dramatically in recent times. Still, at the point of interview, some supporters clearly felt a sense of disconnection to the sport more generally. In the words of Gaz 'I feel like I am being ripped off'.

Bauman, Vorhanden and the Right to Stand Up

Cognitive differences between the *football establishment* and the travelling contingent also provided a source of tension. 'Sid' recalled an encounter with Lord Justice Taylor, whose recommendations led to the introduction of all-seated stadiums in top-flight English football. Despite agreeing with Taylor's downbeat assessment of the facilities at Millwall's Old Den (he was talking about how grim things were…and he was right), what the participant did not share with this influential figure, was a disdain for the joys of standing and it's associated (aesthetic) atmosphere. Positioning himself as a knowledgeable actor, the participant suggested:

> **'Sid':** He said, "You can hardly see a thing in here", he said, and he said "You know, you ought to get your money back. Unless they say to you on a ticket you've got a restricted view, you are entitled to your money back, this is not acceptable". He said, and this is where he and I started to go separate ways, "If you were going to the theatre your ticket would say you have got a restricted view". What he did not understand, **him not being a football person**, he did not understand that, you know, going to a football match is not quite like going to The Crucible[38], you know, the atmospheres completely different.

Having, articulated his preference for the re-introduction of traditional standing areas in English football stadiums, the participant suggested:

> **'Sid':** I tire of people telling football supporters what they ought to be doing (IW: right) when they are not really competent to know.

This passage of text is revealing. Quite simply, for this participant, 'incompetent' non-football supporting individuals, that is those who are deemed to lack the necessary cognitive knowhow, are now steering football down the path to cultural Armageddon. The ideal 'home' which they showcase is not one which is recognised, nor welcomed by the bulk of the supporters in this study (although

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[38] A Sheffield Theatre

there are some points of convergence-see chapter 6). That is to say, these supporters are not yet ready to call in the demolition experts and erect the 'For sale' signs outside their abodes. To make an analogy, the 'synthesis of recognition' which Schutz speaks of now has a loose connection, which, whilst not entirely fractured, hangs precariously like a faulty electrical lead, working only intermittently whilst we shake it back and forth, knowledgeable that our efforts can only ever be rewarded with short-term success.

And here lays the crux of the matter; from the perspective of many 'traditional' supporters the modernisation of football with its neoteric etiquette and acquiescent supporters to match, has created a rupture in the football 'community'. Whereas the football ground (or at least sections of it) once represented a safe-haven for the natural attitude, a chance to switch off (or more accurately, remain switched off) in the company of likeminded individuals, now 'knowledge of how to go on' in this realm, is less certain. Heidegger's Vorhanden has become the norm, in a world where the old clashes with the new and contingency reigns supreme. Struggles over 'authenticity', and indeed, football related social space per-se, highlight this point only too well, something which becomes increasingly clear as we delve further into Bauman's ideas.

Bauman develops his argument by describing the strategies which humans use to deal with *cognitive* strangers who enter into and threaten to disrupt the life-world (in this case 'new' consumer spectators, legislators, owners, or anyone else who treats modernised football as some sort of utopia). For a sizeable part of history, suggests Bauman, 'physical and social proximity did overlap' (1993:150). That is to say, the boundaries between 'neighbours' and 'aliens' were clear cut; as were the possible responses to an alien's decision to cross over the border and into 'the radius of physical proximity'. Conformity was a prerequisite for acceptance in this scenario. Newcomers, who wished to be treated as neighbours, had to play the game i.e. act in accordance with the customs and practices of the established group (in this case 'traditional/hot' supporters). Ultimately, the social space was one which granted the security of normative regulation. This did not mean that everything was rosy in the garden. Still, such neighbourhoods were characterised by *reciprocal understandings*, shared biographies and gravitation towards the intimacy pole. Commensurately,

typifications in this context were longstanding, neighbours had sufficient knowledge of one another, and rules existed 'for every occasion' (ibid:151). However, as a crack developed in the 'co-ordination between physical and social/cognitive proximity', the scenario described above began to change. *Cognitive strangers* who enter the lifeworld e.g. 'new' consumer spectators, legislators etc are now more resistant to expulsion and their exemption from local rules further entrenches their position as 'strangers'. Ultimately, their position is ambivalent, they neither fall neatly into the category of neighbours, nor can they reasonably be typified as 'aliens'. Rather, they occupy a middle ground. We are unable to fit them neatly into our classification scheme, but we cannot block out their presence; we hear, smell and see them, and on occasion may even enter into discussion with them, and yet they are *not really like us*. To quote Bauman himself, they are 'socially distant, yet physically close' (Bauman, 193:153).

If this is a condition which is endemic to modern life in general, then its relevance to the world of football cannot go unnoticed. Cognitive tension has always existed between the different cultural groups and individuals (e.g. 'new' consumer supporters, expressive supporters, corporate sponsors, club owners etc) who make up the wider football 'community'. Arguably however, their aggravated relationship has become more inflamed in recent years, as each party brings its own ideas about appropriate football supporter decorum to the negotiating table. The respective parties cannot be classified as 'aliens' who 'don't understand' football (although this does not stop people from trying to label them in this way) nor can their views be easily incorporated into the 'preferred' way of doing things. They are hard to 'understand', breach boundaries, and worst of all, seemingly have no intention to leave.

If to live in the modern world is to live in the company of strangers, then coping strategies are needed to manage the cognitive challenge which these anomalous entities present. However, all hopes of keeping things 'as they are' remain doomed to variegating degrees of failure. As Bauman (1993:157) reminds us: 'Defence of social space is never foolproof, boundaries cannot be hermetically sealed. There is no infallible cure against strangers, let alone against the dread they arouse'.

That said, humans don't just shrug their shoulders and give up (as can be seen from the authenticity wars which supporters engage in). Instead, in an attempt to preserve their respective cognitive identities i.e. to maintain the archipelagic character of cognitive space, humans engage in various acts *of boundary maintenance.* Ultimately, attempts to defend the social space amount to attempts to regulate the rights of others, and gain mobility for oneself. The cognitive indeterminacy which strangers arouse, 'finds its outlet in the continuous efforts to gain control over social spacing' (Bauman, 1993:159). That is, a struggle to keep the other in their place, to limit and control their freedom. It is easy to find examples of such struggles in the world of football. Increasingly, those supporters who see themselves as more 'traditional' in character encounter various obstacles as they try to maintain their vision of a utopian social space. Drinking, standing and swearing have become the pariahs of the new visionaries, old-fashioned relics which need to be extinguished to complete the cosmetic overhaul. The tools of surveillance provide the necessary means of violence, the moral discourses the justification for their use (see chapter 1). As will be made clear this is not all one-way traffic. However, prior to explaining this more fully, it is necessary to outline the procedures which underpin these acts of boundary preservation.

Two complimentary strategies, suggests Bauman, are used in tandem to unclog the ambivalent quagmire which sits between the two ends of the familiarity spectrum (partly in this case, between the 'traditional/hot' supporters and the 'post-modern' flaneurs who Giulianotti, 2002, describes). With reference to Levi-Strauss, Bauman suggests that the first of these, the 'phagic' strategy might be thought of as 'inclusivist'. Willing individuals (e.g. supporters who conform to the cultural demands of the group) can shake off their stranger tags and become accepted as neighbours i.e. they are assimilated into the clan. Alternatively, they can find themselves being pushed towards the other end of the scale, taking on the role of 'aliens' - complete outsiders, all nice and tidy. Bauman uses the label 'emic' to describe this 'exclusivist' strategy. Ultimately, the choice which is open to these anomalous entities can be summed up in a few simple words: 'Conform or be damned, be like us or do not overstay your visit, play the

game by our rules or be prepared to be kicked out from the game altogether' (Bauman, 1993:163).

Chillingly, Bauman suggests that serious opportunities to control the social space can only exist whilst these two strategies remain in an 'either/or' format. Hence their inclusion 'in the toolbag of every domination' (ibid:163). However, the attempts which supporters make to maintain the boundaries between themselves and others take place within an inhospitable environment. That is, one in which a plethora of contrasting cultural attitudes exists and the world of football becomes, to use Ricoeur's (1965:278) expression, an 'imaginary museum'. The thesis will now discuss the authenticity claims which supporters make in their struggle for cultural ascendency, and the exclusionary practices which are central to these.

Let there be Light: Phagic Strategies and the Promise of Salvation

Belonging, suggests Guibernau (2013:33), 'automatically brings about the distinction between members and aliens or strangers', such classifications of course are not neutral, but rather I would add, are best seen as hierarchical (see Jenkins, 2008). Of all the negatives which we might associate with community, 'othering' ranks highly amongst them (see May, 2013). Supporters who are willing to berate the exclusionary practices which they associate with high ticketing prices are also happy to engage in their own 'emic' strategies, often drawing the curtains on those who see it as their role to 'enlighten'. If the aficionados of mass-culture can be accused of commandeering (or at least trying to force entry into) the elitist cultural galleries of the absolute spirit, then the latter's own devotees can be seen to have made their own counter-move into the cognitive territories of mass-culture. This game of cognitive cat and mouse appears to have no end point. No final whistle to call this match to a halt and declare a winner. Upset by the incursion of these cognitive strangers, supporters who might regard themselves as 'traditional' have sought to defend their social space from this type of boundary encroachment. The mantra is simple 'conform or be damned', 'play the game by our rules' (Bauman, 1993:163) or we will toss you over the castle walls and raise the drawbridge

forever. The authenticity wars which have accompanied the modernisation of football, which to all intents and purposes constitute a struggle for cultural space and territory, are part and parcel of this process. Authenticity claims regarding issues of loyalty and attendance have already been discussed, as has the distinction which 'Sid' made between individuals who *were* (by implication himself) and were *not* qualified to 'know' about football e.g. Lord Justice Taylor. The distinction which these supporters make between 'us' and 'them', whether the latter are 'new' consumer spectators, stewards, police officers, the club's owners, the game's legislators, or whoever, provide a key identity referent, something refreshingly solid in today's liquid modern times. The irony of this paradox is that it has the ability to both provide security and to undermine it in the same breath.

May (2013:113) suggests that an individual's 'sense of self is relational', difference, as well as similarity, providing its axes. Arguably the 'defensive exclusionary behaviour' which this scholar refers to, goes someway to bludgeoning the romantic vision of belonging which might otherwise hold sway, vilifying all those who refuse to conform and abide by the 'rules'. In chapter 1, I suggested that 'the work of Scott Lash (1994: 161) provides a useful starting point for comprehending some of the community formations which concern themselves with 'authenticity issues'. In as much as this study's participants transgress 'the distinction between consumer and producer', they can be thought of as a 'reflexive taste community'. Even more significantly, they *'consciously pose themselves the problem of their own creation'* (ibid: 161). That is to say, they stray beyond the tranquil boundaries of a 'given' form of belonging (even if Sheffield 6 provides the ground zero) and into more agitated territories where they must consider their credentials, all along contemplating the hard questions about what it really *means* to be a football supporter. It is no accident that Lash identifies the travelling supporters of Manchester United, Arsenal and Leeds as exemplars of these community formations (see chapter 1). As suggested earlier, to operate within the realms of the absolute spirit demands the use of one's 'judgemental and reflective power' (Heller, 1995:10), that is, skills in cultural arbitration. The increasingly negotiable character of modern day support requires supporters to use their interpretive skills, to

separate the 'wheat' from the 'chaff', or inversely, the mannequins from the lifeblood of the club. In the face of all this, one could be forgiven for asking the question, 'Where does it all end?' The simple answer to this is that 'it does not', as can be seen in the almost routine denigration of those supporters who are deemed 'inauthentic'. Still, hope springs eternal for all those who are willing to lay down their weapons and open up their arms to the phagically-loaded forms of salvation which are brought to the negotiating table:

> **Gaz**:…they patently only ever home games, they are there with their flask or whatever…but I'd love to get them by the hand and take them to an away game and say "Look this is really what your clubs all about"… I think everybody should go to an away game. If you haven't, you will never really truly understand.

The words 'truly understand' are significant here and emphasise the exclusionary, cognitively-fuelled, character of belonging. Gaz's words also highlight the mutually interdependent relationship between 'phagic' and 'emic' strategies. 'Come with us, let us lead you down the path towards enlightenment', goes the mantra, 'otherwise you will stay in your poorly illuminated cave for the rest of your days', a real life working replica of Plato's shadow-watchers. In keeping with the remainder of his authenticity claims, Gaz also drew a distinction between those Wednesday supporters who travelled by official club transport, and himself, claiming that they *were* 'just like' him, and yet at the same time were *not* 'just like' him. First and foremost, he proffered, these cognitive strangers were 'football supporters', whereas he was 'a Wednesday fan', who had 'a belonging to Wednesday'. He also enjoyed the 'day out' with his friends. What this indicates is that a love of the game is not enough, membership it would seem, is about something deeper, the type of 'connectivity' which breathes life into this 'bund'. Gaz was not alone in employing these emic strategies of differentiation. Nick, who as we recall, revelled in the virtues of not being a part-time 'wanker', also forged his sense of difference partly around aesthetic preferences. Explaining his preference for independent train travel, Nick suggested that 'coaches tend to be full of quiz supporters' 'who were looking forward to doing the bingo … and the footy quiz'. By contrast, Nick explained that he was looking forward to a 'good drink'. These types of

'othering' crop up in conversation on a fairly regular basis. During an (unofficial) coach journey back from Bolton in the 2013/14 season, I recall one supporter ridiculing a Manchester United supporter who had contacted the 'talkSPORT' radio station to air their grievances about their team's one-all draw with Southampton:

> As we get onto the pavement [name of supporter] begins his assault on the Man Utd supporter that rang in. He puts on a 'posh' accent, and although I can't remember all the details, I do remember the thrust of his discussion amounting to a general attack on modern day 'consumer supporters', that probably never attend, and switch clubs at the drop of a hat. "I'm thinking of switching my allegiance to Arsenal next year", (or something similar) he quips (Bolton away, 2013/14).

At the heart of this 'emic' tirade is a disdain for the less endearing characteristics of 'modern day' football. This supporter's contempt for these cognitive 'others', appears to be born in part, out of a desire to return to the 'good old days'. Although he is less critical of modernised football than some of the other supporters in the study (particularly 'Tango', Stuart and Warren, 'Sid' and Eileen) his overall narrative is infused with a nostalgic flavour. This type of yearning is captured well by the Welsh word 'Hireath' which describes 'a longing for home you can never return to' or more pertinently, 'a home which may never have existed at all' (Penny, 2016, para, 10).

Clear parallels can be found between some of the supporters who are described here and the 'lads' in King's (1998) study. A disdain for official club transport, pride in loyalty, a love of heavy drinking, and expressive modes of support are all central to these supporters' concerns. However, *by and large* what these supporters do not share with their Mancunian 'counterparts' is a love of fighting. Contrasting moral codes also mark them as distinct (see chapter 5). The remaining part of this chapter will consider some of the implications of this cognitive usurping.

'It's Who We Are': Ontological Security, and Vorhanden

Ontological Security

Homesickness means that one is longing to return home. But it could also mean that one is getting sick of being at home (Heller, 1999:193)

If we use the word 'home' as a metaphor for 'community' (see Blackshaw, 2010), then travelling football supporters are at once, both home and away. This positioning/location neutralises the need to choose between 'dwellings' located in the 'absolute present' and those rooted in more well-trodden social spaces i.e. geographically given 'homes'. Football clubs have constancy, a meaning which transcends the players who represent it. Similar in character to a James Bond film, the actor who plays the leading role might change, but the name, and the character of the plot, remains the same. This history, when mixed with the unfamiliarity of new adventures, what Heller (1995:8) would call 'novel', but 'familiar', generates a welcome ambivalence – security and freedom all at once, a place of familiarity without boredom, a 'home' without responsibility. However, the problem, as we have seen, is that the familiar has become less so. Not only have exclusionary practices limited the opportunities for novel aesthetic experiences (at least for some members of the travelling contingent), there has also been an erosion of the cognitive turf which once provided a reassuring air of familiarity to these supporters. And yet these supporters refuse to give in, often making substantial sacrifices (family life/financial) to pursue their activities and defending 'their' social space with an 'irrepressible' level of vigour. For now, at least, many of these supporters have managed (to some extent) to hold onto their vision and routinized ways of life. However, modernised football, for its perceived benefits (see chapter 6) poses a threat to their long-term prospects of 'survival'. Such a situation is problematic as it places the ontological security which Giddens (1991) speaks of, in danger.

As stated in Chapter 1, *continuity,* is important in ensconcing feelings of 'ontological security', or to repeat what was said earlier - knowing 'what one is doing and why one is doing it', is part and parcel of human life (Giddens, 1991:35). This is why the disruption of the 'natural attitude', and the move from

a state of Zuhanden to Vorhanden, is potentially so disturbing. When I asked supporters, in a somewhat leading manner, whether they were proud of the commitment which they had shown to Sheffield Wednesday over the years, I was pleasantly surprised by their responses. Loyalty, as indicated *is* important to some of these supporters and responses of a more expected nature were articulated in some cases e.g. Matt suggested that he was 'proud of the fact that', he had 'stuck with it'. So too James, who was 5 grounds short of making it into the infamous '92 club'[39], and Chris who had maintained his loyalty in the face of poor-quality football and 'the shambles in the boardroom'. However, others took their loyalty as a given. Even Matt, for all his pride, explained in a quite matter-of-fact way, that 'it's what we do'. Similarly, Nick, who felt 'loyal' but without *necessarily* feeling 'proud', explained that 'it's just the way it is'. Other supporters also identified their support as something which Ben Porat (2010:280) might call a 'central life interest', intimating at the importance of routine in their lives. Richard suggested 'generally, it's a dominant feature in my life; I wouldn't have it any other way', adding that he did not feel proud of his commitment, but rather, 'that is just what I am'. So too, Jon, who suggested that 'it just becomes like this thing that you are' and Craig, who ventured 'it's in your blood isn't it'? To quote Dave, whose account highlighted the role which football support can play in providing a stable identity referent:

> **Dave:** It's what I am, do you know it's, it's a bit like my commitment to Northern Soul, it's just who I am and what I'm about, and I can't see it ever changing.

Some of these responses may be a product of method. When I asked one supporter whether their support was a big part of who they were (rather than asking them if they were proud of their commitment) they responded by suggesting that they were proud to be a Wednesdayite i.e. the question and the response were inversed. Still, there seems to be reasonable grounds for thinking that *routinized* support helps to stave off the perils of ontological insecurity, which in a liquid modern world threatens to multiply by the minute. Drawing on a well-worn discourse Eddie and Eileen likened their support to a

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[39] A club for supporters who have visited every football stadium in the top four divisions of English Football.

religion. However, this security is under threat, May (2013:86) making the seemingly obvious, but very important point, that humans may feel a sense of ontological insecurity when they do not feel that they "fit" with their environment. If Giddens is correct, as I believe he is, to suggest that continuity fosters feelings of ontological security, then we have a basis for understanding why some of this study's participants are willing to go to such great lengths to maintain their routinized ways of life. Some supporters, who will remain nameless for ethical reasons, demonstrated a remarkable ingenuity in organising their home and work lives around their footballing priorities. Meetings were organised near train stations/the venues of away games and smart phones were used to keep watch of operations in the workplace. One supporter even went as far as to cancel his honeymoon to attend an F.A. cup final replay, a decision which had catastrophic consequences for his relationship. With the type of gallows humour which is so typical of long-suffering football supporters, the participant quipped 'so it was downhill from then on wasn't it?' Some supporters were even willing to breach ground safety regulations to maintain their routine attendance. In cases where away supporters were disallowed from entering specific stadiums, whether that be due to official club policy e.g. Luton, or ground refurbishments e.g. Liverpool, supporters turned to alternative strategies to maintain their attendance. These included purchasing tickets in the 'home end' of the stadium or, less controversially, paying through the nose to sit in the hospitality areas. 'We find a way', as one supporter expressed it.

All of this is not to say that supporters *never* grew tired of the routine of away games. Eddie derived little pleasure from attending 'when they've got nothing to play for'. Arduous midweek journeys across the depths and breaths of the country had also taken their toll on 'Sid'. However, by contrast, he 'did not really tire of it', because it meant that he was going 'to new places'. James, who enjoyed the 'great days out', also picked up on these aesthetic thrills. In response to my comment that I really like some areas of Bristol, James reasoned 'It's different isn't it...because you've got that nice waterfront area, which you can go round?' The role of this 'difference', the 'novelty' which Heller and Bauman speak of, in encouraging the routine attendance which is described here, should not be underestimated (see chapter 6). However, the

enforced disruption to these supporters' weekly routine which is brought about by the summer break in the football calendar (which is also a routine), puts these aesthetic thrills on hold, wreaking havoc with their inner-peace. 'Welcome to boredom', I recall one of the more well know 'faces' announcing loudly as we arrived back into Sheffield train station following a game at Ipswich on the final day of the 2013/14 season. Stuart, much to Warren's amusement, appeared equally nonplussed:

> **Stuart:** Like Warren said earlier like and whatever now, on Saturdays, I'm twiddling my thumbs. She's got me gardening (IW and WW laugh) you know what I mean? What's that all about?
>
> **IW:** Well its er…
>
> **Stuart:** You know?
>
> **Warren:** Cutting big bush down (laughs).
>
> **Stuart:** You know, Jesus!

However, there is more to it than this. *Moral* concerns also played a role in encouraging this duo's routine attendance. In keeping with his loyalty narrative Warren suggested:

> **Warren:** Whether we play good, whether we play crap we are still there (**SP:** Still there) week in or week out.

Cognitive concerns, the desire to be with similar others, to connect, also provide a source of motivation. Gaz suggested that he never tired of 'away days' because of the 'camaraderie'. Whether the predominant reason for these supporters' regular attendance is cognitive, moral, or aesthetic, one thing is clear, in the main, these routinized ways of life are considered a blessing rather than a curse. However, as already suggested, modernisation presents a threat to these supporters' ways of being. For several supporters this fostered a nostalgic yearning for the past, a desire to return to what 'Tango' would call the 'good old days of football'.

Nostalgia: A home Without an Entrance?

The past is a curious thing. It's with you all the time, I suppose an hour never passes without your thinking of things that happened ten or twenty years ago, and yet most of the time it's got no reality, it's just a set of facts like you've learned, like a lot of stuff in a history book. Then some chance sight or sound or smell, especially smell, sets you going, and the past doesn't merely come back to you, you're actually in the past (Orwell, G, 1939:27).

Whether supporters' interpretations of the past can all be considered 'real' or otherwise, Orwell is correct. Sensory experiences can place people in the 'past', however fleetingly. Nostalgia, a longing for Eden, whether the epicentre of this is Wales, Rome, or somewhere altogether different, *might* be thought as the engine behind these temporal transitions/experiences and yet, it is often when we least expect it that we transcend the boundaries of the absolute moment. A desire to retain a culture which may or may never have existed, to transcend linear temporal barriers and locate oneself 'in the past' is implicit within some of the narratives which are discussed here. 'Tango's' warm references to the 'good old days of football', Eileen's fond recollections of seeing Tommy Craig at the funfair, 'Sid''s recollection of a time when players and supporters lived side by side, Jon's desire to maintain a 'working class' culture, Chris's derision of fickle modern-day consumer spectators, Warren's desire to go 'back in time', and Stuart's call for traditional kick-off times, all fit the bill well. And *yes*, these transcendental moments can materialise when we least expect them. Matt, who understood, without necessarily agreeing with the reasons for football hooliganism, recalled a skirmish at Burnley, which I caught the back end of (in an observational sense) during the 2013/14 season:

> **Matt:** Well it's an horrible little place Burnley… what I saw of it anyway, it
> looked like it was still stuck in the 70s and then we kinda come out and all them
> horrible little Burnley kids started kicking off and erm, but in a kinda weird way
> I quite enjoyed it, because it sort of *took me back*[40]. You know and it was all like

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[40] My emphasis

our kid said, "Right glasses off, chests out, don't look like you are gonna bottle it".

This lucid moment, 'extra-temporal' (Game, 2001:226) rather than linear, cannot be shrugged off as a product of the imagination; rather, Matt who was 'of the time', was now well and truly back 'in it'. And yet, in the same breath, he was also living in the present moment. For Matt, the aesthetic backdrop to this encounter may have resembled something of a dystopian nightmare, but the joys of taking this trip down memory lane (see Slaughter, 2004), survived unscathed.

Two principle reasons can be theorised for these supporters' nostalgic feelings. Firstly, a heightened state of Zuhanden currently prevails in the world of football, cultivating both types of the home-sickness which Heller describes. Secondly, liquid modernity is an age of uncertainty, one where any type of solidity, offers a degree of comfort (whilst at the same time threatening that most cherished value – freedom) to its liquescent citizens. This solid 'working-class' aspect of their identity, the type which Jon wished to maintain, provide the tools with which to resist, albeit momentarily, the uncertainty which is characteristic of our time. And yet, in many ways, like Blackshaw's 'lads' (2003:93-94), whose 'nostalgic' feelings helped them to maintain their 'sense of belonging' and feelings of ontological security, the supporters in this study are 'relics of the past… trapped in a cycle of performance and display' (ibid:96). The poppies at Charlton, the *faux*-posh (mocking) voices in Fulham, the countless retro Adidas training shoes at York, the exaggerated accents at Watford, the pin-badges at Rotherham, all hark back to an era when collective identities were as much a part of everyday life as a long-term relationship and full-time permanent (in a meaningful sense) contract. A central tenet of this current thesis is that it is not just a 'traditional' football supporter identity which these supporters seek, but a traditional (solid modern) identity *per-se.* And yet, nostalgia brings its own problems.

