

## Durham E-Theses

---

*Mothering in the new moral economy: making,  
marking and classing selves*

Sue Parker

### How to cite:

---

Parker, Sue (2006) Mothering in the new moral economy: making, marking and classing selves.  
Doctoral thesis, Durham University.

### Use policy

---

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a <https://etheses.durham.ac.uk/id/eprint/2643/> is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full Durham E-Theses policy](#) for further details.

**Sue Parker**

**Mothering in the new moral economy: making,  
marking and classing selves**

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author or the university to which it was submitted. No quotation from it, or information derived from it may be published without the prior written consent of the author or university, and any information derived from it should be acknowledged.

**Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph D**

**School of Applied Social Sciences  
University of Durham**

**April 2006**



- 5 FEB 2007

## **Contents**

Abstract

Acknowledgements

### **Chapter 1**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
Framing the research-key terms	3
Working (with) class; theories of exchange and inscription	4
Methodological considerations, locations and instruments	9
Qualitative methodology-problems and reinvestigations	12
Emotion and capitals in research(er) and researched	18
Researcher standpoint	23
Chapter outline and summary	28

### **Chapter 2**

<b>Literature Review</b>	<b>32</b>
Knowledge/ power	33
• Selfhood	33
• 'Psy' disciplines	40
• Surveillance	45
• Knowledgeled selves?	47
Distinction	49
• Class and capitals	49
• Emotion, affect and instantiating classlessness	53
• Distinctive selves?	58
Literature summary	58

### **Chapter3**

<b>Identity: constructing mothers and class (be)longings</b>	<b>60</b>
Classed construction and identification	62
(Ex)changeable spaces; choice, enterprise and value	70
Use and exchange value	76
Narrative constructions	81
Conclusions	85

## **Chapter 4**

<b>Psychological disciplines and self surveillance</b>	<b>89</b>
Post war: the impetus to expertise	91
Child care knowledge and theories of 'psy'	95
Needs talk	100
• Needs gratification	100
• 'Good enough' ( and better) mothers; pedagogy and resistance	105
Family development	113
Disordered subjects; social policy responses	120
Conclusions	125

## **Chapter 5**

<b>Material(istic) bodies and vexed transitions</b>	<b>129</b>
Corporeality: bodies and feminine traits	132
Bodily (in)formations	138
Distinct(ive) bodies	148
Conclusions	155

## **Chapter 6**

<b>A labour of love: mothers' work</b>	<b>158</b>
Mother work and domestic tasks	160
Love's labour lost; working to meet needs	162
All work and no (dis)play: appearance and inscription	165
Practical advice	169
Working mothers; father's work	170
Sure Start: raising the ante?	177
• Human capital	179
• Child centre(d) to job centre(d): the emergence of moral 'problems'	182
Mothers' work as social capital	185
Conclusions	189

## **Chapter 7**

<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>192</b>
Dynamic principles: movement and stasis, the order of things	193
Geographies of time and place: unequal interpretation	195
Knowledge agents	197
Political intrusions	199
Capitalising on (enduring) love	201
Aspirational identities: potential and static structures	204
Mothers and children..... naturally	205
Good enough (m)others (and full citizens)	207
Dangerous liaisons: between classlessness and abjection (making use count)	209
End commentary	214
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>217</b>
i. indices of deprivation	217
ii. group interview/individual interview / family development worker	218
iii. questionnaire	223
iv. Sure Start questions	226
v. The mothers in the study	228
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>230</b>

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis is an empirical study examining personhood. More specifically, it is concerned with the ways in which (maternal) subjectivity is constructed through and negotiated within power/ knowledge complexes. A qualitative empirical analysis of interview data gathered from mothers of pre school children demonstrates the central importance of social and cultural relations which account for selfhood. Selfhood here is negotiated through the child, who comes to stand, (more than ever), for the promise of a new moral economy. Such a weighty responsibility upon the figure of the child however, is turned back as coda for good parenting, implying much more than 'instinctual' or 'natural' maternity, and rather pointing up the part classed relations, potentials and inscription has come to play in making and being 'good' citizens.

This study is concerned then with the ways in which 'classlessness' has been invoked through the use of family, love, potentials (and more specifically the motif of the child) in current politicised constructions of community and society, which owe much to the legacy of Thatcherism. Political rhetoric and forms of expertise, (in this case, 'knowledges' around motherhood), make links to middle classed identity with the intention of dissolving difference and it is these appeals to work upon the project of the self (and child) that act as a screen for the re-appraisal of classed (be)longings in western de- industrialised economies. The dismissal of class, or rather its traditional imagining has been replaced by appeals to an individual and altogether surveillant moral responsibility.