In a book chapter entitled 'Belonging: Experience in Sacred Time and Space', Game (2001:226) suggests that there are moments when: '…we experience a now and then all at once, we experience a temporal connectedness…living in

the now always implies a now-and-then'. Matt's 'now and then' moment illustrates this point well, as do those supporters who commonly locate their quest for belonging in 'a longing for home' (ibid). However, for Game, attempts to locate belonging in a specific locale are self-defeating. Belonging, she suggests, is not stationed in a 'fixed place and time' (ibid), quite simply, it has no end point. Rather, 'belonging is an in-between state of being within and without ourselves' (ibid: 228). Feelings of internal harmony, those this 'feels right' moments (ibid), combine a connection with the *world* e.g. a football stadium, with a union rooted in *time*, an experience that captures the 'now and then' in the same breath. However, to live these moments is to do something more than to simply regurgitate the past, we are not talking about a pale form of imitation here, a limp and lifeless pastiche. Rather, these 'I know this already' (ibid:229) moments amount to something 'much more and more alive' than this (ibid). Pure nostalgia does not equate to belonging, but rather, represents a yearning for 'a re-presentation of a "real" past' (ibid: 230). By contrast, belonging is an experience within the 'primitive or archaic now', a return to the mythical world of the *spirit* of a place. The key point which we might glean from this is that if we truly wish to find a connection, belonging, and home, we must abandon our nostalgic feelings, their reversal of adulthood, and the barrier which they present to feeling 'alive' (ibid:231). Nostalgia, we might infer, is not of the moment, it is of the past, glancing wistfully over its shoulder and never laying the memory of a former love affair to rest. It offers no hope to those supporters who are searching for 'home'.

Summary

There is something reassuring about repetition, the comfort of a pre-reflective way of being, 'knowledge of how to go on'. The tacit understandings which provide the axis of a well-functioning community need not be articulated; they simply go about their business undisturbed and allow their members to avoid the anxieties of an overly-contemplative existence. However, when these understandings begin to lose their collective influence i.e. when people start to question them, the cognitive bedrock of these communities begins to break down. To recall Bauman (2001a:12), 'spoken of community', is a 'contradiction

in terms'. The relative ease with which this study's participants described their 'community' is indicative of the disharmony which exists within the wider English football 'fraternity' at large. Ever since the playwrights of English football rewrote the theatrical script that its cast were asked to perform, a state of Vorhanden has prevailed. Contingency, rather than certainty wafting unceremoniously throughout the playhouse. Whereas sections of the football ground once provided football supporters with the opportunity to remain 'switched off' in the company of kindred spirits, now they must question every aspect of their behaviour, play by the new (morally infused) rules, and keep within the margins. Put another way, the cognitive orientation of this study's participants, which is vital to all those who operate within the (in this case nearby) realms of the absolute spirit, has shifted from the 'practical' to the 'theoretical attitude'. This poses a threat to the ontological security of these supporters who for the best part, do what they can to maintain a stable identity.

The hermeneutic community which makes up Sheffield Wednesday' travelling support, express nostalgic feelings for the 'good old days' of football, the paradise of Eden, and the automated character of the 'natural attitude' (Schutz, 1970). In part, struggles for the soul of football support and the related issues of 'authenticity', are symptomatic of this dissatisfaction with the status quo, the latest in a long line of cultural battles which have accompanied the game at various points during its tempestuous history. These struggles (which are underpinned by phagic and emic strategies) wax and wane, escalate and subside, a cherished memory seemingly giving the impetus for the chance to make things 'right'. That is, to participate in a performance where the stage has a familiar feel and the actors know their lines. Herein lies part of the attraction of ''away days'', which ostensibly offer some degree of respite from the modernisation of football (and the destabilising effects of a liquid modern lifestyle), a glimpse of how things 'once were', a chance to maintain the archipelagic character of social space, an opportunity for what Game, (2001:226) would call a 'now-and-then' moment. Ultimately however, the nostalgic feelings which are wrapped up in these are counterproductive. Nostalgia, which is orientated towards the past, is unable to provide the comforts which are longed for in the present. Any promises of 'home' which it

provides are illusory, the locks to the front door have now been replaced by football's new property owners, which is not to say that supporters never experience the joys of breaking and entering into these abodes, every once in a while. The battle continues, members of this reflexive taste community do, to use Lash's (1994:161) expression, 'consciously pose the problem of their own creation'. However, the bookmakers have stopped taking bets on a final-round victory for the game's new architects. That said, and as the next chapter will make clear, the story does not end here.

Chapter 5: Moral Spacing

Introduction

The previous two chapters presented a typology of common characteristics, a rich tapestry of intersubjective understandings, which, for the best part, represent the cognitive glue which bonds travelling supporters together, whilst simultaneously shunning those who are located towards the opposite end of the anonymity pole. Such an account read in isolation is accurate, but it is also misleading. Its messages are 'true', but they also contain 'lies'; big ones. To show fidelity to the topic at hand is to acknowledge its horrible discordance, its messiness, the crumbs on the carpet that cannot be covered up, less still, be swept away. And why, one might wonder, does this happen to be the case? The answer is simple. Because the *moral* spatial practices of travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters are more disparate than their cognitive counterpart, less unified, and ultimately one might say, harder to pin-down (see Bauman, 1993). This fluid and complex beast presents something of a headache to all those who would wish to categorise travelling football supporters as a simple homogenous mass, whether that be in the sense of 'animals', or something less pejorative. Its steadfast refusal to sit still whilst its observers subject it to their knowing gaze, its typification-denying characteristics, and it might be concluded, its down-right awkwardness, spell danger for every scholar who likes to keep their classification schemes neat and tidy. Yet to recognise its complexity, is to open our eyes to new ways of understanding. This chapter begins by presenting an overview of Bauman's ideas about moral spacing, and intimates at the opportunities which moral action present for supporters to step-outside of the boundaries of a wider-cognitive field. The discussion of these theoretical overtures is *necessarily* lengthy as it provides a framework for understanding the remainder of the chapter which analyses the moral perspectives/practices of travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters. Specifically, this chapter will focus upon supporters' attitudes/actions towards a) women, b) swearing, c) children, d) violence, e) family, and f) racism. The first five topics have been selected principally for what they say about the relationship between conflicting cognitive

and moral imperatives in a modernising football landscape. They are also useful in highlighting the 'situationist' standpoints which supporters adopt to negotiate these tensions. By stark contrast, the de-ontological positions which supporters take up in relation to the final topic area, racism, provide a thought-provoking rejoinder and hint at the limitations of these strategies.

Moral Spacing: A Brief Overview

Social spacing is not reducible to the configuration of the cognitive domain; moral spacing also has a hand to play in the overall organisation of the cultural sphere. Bauman (1993:165) opens his sub-chapter on moral spacing by explaining that it is impervious to the 'rules that define the social/cognitive space'. The human intellectual activity which underpins the construction of the cognitive domain has no role to play here. As such the calculative, evaluative, and comparative skills which provide the foundations for the construction of the cognitive sphere, find themselves redundant during the assembly of the moral space. The level of one's familiarity with a specific object and the 'intimacy' pole also constitute an irrelevance. Accordingly, the acquisition and extent of one's knowledge, which are so vital to the processes of cognitive spacing, remain dormant, left on the cerebral library shelf from whence they came.

In the last instance, moral spacing is concerned with the individuals who 'we live *for*', meaning that the objects of concern are of a different character to those in the cognitive space i.e. those who 'we live *with*' (ibid:165). Digging a deeper trench between the two space-making processes, Bauman develops his argument by insisting that the objects of moral spacing are immune to the processes of typification which reside in the cognitive domain. That is to say, the selection of appropriate objects for our attention in this sphere is guided by moral concerns, rather than categorical membership. Being a fully paid up member of the cognitive guild does not guarantee entry into the moral clubhouse so to speak.

Conceivably, moral concerns might be felt most closely when the object of concern is situated most closely to the intimacy pole i.e. our knowledge of the object is well developed. Still, any potential overlap, suggests Bauman,

constitute a possibility, rather than an expectation. Channelled by disparate and independent factors, the potential for conflict between these two types of social spacing is an ever-present feature of their cohabitation. As such, the very existence of moral spacing presents a potential thorn in the side to all the would-be executives of 'social/cognitive spacing' (ibid:166).

The remainder of this section charts the historical developments which have generated a specific context for the identification and enactment of moral action(s) in today's world (including those of football supporters). Principally, these include a loss of confidence in unitary ethics, and the ensuing opportunities for personal autonomy. The importance of these conditions cannot be overstated, for they lift supporters out of the taken-for-granted assumptions of the life-world and the cradle-like warmth of a relatively homogenous cognitive sphere (albeit against a backdrop of an uncertain liquid modernity). At the same time, 'irregular' autonomous actions also reveal something telling about the more routinised patterns of behaviour which characterise those individuals of a less 'saintly' disposition. Following this, consideration is given to Bauman's interpretation of 'morality'. Namely, that of autonomy, impulsivity, emotion, and an indifference towards rational calculation/reciprocity. Ultimately, the question which might be asked is 'Who do these supporters feel responsible *for*'?

Good Supporters/Bad Supporters? On Kierkegaard and False Dichotomies

'One cannot be human by oneself' (Carse, 1986: 37)

In division IV of *Being and Time*, Heidegger (1995:155) makes the seemingly obvious, but important point, that the human world is a shared one: 'The world of Dasein is a with-world [Mitwelt]. Being-in is Being-with Others', as he succinctly puts it. An important question then is 'how' we should act, both towards ourselves, and also towards those 'others' who lend form to this *Mitwelt?*

Ever since modernity tore up the taken for granted ways of acting that were part and parcel of a 'divinely-ordained' lifeworld (see Bauman, 1993) issues of

morality have provided philosophers with an *increasingly* significant talking point. Writing in 1843 the eminent Danish philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard (1992), published the first volume of his thought-provoking two-part digest - 'Either/Or'. The title of this text, which could easily be interpreted as a product of the binary thinking which was characteristic of the solid-modern era, describes two types of existence which social actors might pursue during the life-course, the aesthetic, and the ethical. Thought of in such terms, it might be concluded (and there are several passages in this book which foster this impression) that a mutually exclusive choice confronts human individuals - a life without abandoned pleasure-seeking or a life without morality? However, it is worth recognising that the characters in 'Either/Or' made compelling arguments for both forms of existence (even if they would always fall short of the happiness derived from a religious one), possibly foreseeing the relativism that would be advanced by postmodern scholars, over 100 years later. Moreover, and as Schutz (1944) maintained, humans are seldom so simple, riddled as they are with contradiction and inconsistency. A more nuanced understanding not only recognises the propensity of human actors to fluctuate intermittently between these alternative modes of existence, but also that both can be *complementary*. Such a point was recognised by Plato (cited in Huizinga, 2014) who correctly identified a moral dimension to play; a welcome distraction it would seem from the less virtuous activity of war. Try as we might, our pleas to castigate life's players as immoral, often fall on deaf ears. Faced with such a realisation, a constructive reading of Kierkegaard's work might ask, when are we 'either', when are we 'or', and perhaps most-counter intuitively of all - when are we both?

Saints and Rituals: A Morality Without Guidelines

A principle question which philosophers of human morality have sought to answer is 'How humans should act towards each other?' A related question, and one which pre-occupied the modern imagination for some considerable time, was how might this be realised? As Bauman (1993) suggests, solid modernity tried hard to liberate humanity from all its undesirable traits. The 'savage' impulses which had plagued humankind for centuries had no place in

the new rational order. What was needed, it was thought, was to teach humans how to act towards one another, to learn how to be more humane and yet at the same time less human.

What unfolded was an attempt to identify a *universally* applicable set of ethical standards which would provide a guideline for human conduct. That is, a set of rule-bound ethical cannons which would save civilisation from its uncivilised impulses and the plurality of moral *choices* brought about by the demise of the church's authority and the increasingly fragmented character of everyday life (Bauman, 1993). These 'unitary ethics', rationally derived and intravenously inserted, would save humans from their new-found freedom (ibid:6), silencing 'moral impulse to socially designed targets' (ibid:13). 'Normative regulation' (ibid:4), it was thought, would allow humans to 'choose what is right whilst making their choices'. As such, humans would be rescued from the passing of a 'once unitary and indivisible 'right way' and its division into choices which were 'economically sensible', 'aesthetically pleasing', and 'morally proper' i.e. choices which were 'right in one sense, wrong in another' (ibid:5). From Bauman's writings it might be inferred that for every 'or' a defensible 'either' could be found.

All such attempts were of course inevitably doomed to failure. If solid-modernity cried 'freedom', rallying behind the pretensions of liberation and an advanced humanitarianism, then slowly but surely the citizens of a less confident modernity turned their heads away from their would-be captors, scarred and bloodied on the one hand, liberated and re-humanised on the other. Not only were universal ethical codes self-seeking, they also paid insufficient homage to the ambivalence of humanity and its associated moral actions. If actions could be 'right in one sense' and 'wrong in another', then the rigidity of rationally-infused ethical codes was always going to present an Achilles-heel to the 'legislators' (ibid:32) of human propriety. Perhaps it should come as no surprise then that 'unemotional calculated reason' (ibid:33) became knocked off its perch as the grand-adjudicator of all that was 'right and proper' - scepticism replacing trust as the prevailing attitude towards this great bastion of modern thinking: '…we learn again to respect ambiguity, to feel regard for human emotions, to appreciate actions without purpose and calculable rewards' (Bauman, 1993:33).

For Bauman then, impulses and emotions, rather than reason and rational calculation, are the key ingredients of human morality. All efforts to 'explain away' the 'mystery of morality inside me' (ibid:35) seemingly headed down a path towards failure.

What joys might be expected to follow such an escape, humankind throwing off its shackles and returning to its natural state i.e. that of impulse, emotion, and autonomy. And yet, as Bauman maintains, freedom came at a price - the freedom of not knowing whether one was following a righteous path, the freedom of losing the guiding hand which once took away the burden of responsibility, the freedom to make calamitous mistakes, the freedom it might be deduced, to be human. This, Bauman suggested (before he coined the term 'liquid modernity'), is what it means to be postmodern, to recognise that when we act, we act alone, that is, without the comforting reassurance of universally applicable guidelines and grand adjudicators (see also Giddens and Pierson, 1998). Uncertainty is characteristic of an age which lacks 'unambiguously good solutions' (ibid:31) to the moral dilemmas which humans have to negotiate daily. Having tried and failed to sidestep such issues by placing their faith in the 'morally indifferent' (ibid:30) hands of reason, humans must negotiate the conflicting demands of 'many agencies and many ethical standards, whose presence casts the individual in a condition of moral uncertainty'. To summarise, moral responsibility has been returned to the individual, who now must choose between competing 'moral demands, options and cravings' (ibid: 31). To quote Giddens (1991:153), 'The individual no longer lives primarily by extrinsic moral precepts, but by means of the reflexive organisation of the self'.

Charity Begins at Home?

In the absence of a set of universal moral standards which would shoulder the burden of human responsibility and faced with the existence of a multitude of 'cultural/moral sovereignties', 'postmodern' individuals can find the 'homely shelter of native community' (Bauman, 1993:43), increasingly hard to resist. Only too happy to rent out the floor-space which was formerly occupied by the grand-designers of a universal morality (read ethical codes); these native

communities show no remorse in stipulating their own set of guidelines for moral action. Co-operation and subservience is the name of the game in this relationship, 'selfish interests' (ibid:44), needing to take a back seat to the more pressing demands of the (so-defined) 'greater good'. Clearly this is no free-space, no playground for unfettered acts of autonomous moral action. Rather, and in common with 'state-legislated morality', the disparate pressures which are exerted by the 'self-appointed spokesmen' of these 'postulated communities' (communities which 'have no established traditions', ''exist'' only in the future tense', and rely on the 'most intense loyalties of their would-be members' – Bauman, 1995:158) have at their centre, a desire to reign in any errant acts which could be subsumed under the umbrella of 'individual moral discretion' (ibid:45).

What is Moral Action?

Having traced the failure of humankind to establish a set of universally-applicable ethical principles, Bauman (1993) advances his argument by setting out his own vision of how the term 'morality' should properly be understood. *The conclusion which Bauman arrives at is important as it allows for a more nuanced understanding of football supporter behaviour than that which is sometimes presented.*

The first point which Bauman wishes to make is that morality is not founded upon a set of symmetrical relationships. When humans genuinely act *for* the other, they do so without an expectation of 'reciprocation' or 'reward'. 'Indifference' (ibid:48) to the actions of the other is a hallmark of morality. Put simply, the actor who is 'for' is so, regardless of the willingness of the recipients to return the favour. Such a conceptualisation represents a departure from the symmetrical 'Being-*with*' relationships of Heidegger's *Mitsein*, the latter's 'morality' being founded upon a unifying common 'ontological predicament' (ibid:49).

Here the virtue which Bauman bestows upon the enactment of *autonomous* action arises from its latent slumber. Drawing upon the ideas of Levinas, Bauman elevates the moral actor above and beyond the business-like partners

whose actions rotate around the fulfilment of a set of mutually-binding (externally enforceable) contractual *obligations*. To quote Bauman (1993: 52), 'my moral responsibility is always a step ahead, always greater than that of the other'. The burden of the moral actor suggests Bauman, is not one which is shared by the masses, but rather is one which is endured 'alone'. These responsibilities are out of the ordinary, rather than 'statistically average'. Common standards which would deny the individual their uniqueness and shared ideals which emanate from a collective identity are not the stuff of which moral action is made. Too bad it might be assumed, for the self-styled high-priests of those communities (including supporter-based ones) which seek to reign in any errant actions of their 'would be' (Bauman, 1995:158) members. For morality, is not about fulfilling group obligations, *nor is it about acting to maintain the survival of a group*. Call as they might for their group's members to sacrifice their autonomy for the greater-good, 'to behave like brothers' and to 'stick together' (ibid:55), these overlords cannot implore these actors to do so on the premise of morality. Acting towards the survival of a group, whether that be to protect the 'traditional-hot' fan-based relationships of travelling football supporters (see chapter 1) or something altogether different, may offer assurances to the sacrificing subjects that they have 'done (their) bit' (ibid:56), however, such acts pre-suppose a *rationally-calculated (self-serving) purpose* which cannot be classified as 'moral'. Why? Because morality is about a *felt-*responsibility towards others, impulsively generated, emotionally experienced, and critically, a willingness to act *for* rather than simply *with*. It is autonomous rather than rule-bound, free rather than constrained, it is not based upon the fear of sanction, nor can it be constructed with reference to a set of universal ethical codes. Rather, it is about an urge to act on behalf of the other. To quote Bauman - 'The *duty of us all*, which I *know*, does not seem to be the same thing as *my responsibility* which I *feel*' (ibid:53).

Morality then is not synonymous with rationality, it does not live by the 'calculation of gains and losses' e.g. group survival (ibid:11), nor can it be founded upon the 'edification' of black and white ethical codes. The 'power-assisted heteronomy' which derives its strength from a belief in unambiguous and mutually-exclusive virtuous choices, strips morality of its very essence,

rendering personal autonomy redundant, and substituting 'answerability to the other', with an 'answerability to the legislators and guardians of the code' (ibid:11). Consequently, Bauman suggests that rather than being conceptualised as a willingness to adhere to a set of depersonalised rules which 'are in principle' universalizable', morality should be thought of as 'thoroughly personal' (ibid:10). Having cited, Fourastie's contention that morality should be understood as a 'Morality of sacrifice', something which is incapable of being explained by 'the pursuit of happiness, nor…defence of the actor's interests' (ibid:61) Bauman, draws chapter 2 of *Postmodern Ethics* to a close, by asserting that moral acts commence with the *solitude* of their instigators. The outcome of these autonomous self-sacrificing acts is a form of communion and togetherness, a sociality emanating from a type of altruism which, for Bauman, is the 'hub and expression of 'being for' (ibid).

Ultimately, for Tester (2004), Bauman's postmodern ethics amount to an 'imaginative incentive', a possibility, rather than an inevitability. The opportunity to act 'for' has the potential to motivate 'critical praxis', a chance to chip away at 'common sense' and the world's existing power relations. But that is all that it is. Such an observation is particularly pertinent in the context of football's rapidly-changing landscape where the remnants of a once-dominant, if never wholly accepted culture (see Russell, 1997), refuses to slip away quietly. These vestiges are best thought of as 'residual' codes, a term used by Raymond Williams (1977:122) to describe that which, 'has been effectively formed in the past, but is still active in the cultural process'. Significantly, the decision which some supporters make to act 'for' the other, bring them into direct conflict with the defenders of these 'actively residual' (oppositional or alternative, rather than assimilated) outposts.

The remainder of this chapter will focus on supporters 'being for' (moral) relationships, whilst simultaneously keeping one eye on the less spectacular residual frameworks which underpin the actions of Bauman's 'statistically-average' mass. The section begins by discussing these supporters' orientation towards women and their nostalgic yearnings for the days when 'men were men'.

Where Have All the Real Men Gone?

> **Eileen:** The last away match at Stockport, and we were asked to take cuddly toys… and their goalkeeper shouted at the top of [his] voice (puts on high-pitched 'mardy' tone) "Referee they're throwing teddy bears at me".

Nostalgia, as the historian Skoda (2016) indicates, is not a new thing. As early as the 14th century, records can be found of John Ball's yearnings for a long-lost period of equality and liberty, a time when the term 'gentleman' (in a hierarchical sense) was meaningless, and dignity was enjoyed by all. In the same period the Renaissance poet Boccacio, lamented the denigration of Florence which had recently fallen prey to disease and famine. The targets of his fury were the city's labourers who had taken advantage of a declining population to seek a more favourable exchange for their toil. Amongst the grievances which Bocaccio articulated was a concern for the debasement of 'the manners by "men"' (ibid:41) – their inappropriate apparel signifying the insidious character of social mobility. And so it is in today's world, where conflicting opinions abound as to what it means to be a 'real man'. Do 'real men' incorporate expletives into their dialogue? Do 'real men' harangue young women who are on their way home on the train? This subsection discusses supporters' attitudes towards *women* and their capacity to lift supporters out of the comfort of the cognitively coherent natural attitude which was described in chapters 3 and 4.

To speak of masculinity as if it were a static inflexible entity is of course, misleading. Scholars including Beynon (2002) and Connell (2005) have problematized the term, drawing attention to the multiplicity of masculine forms which have existed throughout history. These include the 'Arnoldian' configurations of the mid-nineteenth century, the more genteel 'new-men' of the 1970s, and the 'new lads' who emerged some 20 years later (Beynon, 2002). Although, some of these constructions have been more widely-accepted than others, Beynon suggests that the general trend has been towards a more fluid conceptualisation of the terms 'male' and 'female' - freedom, rather than a prison cell becoming the new *modus vivendi*. And yet, as Beynon (ibid: 6)

maintains, 'for many there remains a strong nostalgia for a time when gender differentiation was less ambiguous'. Whilst not wishing to suggest that this study's participants would welcome a return to the days of Arnoldian masculinity, Old-Spice, and tea on the table within seconds of the first male foot crossing the threshold, there was a sense in which some of these supporter's moral acts/perspectives were indicative of a nostalgia for the days when 'men were men'. The 'chivalrous' narratives *which are presented here may be considered sexist, or they may be deemed morally desirable*, Skoda making the insightful point that the 'genius of nostalgia', resides in its ability to augment claims which are seemingly at odds with one another (ibid:39). Some of the patriarchal constructions of morality which are described can, on the one hand, be criticised for their role in further entrenching male dominance and power. However, on the other, a decision not to act, might equally be deemed amoral/immoral. The ambivalent character of these acts, 'right in one sense, wrong in another' (Bauman, 1993:5), are testament to the difficulties which humans face when left to their own devices.

Of all the accounts of gallantry, heroic intervention, and 'being for' the other, which this study's participants articulated, James' tale of an incident at Notts County perhaps fits Bauman's criteria for a genuinely moral act the best. This *autonomous* act was not only driven by 'impulse', showed 'equanimity' towards repayment, and paid scant regard to 'rational calculation', its raison *d'etre* also evolved from something other than concerns for a shared 'identity', or survival of the group (see Bauman,1993, 33,56,56,53). The recipient of James' altruistic act happened to be a kiosk 'girl' who had been charged with the impossible task of single-handedly satisfying the Owls travelling hordes' demand for alcohol. As a scene of 'absolute carnage' began to unfold, James took it upon himself to traverse the kiosk counter and offer the beleaguered individual a helping hand. Having quickly ascertained the going rate for a pint of beer, James spent the remainder of half-time serving his fellow supporters, taking no less than £100 in takings in the process. When asked why he had chosen to act in such a way, James paid homage to the *felt* sense of responsibility which is characteristic of a moral stance:

> **James:** Because she was in tears, it was horrific…I was just watching, think 'You've got to do something'.

The impulsive character of James' act, the feeling that he had *'got'* to intervene, is significant here. Whether Bauman is correct to suggest that 'dignity has been returned to emotions' (ibid:33) approximates an irrelevance in this context. What is more important, is that when faced with his decisive-moment, James *chose* to step outside of the comforting cradle of the cognitive realm and into the lonelier world of the 'autonomous' moral actor (see Bauman, 1993).

There are parallels here between the James' 'cometh-the-hour, cometh-the-man' moment and the 'sudden unexpected' opportunities, which Murchadha (2007:396) describes. The significance being that when faced with these 'decisive moments' (which the Ancient Greeks would refer to as 'Kairos'; ibid: 403), the 'existing norms of the community prove unable to supply clear guidelines' (Held, 1993, cited in Murchada, ibid 404). These types of situation may be loaded with opportunity for self-actualisation (see Bauman, ibid), but they are also riddled with uncertainty – the double-edged sword that is the breakdown in external ethical codes, revealing its ambivalent character. James' 'heroic' act is also important for what it says about the remainder of the contingent, who, it might be argued, took an amoral stance rather than an immoral one - bathing in the natural attitude and the taken-for-granted assumptions of the lifeworld (those being that this is how 'things are' at football matches). If one were to use the phenomenological technique of 'free imaginative variation' i.e. 'imaginatively vary [ing] elements of [an][41] experience' (Langdridge, 2007:19), to reveal its 'essential' character, they, from what can be deduced from James' narrative, would observe countless individuals failing to act 'for' the other. Half-time is beer time, the seductive qualities of the drug and the desire to keep 'topped-up', frequently blinding individuals to the plight of others. That is, preventing them from acting 'for' the other regardless of what they might expect in return or perhaps more specifically, to treat the 'Other' as 'Face' to use Levinas' terminology (Bauman, 1993:48). It is the 'non-symmetrical' character of the latter and its indifference towards 'reciprocation'

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[41] My brackets

which are the key constituents of this orientation's moral character. Consequently, it is worth re-emphasising that James' actions were the exception, rather than the norm in this case. To employ Bauman's (1993:52), turn of phrase, 'The saints are *unique* people, people who do things other people shirk – being too afraid, or too weak, or too selfish to do them'.

As a former match–day pie-seller I have a good deal of sympathy for the target of James' intervention. Alcohol-fuelled supporters can and do lack empathy at times; aesthetic concerns often taking precedence over moral ones. I was also genuinely impressed by his decision to take the hard road, to not turn a blind eye, to play the Good Samaritan. James abandoned his cognitive stronghold, the party, and the inebriated singing, in order to hold out a helping hand to somebody in need of support. However, and as Ricouer (1973:153) suggests, the propensity of 'situational ethics' to treat the exceptional case as if it were a paradigmatic one is one-sided, not least, because it plays down the significance of more durable forms of morality – including 'the rule of honor, or the duty of friendship or…loyalty to the party' (ibid:154). There are also difficulties in drawing too many inferences from the spectacular. Sociology, as we know, is not the same thing as tabloid journalism. However, there is a tension here. If Bauman is correct to suggest that acts of morality are autonomous, rather than fuelled by the demands of community, then it becomes difficult to speak of morality, without making reference to these less-common or a-typical acts. These decisive acts dismantle, or perhaps better, disturb the coherence of cognitive spacing, but it must be remembered that for every hero, there are often countless villains, or perhaps less incriminatingly, those who take an amoral, rather than an immoral stance.

James was not the only participant to articulate a 'chivalrous narrative'. Nick fondly recalled the time when he and I (to use his expression), 'saved' an exhausted looking lap-dancer who was returning home from a night-shift. However, Nick's intervention appeared in part to be fuelled by aesthetic, rather than moral concerns. Nick described how the lap-dancer, who had been on the receiving end of 'a bit of mouth' from a small group of teenage Swansea

'football hooligans', was charmed by our 'heroic'[42] efforts – 'she wanted to sit and chat with us, which was nice'. Allowing his imagination to run riot, Nick suggested that he 'could have probably smoked at her house for sure', but chose to go to the match instead. As Langdridge (2007) indicates, there are several disparate modes of experiencing, imagination being one of them. Perhaps less obviously, what might be read from this account is that there are occasions when aesthetically-fuelled actions (the search for sensate, emotional thrills in this case), intentionally or otherwise, result in moral outcomes (the protection of others). The beauty of writers such as Plato, Bauman, and Kierkegaard, is that they provide a framework which helps us to understand this complexity. Nick's repudiation of the (cognitive, 'actively residual') 'laddish' antics that preceded his intervention was not solely driven by a desire to 'be-for', to forsake himself for the other, to treat the other as 'Face'. However, the outcome of his actions remained the same.

Additional acts of chivalry, or perhaps less dramatically in some cases, an unwillingness to turn one's head the other way, appeared at first glance, to emanate from a genuine concern for the other, an emotionally-infused form of morality, that showed scant regard for the (contestable) rituals of the hermeneutic community. In some cases, acts which were deemed morally reprehensible resulted in an intervention or even an altercation. In others, they simply generated feelings of distaste amongst this study's participants. In a tone which was befitting of the intense emotional feelings which he was describing, Richard recounted the outrage which he felt towards three members of the travelling contingent, who had crossed the boundary between playfulness and harassment. The supporters, whose quest to continue their 'infinite game' (see Carse, 1986:3), had resulted in them fracturing the interaction rituals which are designed to respect the privacy of other individuals (see Kristiannson, 2009, on Goffman), repeatedly tried to attract the attentions of a young woman who had been busy minding her own business. This anecdote is useful in foregrounding the friction which can develop when two separate ontologies (in this case work and leisure) occupy the same space, struggle for ascendency, and ultimately, begrudge one another's existence (see Blackshaw and Crabbe, 2004):

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[42] My inverted commas

> **Richard:** …she was on her laptop, and 3 lads sat at the table she was sat at. And she did not want anything to do with them. And they just pestered her, and pestered her for 3 hours, and I just felt, just outraged and…I think [name of supporter] said something to one of them.

When I probed further, querying whether by 'pester', Richard meant trying to 'chat up' the individual in question, Richard replied:

> **Richard:** Chat her up yeah, trying to distract her, trying to get her to have a drink with them and, theres a time and a place for that, it's not on a train. It's not on a train at teatime with somebody who's no interest in it.

As Kristiannson (2009:224) suggests, for Goffman, the enactment of 'ritual obligations' work to uphold 'a moral order', which may explain why their contravention provoked such hostile feelings within Richard. The references which Richard makes to 'situational' propriety (Goffman, 1972:259) are also instructive, Beynon (2002:6) suggesting that several males now maintain a 'hybridised identity'. That is, one which is 'experienced and displayed differently at different times in different situations'.

Richard's account is useful in foregrounding the central role which human feelings play in the construction of the moral sphere (Bauman, 1993). However, there is more to this tale than a simple concern for the other, a ruffling of the feathers caused by an inappropriate act. As it transpired, Richard's concerns also revolved around a defence, as he saw it, of the 'group's'[43] interests. Football supporters, he reasoned, had a duty to act with a 'degree of decorum', that is to represent their club/city in an appropriate manner. Offering additional insight into the psychology behind his outrage, Richard suggested 'I'm a bit weird with people disrespecting, (laughs) Sheffield 6'. As might be recalled, for Bauman, the hostility which a community (albeit 'postulated' rather than hermeneutic in Bauman's discussion) might display towards any unsanctioned 'moral' acts, can be even more pronounced than that of the 'secure and self-confident state' (ibid: 45). However, in light of this incident, one may be forgiven

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[43] In this case the sum of Sheffield Wednesday's support

for asking 'Is this always a bad thing'? Perhaps there are good and bad elements to all cultures, 'actively residual' or otherwise?

Richard's response to his increasing disillusionment, ('there is part of me there that I might have outgrown going on trains, to a degree') has been to retreat into the more insular surroundings of private transport. As well as offering more freedom (see chapter 6), minibuses also eliminated the potential for any unpleasant encounters - 'we are in our own company', as he expressed it. The outcome of this decision is a simple 'being with'. Not an altruistic stance, a desire to forsake oneself for the other, but a pleasant one, that is, one which affects only those who have chosen to opt into the self-contained moral party.

Richard's account raises interesting questions about the relationship between moral feelings and moral action. Clearly, Richard does not have an issue with the consumption of alchohol and trying to woo members of the opposite sex *per-se.* However, the contravention of specific cultural standards rubs against the grain. It is also noteworthy that Richard chose not to intervene in this case, preferring to leave the job to one of his companions. Why is this significant? Because Richard's inner-rage indicates that there is a *difference* between failing to challenge a specific act and agreeing with it. Moral acts e.g. 'chivalrous' ones may be carried out by autonomous actors; however, others can *agree* with their decision to intervene. To act outside of the remit of one's obligations can be 'considered meritorious' as Agnes Heller (1988:71) expresses it[44]. The astute 'autonomous' actor may also calculate the odds of them receiving the support of their companions should their intervention turn sour. Friends, for better or worse, have a habit of backing one another up in such circumstances. As such, a degree of *rational* calculation and *collective* activity may enter into the proceedings.

Jon, a supporter who freely admitted to making drunken mistakes ('I've had arguments with people thinking that they are sat in my seat…and I'm on the wrong train'), offered a social-psychological explanation for the types of incident which Richard described. Articulating his disapproval of behaviours which were

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[44] Here Heller's concern is to suggest that such merit indicates the presence of a degree of responsibility, even if this is not formalised.

a 'little bit obnoxious', including acts towards those on a train who are 'minding their own business'; Jon explained that there was a 'gang mentality' which 'goes on'. Invoking images of an asymmetrical power relationship, Jon suggested that a 'bit of bravado' infused the actions of supporters who take it upon themselves to act however they wish. So much, it might be said, for the Freudian repression of desires discussed earlier (see chapter 3/Giddens, 1991). Jon gave the part-hypothetical example of two 18-year-old women who were dressed up and travelling on their way to a night out. The likelihood, he suggested, was that they would find themselves on the receiving end of 'loads' (of grief) from the '40-year-old blokes', who happened to be sharing the same train carriage. Such encounters rested uncomfortably with Jon's preference for the maintenance of 'situational' propriety, that is, a respect for the privacy of others.

In all of this it is important to acknowledge the significance of the silent amoral (or perhaps more accurately) passive majority. Trains can be populated by drunken noisy 'lads' who revel in controlling the social space, immersed as they are within the kind of liminal states that Turner (1995) describes (see chapter 6). Conversely, and although this can depend on the time of the day, the result of the match, and the amount of alcohol consumed, they can also be occupied by supporters who are largely innocuous. Just as there is a danger in placing too-much emphasis on the actions of the 'heroes', so there are dangers associated with focusing one's sociological gaze too closely upon the 'villains' (see Williams, 2011). Most travelling supporters are of course, located somewhere between these two extremities.

As can be seen, impulse, emotion, and even aesthetic concerns can all result in an indifference towards reciprocation, a decision to contravene the coherence of the cognitive sphere and enter the saintlier hallows of the moral realm. The role which moral spacing plays in disturbing its cognitive counterpart becomes more lucid when the thesis considers supporters' attitudes towards the expression of what Allan and Burridge (2006) refer to as 'forbidden words'.

Right Place, Right Time: On Tradition and Maturity

In a paper entitled '*Ethics and Culture'*, Ricoeur (1973:155) suggests that the 'authority' of tradition 'can appear to us… as violence exercised against our thinking' or 'as a necessary guide on the pathway from infancy to maturity'. Each generation has its own 'dominant' 'moral' standards (see McCenery, 2006, Williams, 1977), some which wash away with the faintest of touches, and others which are scribbled on the wall in indelible ink (which is not to say that each generation can enjoy the security of non-contestable ethical codes). Each of course, considers their worldview to be the correct one. Dave, a supporter who made no attempt to 'conceal' (see Goffman, 1963) the mischievous character of his formative years as a supporter ('we were the old contemptibles or whatever you want to call it') also articulated his respect for the 'fairer'[45] sex and those of a more tender age. With a nod to the hybridised identity which Beynon speaks of, Dave, 'ex-army', 'ex-miner', suggested that whilst he was happy to express profanities at work, he 'wouldn't dream' of doing so 'in front of women and kids'. Put simply, and with a hint of nostalgia for the days when 'men were men', Dave proclaimed that he was 'Old Skool'. Clearly, however, not every travelling supporter subscribes to this (arguably 'residual') position. I have observed supporters articulating expletives in the company of women and children, whilst others, equally drunk and dressed in the same colours, roll their eyes in despair. In some cases, supporters appear to be making a deliberate attempt to control the social space, in others, (I think back to the 'sing-song' on the train home from Bristol during the 2015/16 season) their actions are underpinned by aesthetic abandon rather than a desire for power.

Chapter 3 discussed the role which supporters play in enculturating their young apprentices into the ways of the 'tribe'. Such practices represent an attempt to pass the baton of *tradition* over to their (sometimes) eager successors - the weary and the battle-scarred realising that their time in the fast lane cannot last forever. This is not always a seamless process. Clearly, there is no unanimous consensus regarding appropriate demeanour, no universal ethical codes which

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[45] my inverted commas

would allow supporters to coast along indefinitely in the cognitively coherent 'natural attitude' (see Bauman, 1993). However, this has not prevented supporters from trying to impress their own vision of the world upon others. Matt, who reprimanded me for swearing on a Cardiff-bound train that was filled with women and children, gave some insight into the processes of socialisation/synoptic activities which seek to reign in the less palatable tendencies of the 'boys brigade'[46], and their liminal tendencies (see chapter 6):

> **Matt:** We're all pretty intelligent, articulate, employable, (laughs) good lads to have a natter to…and if the lads on the train are getting a bit too rowdy and kicking off, we'll be telling them to calm down, cus I think we are definitely respectful of everybody else to a point.

Matt, who defended the right of supporters to swear at football matches (see chapter 4) epitomises the 'hybridised identity' which Beynon speaks of. Despite acknowledging that he likes to swear ('I've like invented swearwords'), Matt emphasised the importance of reserving these practices for the 'right place'. Articulating a narrative of respect and chivalry, Matt suggested that 'women', 'kids', and 'granny (s)' did not want to hear '5 Wednesday lads 'F-ing and Blinding'. 'Mum's and 'daughters' also fell under the radar of those who should be shielded from the rowdy antics of the drunken mob. Put simply; 'You don't swear in front of your mum, you don't swear in front of your Nan, and you don't swear in front of people on a train as far as I'm concerned'. Arguably, the processes of socialisation which Matt describes can, to use Ricoeur's terms, be interpreted as an act of 'violence' towards another individual's 'thinking' *and* as a process which facilitates 'advancement from infancy to maturity'. Such is the ambivalent character of a liquid modern morality.

Additional supporters also foregrounded the importance of context with regards to the expression of profanities. James, an advocate of the 'football specials'[47] which were commonplace during the 1980s, suggested that whilst he was not opposed to *chanting* in train carriages *per-se*, there had been occasions when these chants had 'got a bit out of hand'. James deemed the song 'Harry Roberts

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[46] My inverted commas
[47] Trains which only contain football supporters

is our friend; he kills coppers' to be inappropriate. However, he also indicated that the rights of supporters to use expletives on the railway system, *varied by the time of day*. James was clearly unimpressed by the 'half-cut' Doncaster supporters whose language at 9.30 in the morning had been 'quite explicit' (James was travelling with his 6-year-old son at the time). However, he added that if he were to travel with the same companion at half past 8 at night, then he had to accept that this type of behaviour would take place. The type of incident which James describes, and his attitude towards it, indicates that the search for a '*universally*[48] accepted' normative code is likely to be fruitless (see Bauman, 1993). Cognitive spacing, I would add, is largely coherent, moral spacing is less so.

Eileen was another supporter who adopted a 'situationist' approach (see Fletcher, 1966, cited in Bryman, 2008) to moral quandaries. As stated in chapter 3, 'Eileen's cognitive outlook which makes the use of certain songs which she did not like 'acceptable' at football matches is necessary to maintain the intense aesthetic atmosphere which can be found within these locales' - the ambivalent character of morality revealing its indecisive head (see Bauman, 1993). However, this outlook had not prevented her from establishing a set of ground-rules, which her daughter would be required to adhere to if she wished to stay on the right side of this participant:

> **Eileen:** I said "You are going to hear words, that if I hear you using them *outside the football ground*[49], you've had it, you know.

Eileen also expressed a dislike for *sexist* swearwords and recalled a time when she asked one supporter to rely upon British Sign Language the next time that they felt the need to express a specific profanity ('I showed him the sign word for it'). To summarise, *some* swearwords, were acceptable in *some* contexts, for *some* people.

Owen, a supporter in his late fifties, added an additional layer of complexity to the 'discussion', when he drew a line between two disparate types of swearing. The first of these, which included the word 'bloody', would 'probably' be

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[48] My emphasis
[49] My emphasis

recognised by 'most people' (including himself) as being 'acceptable' within a football context ('It's almost like if, if you hit your thumb with a hammer, you'll say ((emphasises voice)) "Bloody Hell"'). However, the second type, which included the 'f' and c' words was, from what can be read from the account, less so. Like Dave, Owen reasoned that supporters needed to be mindful of the fact that a 'lot of supporters are women and kids' (an outlook which is compatible with the modernisation of football). Not only were some swearwords deemed inappropriate, some of the songs which supporters sang, also made him 'cringe' - the expletives only being added to make the sentence fit with the tune.

The references which Owen makes to social etiquette are noteworthy here. Arguably, Owen's stance is a commendable one. However, the extent to which this is born out of a desire to sacrifice himself for the 'Other' is unclear. Yes, Owen foregrounds the need to think of others, however, the references which he makes to social acceptability, begs the question of whether such a stance can meaningfully be interpreted as autonomously-fuelled, impulsive, and moral (in Bauman's sense), or whether it is simply driven by a desire to comply with a wider societal norm? To quote Angus Heller (1988:32), 'We 'have' a world because we are norm and rule regulated and not instinct-regulated… the distinction between good and bad (ethics) is the condition of the world.'

Where does this leave us? On the one hand morality is characterised as reflexive (Giddens, 1991), or impulsive (Bauman, 1993), on the other it is said to be regulated by 'moral maxims' i.e. the social facts which Durkheim (1962:2) spoke so eloquently of. When trying to understand the moral spatial practices of travelling football supporters, should we simply take the most basic morality of all as our starting point i.e. the doing of 'good' deeds? To quote Moore, 'If I am asked "what is good" my answer is that good is good and that is the end of the matter, that good is evident when seen and thus calls for no explanation' (cited in Bauman, 1993:21).

Such an answer is seductive, if necessarily vague. As can be seen, for several supporters what counts as 'good' varies by context. Additionally, actions may be 'good' and 'bad' in the same breath; aesthetically pleasing on the one hand, morally questionable on the other. As such, these supporters' positions are

ambivalent, multifaceted, and complex. Their fluidity calls for a nuanced analysis, which acknowledges the conflicting imperatives that these devotees must negotiate come Saturday 3pm. The collision of these different priorities shifts these supporters between different realms, which is not to suggest that these spatial priorities are incapable of co-existing harmoniously.

Not in Front of the Children: Aesthetic 'Eithers', Moral 'Ors'

Arguably some of the perspectives articulated in the previous subsection (particularly, those of Dave and Owen) demonstrate a degree of complicity with the modernisation of football, the rhetoric of the family game, the need to think of women and children, and so on (see chapter 1). These perspectives are interesting, as they throw the socially constructed character of 'childhood' into sharp relief. Vivien Burr (2003:4) has noted that understandings of how best to act towards children have varied dramatically over the years. The mini-adults who once provided the subject matter for Dickensian dystopias are now viewed as 'innocents', who need to be shielded from the less virtuous trappings of adult-life. It is against this backdrop that the architects of the moral space put pen to paper, and craft their grand designs for an inclusive (in this case bourgeois) dreamscape which recognises the needs of 'everyone'.

During my fieldwork, I observed several instances where supporters identified a need to 'protect' the younger generation from the excesses of the aesthetic thrill-seeking hordes. Occasionally, this could be detected from the most throwaway comment, as was the case at Watford when one of the regular 'faces' articulated his disapproval at the discharging of a smoke bomb in the concourse during half-time:

> Half time and the concourse is manic… in the distance a group of about 30 youths are bouncing up and down. A smoke bomb goes off and I inhale a horrible taste (potassium nitrate). A supporter that I recognise…looks aggrieved and suggests that it is "well out of order" as there are "Babies" about. Smoke alarms are ringing loudly and the kiosk shutters get slammed down. The lads are upping the ante and start chanting "Let's, all have a disco'…which soon morphs into "Let's go fucking mental" (Watford away, 2014/15 season).

Calls for 'situational' propriety (Goffman, 1972:259) and sensitivity to context are particularly noticeable when altercations arise. For example, in the aftermath of a confrontation at Burnley (see chapter 4), I observed one exasperated adult scraping a young boy up off the floor and questioning "Who did that, he's only a bairn"? Similarly, on a train journey back from Charlton (2015/16 season), I overheard one supporter (hereon in referred to as supporter 'A') imploring another (Supporter 'B') to calm down on the grounds that he 'had got his 14-year-old son with him". The disagreement had begun when one inebriated and joyful looking supporter ('B') appeared to swipe a bottle of expensive (Grey Goose) vodka and proceeded to pass it around the train (much to the chagrin of its owners) to anyone who showed an interest. Ultimately, after repeated warnings, one member of the aggrieved party (supporter 'C') stood up and pushed the other ('B') to the floor. As supporter 'B' - who was now spread-eagled on the floor - began laughing, his son stepped in and implored "Stop it you are frightening me". This was seized upon by a member of the aggrieved party who shouted at supporter 'B' to leave, emphasising the fact that the latter was in the company of his son.

As was the case at Watford, my experiences on this journey encouraged me to think more critically about the morality of the practices which *some* members of the travelling contingent engage in. Liquid modern identity as Bauman (2001b) has suggested is not constructed on solid foundations, nor is stability always considered desirable. Reflexively speaking, I consider this to be important as my perspective became less empathetic as my identity began to develop in unexpected ways. Regardless, as some unacquainted 'lads' on the train took full control of the social space, flirting with a young woman, calling a police officer a "weirdo", and generally, revelling in the freedom of the aesthetic space, I began to develop feelings of disquiet. I also got the impression that I was not alone, as one of my companions kept a watchful synoptic eye on one unacquainted supporter whose actions he thought were verging on being inappropriate. As Giddens (1991:153) suggests, in today's world 'shame', which in contrast to 'guilt' does not derive from 'fear' of transgressing externally-crafted norms, 'corrodes a sense of security in both self and surrounding social milieux'. More importantly, what this chapter has indicated is that some

supporters are willing to de-prioritise aesthetic concerns to safeguard moral ones. 'Sid' captured this disposition well, when he described the act of drinking alcohol in the company of children as 'a nonsense'. This outlook, not unlike some of those practices described earlier on in this chapter, chisel away at the foundations of a well-designed cognitive space, stripping it of its freehold tenancy, and putting out the tender for the latest 'emergent' (Williams, 1997: 123) cultural development.

On Violence and Morality

A felt responsibility towards 'minors' has also provided the basis for both the justification and the condemnation of violent altercations. Eileen was critical of the Greater Manchester Constabulary for their handling of a league cup semi-final game between Blackburn Rovers and Sheffield Wednesday during the 2001/2002 season. The needless beatings which the 'riot police' dished out, had not only taken place in the proximity of disabled supporters, but had also 'frightened' her two teenage daughters, 'to death'. Alternatively, a desire to protect innocent children from the harmful actions of adults was offered as an explanation for supporter violence. Dave, who, it may be recalled, articulated an aversion to using swearwords in the company of women and children, described a time when he punched a safety steward who had been 'throwing his weight about' outside the stadium of the Owls closest rivals, Sheffield United. The incident occurred as the Owls supporters, who were 'kettled in by the police' and on the receiving end of a smoke bomb from the Blades supporters, felt the weight of a crush as they stood adjacent to the entrance gates which were locked at the time. Depicting a potentially grave scenario, Dave recounted how he just managed to catch a 'young girl' who had been 'shoved to the floor' by the Blades 'so called' safety steward:

> **Dave**: I just put my arm under her to stop her from, cus I thought if she goes down, I go down on top of her, we're done. We are actually done. Got, hauled her up, everybody pushed forward, and I just whacked him and got arrested.

This impulsive act, smacks of the moral ambivalence which Bauman (1993) speaks of. Right in one sense, yet wrong in another, this decision to act 'for', could also be interpreted as an example of an individual defending the survival of the group (Bauman, 1993); which - depending on whether one chooses to pin their colours to mast of Ricouer or Bauman (see earlier) – may, or may not, be categorised as a morally-infused act. The degree of rational calculation involved i.e. the desire to avoid injury, may also be interpreted as incongruous with the idea of morality (in Bauman's sense), and yet there is also a sense in which this act could be interpreted as impulsive, a split-second decision to act 'for' the other, irrespective of the cost. Regardless, the guilty verdict which was passed in his subsequent court case, despite the existence of CCTV footage which 'showed what was happening', has resulted in Dave taking the decision to never return to Bramall Lane.

A willingness to defend 'the group' i.e. the hermeneutic community, was also described by Gaz, who recalled a fractious incident in the aftermath of an away game at Pride Park. As Gaz headed away from the stadium, following a heavy defeat, he became increasingly 'annoyed' with a Derby supporter who was 'mouthing in [his] ear'. As the Derby supporter proceeded to slate the quality of the Owls team, (the supporter was expressing 'how shit we were'), 'Family-man' Gaz, (see chapter 3), lost his 'rag' and took it upon himself to threaten this social irritant. With a contemplative facial expression that cascaded into a stupefied laugh, Gaz reflected:

> **Gaz:** I got hold of this lad and I held him over a bridge (sighs), I picked him up, and literally held him over a bridge (laughing) on the motorway.

As he recounted the story, Gaz, scrutinised the *rationality* of his actions; questioning why he had developed such angry feelings over a 'bunch of…overpaid tossers playing football', and 'that shirt there'?[50] The answer which he gave was telling, as it hinted at something much deeper than a simple love for his club and its symbolic representation. Reflecting '*on* action' (Schon, 1998: 278) his conduct seemed 'stupid'. However, reflecting '*in* action' (ibid:54), his

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[50] At this point during the interview Gaz points to a replica Owls shirt which is in a picture frame on the wall.

behaviour 'did not seem stupid', as the Derby supporter had chosen to act disrespectfully towards his 'family'. Regardless, of how 'naïve' this perspective might seem to others, Gaz, felt that he 'was sticking up for what he stood for'. In keeping with the remainder of his narrative, Gaz suggested:

> **Gaz:** You don't like to be too obvious about it, but you know when you are in someone else's neck of the woods or territory or whatever who want to call it, you do have a sense of kind of belonging and you do want to defend the people around you.

Gaz concluded that what 'scared him', 'deep down', was that 'given another away game', he would 'probably do the same'.