Demonstrating, through reference to recent scholastic work and empirical data, the persistence of class and the fixing of selves in social space; this thesis provides a critical repudiation of late liberal and current New Labour appeals to 'classlessness'.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

So many people to thank; Mam and Dad, for always being there, quietly encouraging me, I got there in the end through all the stops and starts, (Dad, you would have been so proud). Unparalleled thanks to my supervisor and friend Steph Lawler, who encouraged and inspired me when it all seemed too hopeless and too much, she deserves a medal for her guidance, patience and her generosity. Similarly, Paul Johnson and Ian Roberts, who know that academia is a foreign land to me and have helped me find a way through it, and gave me confidence to finish the task. Friends; Karen Curry (who helped me with the labyrinthine complexities of Word), Linda Hall and Nina Robinson; all for being there when everything that was thrown in my way got too much to bear, making this task suddenly pale into insignificance. The School of Applied Social Sciences at Durham; and the opportunities given to attend conferences that invigorated and spurred me on. Lastly, my immediate family; George, my long suffering partner for putting up with my moods, invariably they were linked to how this study was progressing (or not), also to my eldest son Sam, and his 'special' brothers; my sons Tom and Adam.

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

The individual, with his identity and characteristics, is the product of relations of power exercised over bodies, multiplicities, desires, forces  
Michel Foucault, Power/ Knowledge, p74

At the time of writing this introduction, it is the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Listening to local radio news of a school visit to the site, I am intrigued when a teacher is asked, what, in his opinion, has his group learned from the experience. Noting the educational discussions generated by the visit around the sheer magnitude of the Holocaust, he further (and 'more importantly'), notes that it indicates the need to each strive towards our 'potential', '...something these people [in Auschwitz] could not', (Radio Newcastle 27/01/05). What has this example to do with a thesis concerned with subjectivity? This reply serves to exemplify the enduring focus accorded to the self and reveals how even here, given the most macabre events of recent history, which should serve as lessons for tolerance and altruism; nevertheless, the lesson to be learnt revolves around self-potentiality. This thesis questions the issue of self and identity, its social construction and the implication of the myriad of power/knowledge complexes, (residing in health, welfare, psychology and education), in making recognizable what constitutes worthy citizens and potentially (im)moral selves. My choice of subject group, mothers of pre school children, has always concerned policymakers<sup>1</sup>, and with the parenting card central in New Labour's vision of meritocracy, with children held reflective of 'good' society; it seems that selves, whether attended to by citizens themselves (via popular psychology), or worked upon via political intrusions of the state (parenting orders, anti-social behaviour orders), have become the signature theme for Blair's 'classless' society.

I thought it pertinent to explore maternal subjectivity now due to Blair's overwhelming drive to make classlessness fit with potentials, citizenship and the

---

<sup>1</sup> Walkerdine & Lucey (1989:15) note the regard for the child as future citizen and the mother as 'guarantor' of social order.



project of the self. This political project, closely tied to the project of the child, (with childhood the gateway to maintaining social order and the good society/citizen), entrusts parents to be the gatekeepers, not only of the child, but of moral society. Such a focus has a resonance for whole populations and reflecting upon children, (which in policy terms translates into the practical), involves attendance generally to citizenship and selves. By extension, children and childhood, future citizens and current personhood become made and unmade according to particular cultural and moral barometers. I aim to discuss how classlessness, under the guise of citizenship and parenting, initiates some complex re- negotiations in the making of self, hence my focus upon maternal subjectivity.

Making a self, as the interviews in this study will reveal, is indeed a slippery task. Issues of class, gender, and femininity coursed indirectly through the discussions that follow, but worked through the child as reflective of individual (desired) selfhood. Such strategic moves, taking the analysis beyond the specifics of particular mother/child interactions, are complicit with claims that; 'Clearly, some realm of the psyche called 'childhood' is being personified by the child and carried by the child for the adult' (Hillman cited in Jenks 1996:8). Whilst issues of class are central to this study they are enabled, paradoxically, entirely through the absence and refusal of traditional class understandings. For example, my subject group often dismissed middle and working class identifications, but similar moral and worthy features were transposed onto childhood, the child and the family in talking about ways of being. The effect was to dismiss class, (as a general phenomenon), yet re-assemble it as inscribed upon certain selves, in the same way as Savage (2000) has discussed 'the gaze sideways' and also Ball (2003), in the moves middle classed parents make to translate middle class identity into the best interests of the child. Such strategies however, simply used childhood as a language with which to confer worthiness/morality within general populations. The foundational stability of assumptions around what constitutes childhood, Jenks suggests, (and to this I would add parenting), arise precisely from the critical debunking of major ideological formations such as class/race and gender. It appears that the child has become a container for the hopes and aspirations