In the superficial sense that it ticks the boxes of impulsivity and a lack of rational calculation this act bears some of the characteristics of a 'moral' act (in Bauman's sense). Impulsive as this act might have been, it also smacks of a durable form of morality i.e. fidelity, which is 'right in one sense, wrong in another' (Bauman's 1993:5). This faithfulness, a willingness to 'defend' one's brothers regardless of the cost may be out of kilter with the increasingly 'civilised' world that Elias (1994) describes. By today's (moral) standards, it might even seem incredulous to present such an act in anything other than immoral terms, regardless of whether Gaz saw himself as defending his 'family'. At a push, Gaz's act *might* be seen as an attempt to stave off the type of 'moral uncertainty' which stalks liquid modern individuals on a daily basis (see Bauman, 1993:56)?[51] That is, a desire to step away from the crumbling precipice of moral autonomy and back onto the solid terra-firma of cultural reproduction. Although Bauman would contend that 'sticking together' on the grounds of brotherhood cannot be subsumed under the banner of a moral act, he also suggests that spokespersons for the 'greater good'[52] can offer assurances to any would-be altruists, that they have 'done' their 'bit'. Moreover, in a climate of moral incertitude, the allure of any 'guarantees of righteousness', is hard to withstand. For Bauman, the type of acts which are born out of this way of thinking can be defined as 'rational'. They therefore are infused with a

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[51] Note that Bauman used the term 'postmodern' in this piece of work.
[52] My speech marks

degree of calculation, which rests uneasily with a moral stance. Arguably, however, such a model cannot *fully* capture the complexities of the phenomenon which is described here. Stuart's recollection of a confrontation at Celtic, indicates that individuals can simultaneously sacrifice themselves for the 'other' i.e. unknown members of the hermeneutic community, whilst, ostensibly, acting in order to maintain the 'survival' of their more immediate group.

Stuart's account of the calamitous Celtic trip is at once both humorous and serious. The event, which began with two hours sleep following an extended stay in a curry house the previous evening, soon unfolded into a series of catastrophic events which still bring a smile to Stuart's face to this day. Essentially, everything that could go wrong did; possession of a sizeable handful of purchased, but unwanted match tickets, receiving verbal abuse from a group of local tenement dwellers upon arrival, beating a hasty retreat after inadvertently parking their privately-owned coach in the *home* supporters carpark, being asked in a local hostelry to denote money to 'the cause' (and receiving information that those of a less 'generous' disposition had been punished violently for their unwillingness to support this political project), and finally, watching in amazement at the culmination of the match as a group of Sheffield Wednesday supporters heroically staved off the advancing hordes of a hostile Celtic contingent. Stuart's attitude towards violence appears to centre more upon a concern for 'fairness', than an aversion to this activity per-se. He is critical of incidents which have seen small groups of supporters (including those from his own team) acting violently towards isolated individuals. However, he was in 'awe' of the Owls supporters who put themselves on the line to defend their 'own'.

> **Stuart:** I saw a notorious Wednesdayite … with his crew, in a circle, absolutely battering Celtic fans, left right and centre and they were coming in droves, and I was just in awe, watching this group of lads, defending their selves. There was about 16 of them...I think they were doing it to protect their own (IW yeah, yeah) it was awesome.

It is difficult to disentangle whether Stuart's 'awe' emanates from a respect for the 'tough' masculinity, which was on display here - a working-class respect for

those who are 'handy in a fight' (see Dunning, Murphy and Williams, 1988, King, 1998, Beynon, 2002), or simply the willingness of these characters to sacrifice themselves for the 'other' i.e. fellow supporters with whom they are unacquainted? The notoriety of their leader indicates that this was not the first time that these individuals had acted in such a way, and yet there is a sense in which their willingness to act 'for' the wider ('unknown') group as well as to defend themselves, *could*, be seen as moral. This might not rest easily with Bauman's interpretation of morality, but there are grounds for thinking that Ricouer might be more accommodating in such circumstances (see earlier). Ultimately, it could be argued that these supporters were simply protecting their fellow supporters, acting selflessly and 'non-rationally', 'taking one for the club', so to speak. However, those who adhere to the canons of a deontological pacifist stance might disagree with the bestowal of honours upon those of a more violent disposition, regardless of the situational specifics.

These types of incident, which directly contravene the drive to modernise football, are testament to an 'actively residual' football culture which refuses to pass away quietly. However, Nick demonstrated his readiness to step outside of the comfort of the cognitive sphere when he defended a steward who had been subjected to a form of linguistic violence from the Owls travelling faithful. The situation materialised when a sizeable contingent of Owls supporters were delayed from entering the ground, due to a turnstile malfunction:

> **Nick:** And there were some Wednesday fans in front of us playing absolutely fuck, you know like, "Your shit ground", you know, "Don't know how to fix a stand", and I remember saying to them, "Look mate, he's just come over and apologised, he's a steward, he doesn't fix turnstiles, you know, why are you calling him a cunt?"

Tempting as it might be, it would be disingenuous to depict this study's participants' attitudes towards violence as unified. Whilst Gaz is correct to recognise the existence of a 'macho hierarchy' amongst football supporters, his own anxieties about this issue are indicative of a much more complex phenomenon than that which is sometimes presented. Some of this study's participants including Stuart, Matt, and Graham, articulated a situationist

approach to the issue. As can be inferred from earlier, there are times when Stuart condones acts of violence, however, this did not prevent him from criticising a one-sided beating, nor from labelling Millwall supporters as 'animals'. Similarly, Graham, who had not been averse to acts of physical confrontation during his youth, depicted Leeds supporters - who he described as being at 'a level above' - as a 'bunch of numbnuts'. However, Matt, who as we recall enjoyed a 'now and then' moment, during a confrontation at Burnley (see chapter 4), was less committal on the issue. Despite acknowledging that he 'gets' the rationale for hooliganism, he remained undecided as to whether he agreed with it. However, in his own words – 'I've never run away from it… but I've never actually gone looking for it', and… 'If someone's gonna have a swing at me on a train and I can't go anywhere, then I'm gonna put him down if I have to [laughing]'. Craig appeared slightly more reticent about the use of violence, suggesting that he had not enjoyed the 'intimidation' that he experienced during one of his trips to Millwall. However, he also indicated that he *would* have been willing to take measures to defend himself ('…and if it kicks off, I'm going [to] punch him') had a scene of confrontation developed during the tense journey home. Other supporters articulated a more thoroughgoing condemnation of violence. 'Sid', who accepted an exposure to violent confrontation as 'part of being a fan', also disapproved of some of the unnecessary 'trouble' which he had observed over the years, an example of the cognitive meeting the moral in a marshy middle ground. Additionally, Owen, questioned the rationality of *pre-meditated* violence – 'there's no rationale in them…it isn't a spur of the moment thing, it's almost a planned thing'. However, and despite being unable to attribute these actions to *impulsivity*, Owen, offered a concession to *relativist* moral thought, suggesting that, 'I realise people are different'. Even more interestingly and intimating at a degree of respect for the 'Clint Eastwood style' (read tough) masculinity which Connell (2005) speaks of, Owen suggested apologetically, 'I don't think I've ever been violent at a match, *If I'm honest'*. His belief that a change in Police tactics now made it easier to avoid violent altercations is also noteworthy. Seemingly, an increasing propensity to move away from the 'herding', which was commonplace during the 1970s and 1980s (see Frosdick and Marsh, 2005 - chapter 1), allows for a more individualised form of morality i.e. one which is more in keeping with today's emphasis on

choice and personal autonomy. However, it is also worth noting that this practice is far from being obsolete (see chapter 6).

Richard's moral stance on the issue is best described as 'absolutist'. Violence, it might be inferred, was unacceptable, regardless of the situation. Positioning himself as a moral actor, Richard suggested:

> **Richard:** I've never thrown a punch, either at a football game or outside of a football game…I'm not that kind of person, I'm better than that, I'm brighter than that.

Once again, Richard's sentiments revolved around identity concerns. Put simply, it annoyed him that people assumed that he was of a violent disposition simply, 'because (he was) a football fan'. James appeared equally committed to a pacifist stance, even going so far as to describe the supporters who had engaged in acts of violence at Grimsby and Hillsborough as 'nutters'. Eileen's position might best be categorised as contractual, rather than moral per-se. The Birmingham City supporters who had pelted the Owls supporters with bricks were wrong to do so, on the grounds that the latter were no 'threat to them'. In the words of Martin Buber: 'It is the symmetry of attitudes and responsibilities that gives the relation its 'I-Thou' character'[53] (Bauman, 1993:49).

In the same way that supporters express disparate attitudes towards women, children, and swearing, so it would seem, that they are equally divided on the issue of violence. Cognitively, there *has* to be (and is) something which holds supporters together, something which makes them what they are. However, as this chapter has suggested, moral spacing is well-equipped to disturb the coherence of this sphere. The threats to this coherence are largely internal, put simply, supporters adopt different moral positions. However, one additional hazard presents a specific threat to the *loyalty* of these supporters; namely, a felt-responsibility towards partners and friends.

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[53] (i.e. one where the 'Other…'appear (s) as a moral subject', Bauman, 1993:49)

Self-Alienation

Chapter 4 discussed the value which this study's supporters place upon loyalty and regular attendance. Such a persuasion of course, lends itself nicely to 'authenticity' claims (see chapter 1), an 'us' and 'them' mentality, which lies at the heart of any social identity (see Jenkins, 2008).

Here, the overlap between the cognitive and the moral sphere is self-evident. To be loyal is to act morally. However, the 'realities' of everyday life are often more complex. Morality, as Bauman (1993) suggests, is about sacrifice, a willingness to switch on the significance of the other, to bring them into vision. The problem which some supporters have to negotiate is a felt-responsibility towards several 'others'. That is to say, these individuals have multiple commitments. Nick spoke about the guilty feelings which he experienced when leaving his partner to oversee the weekend welfare of their children (see Ben-Porat, 2010) – 'I'm out all day and then I'm suffering with a hangover the most of Sunday'. Similarly, James acknowledged the stifling effect which children had upon his attendance. A regular at every away game in years gone by, James suggested that he now attended a much more modest amount – 'I just pick 6'. This decision to act selflessly might well be viewed as moral, given his belief that 'It's not fair to go to them all'. However, in some cases the decision to prioritise the needs of one's family appeared to emanate from an external source. Graham suggested that his brother, who had followed the team home and away for 'years, and years, and years', had always claimed that Wednesday came 'first'. However, he 'then…met his wife', who, it would seem 'changed his mind'. As is self-evident, a need to satisfy the demands of two 'families', often places a strain on supporters, who are forced to allocate their attention, however they see fit. The restricted attendance of some supporters (for the benefit of their children) amounts to a moral stance, a felt-responsibility towards the other. Others, whose family demands may vary, are able to pursue their support, unrelentingly. This also amounts to a moral stance, even if there are grounds for thinking that there is more to this than an altruistic self-sacrifice for the benefit of the team (see chapter 6). In some cases, a restricted support is 'imposed' by others, and therefore is the furthest away of these positions from

a moral stance. Regardless of the motivation, whether that is a heartfelt need to care for others or a rationally calculated decision to maintain one's blood-family relationships, the choice to limit one's attendance poses a significant threat to the cognitive stronghold of these supporters. Morality is a sufficient, if not a necessary condition for this demolition - it creates its own anonymity pole, a self-alienation brought about by conflicting imperatives. However, there are ways in which to resolve these types of dilemma.

Resolving the Tension: Situationist Salvation

Part of the purpose of this chapter has been to highlight the moral dilemmas brought about by a) an absence of universally agreed ethical standards and b) the competing demands of the cognitive, moral, and aesthetic spheres. The situationist moral stances which some supporters adopt can be seen as an attempt to negate the tensions which are necessarily thrown up by this ambivalence, a strategy for dealing with the indecisive character of liquid modern morality. At times, these different (aesthetic, moral, cognitive) entities overlap e.g. when Matt, Eileen and James recognise the rights of supporters to use 'forbidden words' in specific locales. However, in others, for example when supporters specify the boundaries for the expression of such profanities, they are distinct. That is to say, moral spacing undermines the coherence of the cognitive sphere.

Perhaps this fluidity is to be expected. In 1988, Agnus Heller enticed her readership to consider the following question, 'How can individuals live up to the Ought they are committed to whilst deriving as much enjoyment from life as is humanly possible?' (ibid:12). Matt, James, and to a lesser extent, Eileen, resolve the tension between competing aesthetic, moral, and cognitive imperatives by appealing to the importance of context i.e. a situationist ethics. A hybridised identity provides a 'home' for all those who have grown weary of the exacting demands of moral absolutism. However, some moral issues call for a much less-flexible response...

'We're not all Wednesday are We'? On Belonging and Racism

To a greater extent, to 'be Wednesday', is to 'be white'. If one were to look closely at the demographic makeup of Sheffield, they would quickly establish that the city where 'everyone matters', to use its Council's strapline, is made up of several different ethnic groups, who, for the best part, 'co-exist' peacefully. However, and in a manner which is more reminiscent of some of the city's ethnically 'exclusive' postcodes, the demographic of the Owls travelling support, largely belies the *overall* make-up of the metropolis from which it is predominantly drawn. Even the most casual observer would struggle not to notice that the 19% non-white population of Sheffield (Sheffield City Council, no date) are barely represented.[54] This subsection discusses supporters' perspectives on racism, and the relationship between rationality and social impassivity. Specifically, it foregrounds the difference between a deontological ethical *stance*, and situationally-saturated 'inertia'.

The longstanding relationship between (some) football supporters and racism has been well-documented (see Back, Crabbe, and Solomos, 2001). Cashmore and Cleland (2014) have suggested that the problem arose during the 1970s, and despite its *supposed* disappearance – its existence screened in part by a dwindling media interest - continues to this day. However, it is worth remembering that evaluations as to the existence of racism depend largely upon the definition employed. Following Cashmore and Cleland (2014:76), this thesis will use the term 'racist behaviour' to cover the following acts – 'chanting', 'shouting', 'uttering abusive language' and 'physically assaulting'. These say nothing of course, of views which supporters may bottle up inside but reveal unknowingly, the 'expressions given off', to use Goffman's (1959:16) terminology.

Despite the current political climate, Cashmore and Cleland (ibid:70) are correct to suggest that '*overt* racism' is out of vogue, to the point where accusations of racism are located towards the apex of defamatory insults. Methodologically, this presents considerable difficulties, the likelihood of anybody openly admitting

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[54] These figures were taken from the 2011 census and therefore represent a 'best estimate'.

to being a racist when asked, is, as Cashmore and Cleland suggest, minimal (however, see comments made by 'Greigsie' in Back, Crabbe and Solomos, 2001:234). One might assume that this will apply as much and as little to supporters in this study, as to any other. However, as a supporter of 38 years, I have observed occasions when my fellow supporters (not this study's participants) have *chanted* and *shouted* and *uttered abuse* which could not be passed off as anything other than racism. The accounts which the supporters describe below lend some credence to this view, even if, there are grounds for thinking that these types of occurrence are *less* common than they once were. When asked, 'Have you seen any behaviours on the part of travelling Wednesday supporters that you disapprove of?' several supporters recounted tales of overt racism. Matt described the 'proper, fucking horrible racist abuse' that an Owls supporter voiced during an away game at Bramhall lane in the 2011/12 season, Graham recalled the 'anti-Semitic' comments made by some Owls supporters in view of a group of Jewish passengers who were sharing the same train carriage, and Jon discussed the time when he and a friend of 'Indian Heritage' walked into a pub following a home game, only to be met with a chorus of 'I'd rather be a Paki than a Blade'.

The deontological ethical stances which supporters take up on the issue of racism are interesting, as they are in stark contrast to the situationist ones adopted by many supporters regarding swearing, women, children, and violence. They also hint at a normative shift from the days when overt racism was less frowned upon. Back, Crabbe, and Solomos (ibid) have discussed the subtleties regarding the well-known song 'I'd rather be a paki than a scouse' (or 'than a Blade', in the Owl's version). Notably, the song defies a literal interpretation, unlike other songs, which mean **'**what they say on the tin'. However, Nick and 'Sid' both expressed their dislike of this song, irrespective of its figurative character. One participant, who described the articulation of this song as 'blatant racism', even 'made it [his] business to make sure that the Sheffield Wednesday supporter's society was making public statements', regarding its unacceptability. The participant's deontological stance was easily detected, put simply; the song was 'completely unacceptable'. Craig also took a deontological approach to the issue of racism describing racist chanting as,

'completely and utterly wrong'. However, unlike Stuart who also 'hated [d];' racism, Craig was more optimistic about the possibility of wiping this (residual football culture) out completely. In response to his self-posed question, 'Can you eradicate it?' Craig answered, 'you would hope so'.

Supporters also held contrasting views on the origins of racism and its prevalence. Whereas Gaz, attributed 'lazily racist' actions to ignorance, Matt (in conformity with his self-positioning as a 'pretty intelligent lad') rebuked any attempts to intellectualise this phenomenon in such terms, arguing that '…it's just a bit stupid innit?' In keeping with the idea of overt racism as a decaying phenomenon, Eileen suggested that racist chants were now uncommon in a football context. Similarly, 'Sid' stated 'I don't think you see that much of it…round the grounds these days, but you do see it occasionally'. By contrast, Graham suggested that 'You hear it all over'. Graham's account is interesting because it illustrates that what people think, and what they do, are *not necessarily* the same thing (see Jones, Bradbury and Boutillier, 2011, on Connell). Although Graham disagreed with the racist act that he witnessed, positioning it as antiquated (cultural alternatives can be depicted as 'allochronic' as Bauman (1993:39) expresses it), he also refrained from intervening, in a way which would have derailed the course of events. In a manner somewhat reminiscent of Back and Solomos, who allowed a racist incident to pass without comment (see Back, Crabbe, and Solomos, 2001), Graham's *calculated* fear of reprisal dissuaded him from acting impulsively *for* the other:

> **Graham:** I don't want to get into that situation when I've got [son's name] with me, I don't want to get in that situation where he's then going to decide he wants to take issue with me, and his mates want to take issue with me…it's not worth me getting into that situation.

Agnes Heller's ideas are useful for interpreting Graham's 'inertia'. Drawing a distinction between 'retrospective responsibility', a responsibility for one's actions, and 'prospective responsibility', which accompanies the adoption of specific roles, Heller (1988:70) suggests that every individual performs 'actions having nothing whatsoever to do with [their] obligations'. Praise is bestowed upon those who choose to intervene in a situation, when not required to do so

by role-specific i.e. prospective, responsibility. However, those who remain inactive have the option to defend their passivity on the grounds of 'self-interest' e.g. 'Had I intervened in the brawl, I should have been badly hurt' (ibid:71). Graham's 'inertia' can rightly be interpreted as an 'act' of calculated self-interest. However, it could also be read as an act which was underpinned by a felt-responsibility towards his son, a decision which I can wholly empathise with. As Bauman (1993:11) suggests, 'The majority of moral choices are made between contradictory impulses'.

References to the potential consequences of one's actions can also be used to justify any failure to act on behalf of the other (Heller, 1988). Put simply, the passive bystander may reason, 'Had I interfered the consequences would have been much worse'. The *rational* stance which Eileen described can be understood in such terms. When confronted with racism, Eileen chooses not to intervene, as it would only 'make matters worse'. Like Graham, her actions are best thought of as calculated, rather than impulsive, however, both participants presented defensible reasons for their passivity. In their own different ways, Graham's and Eileen's moral stances can be described as deontological in relation to racist acts. However, their *actions* are underpinned by a situationist ethics. Even the most abhorrent acts can be ignored, when the wrench of competing imperatives (a responsibility to the abused/a responsibility to one's kin) pulls first in one direction, and then decisively in another.

We're All Wednesday Aren't We?

Whilst mindful that this study's participants will have been keen to establish a positive 'face', (Goffman, 1972:5), much of that which they articulated debunked the 'football supporter = racist' equation. However, the near absence of people of colour at Sheffield Wednesday away games remains a nagging issue, as do the references which participants make to (albeit declining) racist incidents. Perhaps, this is unsurprising. As Spracklen (2013:110) suggests, 'whiteness can be seen as an invisible, taken-for-granted signifier in modern sports' and, 'to be a sports fan in most Western countries is to belong to a residual, white male hegemonic culture' (ibid:116). If football is about belonging (see chapter

3), then the question which might be asked is who belongs, and additionally, what type of 'home' do they reside in?

Cashmore and Cleland (2014) correctly suggest that, whiteness is normalised within Association football (see also Spracklen, 2013). The demographic makeup of the Owls travelling fan base is hardly a-typical in football terms, even if I do remember one acquaintance from Nottingham Forest jokingly remarking, "You racist bastards" as he cast his eyes across the remainder of our away following. Perhaps, as one supporter in Cashmore and Cleland's study suggested, people *do* look to something to belong to, that is, 'a group of people with common ground', to use these authors' expression (ibid: 75). However, and not withstanding all that which has been written thus far, 'belonging' cannot always be reduced to simple demographics. Rather, from Gaz's perspective, membership of the in-crowd is more dependent upon an expressed commitment to a wider cause:

> **Gaz:** "Whether you were racist, whether you were sexist or whatever, in your upbringing or whatever, none of that would ever manifest itself when you were watching Wednesday, it wouldn't, cus you wouldn't even think about it, because first and foremost the people that you see, you know that they are Wednesday fans.

Perhaps there are different levels of belonging, which vary by context, and the company that one keeps, British society's 'dominant' and 'actively residual' cultural codes competing for ascendency? It is hard to believe that a Bradford City supporter who I met on a train back from Birmingham would share Gaz's sentiments. If the Bradford supporter did have a 'home' in Heller's sense, it appeared to be of the temporal, rather than the spatial variety. To cut a long story short, the supporter considered his home City to be 'horrible', as it was 'full of Pakis'. However, Richard, albeit in the more fettered context of a formal interview encounter, articulated a more egalitarian stance. Victimisation of any sort, whether that was in the form of racism, sexism, or something different, made him 'uncomfortable'. In a stoical, but matter of fact tone, Richard asked, 'Who gives anybody the right to question somebody else's existence'? Still, like

Graham and Eileen, and I might add, myself, Richard conceded that he did not 'do anything about it'.

Richard's account is interesting, not least because of its Heideggarian overtures. Bauman (1993:49) suggests that the *Mitsein* which this scholar describes is underpinned by an 'assumption of symmetry'. A 'common ontological predicament', serves to unite humans, that is, a, 'togetherness *before* morality', as Bauman puts it (ibid: 49). Richard's argument is of course, morally-infused. It is not devoid of content, nor is it simply given. As such, it is not *of* the *Mitsein*. However, the commonality and togetherness which it lays claim to, is, to all intents and purposes, *for* the *Mitsein*, a shared togetherness founded upon a common ontological position. One conclusion which might be drawn from this is that neither moral spacing, nor cognitive spacing, can be seen as a superordinate power. Something much deeper connects humanity, even if this sometimes does get lost under the rubble of this two-pronged demolition.

Summary/Reflection

To 'Either' or to 'Or', was this ever really the question? To understand the character of moral action in contemporary society it is necessary to understand the historical conditions in which it unfolds. Bauman suggests that today's world is one in which the stranglehold of tradition and the search for universally applicable ethical (rule- bound) codes, have given way to a loss of confidence (see Tester, 2004) and a morality without guidelines. The significance of this, although I will argue that this idea is, to an extent, over-simplified, cannot be overstated. As the fruitless search for these ethical canons grinds to a halt, a new form of morality is given the *opportunity* to emerge. That is, one which allows individuals to break free from the cognitive stranglehold of the 'communities' to which they belong. Travelling football supporters *do* have a common cognitive background which sets the parameters for some actions i.e. they occupy a (football) world which has its own way of doing things. However, they also make 'autonomous' choices which can downplay the significance of group allegiance, and this 'world's' residual guidelines. That is to say, morality

becomes lifted out of the security of the taken-for-granted assumptions of the lifeworld and elevated onto centre stage. The ambiguity of morality also needs to be recognised. Just as Kierkegaard recognised the pull of competing imperatives, so Bauman draws his readership's attention to the way in which actions may be 'right in one sense, wrong in another'. Moral spacing is able to disturb its cognitive counterpart, as is the case when travelling football supporters set about their task of ranking their personal priorities (actions which sometimes comply with/resist the modernisation of English football). In some cases, moral concerns play second fiddle to, or are informed by aesthetic concerns, the relationship seemingly complex and indeterminate. A rational response to the pull of competing imperatives is to adopt a situational ethical stance, even if the importance of some issues, notably racism, precludes the likelihood of this.

In some respects, the narrative presented here is 'ideal-typical'. There are several aspects of Bauman's description of morality, which at times, seem overly-simplistic. For example, some of the more chivalrous acts 'for' the other, (notwithstanding their patriarchal underpinnings) which are described here, may be *calculated*, a warm reception awaiting their instigators, who heroically perform the role of the alpha-male. The rigid dichotomy which Bauman draws between moral acts and calculative ones, isn't always born out in practice. Similarly, there are grounds for thinking that Bauman overplays the absence of ethical codes in today's world. One only has to think about the overall trend towards a 'civilising process', which can be observed in English society, to realise that there are some signposts to help individuals negotiate their way through the moral thicket. The complex character of social spacing will be discussing more fully in the following chapter, which explores the aesthetic priorities of travelling supporters and the additional spoke which these place into the wheel of a harmonious existence.

Chapter 6: Aesthetic Spacing, Football, and Play

Introduction

'Under the heaven of the aesthetic, everything is light, beautiful, transitory; when the ethical comes along then everything becomes harsh, angular, infinitely boring' (Kierkegaard, 1971:363).

Thus far, the thesis has emphasised the importance of cognitive spacing in providing a 'home' for travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters, and the role which moral spacing plays in undermining the cognitive coherence of this hermeneutic community. The analysis will conclude by discussing a third type of spacing – 'aesthetic' - which is motivated *primarily* by different concerns to cognitive and moral spacing (which is not to say these never overlap). 'Plotted affectively, by the attention guided by curiosity and the search for experiential intensity' (Bauman, 1993:146), aesthetic spacing is the outcome of playful endeavour, a release valve for the human spirit, in what otherwise largely amounts to a fettered social existence. Commensurately, aesthetic spacing is about the search for *amusement, novelty, experiential intensity,* and *freedom* i.e. the 'light, beautiful, and transitory' ambience which Kierkegaard's character 'Johannes' refers to. Perhaps most significantly of all, and regardless of aesthetic spacing's associations with the contingency which is characteristic of the liquid modern era, play comes with 'knowledge of how to go on', a nod to the sometimes-overlapping character of aesthetic and cognitive social spacing. Bauman's analysis centres upon a discussion of an aesthetically-demarcated city. However, it is not hard to see how these ideas can be meaningfully applied to a football context (both within and around its stadiums). The 'experiential intensity', playfulness, and affective plotting of aesthetic spacing, map readily onto the 'quest for excitement' (Elias and Dunning, 1986), playful supporter activity (Marsh, Rosser, and Harré, 1978) and 'emotional experience' of watching sport (Mumford, 2012). A search for novelty is also central to the activities of Sheffield Wednesday's travelling contingent. So too their desire for freedom, a condition which has long been *touted* as a cornerstone of rationally

organised leisure (see Rojek, 1993, Spracklen and Lamond, 2016). Ultimately, the activities of these supporters amount to a game; a conscious decision to seek temporary reprieve from the mundanity of the working week, to step outside of its soulless asphyxiation and enter a world facilitated by what Victor Turner (1995) would call, 'liminality'.

This following subsection begins by presenting a brief overview of Bauman's conceptualisation of aesthetic spacing. Following this, a more detailed discussion of Bauman's ideas about play will be presented.

Coming out to Play? On *Freedom* and the Human Spirit

> *'Sport is as good a place as any for us to seek our aesthetic pleasure'*
> (Mumford, 2012:19).

A hunger for *experiential intensity* and human *curiosity*, suggests Bauman, are the key drivers behind the attention which underpins the *affective plotting* of the aesthetic space. Less catholic than the moral and cognitive denotations described earlier, at the aesthetic level, social space constitutes a *spectacle* (think Clarke,1978); *'amusement value'* becomes the number 1 priority, meaning that all other concerns must take a back seat when this vehicle of social spacing swings fully into motion. Principally, Bauman's (1993:169) account of aesthetic spacing amounts to a description of *playful activity* - the *'beauty of aesthetic control'* residing in *'its inconsequentiality'*. Baudelaire's free-strolling flaneur who wanders aimlessly through the city, breaking only to observe the delights on display, captures the mindset of the aesthetically-orientated individual (see Mumford, 2012) well. The contingency which cognitive spacing strives to trample upon is permitted to flourish here, the only limit to the individual's imagined reality being the 'power of fantasy' (Bauman, 1993: 169). Still, it is worth noting that in a space which is demarcated by contrasting levels of 'amusement intensity' (ibid:80), a premium is placed upon all that is 'novel' and 'surprising'. Consequently, aesthetic spacing shows antipathy towards anything which lasts forever. *In principle* then, moral spacing, which 'suspends free roaming of attention', is considered, to recall Kierkegaard's 'Johannes' (1971:363), 'boring'. As Huizinga (2014:8) expresses it, *'Play…is never imposed*

by… moral duty', nor does it have *a 'moral function'* (ibid:6), which is not to say that Bauman sees the relationship between these two forms of spacing as irreducibly antithetical. These ideas will be central to the subsequent discussion of travelling supporters' desire for 'novel' and 'surprising' experiences (Bauman, 1993:180) and their 'quest for excitement' (Elias and Dunning, 1986).

Bauman begins his discussion of play by explaining that for Huizinga, from whom he draws extensively when discussing aesthetic spacing, the term *homo-ludens*, which translates as - 'he who plays' (Bauman,1993:169), better captured the distinct character of humans, to the more commonly used *homo faber* i.e. he who makes. For Huizinga, play elevates humans above the, presumably more menial, activities of self-reproduction and self-preservation. *Relative* to the more solemn character of the latter, play is more 'gratuitous', it lacks a 'sensible purpose' (Bauman, 1993:170) or as Huizinga (2014:8) expresses it, 'Play is superfluous. The need for it is only urgent to the extent that the enjoyment of it makes it a need'. Having identified 'fun' (ibid:2) as an essential characteristic of play, Huizinga makes the related point that 'all play is a voluntary activity'. Quite simply, animals and children play because of the enjoyment that it provides, an observation which leads Huizinga to conclude that this activity is in fact*, free.* Perhaps, there is some credence in Bill Shankly's assertion that football is more important than a matter of life and death[55], as for Huizinga (Bauman, ibid), it is the *'free'* and *'gratuitous'* character of play which distinguishes it from 'ordinary' or 'real' life. At the risk of being idealistic (see Rojek, 1993, Spracklen and Lamond, 2016), it is these very qualities, freedom rather than restriction, 'fantasy' rather than 'reality', which (to some extent) mark this study's participants' activities as distinct from the working week. The playful activities of Sheffield Wednesday's travelling contingent, which take place in a 'liminal' world, provide a key focus for this chapter.

Superfluous and pretend as play may be, it is also capable of taking on a *serious* character, Huizinga explaining that the boundaries between play and

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[55] Bill Shankly's original statement reads as follows 'Some people believe football is a matter of life and death, I am very disappointed with that attitude. I can assure you it is much, much more important than that' (http://myliverpoolfc.org/quotes.htm).

seriousness are fluid, rather than fixed. Not only are children's games, including football, 'played in profound seriousness' but some 'element of tension' in play is important (Huizinga, 2014:6). In the context of the present study this conceptualisation of play rings 'true', Mumford (2012:19) suggesting that 'victory and defeat can themselves be part of the aesthetic experience of sport'. However, for Bauman (1993:170), and in contrast to the ideas of Elias and Dunning (1986) playful activity remains 'not for real', and as such should be considered as distinct from 'real reality'.

The chapter will proceed by applying several themes which appear in Bauman's conceptualisation of aesthetic spacing to a footballing context. These include this study's participants' quest for '*freedom*' distinct from 'ordinary' life, their enjoyment of '*experientially intense*' atmospheres, their desire for a good 'day out' ('*amusement* without sensible purpose') and their 'Dionysian' use of alcohol. Breaking with some of the more traditional foci of extant football scholarship, the chapter will also discuss these supporters' quest for *novel* experiences. The chapter will conclude by discussing the threats which the modernisation of football and policing strategies pose to the realisation of these aesthetic aims. *It is important to stress that the aesthetic experiences which provide the focus for this chapter, stretch beyond the narrow confines of those which can be derived at a football match. Rather, and in keeping with supporters' own agendas, the aim is to describe aspects of the 'day out' in its 'totality'.* Narrative descriptions of my experiences, as well as verbatim quotes from research participants are incorporated into the following analysis. Therefore, the reader is forewarned that this section contains the regular use of expletives and politically incorrect outpourings as I aim to facilitate 'entry' into the lifeworld of the study's participants/myself. In this sense I aim to capture the 'freedom' which allows supporters to incorporate sexist language and 'forbidden words' (Allan, K and Burridge, K, 2006) into their dialogue. To recall Huizinga (2014:6), play has no *'moral function'*.

As well as helping the reader to gain insight into the specific cultural persuasion of these supporters, the inclusion of person narratives also provides insights into my own positionality i.e. reflexively speaking, these recollections are invaluable in helping the reader to understand my relationship to the knowledge

produced (see methodology chapter). The chapter begins with a recollection of a day out at Ipswich during the 2015/16 season. The story picks up as I take the symbolic foot out of the doorstep of my house and cross the threshold into another world, a different type of home that can be found in the 'absolute present' (Heller, 1995:2).

'We'll do what we want': On *Freedom* and Liminality

The taxi arrives around 8.30 am, I pick up Nick and Matt and we fall into the usual routine, drawing a hundred quid from the cash machine (sigh), buying some cans and food for the journey (eating's not cheating when you get past 40) and going for a morning 'brew' in some overpriced 'Italian' train station 'caf'. Large brew, one teabag, two quid, rubbish. I get a phone call about my Dad, he's really ill in hospital and the lads decide to give me some space to take the call, 'real' life stuff.

The platform has a few lads milling around, it's about half-past nine and some are on the booze already, making the most of it, taking as much from the day as they can. Train stations are funny places really, people from all walks of life toing and froing; the all 'so important' businesspeople who 'work hard play hard' in whatever city they may find themselves, the students on their way to a new, supposedly better life and the tramps who never stay anywhere for too long for fear of getting twatted by some angry dickhead with nothing better to do. But for us, it's different, this is our world, they (figuratively) move, we stay still, they (literally) move, and so do we, but it's us who are calling the shots, playing by our rules, doing what we want when we want, Masters of the Universe.

The sun is shining and I'm well up for it in my new Fred Perry Laurel (the expensive kind) polo and John Smedley crew neck merino wool sweater, feeling my best, looking 'the bollocks'. No doubt Matt feels the same in his orange Fjallraven 'casual' - style footie jacket (always zipped to the top, rain or shine). So too, Nick, in his Pretty Green pilot jacket - a throwback to the days of the skinheads when 'men were men' and hippies cowered silently in the shadows. Heavyweight dark - rinse selvedge jeans are *de rigueur these* days, and the Clarks Originals, well, they've always been there.[56]. Life as art, our art, proper art - Nobody's going to sit at home painting tortured paintings of some fella on a bridge, covering his ears to the world and screaming his head off, whilst the rest of Norway walks past uncaringly. Who needs that nonsense when you can match a perfectly ironed pair of Levis 'Vintage' jeans with a crisp pima-cotton polo shirt and a Paul Smith Parka? Save that other stuff for

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[56] This desire to 'dress well' has been an integral part of away day culture for as long as I can remember. The manifestation of a 'mod ethic', that was embraced so readily by the football casuals of the 1980s (see Redhead, 1991 and Thornton, 2012).

the galleries of London (or Oslo), where all the self-proclaimed 'experts' and other assorted dickheads hang out in their tweed jackets and brothel creepers, running their flabby fingers through their (to use Matt's expression) stupid fucking Morrissey quiffs. This is art for the masses and we are the curators.

The train is busy, and our seats are scattered separately, standing room only for some people, no time for tired legs, no place for the weak. A group of lads come into the carriage armed with a load of beer, I am not sure if they are footy supporters, or on a stag do or something. Matt and Nick eventually get seats in front of me, stand up and turn around for a natter. At 10.15am Matt opens a can of gin and tonic, no doubt keen to get the 'show on the road'. Nick quickly 'follows suit', although I think Carling is his choice of a breakfast tipple on this particular journey. Plastic is everywhere; plastic tables, plastic walls, plastic phone covers, the only thing that isn't plastic here is our lives, 'real' lives, away from all the bullshit that exists outside of this 70-odd capacity railway car. After a short while we all start to get that warm 'coming up' feeling, where life's lights turn on and the grey begins to fade into the background, no more waiting, no more dicking around, its show time and we are the main actors. The day is getting a little bit hazier and we are all smiling and laughing, talking about bullshit reality music TV shows. Everybody has that cheeky smile and glint in their eye. Of course, nobody should really be drinking at this time in the morning, but that's what makes it fun, safety in numbers, mutual understanding. During our conversation about 'music', I make the mistake of describing Tommy Lee, as a 'proper dirty rocker' (which was meant in a complementary 'authentic' sense) and then realise that an old rocker, who looks a bit like the country singer Kenny Rogers, is giving me mucky looks. Maybe he thinks I'm talking about him? He's got longish grey hair, and a denim waistcoat which probably has a 'rebel' Confederate flag stitched onto the back. Maybe he wishes he was sat on a Harley, speeding across the desert, straddled by some fit bird whilst Lynard Skynard, dutifully provide the obligatory soundtrack, fret-wanking and all that other bollocks? Matt says not to worry about it, we are all up, feeling on top of the world and having a laugh, no reason to let 'Kenny' spoil it.

The journey flies by, I realise we are practically at Ipswich. The lads have polished off the gin and beers and are chomping at the bit to continue their adventure. The sun is still shining and there are a few coppers around but nothing too in your face. Some of the lads who are departing the train engage in a little bit of ritualistic chanting, 'Here we are sleepy people of Ipswich', they seem to say to themselves'; 'If you could take the time to notice us then that we would greatly appreciate it'. Ipswich station itself is fairly small and nothing spectacular, a ridged multi-gabled roof on one side, vending machines, metal pillars and some old buildings on the other, one of which has Georgian-style windows on one side. Regardless, I feel good, never easy to describe, just 'warm', glowing, happy, and most of all, 'free'.

We decide to walk over to the 'away fans only' pub (The Riverside) across the road. It's pretty sizeable and we head past the meathead bouncers on the door and into the main bar area on the left, I remember the layout from a previous visit. The atmosphere inside the pub is raucous, the soundwaves 'oscillate wildly'[57] and people are milling back and forth through the melee. The queue is about three-deep at the bar, which is hard work on a day like today. It's busy, noisy and fairly full on, a fortress of masculinity (the 'real kind'), where time stands still and puffy faced, pissed-up, middle-aged men get a chance to reclaim the world, safe from all the politically-correct brigade who know better than to ply their wares around these parts. A few lads are stood up on the pub seats chanting Wednesday songs and waving their arms back and forth. "Come and have a drink with us we'll kick you to a frenzy, we all come from Sheffield, and we are Sheffield Wednesday" – none of my companions bother to join in. Me, Nick and Matt, head around the U-shape bar. It's about three-deep, but the cold draught Peroni looks inviting. Even with the best will in the world it's not always possible to stay on the weaker stuff, which appears to be about as strong as our resolve.

As we walk around the bar I bump into two separate 'faces' (regular away day patrons), it's the usual greeting "Alright pal" and a shake of the hands/a pat on the back, but nothing more. We know each other but we don't know each other, united by a common cause, but that's about all it amounts to usually. We push out way through the melee, the pub has got a busy buzz but it's the sort I'm happy to get out of to be honest. I've always preferred to be able to chat without shouting; it's not a new development, not a sign of getting old. I get to the men's bogs only to find a big queue of blokes and teenagers trying to get in for a piss. A fat, middle-aged woman punter looks chuffed and says, "It makes a change seeing men having to queue", or something similar. It's hot and horrible, and the supporters try not to think too much about the pool of urine which swills all over the floor in the usual manner. Thankfully the queue goes down quicker than expected and graciously accommodates our bursting bladders, the 'lashings' of alcohol now mercifully released, chasing all the other wasted lives down the pan. Still, we're northern, aren't we? Only doing our duty, drinking hard, showing the rest of the world what we're about.

Relieved, I go and find Nick and Matt who have worked their way to the front of the bar, the pints arrive in vase shaped glasses and we weave our way back through into a quieter room where you can sit and have some food. It's nothing special, you can probably play bingo there in the week or something and I can't imagine the cook's going to turn up anytime soon on Masterchef, still it's trying, nothing offensive about it. We give the food a miss, and head downstairs towards an extra set of bogs, which to Nick's annoyance, turn out to be locked. From here, we leave the pub frozen in time and step out into the fresh air. After the busy confined feeling of the train and the tropical rainforest - style temperature

[57] A song by the English indie-band 'The Smiths'.

of the pub, this breeze feels amazing, I think we are all enjoying the joys of a less-densely populated environment. The sky continues to light up the day, and we stand by a river. It feels like getting out of prison, cool and refreshing. It doesn't get much better than this. I look up and see people going over a nearby bridge, making their way towards the ground, like something out of a Lowry painting (I quite like galleries really). The pub which is a few stories up from where we are has lads sitting on the windowsills with their backs to the half-open sash (I think) windows. Wednesday chants ring out from the inside of the pub. It's nice to hear the atmosphere but to escape the sweaty confines of the interior. Nick and Matt don't take long to head under the stone-built bridge for a piss, laughing their heads off like naughty little boys on a school trip. It's all very immature and very amusing. This is not work, this is not home, this is 'our' time, play time, fun time, nobody can tell us what to do time. We enjoy the cool lager on a hot summer's day. Pockets of Owls supporters are scattered over the beer garden, and of course Nick, Matt, and I, stop for the obligatory 'selfie' (stupid expression) which will be making its way to some disinterested Facebook user anytime now ('look how much more interesting our lives are than yours, look at how committed we are'). We try to look as cool as possible and I drop my jaw and pout 'Jagger style'. Unfortunately, I end up looking more like I've just had a filling at the dentist, aesthetic-induced numbness preventing any composed muscle-presentation.

We head off and walk over the bridge to the turnstiles. It all feels low key with little hassle, although I think one of my companions (typically) might have got searched. Inside the concourse is grey and barren, the Spartan concrete blocks offering a strictly 'no-frills' environment. The food is traditional football fayre, which shows little concern for vegetarians, vegans, or anybody else who 'doesn't belong' here. This is 'real-man' territory, meat-pies, sausage rolls, stuff that puts hairs on your chest. We get the bottles of cider in and I head into the toilets. It's the usual opium den, with wall to wall, thick smoke that makes you choke and shake your cock as fast as you can to facilitate a hasty escape. Outside I bump into an old friend who looks a little worse for wear. It's going to be a long day.

We make our way up to the seats, but Matt had only decided he was coming a few days ago and must sit on his own-the 'joys' of pre-allocated seating. Apparently, Tango, head - honcho, and chant leader, is banned from passing through the turnstiles today. This probably does little to help the atmosphere which is pretty good, but far from electric. It's often a little bit less intense at games once you get outside of a 2-hour 'radius' from Sheffield. Whether it's the clientele, too much booze, tiredness, who knows? Still, everyone's standing and will do for the whole game. Nobody cares its 2015, not least the stewards, who have seen it all before and aren't willing to risk getting their head kicked in, just so that they can collect their minimum wage at the end of the day (shit job, did it for years myself). We decide to let the game start before seeing if we can sit with Matt. The teenagers to the lower right of us are trying to start a new chant to the tune of 'Spirit in the Sky'. "When I die, and they lay me to rest, I'm going to go on the piss with David Hirst". Its crap doesn't

rhyme and is a poor bastardisation of Man Utd's version about 'Georgie' Best, which makes more sense because a) he is dead and b) it rhymes. I guess rationality is not the point though. The game is ok; we look solid, if not spectacular. Eventually we manage to thump one in, we go crazy, the usual mayhem, I dive on Nick, everybody dives on somebody else. It's exhilarating of course, that pure release of emotion, the bodily fervour and energy blast which comes from diving around 'uncontrollably', the yeeeeeees, the roar, the noise, 'the everything'. It's all shit within minutes though as Ipswich quickly equalise. Back to reality, the highs and lows. Monday morning will be a lot worse.

Having offered insights into the aesthetic predilections of the travelling contingent, the thesis will draw upon Victor Turner's ideas to interpret these supporters' quest for freedom.

In their aptly-titled (1986) publication, '*Quest for Excitement'*, Elias and Dunning make the not insignificant point, that in today's world, only children are able to show extreme emotion without being deemed 'abnormal'. For all the positive things which it has brought (see chapter 5), the 'civilising process' (Elias, 1994), it might be inferred, also comes at a price. Boredom, repression, and the suffocation of all things carnal, I would suggest, are the hallmarks of a rationally-cloaked 'adult' spirit. That said, leisure, as Rojek (1993) and Spracklen and Lamond (2016) note, has often been *sold* as the exception to this - a chance to be free, to let down any remaining hair which we have, to throw off our shackles. Shout from the rooftops, step out of the darkness, grab life's paintbrush and stroke some colour back onto the canvas, the hues need no longer, to quote Kierkegaard (1971:23), remain *'too strong, too harsh, for our dim* [adult][58] *eyes'*. All that we need to do is close our eyes to the rest of the world and use our imagination. This subsection will discuss the desire which supporters express to (temporarily) transcend the confines of their 'normal' existence i.e. to enter the hazy, ethereal world which I described in the opening narrative. Ultimately, this subsection describes a quest for *freedom* (a core characteristic of aesthetic spacing). By doing so, it will provide an important precursor to the subsequent subsections, which describe the actualities of this experience in greater detail.

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[58] I have included the world 'adult' to reflect the thrust of Kierkegaard's wider discussion.

In a society which places a premium upon *freedom* (see Bauman, 2001a) it comes as little surprise to find so many football supporters chasing this ideal with such gusto (see Brown, 2008, Pearson, 2012). Sheffield Wednesday's travelling supporters are unexceptional in this regard, revelling in every available opportunity to enjoy life's pleasure, and any associated avenues of personal sovereignty. As the purported antipathy of work, these supporters' leisure activities, it might be thought, open up unparalleled pathways to freedom; a chance to *escape* from the banality of the working week, and its soul-destroying tendencies. If to be human is not only to make things, but also to play, to be *ludens*, rather than simply, *faber*, then the significance of this playful activity amounts to something much deeper than mere relaxation (see Bramham and Wagg, 2014) or the hedonism which is sometimes associated with football supporters (see Jones, cited in Russell, 1997). The escapist narrative presented at the beginning of this subsection *does* contain several hedonic references i.e. the booze-fuelled antics. However, it also contains several references to a human spirit which only gets to flower during the warmest of Springs – i.e. the freedom which is facilitated by these escapist activities.

Of all the participants in this study (although there are several others who might vie for this status), Owen perhaps captures the joys of escape, freedom, and the 'heavenly' character of the 'away day' aesthetic experience, (Kierkegaard, 1971:363), the best. Owen's narrative contains several references to the freedom of aesthetic abandon, the 'childlike' character of away day support, and more specifically, to his youth. For Owen, the pleasures which can be derived from a home game pale into insignificance when compared to the gratifications of a good away day. The knowledge that he would be able to get 'away from it', 'have a drink', and a 'laugh' all added to the attraction of this pastime. Put succinctly, 'away days' were 'a bit like being allowed the keys…of *freedom*'[59]. However, and positioning himself as a rational actor, Owen maintained that this luxury which he afforded himself, still took place 'within the bounds of being alright' - A (self) 'controlled de-controlling of emotions', to adapt Elias and Dunning (1986:44):

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[59] My emphasis

> **Owen:** …it's so nice, you are on your own, you can do what you want, you are travelling on a form of transport that is ecstasy, (IW laughs), you can drink as much as you want, you can have a laugh, you can be stupid, but not be out of bounds to break laws, and *it's almost like being a child again* in a way, you know it's like er, rediscovering that, that life.

The references which Owen makes to the rediscovery of his childhood are significant here, not least because of their regular appearance within his narrative. In a different passage within the interview, Owen, who is now in his late fifties, explained that his decision to maintain his away day support, with all the laughs and silliness that this entails, means that he can still conceive himself in youthful terms. By this, Owen did not mean that he would be participating in the same activities as a '16-year' old, but rather, that it allowed him to 'lower [his] guard a bit', abstain from being 'prim and proper', and just be '*natural*'. For Owen, this natural (I would add, playful) state, stood in stark contrast to a working environment, which demanded attention to 'what you are saying all the time'. To invoke Huizinga's ideas, we might say that the spirit of home *faber* plays second fiddle to the less catholic, homo-*ludens* in this environment. Owen's account is also useful for what it indicates about the propensity of *adults* to play in today's world. Play clearly is not simply the preserve of children, it is, as Huizinga recognises, part of the human condition. The characteristics of play which Huizinga identifies, can all be observed during 'away days'. Critics might object to this foregrounding of freedom, in the sense that football crowds are always circumscribed by a degree of control e.g. when local constabularies establish the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. However, for the best part, and in the minds of this study's participants, 'away days' offer a degree of freedom that is far removed from the fettered environment of the working week. To identify parameters, boundaries, rules and regulations, is not to identify a cage, nor to suggest that any keys to this remain permanently out of reach on a key fob. Adults never grow out of play, not least, in this context, because capitalism benefits from it. But if this is not freedom, then what is?

Victor Turner's (1995) ideas are also useful for conceptualising the type of transition which Owen describes. Owen's references to his departure from the

usual structures of everyday life (albeit with the caveat that he 'didn't break laws'), and the opportunity to just be 'natural', resonate closely with Turner's well-known concepts of 'Liminality', 'Anti-Structure', and 'Communitas'. In his celebrated (1995) text *'The Ritual Process'*, Turner distinguishes between two 'general types of society'- the 'structured', 'differentiated' and 'often hierarchical' vis-a-vis the '*unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated comitatus'* (ibid:96). Whereas the properties of structure are best thought of as '*pragmatic and this worldly'* (ibid:133), *Communitas* (Turner's preferred term for differentiating this form of '*social relationship from an area of "common living"*') are '*often speculative and generates imagery and philosophical ideas'*. Ostensibly functionalist in orientation, Turner describes the relationship between these two modalities as dialectical. Quite simply, the 'immediacy' (ibid:129) of structure/communitas yield to one another intermittently to maintain the effective functioning of society. Turner's recognition of the *transient* character of these states is significant, for it is during what Van Gennep (cited in Turner, 1995) referred to as a 'liminal phase' (of *rites of passage*), that communitas emerge.

Expressed succinctly, Van Gennep's far-reaching conceptualisation of *rites of passage*, includes 'rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position and age' (cited in Turner, 1995:94). Turner explains that each of these 'rites of passage or "transition" incorporate three phases; departure from a collection of 'cultural conditions', 'the intervening or liminal state', and 'reaggregation or reincorporation', i.e. the consummation of the 'passenger' (s) journey, a return to a 'relatively stable state' (Turner, 1995:95) and its associated structurally infused obligations to others. It is this second phase which is of primary concern here, where 'necessarily ambiguous', 'liminal personae', evade all the usual classificatory schemes which 'locate states and positions in cultural space'. These 'threshold people' cannot be fastened down to positions which are customarily arranged by convention, custom, ceremony and law. Rather, they are 'neither here nor there'; they are 'betwixt and between' (ibid:95) these positions, ultimately battering down 'the interstices of structure in liminality' (ibid:128).

When Owen expresses his desire to lower his guard, 'drink', 'laugh', gain 'freedom', and 'be natural'; when he wishes to 'get away from it' and abstain from society's demand to be 'prim and proper', it is not unreasonable to conclude that what he is describing, in anthropological terms, is a desire to revel in the freedom that accompanies liminal situations. That is, one which is free from all the regulatory norms and social obligations that accompany '"real"' or '"ordinary"' life (Huizinga, 2014:8). These related concepts of freedom and fantasy are central to Bauman's conceptualisation of aesthetic spacing and map readily onto a football context.