around moral indictments; the last outpost and irreducible element of our ideological underpinnings<sup>2</sup>. Given that examining motherhood involves an examination of childhood, the points Jenks makes around the iconic status of the child, with regard to good society, become written simultaneously upon the identity mother, thereby establishing identity itself as a location for class, worth and order. The following section outlines the rationale of the study and locates epistemological concerns.

### **Framing the research-key terms**

As the title of this study suggests, inscriptions, knowledge and subjectivity are key to an investigation into the making of identity and moral economy. I give some brief explanation here of the terms and how I aim to approach them in the study, however, the literature review details current work in the field around the relationship between these key terms.

Knowledge can be defined as an ‘organised and systematic collection of information, arguments, skills, practices and understanding’ (Goldblatt, 2004). Further, expert knowledges, distinguished, as in child developmental knowledge, by their own languages and methodologies, are characterised by status and authority. I aim to, in recognition of Kuhn’s (1962) unveiling of the relationship between fields of knowledge production<sup>3</sup>, consider the ways in which identities are socially and, more significantly, relationally constructed. Moreover, given social constructionism theoretically approaches knowledge as the product of language, social, political and legal institutions and through the exercise of power, I hope to temper what is a centrally Foucaultian analysis, (that there is no truth<sup>4</sup> or

---

<sup>2</sup> Jenks (1996:3) notes; ‘The child, it would seem, has not escaped or deconstructed into the post-structuralist space of multiple and self-presentational identity sets’.

<sup>3</sup> Here, I am referring to Kuhn’s (1962) exposition on paradigmatic shifts, where changes in social meaning /dynamics affect the direction/outcomes of scientific inquiry, or rather what gets to count as ‘normal’ science.

<sup>4</sup> In examining the truth of subjectivity, I note Bleir’s theorising of truth;

Truth is not a collection of insights floating about, parts of which are sooner or later revealed or discovered, nor does it lie deep within us, waiting to be freed. Truth is produced through discourse (based in science upon ‘proper’ scientific methods and investigation) and its production is involved with relations of power (1984:195).

reality outside of knowledge production), with an examination of practical logic (Bourdieu, 1999). This practical logic, developed and administered within social relations by subjects, feeds into the very social processes that produce and secure knowledge. The concern here is that those power/ knowledge complexes examined in this study, related to child development and rendered natural, have far reaching effects beyond their target audience; such knowledges become the motor for social, economic, cultural and political development and change. So, though my interest in subjectivity has much to do with productions and subject positions, I retain a focus upon relations of exchange, inscriptions and the part these play in validating personhood; the self here is 'part of a system of exchange in which classed personhood is produced through different technologies' (Skeggs 2004:5).

Here then, I briefly introduce the main theoretical underpinnings of the study. The literatures that developed these tools and further, those that extend these insights, will be examined in the literature review. The methodological tools and research instruments are outlined here; the intention being to provide an explanatory basis through which to chart the relationships between subjectivity, class and power/ knowledge, as mother/ child relationships come to represent good society and define full citizenship.

### **Working ( with) class-theories of exchanges and inscription**

The ways in which biology and the social are merged seamlessly (Riley, 1983), and further overlaid with a classing of 'sorts', is central to exploring maternity and childhood here. These features, implicating bodies and knowledge complexes, coalesce to make identity read as simultaneously inherent and relational. I reiterate Jenks' (1996) point that critical discussion around class, 'race' and gender, initiated as much through sociological academic discussion as through political agenda, filter into everyday discourse. This, and more broadly, in the case of class, the dissolution of leftist claims of the working class as a class for itself, suggests that rather than class becoming less; class is driven to become individually a private concern (Savage, 2000).