In a rationally organised, highly routinized, and largely fettered social existence, the type of liminal experiences which this study's supporters describe takes on extra significance. Drawing a rigid line between his Saturday afternoon exploits, and the fettered character of the working week, Chris conceptualised his support as a form of '*release*', as did Stuart who interpreted 'away days' as an opportunity for 'adventure'. Mirroring the distinction which Huizinga makes between a playful/'ordinary' existence, Eddie and Tango, (respectively) also juxtaposed their support with 'normal life'/'the norm'. Matt also invoked this distinction, when he described 'away days' as a 'little holiday'. In contrast to his 'normal *real* [60]life' (think Huizinga), where he experienced the 'same worries as everyone else', including 'work and not work', 'health' and 'mortgage' payments, 'away days' represented the opportunity to 'never grow up' ('we are all grown men…getting leathered and acting like 15-year olds'). In keeping with his suggestion that 'away days' amounted to a 'day off' where he could 'forget about life', Matt, posed the question, 'How often do you have a drink at 8 in the morning, 9 in the morning, unless you're an alcoholic?' Matt's implicit self-positioning as an individual who *normally* sits within the boundaries of social propriety and his 'othering' of those that do not i.e. alcoholics, is significant for what it says about the liminal character of these escapades. For this is no indiscriminate rejection of society's norms, no wanton hippy desire for wholesale personal transformation (see Turner, 1995). Rather, it is an attempt to inject some colour into social life, before returning to what The Ordinary Boys

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[60] My emphasis

referred to as the 'grey and boring' weather of a workday Monday morning. That is, to invoke artistic licence, a return to 'structure'.

Ultimately, and in keeping with Turner's ideas, these supporters occupy a distinct 'world', on the margins of that which is ordinarily understood to be the world. That is, a world where, the '*customs of everyday life no longer count'* (Huizinga, 2014:12). A world which is reimagined and playful, a 'world' where - to recite the popular supporter chant - they 'do what (they) want' (see Pearson, 2012). However, the burning question remains, 'what is it that they want'? The following discussion will explore the particularities of these supporters' experiences in greater detail, beginning with their quest for atmospheric 'experiential intensity' (Bauman, 1993:146). The discussion opens with a description of a last-minute penalty incident at promotion-chasing Bournemouth during the 2014/15 season.

A Day Out with the Gods: On Atmospheric *Experiential Intensity*

> The game wears on and looks to be a lost cause when Lavery fails to connect with a ball which is whipped across the box in the closing stages of the game. When that sort of thing happens, you can't help but feel it's not going to be your day, agony or ecstasy decided by the slenderest of margins. Nick convinces me it's time to leave and we make our way towards the exit. I'm not normally a fan of the early bath, but we don't have a great deal of time to stock up on cans for the journey home, so I 'rationally' begin the trudge down the aisle. We turn to walk out in front of our supporters at the bottom of the stand when miraculously Nuhiu (or Big Dave as he is commonly known, because nobody can pronounce his Kosovo Albanian name correctly) inexplicably gets bundled over and the ref awards a penalty. Initial excitement always turns to anxiety in these situations as time begins to play tricks on your mind, the seconds turning into hours. Boos ring out from the home end as the penalty taker, Chris Maguire, places the ball on the spot and we brace ourselves for one last throw of the dice. Bodies tensed, faces contorted, willing the ball into the net… "Come on…come on…come on… yeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeesssses, get the fuck in… you fucking beauty". Delirium, a swathing mass of bodies everywhere, strangers hugging, loud pitched screams, a deafening crescendo, mayhem, carnage, people falling over the seats which were designed to keep them safe. Right now, this is it, this is everything, this is football. A lad in his twenties grabs hold of me and we begin jumping up and down – physical strangers, cognitive brothers, aesthetic heaven. People are hugging and celebrating before cruelly turning towards the home end and chanting - "You're not singing, you're not singing, you're not singing anymore.

You're not singing anymore" - raw emotion, pure release. Within seconds it's over and Nick and I are smiling like school kids on a Christmas morning. It's hopeless trying to describe it; it's just 'fucking amazing'.

Imaginative performances, as Huizinga (2014:13) suggests, enable individuals to transcend the confines of their 'reality' and move into a higher order. A child who engages in such acts can be so taken in by his or her performance, that they can '*almost*[61] (ibid:14) believe that they *are* the character which they are pretending to be e.g. a 'wicked witch'. However, one foot always remains firmly on the ground so to speak, they never lose 'consciousness of ordinary reality'. By contrast, the 'sacred performances', which can be found in 'archaic culture', are marked by a more acute 'mental element', their actualisation more mystical than symbolic. Rather than simply bringing an '*appearance*' of a specific entity into being, 'something invisible and inactual takes 'beautiful', actual, holy form'. Significantly, individuals who participate in these rites, firmly believe that their acts *give life* to an 'order of things', above and beyond that which is characteristic of their normal day-to-day existence. The ceremonial practices which can be observed in 'ancient Vedic sacrificial rites', (ibid:15), draw their lifeblood, (and sometimes it would seem, that of others) from the belief that the 'desired cosmic event[s]', which these performances represent, 'compels the gods to effect that event in reality'. That is, they *bring them into being.* Whilst perhaps sharing more in common with the more 'grounded' beliefs of the child who plays 'Superman' (which is not to dismiss the fantasy which can be found within the aesthetic space), there is a very important sense in which the activities of travelling football supporters mirror the belief systems of the ancient Vedics. That is, they are convinced that the passionate encouragement which they give to the team affects events which are taking place on the pitch (see Taylor, 1971 - chapter 1), thereby bringing the 'reality' into being. They will the team on, they try to 'effect that event in reality', they even pray to the Gods, and look to the heavens for divine intervention if the situation requires it. Surely, they think to themselves, their efforts must count for something? If not, then why would they bother? These supporters try to influence the direction of the match, and even when all hope of a positive result appears lost, maintain the honour of the club, through their refusal to stop singing. Clearly, the passionate aesthetic

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[61] My emphais

experience which is *produced* in these circumstances is closely-tied to a set of *moral* concerns.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the expressive modes of support and alcoholic consumption of travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters facilitates an acute atmosphere which surpasses the flat experience of being at a home game. When asked to describe the characteristics of a good atmosphere, supporters eulogised about the specific aesthetic properties which they associated with this. The reference which Chris makes to his sore larynx is testament to his efforts to 'effect' the 'event in reality', to *bring it into being*.

> **Chris:** A good atmosphere is electric. It will be loud, it will be boisterous, but it will be good natured as well. Because it's kinda (unclear-best). Er, plenty of like banter between the sort of home and away, er, just a good laugh and a bounce around and a bit of a sing. You come out of the game and your throats killing. Cus you've been shouting (IW laughs) do you know what I mean?

In keeping with his 'authenticity' narrative, Chris dismissed the need for the type of Mexican waves which Crawford (2004, see chapter 1) describes, suggesting that these were more in keeping with the characteristics of an ice-hockey game. However, Graham appeared more receptive to the appearance of the 'spectacular', claiming that he liked the Italian-style 'massive flags' which he had observed during a game at Middlesbrough. That said, both supporters enjoyed the 'thrills of movement', which Stebbins (2015:51) refers to e.g. the joys of having a 'bounce around'[62]. An extract from my field notes at Hull during the 2015/16 season resonates closely with the types of experience which these supporters describe, the excitement, the tension, the drama, the adrenalin-charged aesthetic:

> Nick and I head towards the ground, keeping an eye out for an off-licence for the return journey home. It's about a 15-minute walk in the dark, the floodlights in the distance acting like a belated lighthouse for the shipwrecked. We get inside the ground and the atmosphere is electric, both sets of supporters who are 'adjacent' to one another struggling for ascendency. The supporters take it in turns to exchange 'niceties' to the tune of the Beachboys 'Sloop John B'. "We're top of the league; we're top of the league. We're Hull City, we're top of the league",

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[62] My inverted commas

is met with the response, "We don't give a fuck, we don't give a fuck, we're Sheffield Wednesday, we don't give a fuck'. It's an intense, proper 'old-skool' away day atmosphere, with only a narrow line of stewards segregating the supporters. It's tense, exciting, and adrenalin-charged, we'd be on the edge of our seats if we only had the courtesy to sit on them (Hull, 2015/16 season).

Mumford (2012) has (correctly in my view) suggested that 'sounds can be as important as sights in forming an excitable and memorable sporting experience'. Like Chris, Tango and Richard also gained satisfaction from the '*experiential intensity*' (Bauman, 1993: 146), which they associated with 'loud' atmospheres. So too, Jon, who *also* identified the facilitative qualities of pyrotechnics. Like a harp for the heartstrings, football, it would seem, plays effortlessly on the *emotions* of these participants, raising their blood pressures and pushing them to dizzier and dizzier heights (see Hopcraft, 2013). Richard enjoyed 'anything raucous that kind of gets your blood boiling', Tango described the flow of 'adrenalin', Gaz claimed that during these intense encounters 'everything's snapping', and Jon described his love of the 'buzz', and an 'edge'. Sometimes however, the magic of these environs was less tangible, abstract, but deeply felt nonetheless:

> **Jon:** There is like *an electricity…* I think a lot of the times there's just like a *feeling in the air*[63] type thing.

The narrative account of my experiences at Hull, tries to 'capture' the 'sensate, emotional' (Highmore, 2004: 312) experiences of the aesthetic space, many of which are 'electric' and intense. However, and not to put too positive a spin on this, there are times when the atmosphere can be, to use Chris' expression, 'as flat as a fart'. A 'reality' check, it might be inferred, which threatens to draw the aesthetic performance to an end. The following recollection of a 3-1 reverse at Charlton during the 2015/16 season contains references to this damp aesthetic.

> We sprawl out of the tube station, and chants of 'Carlos had a dream' ring out in the most dulcet of Northern tones, culturally—bestowed 'industrial' voices, that provide a tribute to a city which lost its identity. The Owls contingent traipses through the cold, bleak environment, nonchalently dismissing the wind-up merchants who are on the corner claiming to be 'Millwall'. It takes a long time to get into the ground and it

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[63] My emphasis

seems ill-equipped to deal with a sizeable following. Still, and in contrast to my companions (including Matt, who has an aversion to its isolated location), I quite like Charlton. As I look up at the barbed wire fences on the perimeter walls and the council high-rises that lie beyond, I feel drawn to the 'authentic' aesthetic. It's disappointing inside though as a flat atmosphere wafts around the stadium; the mood of the supporters, and their expressionless faces matching the grey and dismal weather which makes England everything that it is on a cold day in November.

For Richard, these types of 'dead' atmosphere, made him question why he had bothered to attend these away games, highlighting the importance of aesthetic thrills to this supporter. Richard's and Chris's accounts lend credence to Bauman's (1993:168) assertion that, 'Aesthetically the city space is a spectacle, in which the amusement value overrides all other considerations'. For all their loyalty and their love of expressive support, there are occasions when the paucity of aesthetic pleasures on the pitch, chip away at the cognitive foundations of these supporters. A common solution to this potentially problematic situation is, to use Richard's expression, to 'build something' else around the match itself. The following section will discuss the study's participants' quest for a 'good day out' and the attendant aesthetic. In part, these 'days out', amount to a search for one other feature of aesthetic spacing which Bauman identifies-*amusement*.

A Day Out with the Lads: On *Amusement* and Morality

> **Jon:** You realise that it's not about the football…It's the football that pisses you off…but it's the day out.

As can be gleaned from the discussion thus far, 'away days', are not simply about 'the football'. A common theme which could be 'found' within the narratives of this study's participants, was that 'away days' represent several additional things to this. Most of the participants likened this activity to a 'day out' or less commonly, a 'holiday' (see Mumford, 2012). As such, they are, to varying degrees, distinct from the impartial football 'purists', which Mumford (2012:14) describes. Expressed simply, their aesthetic pleasures emanate from *additional* sources to the flow of the ball, the speed of the players, the beauty of a goal scored from forty yards out etc. For Dave, a commonly held desire for the

types of Dionysian pleasure which Nietzsche describes (see later) had provided the catalyst for the emergence of the Owls travelling support during the 1970s Eddie, conceptualised 'away days' as a 'full' day out, and Matt felt 'cheated' if he did not get one, even suggesting elsewhere in the interview that 'Wednesday tended to ruin it'. Graham echoed these sentiments, summating that the performance of his chosen team, sometimes 'spoils a good day out', so too Craig who quipped: 'following Wednesday…you don't go there…to watch the football!' More romantically, and with a hint of nostalgia, Owen drew parallels between 'away days' and the social club trips to the seaside of yesteryear:

> **Owen:** '…at…those times, most of the parents used to go into the pub and leave you outside…they'd be in pub all day and you'd be on the seafront with a packet of crisps, and it's a bit like that, going off for the day'.

And what glorious trips they (often) are. The smiles on the faces of this study's supporters as they described their favourite 'days out', spoke volumes about the degree of pleasure which they derived from this activity. The joy, the rapture, the 'inconsequentiality' (Bauman, 1993:169) and perhaps most importantly the 'fun' (ibid), all reflect the 'profoundly aesthetic quality' (Huizinga, 2014:2) of these playful episodes. Gaz spoke fondly about the time when he 'ended up in a really stupid German pub' (a bierkeller), on the back of a 4-0 defeat at Fulham. Describing it as one of the 'best 'away days'' that he had been to in his life, Gaz recounted how he and his companions had enjoyed a 'good laugh' with the locals and 'sang Wednesday songs' along to German rhythms. In keeping with his conviction that 'away days' were 'about the beer', Gaz reasoned that the world did not stop turning because his team had lost, and regardless, there was 'always a chance to get it back next time' (see Bauman, 1993).

The narratives which this study's participants presented were saturated with funny escapades-the 'amusement without sensible purpose', which Bauman writes about. Eileen spoke comedically about the time when her companions witnessed three 'frizzy' haired 'Harry-Enfield'-type Liverpudlians crossing the road during a trip to Everton (the 'bus' 'erupted' into a recital from this popular television show), Dave, recalled the time when the Owls contingent threw snowballs at (the former Arsenal Goalkeeper) Pat Jennings during an FA cup

encounter, and Jon recounted the time when his party descended upon a public house full of 'posh' diners, in the midst of a mini-bus malfunction en route to Tranmere. However, Graham's trip to Chesterfield was the one which really fired my imagination. What initially might have been thought of as a good idea for a stag do (or at least this is how I initially responded to his description), soon descended into chaos when the 'stag' failed to show up. As a mood of frenzied desperation set into the camp, the supporters took it upon themselves to find another 'stag' for the day. As a largely unacquainted 'little ginger skinhead', who was an 'absolute ringer for' the former Communards singer - Jimmy Somerville, joined the party, Graham made the split-second decision to appoint this individual as the honorary 'stag' (a title which came with complimentary drinks, breakfast, and round-trip minibus travel). Having hummed the melody to the Communards hit 'Don't leave me this way', at regular intervals throughout the day, the party took up their positions within the stadium and assumed the role of lead maestros:

> **Graham:** …we just like start with the [the participant begins humming the introduction to 'Don't leave me this way'] Ah, ah, ah, ah. Chesterfield, we'd got half the stand doing it. At the start they were like "What on earth are they doing, what are they on with?" And then next thing, blooming, we're all up blooming, *all up dancing*, doing a bit of a Jimmy Somerville dance and blooming, in stand, the whole day went absolutely bang on.

To reiterate, 'fun', as Huizinga (2014:2) suggests, makes play what it is.

Supporters remained divided over the importance of the match result. Like Nick and Craig, Jon remained more firmly in the 'it's mainly about the day out' camp, adding that a good result was the icing on the cake, but that, 'the cake is the day'. By contrast, Richard suggested that it was not 'key' but it helped and questioned the validity of any accounts that suggested otherwise. With some parallels, Tango, Eddie, Dave, Chris, and 'Sid' also homed in on the warm feelings which accompany a win on the road.

These accounts are interesting for what they say about the relationship between aesthetic and moral spacing. Even amongst those supporters who downplayed the importance of the match result, there was often an acknowledgement of the

aesthetic pleasures that accompanied a win. Huizinga's (2014) observation that play can assume a very serious character and Mumford's (2012:19) assertion that 'Victory and defeat can themselves be part of the aesthetic experience of sport' both resonate here. Interestingly, some supporters, including, Tango, Owen, Warren, and James, conceptualised the importance of the result partly in *moral* terms. The result was deemed to be less important, provided that the team had 'tried', or - and possibly reflecting the 'realities' of these supporters' own day-to-day existence - 'put a shift in'.

Bauman (1993:180) suggests that *in principle* the relationship between 'amusement value' and 'moral responsibility' should be thought of as antithetical (the latter suspending 'free roaming of attention'). Ostensibly, this presents problems for supporters who are unable to derive aesthetic pleasure from events which are taking place on the pitch. Somewhat counterintuitively, Bauman adds that it is possible for moral and aesthetic spacing to cohabit peacefully, and even 'reinvigorate each other'. However, for this to happen the individual who desires aesthetic pleasure must also be a 'moral person', who accepts 'the limits and constraints which aesthetic spacing is bent on sweeping away'. Ultimately, if this 'cooperation' is to materialise, aesthetic concerns must surrender to moral ones (however, see Eileen's account chapter 3). *Seen in this light, the quest for aesthetically-driven fun days out might reasonably be interpreted as an effective response to the cognitive and moral 'demands' to stay loyal to the team, to 'represent', to attend.* There is more than one way of interpreting the heavy drinking culture of these supporters, which poses the tantalising question of whether away day support, really is about amusement *without sensible purpose*'? The following section explores the participant's use of alcohol, which stokes up the 'experiential intensity' of the away day atmosphere, fuels the anti-structure of the experience, and ultimately, helps to encourage the continued attendance of some supporters. The human togetherness and morality which emanate from these drunken antics cannot simply be interpreted as nonsensical, meaning that Bauman's ideas can only take us so far in helping to understand their character. The section begins with a recollection of a hazy experience in a late bar, which constituted the final act

of the away day at Ipswich described earlier - worth recalling that there is so much more to an away day than the match itself.

> We get off the train and head (via a taxi) to our usual haunt 'The Green Room'. It's a mucky, some might say bohemian kind-of-a-place, with oodles of character; gnarled wooden tables, leather settees, gig posters, and large rectangular mirrors-the type which Grannies put in their 'best' rooms to make them look bigger. *Some* of the clientele are less 'bo-ho' though, a mixture of indie kids, old mods, towny wankers and anyone else who just can't give it up tonight. We happily enjoy the music and make friends with the DJ, a smiley guy in his twenties with long hair and a beard. We ask for 'Victoria' by The Kinks and enjoy it immensely when he plays it, singing, 'dancing', and punching the air in collective unison, 'Victoooooooria''. This is togetherness, this is friendship, this is different to the cut-throat world which exists outside of these tightly-regulated timeframes, and the half-drawn velvet curtains which temporarily keep its sharpened claws at bay. Unfortunately, even the greatest days out must come to an end and at half-past one my companions decide to call it a day. Game over, no more credits, well, but 'normal' service will resume soon enough.

In one of his earliest publications, *'The Birth of Tragedy'*, Nietzsche (2000:19) discusses the relationship between two artistic 'drives'; the 'Apollonian', and the 'Dionysian' (named respectively after the Greek gods of 'music and poetry' and 'wine' – Rojek, 1995:80). Whereas the former is characterised by 'measured restraint' and 'freedom from wilder impulses' (Nietzsche, 2000:21), the latter, is associated with the 'reconciliation' of 'man', with 'nature in its estranged, hostile or subjugated forms' (ibid: 22). Both the 'analogy of *intoxication*', whether this relates to the consumption of 'narcotic drink' or the joys brought on by the arrival of spring, provide a useful conceptual tool for facilitating comprehension of the character of the Dionysian. However, there is something much deeper at work in Nietzsche's writings than a gratuitous advocacy of life's more carnal pleasures.

The distinction which Nietzsche makes between Apollonian rationality, and the Dionysian's 'reconciliation of man with nature' is significant, as the overall thrust of his discussion relates to something beyond the realms of art i.e. the human condition. Rojek (1995:80) suggests that for Nietzsche, 'modern life' has struggled 'to reconcile the conflicting impulses', which are 'symbolized' by these Greek deities. Any positive outcomes which we might associate with this struggle are at best tempered by the 'ghastly' consequences, which have

accompanied these. 'Apollonian culture' may have 'achieved material abundance', and 'superficial order' (ibid). However, this has been achieved at a substantial cost. Both the specialised character of modern tasks (here we might recall Durkheim) and the bonds between these individuals and their 'possessions', have had a stultifying effect upon the 'Dionysian impulse for union, contact and affirmation'. For Rojek (1995:82), Nietzsche's 'affirmation of Dionysian culture', amounts to something other than a celebration of 'the orgy and ecstatic experience as ideal leisure forms'. However, he maintains that this German scholar's ideas are relevant for leisure studies, not least because Nietzsche recognises the deadening effect of 'respectable society' upon the type of 'arousal' and 'pleasure' which is concomitant with 'the passions'.

As indicated in Chapter 3, with the notable exceptions of 'Sid' and to a lesser extent, Graham, this study's participants were forthright about their love of alcohol, offering little concession to any humanist 'condemnation of excess' (Verbeke, 2013). Seen in this light their activities bear a strong resemblance to the types of Dionysian pursuits which Nietzsche describes and resonate with previous studies conducted by King (1998) and Pearson (2012). They also, at the risk of stereotyping, smack of an attempt to maintain a working class cultural persuasion which has been gradually eroded by the 'civilising process' (Elias and Dunning, 1986). Speaking candidly about the motivation behind his away day support, Gaz suggested: 'Let's be honest, it is about the beers'. Gaz's narrative is interesting for what it says about the oscillating relationship between aesthetic and moral imperatives. Seemingly, the '*harsh', 'angular',* and *'infinitely boring'* (Kierkegaard, 1971:363)[64] distractions of an 'ethical' persuasion are easily forgotten when the charms of an aesthetic lifestyle first court, and then expertly seduce their love-struck admirers:

> **Gaz:** You turn up to Sheffield Midland station at say, ten past seven in a morning … and the entire platform is basically Wednesday fans, apart from a few students looking really upset that they are not going to be able to get a seat like (mutual laughter). There's like 20 people with special brew at the side of

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[64] Note that this quote was taken from the 'either' volume of Kierkegaard's 2-part digest, which is written primarily from an aesthetic standpoint.

them, like going (Gaz laughs and speaks in a comical tone) "You're in for one hell of a journey love!".

As Huizinga (2014:8) suggests, 'Play is never imposed by physical necessity or *moral*[65] duty'. However, this is not to say that moral concerns do not play on the minds of this study's participants (see chapter 5).

Whether it fuels an outlook which is moral, amoral, immoral, or simply moral within the world of football, there can be few doubts (with the occasional exception) about the central place which alcohol occupies in the lifeworld of these supporters. Eddie, Nick, and Richard suggested that they probably would not bother to attend away games/would attend less frequently, if they were unable to consume alcohol. Such an outlook is indicative of the aesthetic priorities of most of the group. For all their love of the club, and the value which they place upon loyalty, their 'Dionysian' concerns reign supreme.

Mumford (2012:14) has suggested that neutral 'purist' spectators, can have a 'superior tactical grasp of the game', to 'partisans' who prioritise the pleasures of a 'good day out' (see following section), even claiming that he has observed partisans sleeping throughout the duration of the match, due to their alcoholic intake. He may have a point. Stuart recalled being 'in a right mess' during a trip to Ipswich, seeing two or three of each player, and to this day remains oblivious as to how he 'even got in the ground'. Similarly, Richard described how he was interviewed for the Radio Sheffield programme 'Praise or Grumble' in the aftermath of the infamous Exeter trip (see chapter 3). As Richard stood 'swigging out of a bottle of red wine' ('no glass, just a bottle') his 15 minutes of fame were cut short when he informed the programme's correspondent, that his attention had been focused on something other than the match that day:

> **Richard:** I just kinda was in a corner and I kinda went, (imitates a drunken voice) "To be honest Rob, I've not really watched much of the match". We'd lost 5-1, and he kinda just went "Oh right well, thanks a lot then and cut me off" (mutual laughter).

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[65] My emphasis

Occasionally this aesthetic orientation becomes regrettable, knowing (at the time) that you have 'overdone it', feeling dirty, drowsy, and wishing you could focus more clearly on the events which are unfolding on the pitch. However, and less damningly, there are occasions when this hazy aesthetic facilitates a greater appreciation of the game. An extract from my field-notes at Bolton during the 2015/16 season, pays homage to these sensate-emotional experiences:

> The first 15 minutes of the match are beautiful, Bannan is pulling the strings and we are stroking the ball around the park in the style of a team which I haven't seen for 15 years. It's a beautiful aesthetic and it's hard not to fall in love with your football team when it's like this; the glow of the floodlights, the hazy state of mind which comes from pre-match pints, and the joys of watching the ball being passed backwards and forwards, side to side. Heavenly!

Nietzsche (2000:22) suggests that insight into 'the essence of the Dionysian' can be derived by contemplating the 'blissful rapture' which accompanies the breakdown of the '*principium individuationis*' i.e. where the structured distinctions between humans begin to collapse. Tango's recollection of a day out with a group of (non-Sheffield Wednesday) supporters from the south coast of England, indicates that a love of Dionysian pleasures is not the exclusive property of the Owls travelling faithful. By itself, this 'finding' is hardly revelatory. However, Tango's references to the kind of connectivity which accompanies the deconstruction of the '*principium individuationis*' are more thought-provoking. Tango began his vignette by describing how he had been invited to rendezvous at a public house, only to realise upon arrival, that the friend who he was supposed to be meeting had got his mobile telephone switched off. Having decided to knock on the door of this (presumably secret) location Tango was met with a disconcerting silence. With hope fading fast, and fearing a stitch-up, Tango made one last-ditch attempt to join the party:

> **Tango:** I can hear this noise, so, I bang on the door, *this arm's come and grabbed m*e[66], pulled me in this pub, and I've gone in this pub... and it was full of (name of team) blokes… and I didn't buy another one. And there was some

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[66] My emphasis

big units in there, so I've gone to the bar… and this blokes gone… "Do you want a Jager Bomb?" Eight o'clock in the morning! (IW: laughs).

Tango enthused about his encounter with these new acquaintances. Suffice to say that all was well, and that his experience of being with the type of strangers 'who we know and trust' was, to quote Tango, 'absolutely fantastic'.

It is during the types of episode which Tango describes that society's structural properties begin to lose their influence, offering their fugitives a glimpse of 'a 'nature' that has long since become 'estranged' (Nietzsche, 2000:22). The norms of social etiquette, the rules of language, the hierarchical relationships that divide and rule, surrender to the 'authoritarian personality' (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Nevitt Sandord, 1950), money, rank and file, none of these things have the same potency when 'we' are in 'our' world. The great feeling of togetherness (see chapter 3) which accompanies these encounters (providing that one adheres to the 'rules' of this culture – see Bauman, 1993), the sense, to use Matt's expression, of being on a shared 'mission', cannot be found within the structured confines of 'real' or 'ordinary' (Huizinga, 2014:8) life. Rather, it is only with the collapse of the *principium individuationis*, where the structured distinctions between humans lose their currency and are temporarily declared bankrupt, that we can begin to experience this level of connectivity. To quote Victor Turner (1995: 96): *We are presented, in such rites, with a "moment in and out of time," an in and out of secular structure, which reveals, however fleetingly, some recognition (in symbol if not always in language) of a generalised social bond that has ceased to be and has simultaneously yet to be fragmented into a multiplicity of structural ties.*

If such an account smacks of romanticism, then so be it. 'Casual and fortuitous' as any sharing in the aesthetic space may be (Bauman, 1993: 178), it is during these playful moments that we can experience a 'We' relationship, the 'untapped evolutionary potential' which Turner (1995:128) refers to. Notwithstanding any Simmelian anxieties (see later), these fleeting encounters provide a glimpse of something special, the possibility of a different way of being, a feeling of something warm, two fingers held aloft to the vacuous

character of modern living. That is, *something away from nothing.* However, not every member of the public derives pleasure from the drunken 'communal' antics of travelling football supporters. Consequently, the British Transport Police make frequent attempts, to bring the party to an end. A recollection of a return journey home from Aston Villa during the 2016/17 season is testament to the ongoing battle for cultural space and territory.

> I board the train and plonk myself down at a table. I am soon joined by some other supporters, one of whom I have seen at countless away games. We begin chatting and I suggest we first met at Portsmouth years ago, he claims otherwise. It's a very hazy, busy, and reasonably 'boisterous' environment. Several Owls supporters are crammed in like sardines at the end of the carriage; drunken solidarity, masculine togetherness. Police officers make their way into the carriage and in no uncertain terms order the supporters to 'disperse' throughout the train. Quite simply, the supporters choose to ignore them, and if my memory serves me correctly, the train gets delayed.

This short extract speaks volumes about the ongoing battle for cultural space and territory and the aesthetic orientation of travelling football supporters. The battle for the aesthetic party is hard-fought, drawing in different 'combatants', shifting strategically from one battlefield to another. Victory can be longstanding and may even last for the duration of a whole train journey. However, on different occasions the triumph is enjoyed only momentarily - the sheer weight of police power and public opinion crushing its insurgency. As discussed in chapter 5, this party may even be terminated by the supporters themselves and their attendant moral codes. My fieldnotes and memories contain several references to these 'struggles'; the teenage supporters coming back from Reading who were given the choice of calming down or being ejected from the train by a rail staff member, the fights between stewards and supporters at Rotherham and Ipswich, the ejection of a supporter for 'excessive' banter at Hull…the list goes on. In part, this defence of the lifeworld appears *unconscious*, the collective 'We' springing into a vigorous rear-guard action. On other occasions the wider 'We' gets forgotten about, in order to protect the interests of one's close knit circle of friends e.g. when supporters break off from the wider group to avoid the detection of the police (for aesthetic reasons). Either way, the game, must, to use Carse's (1986:3) expression, remain 'infinite', it cannot be allowed end.

The thesis will now discuss travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters quest for aesthetic novelty. This search for the unfamiliar, says much about the limits of extant literature, which has focused heavily upon the alpha-male machismo of football supporters and their pursuit of more carnal earthly pleasures. The section begins with a recollection of a four-man jaunt around Manchester, prior to a game at Bolton in the 2016/17 season.

Heavenly aesthetics: Searching for *Novelty*

The vast urban streets of Manchester are paved with gold unless you happen to be one of countless tramps who are unlucky enough to sit outside the posh boutique windows or the fast-food restaurants that waft their smells out invitingly to those who can afford to pay. We've been here enough times for it to have a degree of familiarity but the ever-changing character of this large English city: the converted warehouses, canal and upmarket clothes shops still manage to feel novel enough to capture my curiosity. We sink one in the back room of 'The Millstone' an old-fashioned pub, which is situated in Manchester's trendy Northern quarter; the juxtaposition of the old and the new looking like some surrealist dreamscape. About 20 Stoke supporters in their late twenties come in and do their best to take control of the social space, trying to work out how to turn the T.V. on and generally being loud. Hardly the 'naughty forty', but we still keep one anxious eye on them just in case. From here we head into Oi Polloi, an expensive designer menswear shop, where most of the clothes are realistically beyond my reach. Nice to dream though and who knows, perhaps I'll be able to get that parka off the internet one day? Ash looks bored and heads outside whilst me, Salmon and Matt, purr over the goodies, feeling the quality of the garments, and wishing that our wallets were bigger than they really are. I'm taking it all in today, Piccadilly records, the ghost of the 'Ice Bar' from our student days (novelty and nostalgia rolled into one), the trendy pub-come-cafes where you can sink a pint of 'craft' beer whilst newly - entwined couples tuck into their poached egg and avocado on toast. We wander through the drab grey backstreets, gazing at the strange-looking 'bars' before heading into more familiar surroundings, a food-free watering hole, which is packed full of middle-aged men watching the Liverpool-Man Utd game on a myriad of 42-inch T.V. screens. It's impossible to escape the bombardment of brightly coloured images, which are only exaggerated by the paucity of lighting in this dimly-lit basement. It's hot and steamy but my travelling companions seem happy enough to soak up the atmosphere of this Baudrillardian fantasy world.

What is an 'away day' if not a novel experience? The search for new grounds (the cornerstone upon which the infamous 92 club was built), new landscapes and new faces, all add to the enjoyment of this activity. Strolling like Baudelaire's flaneur (see Bauman, 1993) around unfamiliar cities, taking in the smells and sounds of untried public houses, sampling the local ales, and bantering with rival supporters - people we have never met before and in all probability, will never meet again. Yes, all these things make the trips up and down the country following Sheffield Wednesday seem worthwhile. Critics might object to this foregrounding of novelty, not least because 'away days' are also characterised by a *degree* of routine (they begin, and end, and we cannot wait to 'do it all again'). Nevertheless, it is hard to deny that these types of experience constitute an integral component of this popular pastime.

A brief trawl through the history books indicates that there is nothing new about the search for these types of experience. If Simmel's account is anything to go by, such endeavours are an understandable reaction to the feeling of 'flatness' which modern individuals experience periodically (Rojek, 1993:102). Rojek (1993:101) explains that for Simmel, the sense of detachment which moderns endure creates a thirst for ephemeral gratifications in the form of '*stimulations, sensations and external activities'* which have no forerunner (Simmel, cited in Rojek, 1993:101). Salvation, it would seem, could be sought in the form of 'sociability' and 'adventure', a counter to the grey and drab experience of the quotidian. However, and in a manner, which anticipated Turner's discussion of liminality, Simmel underscored the *transient* character of these experiences. Anything more longstanding thought Simmel, would likely wreak havoc with the adventurer's 'nervous system', and give root to 'pathological' consequences (Rojek, 1993:103).

As a counter to the insipid experience of modern living, aesthetic social spacing unlocks doorways to new and exciting adventures. Not only is this type of spacing 'plotted affectively, by the attention guided by *curiosity*[67] and the search

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[67] My emphasis

for experiential intensity' (Bauman, 1993:146), but also, (and in stark contrast to the objects of cognitive spacing), humans derive the greatest amount of pleasure from those objects with which they are the least familiar (although, as I shall argue, the reassuring character of familiarity makes the situation more complex than this). It should come as little surprise then to find Sheffield Wednesday's travelling contingent lusting after these types of experience with such enthusiasm. To quote Bauman (1993:180), 'The novel and surprising (the mysterious, simultaneously dazzling and vaguely frightening – the sublime) is drawn into aesthetic proximity'.

Several supporters in the present study discussed the joys of escaping into novel environments, and the accompanying 'sensate, emotional' (Highmore, 2004:312) aesthetic thrills. Reflecting on an enjoyable encounter with a 'great sound bloke' who looked like the British actor, Michael Caine (who 'asked if he could come and have a drink with us, and … pulled out a bottle of scotch from his coat') - Nick described the scenery around the Plymouth region as 'ace'. Waxing lyrical about his excursions into more extraordinary landscapes, Nick suggested:

> **Nick:** When you hit a coast, particularly that trip to Plymouth, when you go right along, where you almost feel like the train is in the sea. You know? You've got all these quaint little fishing villages and stuff, and I love that.

Owen also conceptualised away day support as an opportunity to enjoy the type of aesthetic pleasures which Mumford (2012) describes so eloquently. As an away match season ticket holder, Owen acknowledged his love of going to the match and having 'a few beers'. However, he also expressed a strong desire to 'look at' and 'get a feel for' the towns and cities where Sheffield Wednesday were playing. The aesthetic properties of these locales, including their layout and architectural quality, were all captured on this supporter's radar.

Both the playful activity which Carse (1986) associates with 'surprise' and the free-floating geographical character of communitas lend themselves to these quests for the unfamiliar (within the more familiar context of the everyday match routine). Eileen described the enjoyment which she derived from visiting Catherine of Aragon's grave during an away day at Peterborough. The 'Thai

food' in a micro-brewery, and the time she spent on a barge, also provided a source of pleasure. The village of Yarm (complete with cobbled streets), a well-known stop-off-point for supporters travelling towards Middlesbrough's Riverside stadium, was singled out by Graham as an example of a 'beautiful' location.

Additional supporters celebrated the joys of 'being apart together in an exceptional situation' (Huizinga, 2014:12). Stuart spoke of his fascination with the London underground, Eddie enjoyed 'seeing what them towns are like', and Matt explained that his desire to 'do the Quadrophenia mod thing' had influenced his decision to attend an away game at Brighton. My fieldnotes contain several references to these novel aesthetic experiences - the joys of walking though the palatial streets of Fulham, breathing in the sea air at Bournemouth, contemplating whether to scale the dizzy heights of the Shard in London (and laughing as a group of supporters chanted obscenities in the direction of this recent addition to the London skyline). Everything is magical here, nothing - or at least this is the ideal - is mundane:

> As we head back to the station in the murky evening some young supporters are chanting 'What the fucking, what the fucking, what the fucking hell is that' repeatedly 'at' the Shard, which is now illuminated in different colours and looks like something out of the 1970s sci-fi film, 'Battle Star Galactica!' (Charlton, 2015/16 season).

There is something ethereal about these encounters, something 'other-worldly'. To experience a new and novel city during an 'away day' is different to say, experiencing it with one's family. Somehow you feel a greater sense of attachment to your home city, you feel 'more Sheffield', and the encounters feel more celestial. Granted, these encounters are 'in' the world (although they take us to the margins of another world). They are also of 'our' world, in the sense that they constitute an integral component of the away match 'experience'. However, they are not of our space, nor even of our usual (tightly-calculated) time. They are dreamy and hazy, novel and unfamiliar; they appear then disappear, entertain and beguile us. To quote Huizinga (2014:8) 'Play is not "ordinary" or "real" life. It is rather a stepping stone out of "real" life into a temporary sphere of activity with a disposition all of its own'.

Arrested Developments

The quest for unfamiliar experiences is not limited to the search for beautiful cobbled streets and quaint little fishing villages, the unique aesthetic properties of specific football stadiums also constitutes an attraction for some supporters. Richard recalled how 'completely awe struck' he was during his first visit to Arsenal's former Highbury stadium, attributing this to both the scale of the noise and sound, and 'just how different it was'. Warren also reflected fondly on his visit to this ground, describing it as 'unique'. 'Sid', in one particularly nostalgic and powerful passage of conversation, even went so far as to describe Arsenal's relocation to another ground as 'unforgivable', claiming that he 'could have wept when they closed it down'. In keeping with the remainder of his 'authenticity' narrative, the participant suggested that both the history and 'superb' design of this stadium (it contained two art deco stands), meant that it should be thought of as a 'proper ground'. The architectural features of specific stadiums also provided a source of interest for Owen who liked to 'pick parts of the ground out that have got something good about' them. That is, something which was 'aesthetically pleasing' or could not be found 'elsewhere'. Unsurprisingly the type of 'soulless' football stadiums which Bale (see chapter 1) makes references to, came in for stinging criticism from *some* supporters. These aesthetic sensibilities raise interesting questions about the possible erosion, rather than implosion of the 'traditional' masculine boundaries referred to earlier. Yes, the culture described here is marked by heavy drinking, toughness, and at times 'vulgar' language. However, football supporters also show an appreciation of things other than a pint of lager, a crunching tackle, a game of Black Jack and so on.

That's Entertainment: on Routine and Biographical Continuity

> **Nick:** 'You don't even have to look out of the window now,
> you just know its Derby' (comment made on a train journey to
> Fulham, 2016/17 season).

These types of novel (aesthetic) experience can help supporters to maintain their enthusiasm for 'away days'. As such, these encounters, whether inadvertently or otherwise, facilitate the *moral* desire to stay loyal (a cognitive characteristic of the group), and to use Richard's expression 'represent' the club. There are times when defending the honour of the club take precedence over the search for the novel and unfamiliar, but the relationship between these priorities need not always be antithetical. In all of this, it is important not to forget the routine characteristics of these 'novel' but 'familiar' (Heller, 1995:8) experiences; that is, the type of repetition which helps to maintain a sense of biographical continuity, and ultimately, the 'ontological security' (Giddens, 1991:53) described in chapter 1. The allocation and performance of specific roles (collecting match tickets/working out train times), the routine taxi journeys to pick up fellow supporters (always in the same order, via the same route), the purchasing of alcoholic beverages from the mini-supermarket, and then the short walk over to the coffee bar for something to drink 'first-thing'. Ironing clothes before the match, wishing we lived 'there' whilst travelling to the match, chanting 'Hi-Ho Sheffield Wednesday' at the beginning of the match, visiting the supermarket after the match, waking up with crumpled clothes and a blazing hangover the day after the match, all of these things lend a degree of familiarity to these routine, and yet at the same time, novel, 'away days'. The thesis will now discuss two key threat to these supporters' quest for novelty. The first of these is the outcome of a concerted effort by the British Police force to diffuse any potential conflict within and around English football stadiums by 'shepherding' supporters into pre-allocated hostelries. This is hardly a new development, and one whose prevalence is declining (see chapter 1). However, it is still one which supporters deemed out of kilter with today's increasingly pacific times. The second threat, which for reasons of space will only be touched upon briefly, is posed by the modernisation of English football grounds.

Caging the Congregation: On Policing and Modernisation

This is for us, not for the "others"...inside the circle of the game the laws and customs of ordinary life no longer count. We are different and do things differently (Huizinga, 2014:12).

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, for Bauman (1993), the 'rules of play generate their 'own order', one which is 'cosy' and 'homely' (ibid:172). Clearly not every individual will be happy to take up residence in such habitats, nor necessarily agree with the laying of the foundations upon which these are built. However, as Stebbins (2015:57) has suggested, individuals who participate in 'deviant serious leisure' can develop ways to repel any violence towards their 'special belief system' from antagonistic sceptics. In the case of travelling football supporters, one very significant group who slot neatly into the category of 'non-converts' are the British Police force, disposed as they are to disrupt the 'game' which these supporters are playing. As the traditional custodians of the 'moral order' (O'Neill, 2005) this institutional body are charged with the considerable task of diffusing any potential conflict within and around British football stadiums.

A key weapon in the Police's fight against football hooliganism is their right to restrict the movements of supporters who they consider to be potentially troublesome (see James and Pearson, 2015). One strategy which is used to help maintain law and order is the 'shepherding' of travelling football supporters into pre-allocated public houses. Customarily this involves explaining to supporters (who may be violent or otherwise) where they can and cannot go, once they arrive in the municipality of the home team (see also Redhead 1997a, Frosdick and Marsh, 2005, and Pearson, 2012). This practice which curtails the pursuit of aesthetic thrills, including the search for novelty and the satisfaction of curiosity, is contentious to say the least. Tango intimated at a need for less restrictive policing strategies and, somewhat surprisingly given his 'traditionalist' narrative, appealed to the modernisation of football to support his claim. Recounting the local constabulary's decision to close a public house in Derby on the grounds that it was serving Sheffield Wednesday supporters, Tango suggested that police and stewards needed to acknowledge the changes which

have taken place within football. Supporters, he reasoned, attended matches to have a good day and to have a banter-fuelled 'laugh' with the opposing team's counterparts i.e. those novel strangers 'who we know and trust'. Foregrounding the economic contribution which travelling supporters make to the local economy, Tango added that hard working supporters should not be ushered into specific locales against their will.

Tango was not the only supporter to express contempt for this policing strategy. Several supporters described situations where they had been prevented from wandering freely to their desired locations. One of these supporters, Warren, criticised the West Yorkshire Police Constabulary's decision to shepherd supporters into a 'little grotty boozer' at Huddersfield during the 2015/16 season. His companion, Stuart, expressed similar contempt for the instruction which the Derbyshire Constabulary gave to a local publican to stop serving (what were well-behaved) travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters in Derby. One additional supporter who fell on the wrong side of this local constabulary was Richard's wife. Having informed a woman police officer that she did not wish to board a particular train back to Sheffield which was 'packed full', this 'five foot one' individual, suggested Richard, was told in no uncertain terms to, 'Get on the train you fucking animal' (see Frosdick and Marsh, 2005 – chapter 1). Like Tango, Craig also considered specific constabularies to be out of touch with the general tenor of contemporary society. Whilst not wishing to tar every police force with the same brush, claiming that 'some are good', Craig also suggested that supporters were 'treated like scum at times'. The practice of 'herding' supporters and restricting the freedoms which are prized so highly in today's world provided a particular sticking point. In an emotive tone Craig suggested:

> **Craig:** I completely and utterly hate it…I don't see in this day and age, the police can tell you what you can and can't do, on a liberty of, "Can I walk down that street, or can I walk down that street, can I come off the train station on that entrance, or are you telling me I've got to go on a bus somewhere?".

Perhaps Rojek (1993) was on solid ground when he disputed the level of 'freedom' which is typically associated with organised leisure activities?

Given the value which this study's participants attach to the pursuit of novel aesthetic experiences, it came as little surprise to hear that some had taken measures to circumnavigate these 'restrictive' policing practices. O'Neill (2005: 90), has suggested that neither the police nor supporters are able to fully control 'certain spatial features of a football match day' and therefore, 'each group must use the leeway it can find within these structures to assert its will'. One supporter described how his party would sometimes engage in a game of cat and mouse with the police to pursue their aesthetic thrills. That is, to maintain their 'infinite game' (Carse, 1986:8).

> **Supporter:** So, say you are going to Leicester away, so the police will stand at the station and they want to take you to a certain pub. So, what we try and do, is we'll try and walk down the platform come out of a different entrance, de, de, de, to get out of the way of the police from the start.

One alternative strategy for sidestepping any unwelcome police interference, was the decision to travel by mini-bus (see Frosdick and Marsh, 2005, chapter 1). One supporter explained that they sometimes preferred travelling by this mode of transport as it meant that they avoided 'getting frog-marched' by 'mob-handed' police, to an allocated public house. A different supporter, who deemed the closeting of away supporters to be unnecessary, suggested that minibuses allowed supporters to do things their 'own way'. Effectively, the use of these vehicles placed supporters 'outside of the law', enabling them to circumnavigate the type of directives which were associated with coach travel. These dictates, which included the need to rendezvous at a specified time and location, resulted in an experience which the supporter deemed to be 'just so sanitised' and 'no fun'. By contrast, independent minibus travel meant that supporters were 'master [s] of' their 'own destiny'. If 'play is free', and 'vanishes together with freedom' (Bauman, 1993:170), then it is reasonable to deduce that supporters must maintain their freedom, if they wish to continue playing, even if this means depriving themselves of the 'freedom' to utilise other modes of transport.

O'Neill (2005) makes the seemingly obvious point that the police deem some supporters to be more problematic than others. The contrasting experiences of this study's supporters are testament to this type of demarcation. Owen

suggested that he had been allowed to manoeuvre more freely as he had grown older. James and Graham had also been allowed to bypass police restrictions, when accompanied by a child. However, in some cases supporters strategically manipulated this flexibility to pursue their own (aesthetic) ends. One supporter suggested that his party had experienced more freedom when accompanied by a woman as it enabled his companions to convince the police that they had visited the area to go shopping. However, a different supporter had not been party to such a liberal approach and suggested that it had been 'wrong' to make him stay in the vicinity of a police presence.

It is important to recognise that these claims are situated within a wider narrative which is often quite critical of the treatment of travelling football supporters. Word limits preclude a lengthy discussion, suffice to say that some supporters had been party to or observed what could be interpreted as unwarranted police brutality. Therefore, when interpreting the results of these interviews it sometimes became difficult to disentangle whether supporters were describing a dislike of the police per-se, or perhaps more plausibly in most cases, specific practices of this group. It should also be noted that even some of their most ardent critics acknowledged that the police did things for the 'right reasons' and that, to quote one supporter, there were a 'lot of dickheads about'. Moreover, several supporters highlighted what they considered to be positive policing strategies, i.e. ones which demonstrated a cognitive appreciation of the rules of these supporters' aesthetic 'game'. Eileen welcomed a tolerance of 'banter', even recalling a time when the British transport police joined in with a chorus of 'We all hate Leeds' on a train back from Manchester (a stark comparison to the reaction of the police officer described in chapter 3). Owen welcomed a police presence on the proviso that its constituents did not 'follow' or 'direct' supporters and James approved of a reduction in the indiscriminate use of surveillance technology. Clearly, for these supporters, the issue is about appropriate professional practice rather than a disdain for authority figures per-se.

The modernisation of English football grounds also poses a threat to the experiential intensity and novelty which travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters seek. Although a small number welcomed these developments, not

least because of their enhanced sense of safety, others were critical of the flat, one dimensional experience which these engendered, thereby adding a degree of credence to Bale's dystopian outpourings (see chapter 1). It may be the case that all we need to do is to close our eyes and use our imaginations, but something has been lost which cannot be regained, seemingly all roads now leading to Ricoeur's, (1965:278) 'imaginary (culturally variant) museum'.

Summary

The aesthetic experiences of travelling football supporters are central to understanding their related spatial practices. Both the desire for *freedom* and the search for *experiential intensity* facilitate entry into a world which is on the margins of that which is typically thought to be everyday normal existence. 'Away days' are often dreamy, hazy and ethereal. They are also capable of arousing a level of excitement which cannot be found at home games, less still, the routine encounters which characterise the working week. However, there are times when the paucity of aesthetic pleasures on the pitch chip away at the cognitive foundations of even the most ardent supporters. Bauman suggests that *in principle* (although the relationship is not always so simple), amusement value and moral responsibility are antithetical, aesthetic surrender to moral concerns providing the only hope for a peaceful cohabitation. Seen in this light, the search for aesthetic-packed fun days out might meaningfully be interpreted as co-existent with the moral need to attend, to represent, to stay loyal. Dionysian activities, spontaneous, emotional and ecstatic, play a central role in this regard, providing *amusement*, stoking up the experiential intensity of the away day aesthetic, and buttressing the 'anti-structure' of the experience. They also help to foster a sense of togetherness amongst supporters, releasing an untapped 'evolutionary potential', and a sense of 'We' (which must be defended); a stark contrast to the 'measured restraint' and 'freedom from wilder impulses' (Nietzsche, 2000: 21), which is characteristic of the Apollonian. The search for *novelty*, another characteristic of Bauman's aesthetic spacing, also adds to the experience of 'away days', further marginalising the importance of the match itself. Notwithstanding this, the routine characteristics of these

encounters, the 'unfamiliar familiar', also help to foster the kind of feelings of ontological security which are so hard to find in today's liquid modern world.

However, several threats to the aesthetic spatial practices of travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters can be identified. These include the police tactic of shepherding travelling supporters into pre-allocated hostelries, and the one-dimensional experience of modernised football stadiums. The British Transport Police's desire to uphold civil propriety also threatens to put the 'party' on hold and draw these supporters' game to an end. Increasingly, it would seem supporters are seen as 'trespassers' - whereas the football special trains of yesteryear allowed for the expression of 'anti-social' behaviour, now, football supporters (should they choose this mode of transport) have to travel with other consumers. Ultimately, the ongoing battle for cultural space and territory shows no sign of abating. However, in terms of the sensate-emotional experiences which football now offers, something has been lost which cannot be regained. Faced with the incertitude of cultural eclecticism, it is tempting to walk across the fraying tightrope that is the 'steadying' hand of nostalgia. However, to reiterate the point made at the end of chapter 4, ultimately, this strategy is counterproductive, all that remains are the residues of a once dominant culture which now occupies a central place within the 'cultural imaginary'.

The Final Whistle: Conclusion and Solid Aspirations

The processes of knowledge construction are never wholly satisfying. Sometimes they seem to offer little, on other occasions they surprise us – a glimpse of how things might seem, moments of revelation and then agonisingly, nothing. This thesis is no different. It contains innovative interpretations; it also makes necessary, but seemingly banal points. However, what it does offer is an *original* approach for interpreting the practices of football supporters. Not a perfect approach, not the only possible meaningful approach, but a *new* approach nonetheless. This chapter draws together the key findings of the thesis and its original contribution to knowledge. The discussion begins by identifying my key contributions to football scholarship before providing a brief overview of my analysis. From here the chapter considers some of the limitations of my research and identifies future research opportunities. The discussion concludes by considering my own relationship to the research and the impact of this on the knowledge produced.