It is my intention to stitch these concerns around class into the fabric of power/knowledge complexes. I suggest that the explosion of psychological and politically produced knowledge around the mother/ child dyad, (and by extension whole populations), becomes a way of assembling selves that best fit current social and economic change; that is, a reformulation of traditional class identities in terms of knowing citizens. Such knowledges, as Lawler claims, are a production and ‘do not, as it were, fall from the sky’. Rather, knowledge, ‘...is produced, collected, collated and disseminated by human beings living in societies’(2000a:3). Furthermore; ‘The production, dissemination and legitimization of knowledge requires access to and use of resources; economic, political and cultural...these resources are rarely equally distributed’ (Goldblatt, 2004:3). So these productions, and the expression/ suppression of individual class (be)longings upon the self and others, become, not a liberation from collective naming and shaming, but fraught, complex and covert. In effect, though politically denied, classing remains a private concern that emerges in the public domain as the rhetoric of classlessness. In saying this, my aim here is to show that (current) renditions of the knowing, classless self have implications for the making of ‘full’ subjectivity. Moreover, these responsive and reactive subjectivities translate as (already) ‘natural’, universal and potential when imported into meanings around the mother/child relationship.<sup>5</sup> They remain concerned throughout with work upon the self (Foucault, 1988; Rose, 1999a, 1998), capital exchanges, and systems of inscription (Deleuze and Guatarri, 1977; Deleuze, 1997).

Certainly class, gender, ethnicity and sexuality are interwoven in making identity and identifications, but this analysis takes class as a strand that thrives through

---

<sup>5</sup> Henriques *et al* claim;

We use subjectivity to refer to individuality and self-awareness-the condition of being a subject- but understand in this usage that subjects are dynamic and multiple, always positioned in relation to particular discourses and practices and produced by these-the condition of being subject (1998:3).

My point here is that maternal and, for that matter, child subjectivity is taken for granted as essential, yet the interviews and analysis that follow indicate the struggle these mothers have to resist/ match their personhood with the production of the child, (who must correspond to constructions produced through and in sites of psychological knowledge).

capital markets inculcated in the promise of potentials and the child, and moreover reflects both specific and general assumptions around personhood and citizenship. I aim to show that classing involves a complex network of relations and connections to knowledge far in excess of that which is confined to the exclusive mother /child relationship. To this end, I apply the work of Bourdieu (2005) that instantiates cultural capitals to evidence the unequal nature of cultural exchanges for lived experience. Bourdieu's empirical and theoretical works on classed distinction provide a credible and scholarly response to widespread claims to classlessness (Giddens, 1991, 1998; Beck, 1992). That is to say, I would agree with Diane Reay that classlessness is a 'myth' (Reay, 2000:162). We can not, at least at this particularly British political moment, be classless, for a whole range of institutional power relations, between the state, the individual and capitalist driven markets, depend upon the reproduction and reiteration of class.

Exchanges and inscriptions are inter dependent, Beverley Skeggs notes; 'inscription is about making through marking' (2004:12), and further that processes of inscription comprise 'the way value is transferred onto bodies and read off them, and the mechanisms by which it is retained, accumulated, lost or appropriated'(2004:13). Given the women in my study culturally exchange their identities as good mothers producing good children, an identity that is never simply read as maternal (but is interrupted by femininity, bodies, taste, expertise); these factors remain central then to their notions of self integrity. It is with these interruptions in mind that I intend to draw upon the links between power/ self and truth ( Foucault 1988), cultural capital exchanges (Bourdieu, 2005), and Deleuzian systems of inscription (Skeggs, 2004; Rose, 1998; Patton, 2000). The interviews herein indicate that class survives the rhetoric of classlessness.

There is a connection here between appeals to classlessness made through parenting and the child, and the revision of social democratic ideals under New Labour's political standpoint. For New Labour, the thorny issue of class relations remains an embarrassing relic of old labour orthodoxy. Its retreat from public external life, (and core labour sentiments), has seen it reinstated, through the

project of the self, in private internal worlds<sup>6</sup> and impressed in social policy initiatives; (Sure Start, New Deal and Welfare to Work form the plank of the governments strategic formation of classlessness). Through all the discussions I had with these mothers around identity; ‘old’ class distinctions, which for these women resonated with redundant industrialisation, were reworked into nature, potentials and cultural capital. A moral economy, attuned to the duty of the self for itself, and ultimately for the child, replaced what traditionally stood for class, but I argue here that it is simply that; a re-working. If we cast a gendered light upon ‘old’ class sensibilities we see they remain concerned, as they ever were<sup>7</sup>, around a moral economy.