To date, the topic of *travelling* football supporters has received insufficient attention within football studies. The thesis began by chronicling some of the historical developments within football (in all its incarnations) and concluded that contestation regarding the meanings of appropriate moral decorum had accompanied the game, since its inception. This set the scene for the remainder of the thesis which explored travelling football supporters' attempts to resist the modernisation of football and its associated moral, cognitive, and aesthetic imperatives. This in-depth study of travelling football supporters is long overdue and opens the gateway to further study into this largely untapped area. My attempt to redress the paucity of knowledge about this topic constitutes *my first major contribution* to the study of football support.

Drawing upon ideas of Bauman (1993), the thesis explored the cognitive, moral and aesthetic processes of social spacing which can be found within and around English football stadiums and the implications for travelling supporters which are associated with these. This framework facilitated my comprehension of the 'interwoven, yet distinct' (Bauman, 1993:145), character of these oft-

competing spatial processes, thereby allowing for a more nuanced understanding of football supporter practices. The use of this framework is *innovative* and offers a new way of interpreting the topic at hand. This systematic theoretical application to the study of football support constitutes *my second and major contribution to knowledge* within this field. The discussion will now provide a brief overview of my analysis chapters and identify their original contribution to knowledge.

Chapter 3 of my thesis outlined the general predilections of Sheffield Wednesday's travelling contingent, thereby establishing a solid foundation upon which to hang the remainder of the discussion. The chapter began by delineating the specific character of cognitive spacing, which seeks to control social space through the demarcation of identity boundaries. I suggested that these practices, which are founded upon inter-subjective understandings, emanate from a desire to control social knowledge. From here, the thesis set about the task of satisfying the research aims of the thesis, not least the desire to interpret how travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters experience and manage football-related social space. Taking inspiration from the ideas of Agnus Heller (1995), the thesis described these supporters' quest for 'home', their 'bund like' qualities, and their operations at the borders of Hegel's 'absolute spirit'. Significantly, and in keeping with the general thrust of Heller's discussion, the thesis suggested that this form of belonging transcends the narrow confines of an ascribed geographical location. Rather, deeper forms of belonging required these supporters to demonstrate their cognitive competence. *Aspects* of this description also provide a *relatively* novel contribution to football scholarship which has, with a few notable exceptions, (see Brown, Crabbe, and Mellor, 2008) tended to focus its gaze most closely upon those types of 'home' which have a geographical locus. The thesis argued that a degree of cognitive deliberation was to be expected amongst football supporters due to the lack of an underlying *arché* in society. Put another way, and in keeping with the general tenor of the modern world, the rambling social network which makes up Sheffield Wednesday's travelling support is 'hermeneutic' in character. In keeping with the ideas of Heller (1999) and Blackshaw (2010) the thesis suggested the endless cycle of transformation, which is characteristic of

modernity, has added majestically to the 'aura' of modern 'communities' and generated an unabashed nostalgia for these premodern social forms.

Pushing the argument further (and once again, indebted to Heller), the thesis suggested that these supporters' rewards for their nostalgically - fuelled trips down memory lane are cognitive. However, to say that supporters must now interpret and de-code their community (an example of hermeneutics in action) is not to say that they do so as blank slates. Rather, the thesis argued that supporters draw upon an existing set of cultural recipes, common stocks of knowledge, which they use to make sense of their belonging. Loyalty, standing, heavy drinking, belonging, expressive support, and 'traditional' practices are all central to the cognitive outlook of travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters. These predilections, many of which are tacitly understood, also provide travelling supporters with important identity referents for distinguishing the 'in' and the 'out' group. However, the thesis suggested that the post-1989 modernisation of football, whose strange and unfamiliar experiences cannot be interpreted with reference to existing stocks of knowledge, pose a threat to these supporters' quest for 'home'. The chapter concluded that cognitive destabilisation is the likely outcome of this significant development within English football. This adds weight to the work of scholars including Mainwaring and Clark (2012) and Robson (2000) who have drawn attention to the ontological security which football support can facilitate.

In some ways, *aspects* of this chapter (which is arguably the least original in the thesis) might be interpreted as a repackaging of old ideas. I am not the first football scholar, nor will I be the last, to discuss the relationship between football support and belonging. However, what distinguishes my approach from other scholarship within the field is its attempt to situate these modes of sociality within a wider social, cultural, economic and political context and to theorise the psychological effects of their disruption. Although a lot of excellent work *has* been conducted in the field e.g. Redhead (1997a) King (1998), Robson (2000), several other scholars have paid insufficient attention to the wider framework in which contemporary football supporters operate. It is also worth noting that there has been something of a lull within football studies since the turn of the millennium, meaning that even the most impressive studies are a little out of

step with the *increasingly* liquid modern climate of today's times. The thesis argued that the affectual mobile 'community' which is described here, has no love for the atomistic character of liquid modernity and the uncertainty which surrounds it. Put another way, the study's participants expressed a desire for a more solid form of 'identity' i.e. one which is stable, predictable, and familiar (see chapter 4). With no small dose of originality, the thesis also argued that these supporters' cognitive outlook intersects with aesthetic and moral concerns. Expressed succinctly, in *some* cases, the moral must surrender to the aesthetic to maintain the experiential intensity of the away match atmosphere. By doing so, the thesis added a degree of nuance to extant literature on the topic of football support.

Having outlined the cognitive predilections of Sheffield Wednesday's travelling contingent, Chapter 4 employed Bauman's (1993) ideas to help interpret the cognitive destabilisation which had accompanied the modernisation of English football. The chapter foregrounded the reassuring character of routine activity, a pre-reflective mode of being that is underpinned by 'knowledge of how to go on'. Beginning from the premise that tacit understandings are the bedrock of community, the thesis recounted Bauman's (2001a:12) idea that it is 'a contradiction in terms', to speak of this entity. The ease with which supporters described their 'community', intimated that all was not rosy within the English football garden, as the taken for granted character of football support became replaced with a more reflective outlook. The post-1989 transformation of English football, which had sought to 'modernise' the game and rid this popular pastime of its social ills, had thrown these supporters' tacit understandings into sharp-relief. Correspongingly, the chapter suggested that supporters were no longer able to bathe in the comfort of the 'natural attitude' (Schutz, 1970:320) as the foundations of their support became castigated as archaic. Paying homage to the ideas of Bauman (1993), the chapter then argued that this overhaul of the English game had wreaked havoc with 'tradition', shattering the 'reciprocity of perspectives' Schutz (1971:11) which had previously been integral to a once 'dominant' and now 'actively residual' (see Williams, R, 1977:122) football culture. Exclusionary practices had also threatened the *aesthetic* intensity of the football match experience, as expressive modes of support became

increasingly under siege. Accordingly, the thesis suggested that these developments had created a tension between the football establishment and the game's travelling supporters, as a state of 'vorhanden' became pervasive within English football stadiums. From here, the thesis suggested that the study's participants longed for a return to a perceived 'golden age', where social practices were set in stone and 'the natural attitude' reigned supreme. The shifting moral persuasion, which had helped to dampen these supporters' aesthetic experiences and undermined their cognitive predilections, had kick-started the latest in a long line of cultural struggles for the soul of English football. However, these supporters had strived to uphold the culture in what was, to all intents and purposes, an increasingly difficult climate.

In keeping with the ideas of Crabbe and Brown (2004) and Pearson (2012) the thesis argued that 'away days' appear to offer a degree of respite from the modernisation of football, a chance to maintain the archipelagic character of social space, and experience what Ann Game (2001:226) has called, 'now and then' moments. The authenticity struggles which unfolded in the wake of the Hillsborough disaster and the subsequent (HMSO) Taylor report, are best conceptualised against this backdrop. Members of this 'reflexive taste community' *do* 'consciously pose themselves the problem of their own creation' (Lash, 1994:161), they *do* employ 'phagic' and 'emic' strategies (Bauman, 1993) to deal with those who sit towards the opposite end of the 'anonymity pole', and they *do* define themselves in relation to a perceived 'other'. Spurred on by their sense of moral duty and cognitive sense of belonging, these individuals have strived to maintain their vision of the ideal aesthetic space and routine way of life. However, the thesis argued that ultimately, these supporters' nostalgic yearnings are counterproductive. Recounting Game's ideas (2001), the thesis suggested that nostalgia, which is oriented towards the past, cannot provide these supporters with the creature comforts of a well-functioning habitat in the present. It offered no hope to those supporters who were looking for 'home'.

It is rare to see concepts like 'zuhanden', 'vorhanden', 'the natural attitude', 'reciprocity of perspectives', 'phagic' and 'emic' strategies, and the 'anonymity pole' being applied to football studies. This thesis introduces a new set of working concepts to football studies which future generations of scholars might

draw upon when interpreting supporter-related practices. *I consider this to be my third original contribution to the field.*

My fifth chapter began with the somewhat provocative suggestion that when read in isolation, the previous two chapters of the thesis, were accurate, but misleading. The rich tapestry of intersubjective understandings which represented the cognitive glue which binds Sheffield Wednesday's travelling contingent together, whilst shunning those towards the opposite end of the 'anonymity' pole, failed to provide a complete picture. Quite simply, the *moral* spatial practices of these supporters were more disparate, less unified, and harder to pin down. Therefore, and unlike some extant studies into the topic of football support, the thesis intimated at the futility of treating football supporters as a cohesive homogenous mass (see also Hopcraft, 2013).

Having outlined the historical backdrop to these supporters' acts, principally, the abandonment of a search for a universal ethics and the breakdown in traditional practices, the thesis recounted Bauman's (1993) suggestion, that individuals must now forge their own moral path in today's world. From here, the thesis presented a typology of characteristics which, for Bauman, distinguish moral action from less virtuous modes of human conduct. Morality was deemed to be impulsive and emotional, autonomous and free; it demanded a willingness to act 'for', rather than simply 'with'. It also showed scant concern for rationality and personal reward. All well and good one might think. However, acting with a 'felt sense of responsibility towards the other' is no easy task within the ambiguous moral climate of liquid modernity. Consequently, and following Bauman, the thesis acknowledged the seductive character of 'community' directives, in a world where individuals are required to act without the comforting reassurance of ethical guidelines. By way of a rejoinder, the thesis also recognised the autonomous character of actions which place supporters at loggerheads with the defenders of an 'active residual' football culture. These supporters' decisive acts, 'right in one sense' and 'wrong in another', illustrated the *oft-competing character* of moral, cognitive spacing and aesthetic spacing. They also highlighted the existence of an amoral silent (in some cases) majority i.e. Bauman's 'statistically average mass', who disagreed with some of the actions of the travelling contingent but left these unchallenged. The thesis even

described occasions when a felt sense of responsibility towards the other created its own 'anonymity pole', a self-alienation brought about by the *moral* need to satisfy the demands of family-membership. A common response amongst supporters for dealing with competing moral, cognitive and aesthetic demands was to adopt a situational ethical stance. However, some issues, most notably racism, demanded a de-ontological orientation.

Supporters were not alone in trying to untangle the complex web that best captures the qualities of a moral existence. The chapter wrestled with the multifarious understandings of morality which can be found within academic textbooks, suggesting that, on the one hand, morality is conceptualised as reflexive/impulsive and, on the other, it is deemed to be regulated by moral maxims. Commensurately, the thesis problematised the simplistic character of Bauman's model, questioning the dichotomy which he draws between acts which are underpinned by the rational character of reward, and those which are deemed to be genuinely altruistic. The thesis also suggested that Bauman underestimates the existence of moral guidance in today's world, even if there are situations which call for a situationist stance to deal with its competing imperatives. Regardless, and what this thesis has been successful in doing, is drawing attention to the complexity of these competing demands. It has also helped to undermine simplistic notions of what it means to 'be' a football supporter.

Having discussed the importance of cognitive spacing in providing the travelling contingent with a feeling of 'home' and the role which moral spacing plays in undermining the cognitive coherence of the hermeneutic community, the analysis concluded by discussing a third type of spacing, aesthetic, which emanates from a different set of priorities (even if these do sometimes overlap with moral and cognitive concerns). Drawing upon the ideas of Bauman (1993) and Huizinga (2014), the chapter foregrounded the playful character of aesthetic spacing; a way of organising social space which is motivated primarily by human curiosity and the search for 'experiential intensity'. The thesis also drew attention to the liberating qualities of 'away days', the freedom which allow supporters to gain entry into an ethereal world, a world which is on the margins of what is normally thought to be the world, a world where they, relatively

speaking, 'do what they want'. Their liminal encounters allowed these supporters to escape the fettered character of the working week; they invoked the spirit of *homo ludens*, and even offered a glimpse of an alternative (albeit short-lived) type of existence.

For Bauman (1993), *moral* and *aesthetic* spacing, at least in principle, are antithetical. However, the thesis argued that the search for intense aesthetic experiences, complemented, rather than worked against, these supporters' felt-sense of responsibility towards the team. If the paucity of aesthetic thrills on the pitch chipped away at the cognitive foundations of these supporters', then salvation could be sought in the form of their Dionysian pursuits, which stoked up the experiential intensity and anti-structure of the away day experience. Expressed simply, supporters, 'built something around the match', to satisfy their *moral* need to attend. This is not to say that moral concerns never took a back seat to these supporters Dionysian impulses. However, there were occasions when the aesthetic surrendered to the moral to maintain a harmonious existence. Either way, the thesis argued that the extra-temporal moments which these activities facilitated, released an untapped evolutionary potential (Turner (1995:128), a reconciliation of humans with nature and a sense of 'We', where the structured distinctions between humans begins to collapse.

It is not difficult to detect a nostalgic element to these supporter's activities. These 'day [s] out with the old boys' (see Slaughter, 2004:55) are replayed week in, week out, and present an (albeit problematic) opportunity to recall how things were 'back in the day'. This is a recurring theme within football studies and not without good reason. However, this chapter has also demonstrated that 'away days' are more than this. They present the opportunity to 'escape', enjoy a collective form of sociality, and to seek out novel experiences (albeit within a familiar routine). Time takes on a different meaning during these occasions, and the 'seriousness' of these supporters' playful activities, endows them with a 'real' character, in what ostensibly is a plastic and 'unreal' wider social existence. The thesis suggested that these novel encounters provide a source of aesthetic pleasure, and therefore, co-exist peacefully with the moral need to stay loyal, to attend or to use Richard's expression, 'represent' the club.

However, the discussion also foregrounded the importance of familiarity, and, in keeping with the ideas in chapter 4, its role in fostering feelings of ontological security. Two key threats to these supporters' quest for novelty were identified. Namely, the police practice of shepherding supporters into predesignated hostelries and the development of 'copycat' modernised football stadiums. Unsurprisingly, supporters had taken steps to maintain their aesthetic lifestyle. However, the thesis argued that ultimately, something has been lost which cannot be regained. All that remains are the residues of a once dominant culture which now occupies a central place within the cultural imaginary.

To say that this thesis has brought a new framework to football studies, and therefore, has made an original contribution to knowledge is not to say that it is perfect. When scholars look one way, they often miss that which lies behind them. They may even, in their clamour to say something new, ignore that which is right in front of their very nose. Even the most casual observer would struggle not to notice that, with the exception of the irrepressible Eileen, this thesis is largely about men. Women do get a mention in passing, but almost exclusively, are only offered a bit-part role, put under the spotlight to complement the performances of the main (male) actors, the 'real' stars of the show. The same might also be said of people of colour. Yes, to be Wednesday, is, for the best part, to be white and male, but more could have been written about those who do not fit the 'typical' criteria of a travelling Owls supporter. Similarly, the theme of social class runs throughout the thesis. However, and due to my conviction that today's liquid-modern times make any such scheme problematic, this thesis has not employed a systematic model of class, which some scholars might have welcomed when interpreting these supporters' activities. Additional concepts which might have helped to make sense of the data have also been neglected. The thesis argued that 'habitus' is too-rigid a concept to be applied meaningfully in a liquid modern climate. However, there is something persuasive about much of Robson's (2000) account of Millwall football supporters. After all, the habitus is deemed to be 'durable but not eternal' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:133), the activities of travelling football supporters do have a recurrent quality and their outlook does have a consistency about it, shaped in no small part by their previous experiences. However, it is the *degree* of durability which makes the

use of this concept less meaningful in a world where supporters are required to shape their identities through the reflexive construction of biographical-narratives (see Giddens, 1990, 1991 and Bauman, 2000, 2001a, 2001 b). *More* might also have been said about the bodily-sensations of travelling football supporters and their relationship with time throughout the duration of the day. Originally conceived as a phenomenology of sensual experience, this thesis eventually turned its focus towards additional aspects of away day support. However, there is no good reason why a more substantial study of this type could not be conducted in the future. Other scholars might also benefit from drawing upon Soja's concept of 'third-space', say, in the vein of Hughson (2007) or even Foucault's 'heterotopias'. Additional methods, including visual ones, could also be employed to explore the spatial practices of travelling football supporters. More attention could also be devoted to the 'virtually' constructed character of football-supporter identity and the perspectives which individuals articulate on supporters' forums (see Gibbons and Dixon, 2010). As already suggested, when we focus on one object, we neglect another. However, what this thesis does offer is an understanding of the interaction between the moral, aesthetic, and cognitive realm which can be applied meaningfully in a football context. Gaps in the analysis remain, but much has been said, which has not been articulated previously in football studies.

This thesis has also opened the doorway to new topics of enquiry, which have been neglected due to the limitations of time and space. Certainly, more could have been said about the novel experiences of travelling football supporters (including their encounters with unfamiliar individuals), the neo-tribal character of this 'bund', their relationships with the British Police force, and everything, not least logistically, which goes into the preparation for a 'day out with the lads'. It might also be advantageous to broaden my sample to incorporate younger supporters who have no experience of attending football matches prior to the post-1989 transformation of English football. What lies behind their motivations? Are their activities best thought of as a form of pastiche? Are there any signs of a newly - 'emergent' (Williams, 1977:123) culture on the horizon? Opportunities also exist to conduct a similar study with supporters from different football clubs. Perhaps some e.g. those who support Premier League clubs, have felt the

effects of a modernised football environment more keenly? Perhaps teams from the lower divisions would welcome some of the changes described in this thesis? If it is justifiable to think that much of my analysis might be generalizable to supporters of different teams, then which aspects? The ambiguous character of play and morality i.e. the idea that play can be moral and immoral at the same time, also presents opportunities for a deeper level of analysis.

All the above, of course, requires money and time. What this research has taught me to do is to think clearly about what a lone researcher, working within a designated time-frame can realistically hope to achieve. It has also taught me a lot about myself and encouraged me to think more clearly about the impact of my own positionality on the knowledge produced. My methodology chapter foregrounded the importance of two things. The first was to employ a method which would allow me to try and feel what it is like to be a football supporter (or perhaps more accurately, to continue to feel). The second was to test my developing ideas against the 'things themselves'. As far as possible, and notwithstanding everything which has been expressed about the 'crisis of representation', I consider that my chosen methods allowed me to do this. This was advantageous as it allowed me to avoid the mistakes of the Birmingham CCCS, who had not taken the accounts of their (reflexively capable) 'subjects' seriously and those who have failed to describe one of the most important things about being a football supporter, namely, the *feeling* that this pastime affords. However, and taking inspiration from the writings of Gadamer, I sought to problematise the nature of the knowledge which I produced.

My position as a football supporter was advantageous in facilitating my comprehension of the culture, knowing what questions to ask etc. However, it might also be deemed problematic in some ways. As somebody who has followed Sheffield Wednesday on their travels for several years, it is tempting to simply describe myself as an 'insider'. However, the thesis argued that my position was far too-fluid and complex to describe myself in these terms. Not only did my status change by the company which I kept, but also both my understanding and my attitude developed as the study progressed. Notably, I began to treat constructions of 'authenticity' with more caution than I had done prior to undertaking the study. Even more significantly, I began to develop a

more ambivalent position towards the cultural practices which some travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters engage in e.g. swearing and chanting on trains. This development is noteworthy for two reasons. Firstly, because my commitment to a reflexive approach requires me to try to understand how my own biographical background has contributed to my interpretation of the topic (see methodology chapter). Secondly this change in my outlook is important for what it says about the general character of a liquid modern lifestyle, where everything is susceptible to change. Football supporters are not immune to these social forces, nor, does their orientation always remain static (see Crawford, 2004). However, at the point of writing this, there is something about 'away days' which still beguiles me. And why wouldn't there be? Liquid is messy, liquid slips away from us, liquid means not having a single solid thing upon which you can rely. Liquid means change, liquid means disorientation, liquid means wondering what to do next and who to do it with. I choose 'solid', I choose 'stability' and I choose something which was there before I arrived and something which will be there long after I am gone. I choose belonging, I choose 'now and then', I choose Sheffield Wednesday 1867. I choose… something *away from nothing*.

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Appendices

1. Sample Participant Information Sheet/Consent Form

Sheffield Hallam University

SHARPENS YOUR THINKING

Participant Information Sheet

A qualitative study of travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters

This study will focus on the actions and motivations of travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters. The study will focus on your experiences of travelling to and attending away games. It will also invite you to comment on various issues including; the policing of football supporters, the atmosphere at away games, and football fan behaviour. Additionally, the research will ask you why you continue to attend away games.

This is a PhD study with support from Sheffield Hallam University. For this I am aiming to find individuals who hold a range of views. I would like to invite you to take part in an interview to gain your views and perspectives on the topic of travelling football support. However, the decision of whether to participate in the study or not is entirely up to you.

I will arrange the time and place of the interview to suit your convenience. The interview will be very informal. I would like you to raise issues and discuss with me what seems important to you. I would like to make a voice recording so that I don't miss out things that you are telling me; but if at any point you aren't comfortable with your words being recorded, we can turn off the recorder.

I would like to ask permission to make use of some of what you tell me in publications from this study, including quoting some of your words. When I do this, I usually 'anonymise' research participants (disguise their names and identities). However, some participants might prefer to have their real name used in any publications and presentations. I would like to discuss this with you and we will return to this point again at the end of the interview. It is anticipated that data from these interviews will be included in a PhD thesis, conference presentations, academic journal articles, and possibly, a book.

Ian Woolsey, project researcher
Sheffield Hallam University

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Person who to contact in case of a complaint:

Dr Donna Woodhouse

Tel: 0114 225 5670

d.woodhouse@shu.ac.uk

Please confirm your agreement to participate by circling your responses to the following questions.

Have you read and understood the information sheet about this study?	*YES*	*NO*
Have you been able to ask questions about this study?	*YES*	*NO*
Have you received enough information about this study?	*YES*	*NO*
Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study? • At any time? • Without giving a reason for your withdrawal?	*YES* *YES*	*NO* *NO*
Your responses will be anonymised before they are analysed. *(This line will be deleted if not appropriate.)* Do you give permission for members of the research team to have access to your (anonymised if appropriate) responses?	*YES*	*NO*
Do you agree to take part in this study?	*YES*	*NO*

Your signature will certify that you have voluntarily decided to take part in this research study having read and understood the information in the sheet for participants. It will also certify that you have had adequate opportunity to discuss the study with an investigator and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction.

Signature of participant:.. Date:...........................

Name (block letters):...

Signature of investigator:.. Date:...........................

Please keep your copy of the consent form and the information sheet together.

(Name, university address, and contact number of investigator will be added here.)

2. Sample Interview Questions

Interview Guide

Can you remember your first away day? How did you get into it?

Before

 1) Do you prepare for away matches in any way?

The Journey There

1) How do you like to travel to away games? Why?

2) How do you pass the time when travelling there?

3) Who do you travel with? Do you always travel with the same people?
   - *Do you see these people outside of match days or is it strictly football only?*

4) Do you tend to prefer the longer or shorter journeys? Why?

5) Does the availability of live TV ever affect your decision to travel or not? (If not, why not?).

6) Have you ever boycotted an away game and chosen not to travel for any reason?

7) Have you ever seen any behaviour from Wednesday's travelling fans which you disapprove of?
   - *How do you think other public transport users view travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters?*

The Match: Policing

8) What are your views on the policing of away fans? Can you recall any positive or negative experiences?
- *Do you think that the police treat away fans differently to home fans? Can you get away with more?*

The Match Atmosphere:

9) What are the best atmospheres like at a match?
- What are your views on all seater stadiums? New bowl type stadiums?

10) Is the atmosphere at away games different to home games? Is this part of the attraction?

11) How important is the result in terms of the quality of the day?
- *Who do you go to be with the team or your mates?*

13) I once asked a fan why we continue to go to 'away days' and he said because 'it's funny'. Would you say that your main motivation for going is to get let your hair down and have a laugh? Any funny stories?

The Journey Home

14) How do you pass the time on the way home?
- *What do you usually do when you get back into Sheffield or wherever you started?*

Thinking back

15) Any favourite 'away days' you can remember?

16) Are you proud of the commitment which you have shown to Wednesday over the years?

Motivation

17) Wednesday have had limited success over the last twenty or so years so I'm interested in why you continue to follow Wednesday away from home?

- *Do others play an important role in encouraging you to go?*

18) Do you ever get tired of the routine or is it something you enjoy?

19) Would you say that being a fan is a big part of who you are?

Other Issues

20) Any other issues/comments?

3. University Ethical Approval

Faculty of Health and Wellbeing Research Ethics Committee
Sport and Exercise Research Ethics Review Group
Report Form

Principal Investigator: Ian Woolsey

Title: Away from nothing: an ethnographic study of travelling Sheffield Wednesday supporters.

Checklist:

Application form	✓
Informed consent form	✓
Participant information sheet	✓
Risk assessment form	✓
Pre-screening form	n/a
Pre-screening form (under 18)	n/a
CRB Disclosure certificate	n/a
Collaboration letter	n/a

Recommendation:

Acceptable:

Revise (see comments):

Resubmit (see comments):

Comments:

Thank you for addressing the comments you received.

Your application is now Acceptable and you may commence your study.

Signature : .... Date: 12/06/2014
Donna Woodhouse
Chair, Sport and Exercise Research Ethics Review Group

Note: Approval applies until the anticipated date of completion unless there are changes to the procedures, in which case another application should be made.

Name of Supervisor: Tony Blackshaw