Let us be under no illusions here, de-industrialisation does not mean the end of class (Pakulski & Waters, 1996), the classed distinctions that once inhabited the public work place have simply shored up those that already existed in private realm of the family. Representations around the family are further driven by media effects (Skeggs, 2004; McRobbie, 2004), where drama series (Shameless, Channel 4), and ‘reality’ television (Wife Swap, Holidays from Hell, ITV 1), present opportunities to construct those (imaginary) others who disrupt the notion of good citizen. The connections between, not only, media representations, but public responsibilities demanded through politically driven moral and economic concerns enshrined in education, health/ welfare and law (for example, New Deal, ASBOS<sup>8</sup>, parenting orders), craft class distinctions anew. In this way, mothers and their children become the site where the biological and the social merge (Singer, 1992; Riley, 1983); where appeals to the self, (and political projects require particular selves), can be calibrated through ‘the best interests of the child’ and ‘nature’, thereby gaining majority consensus/ purchase.

---

<sup>6</sup> Nikolas Rose (1998, 1999a) notes the anxiety produced through the cult of the individual.

<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth Roberts (1995) records the classed experience of the domestic and private as opposed to the industrial and patriarchal; the privileging of shared class positions over and above considerations of patriarchy. Roberts notes too, the increasing political emphasis in the post war environment upon family/ home as opposed to family/community. This, and the growth of wider consumption practices to shore up the comfort of the domestic realm led, Roberts claims, to a change in attitudes concerning class, privacy and respectability.

Around identity then, and particularly identities closely involved with the figure of the child, it seems there is always moral work to be done. With reference to the project of the self (Rose, 1996); the child, (or rather the iconic status of the child, and the hopes and aspirations contained therein), cannot be divorced from maternal identity; each is reflective of the other. They do not stand individually, at least not in the psychological and therapeutic vein of unfolding potentials that can be aspired to, because what is located within these reflections, as I hope to show, are some enduring core assumptions around class, distinction, culture and worthy selves.

So, this study firstly is concerned with the project of the self and conceptualizes mothers and children as participants in the generation and acceptance of political attempts to instantiate 'worthy' selves. By extension, it is concerned with the narrative<sup>9</sup> of class, its dismissal and paradoxically its renewed, if somewhat reinterpreted form; where the cultural capitalisation and classed distinction that attends selves and potentials becomes located as 'naturally', (via instinct, knowledges and the figure of the child), part of every self. Yet identities, as my interviews reveal, are assembled and dismantled around social relations where the progressive individualism of neo-liberal politics, eager to conceal historically mediated understandings of hierarchical class distinction, merely results in a re-interpreted gaze sideways (Savage, 2000). I hope to dispel the notion of identity as fixed and essential; rather pointing up the persistence and rigidity of particular versions of personhood deemed problematic. The biological and social merge in

---

<sup>8</sup> Anti –social behaviour orders.

<sup>9</sup> Lawler claims narratives are;

...social products produced by people within the context of specific social, historical and cultural locations. They are related to the experience people have of their lives, but they are not transparent carriers of that experience. Rather they are interpretative devices through which people represent themselves, both to themselves and others. Further, narratives do not originate with the individual: rather, they circulate culturally to provide a repertoire (though not an infinite one) from which people can produce their own stories (2002:242) (original emphasis).

It is through examining narratives of class and mothering discourse that I trace current forms of subjectivity.

current parenting discourse in the form of instincts ‘gone wrong’ and/ or children’s (already there) potentials being obstructed , and I hope to re route these concerns to the highly capital - driven relations at the heart of making, not simply maternal, identity. The refusal to appear ‘unworthy’ serves to evidence that there exists something still, call it ‘class’, that conjures up pathology and lack.

My attempts to braid together these concerns result in an analysis that extends beyond maternal identity, incorporating families and children and how they place themselves, and are placed in discussions around citizens and others. What I attempt to broach here is that we have all, regardless of the ‘family’ or ‘mothering’, been children; and have carried , whether we realise it or have had it placed upon us, the promise of good and proper society; so these concerns with class have continuities across and between gender and generations. The inflection of these continuities however, owes much to relations between (self) government and the self, so I ask my reader to consider the resonance of this study beyond its maternal focus.

The rest of this introduction considers the methodological aspects of the study, an explanation of the research instruments, the sample groups and importantly, the difficulties of the research process itself. I hope my exploration here offers up the integral part that I, as researcher, have played in producing the outcomes of the study.

### **Methodological considerations, locations and instruments**

As I noted earlier, my interest in following the theme of maternal identity was driven by the increasing focus given to the child in framing discussions around community and citizenship. It seemed to me that the family, or more precisely the mother/ child dyad, was central to New Labour’s discussions around inclusion and social order; and this marked a shift from the exclusionary tone of conservative rhetoric around underclass (Murray, 1994). During my fieldwork much was being written in the media about the introduction of league tables in education and

---

parenting/ citizenship classes to promote social equality and mobility for future citizens. More recently, however, the focus has shifted to more punitive measures incorporating anti social behaviour orders, truancy orders and parenting orders. With this in mind I was interested in the ways the child could be seen as a tool to shore up distinctive selves, who reproduce good citizens, and I sought to evaluate how 'psy' knowledges around the child, delivered through playgroups and family centres, produced knowing selves; selves that reproduced class and distinction under the cover of nature and potentials. How did these mothers construct their identity? From where did they draw such knowledge? What ends did this knowledge serve? Furthermore, over and above the issues of child development and parenting, were there issues here around the privileging of some sorts of citizens, (those who were willing to construct themselves accordingly), and the making of others?

I contacted a rural playgroup in Northumberland and one of the recently expanded family centres in Tyne and Wear. My intention was to investigate the part played by childcare knowledge in constructions of both maternal identity, childhood and the wider society, not only from the perspective of mothers, but also from the viewpoint of the development staff delivering those services. I now discuss the research locations.

The family centre in Tyne and Wear maintains its original links with the local Church of England, though is by no means uni-denominational in its focus, having acted as part of a support network for refugee families and ethnic minorities within the local community, (see appendix [i] for profile of area in terms of population by age group, deprivation indices and tenure holdings). The centre successfully obtained funding through a national lottery grant; subsequent purpose built accommodation led to the extension and range of services the original framework was able to offer the local community. The work of the centre extends beyond child care and mother/ children groups to encompass women's groups, family referral sessions, community group outings, (with an emphasis on maintaining dual parental involvement), pre and after school clubs. Networks

with local school, social and health services are maintained. At the time of writing up the centre was not yet marked for the Sure Start program; the manager maintained that they had been operating such a system for many years prior to announcements for the planned delivery of a rolling program of Sure Start centres. The centre has a dedicated team for family development, as well as a formally organised structure for administration.

The rural playgroup operates within a local community centre with assistance from the PPA (pre school playgroup association). Appendix [i] profiles the area in terms of population by age group, deprivation indices and tenure holdings. The playgroup is staffed mainly through the local community, the majority of playgroup workers are mothers of children who attend/ have attended the group; these mothers are taking a career break from teaching/nursing or similar socially orientated work. The structure is certainly less formal, mainly due to the much smaller grouping and the fewer links to more formal outside agencies.

My initial meetings were with the organiser of the rural group and the centre manager. After discussing the remit of my research, I presented my self, and my proposals to collect data via interviews, to the users of each service at one of their morning meetings. Consent was given to tape the interviews. I arranged a time to return for a group interview (appendix [ii]) at each location and thereafter proceeded with a series of individual interviews, all semi-structured (appendix [ii]). The group interview at the family centre was, in retrospect, undertaken in difficult conditions. A large hall, eight mothers and twelve children; as the conversations became more animated, I admit I felt overwhelmed by the task. However, I undertook individual interviews a month later and sat in with the group to chat when I returned again to interview the family development workers. (appendix [ii]).

At the rural playgroup, again I undertook a group interview of five women (with six children present). I returned to undertake individual interviews with them and followed this up with another visit. At each initial group interview I asked the

women to complete a questionnaire comprising housing tenure, age, number of children, employment etc (appendix [iii]). The majority of interviews took place either at the family centre or playgroup with individual staff or mothers; only three interviews took place in the home. An interview with the Sure Start manager was undertaken at the Sure Start centre (appendix [iv]), as was an interview with each family development worker at the family centre. Pseudonyms and information concerning the women appear in appendix (v). In total then, I interviewed thirteen mothers (in two sites), two child development staff and the Sure Start manager over a period of nine months. All my respondents identified as white British.

During fieldwork, I transcribed the data and began preliminary qualitative analysis. The next section discusses my reasons for such methodology, though here I note such analysis is not without problems.

### **Qualitative methodology: problems and reinvestigations**

The truth had become as ghostly as invention. She could begin now, setting it down as she had seen it...(McEwan, 2002:41).

It is not a choice between absolute truth and no truth at all. Rather, truth is always historical, cultural and socially created. Historically and culturally located truths still provide a guide for living.....Between the extremes of absolute truth and no truth is the lived reality of half worked through truths that shape our daily lives (Ezzy, 2002: 2).

These quotations, and the claim to ‘no absolute truth’, reflect, in some part, my own position in the production of this piece of knowledge. As researcher, I have, as part of the research process, shaped this knowledge and as such it is not absolute or irrefutable. I recognise that whilst it holds only for the women in this study, within a particular time frame, I tentatively hope to formulate a set of discussions that point up the complexities in assembling what we have come to understand in this particular political and cultural moment, as identity.<sup>10</sup> It is

---

<sup>10</sup> In saying this, I note Dorothy Smith’s cautions around ‘telling’;  
The lived world can never be exhaustively described or enumerated. It is always more and other than anything that can be said, written, or pictured of it. Any kind

through this self–assembly and ‘through the telling of the self that social processes, (of positioning, of value, of moral retribution), are put into effect’(Skeggs, 2003:350). In another sense, issues of ‘absolute truth’ reflect the problematic assumptions of everyday talk around the self as fixed, as immutable, as inherent. Such truths, as they are, operate discursively, as ‘guides for living’. As a trajectory from where identity is launched, these truths provide a safe and certain point of return.

However, there are disclosures to be made here. The family centre is located one street down from my childhood home. There have been no great changes in that area. The housing stock, mainly terraced flats remains, except to say that what was once termed a ‘respectable’ working class area has, according to long standing residents; ‘gone under’, much of the area is now owned by private landlords. These judgements must be viewed cautiously, they are perhaps implicated with the general removal of juxtaposing respectability with working class (or underclass) in current tabloid and broadsheet reportage (Charlesworth, 2000:157), and the generations of violence done to the economic and structural that Charlesworth claims imbued working class with the opportunities to accumulate respect. Furthermore, the playgroup is located around a mile away from my current home, a village that has its fair share of retirees and professionals, where schools are sought after and house prices have escalated. In sourcing the places where I would interview these mothers; I have somewhat inadvertently, though perhaps not unconsciously, stumbled upon elements of my own (classed) identity production. Yet, I do not, by any means, intend to make this the story of the research project, nor do I intend to be trite, framing my analysis upon what, on the face of it, appears as a journey ‘from...to’<sup>11</sup>, but simply chart the continuities and discontinuities that avail themselves to me as I

---

of storytelling selects from the raw material, shapes it and creates discursive order. The storytelling is achieved in actuality whether in writing or reading, but the actuality always escapes; it is always over; it is always other.(2002:23)

<sup>11</sup> As I discuss in Chapter Three, Bourdieu’s concept of habitus (2005), and the durable dispositions that frame the self, put paid to any total and easy fit or transposition through social space. Such anxieties around class and fields are examined in Skeggs (1997a) and Lawler (2000b).

trace these women's constructions of their selfhood and how this is interwoven with class, gender and notions of child/ self. These disclosures are important in framing the analysis; researchers do not stand outside the research(ed). Here I initially consider some of the problems arising from the qualitative research process, indeed these issues that I point up, I have attempted to address in the practical doing of method and are addressed throughout the study.

Jennifer Mason (1997) notes the dangers of researcher standpoint (Haraway, 1991). A standpoint confers some sort of epistemological privilege; the danger lies in researchers claiming insider knowledge through their own experience and Mason notes that standpoint theories are 'not the quick fix of interpretative validity' (1997:151). This position, Mason continues, implies a simplistic view of concerns both ontological (theories of what the social is), and epistemological (theories of how the social can be known). Moreover, Mason warns us that to claim research subjects have epistemological privilege is similarly invalid, given they may be unable to confirm researcher's interpretations, which remain embedded within particular academic conventions and languages. In this sense researcher and researched produce research outcomes, they are complicit with the construction of knowledge. How then to manifest truth in the research process? By making researcher and researched the subject of study. And though what emerges is undoubtedly interpretative, (and later I introduce a way of positing the subject that allows this), such methods go some way to check the production of subjects as objects by forestalling the privilege of researcher standpoint.

Still, a criticism often levelled at qualitative work is that of romanticism; where misinterpretations of experience and authenticity obscure any claims to methodological validity and reliability (Silverman 1993; preface ix). Silverman claims a way of avoiding the absolutist traps of scientism, progress, tourism and romanticism is to be historically, culturally, politically and contextually sensitive to the topics under research. How we are (were) governed, representations, the role of political agendas and the dynamic nature of meaning need to be attended to in the research process, particularly the interview process. Social researchers

must, Silverman claims, view the interview, not simply as a method or social research technique, but increasingly as part of the overall analysis incorporating the researcher/ method; ‘we all live in what might be called an “interview society” in which interviews seem central in making sense of our lives’ (Silverman, 1993:19). Similarly, Bourdieu’s epistemic reflexivity<sup>12</sup> (Wacquant, 1996) is a useful research tool here and reminds us to examine the research process as instrumental in creating objectivity. So, a double distancing, analysing, not only researcher standpoint, but also the very disciplinary methodologies invoked in the research process, make it possible to counter the making of objects.

Though aware of these pitfalls, my aim is to chart the ways class still informs the making of citizens, using the academic means at my disposal. Simon Charlesworth notes;

Working class people require intermediaries in the realm of culture to relay their condition; that is people committed to expressing their condition through the instruments offered by the field of cultural production (2000:13) (my emphasis).

Though, as Charlesworth continues, I hope to do so in a ‘language that allows for respect of the experience’, and not in the vein of current media constructions of class.<sup>13</sup> In this way, I hope not to straightforwardly privilege working class but to examine the ways in which class distinctions, at one level, become inescapable methods of ordering for both middle and working class women (and children), particularly when invoking the figure of the child (Walkerdine & Lucey, 1989). In

---

<sup>12</sup> Subsequent chapters provide more discussion on Bourdieu’s methodological concerns, though here I wish to make clear that I do not render my co-participants in the research as immobile, and my own position as ‘knower’ mutable. Rather their reflexive positions were governed, not simply by the cultural and social resources around them, but remained tempered by their (reflexive) recognition that those same processes misread subject positions; this gave rise to frequent distancing and opposition in the interviews (see Adkins, 2003; Skeggs, 2003 for discussions on reflexivity and privilege).

<sup>13</sup> Angela McRobbie’s (2004) discussion of media constructions, (in this case an analysis of What Not to Wear), evidences the reproduction of class distinctions through women’s bodies/ taste. McRobbie points up these developments as a response to individualization, which has, she claims, rather than alleviating social divisions, produced a more visible and visceral form of distinction and inscription.

communicating this then, the relationships between research methods, researcher and researched become enmeshed;

Asking, listening and interpretation are theoretical projects in the sense that how we ask questions what we assume is possible from asking questions and listening to answers, and what kinds of knowledge we hear answers to be, are all of the ways in which we express, pursue and satisfy our theoretical orientations in or research (Mason, 2003:225)(original emphasis).

I am therefore, even as engaged in the process of research, similarly complicit in knowledge construction. However, I maintain that these 'theoretical projects', however attenuated, work in 'making the everyday world a sociological problematic'(Smith, 2003:18); that is they reveal not only the wholly relational, cultural and historical contingencies of identity, but the constant checks and balances that are generated in calculating an economy of authentic and continuous subjects.

Ethical issues in the research process, of course, must be considered. As researcher I feel entrusted with the material offered up in the discussions. Concerns have recently been highlighted around the use of archived qualitative data (Parry & Mauthner, 2004). Funding bodies increasingly requesting social scientists to access archive qualitative data and in turn to archive their own corresponding qualitative material makes research material potentially accessible worldwide. Parry & Mauthner (2004) note that whilst archiving is relatively unproblematic for quantitative data, it throws up a series of concerns regarding confidentiality, respondent and researcher anonymity and respondent consent for qualitative data, not least, Hollway and Jefferson's claim that, '...there can be no guarantees that different people will share the same meanings when it comes to making sense of an interviewer's account' (2000:10). Certainly, I regard the outcome of this study as constructed between researcher and respondents and would feel ambivalent about the use of my data for secondary analysis given the guarantees around ownership that I offered during my interviews. It could be argued that my respondents may be unaware of such use; nevertheless, they remain a central part of the research process and I remain indebted to them. The outcomes of research remain a joint construction, and their words reflect the

specific relations generated in the research encounter. It is for this reason that I disclose effects pertaining to me (as researcher), in the hope that they will shed light on the route through which my interpretations have been reached, or at least influenced. Ezzy claims;

A theory or an interpretative framework, provides a unifying account of events observed in the world that is temporary, uncertain and limited. Theory is not arrived at solely through logical derivations from abstract principles, nor are theories developed solely through objective observation of an empirical world. Rather theories are developed through an ongoing dialogue between pre-existing understandings and the data, derived from a participation in the world (Ezzy: 2002:28) (my emphasis).

Though raising the issues above around secondary analysis of data, reinterpretations of data reveal the ways in which disciplinary research practice itself, is inhabited by shifts in cultural effects. Mike Savage's (2005) re-investigation of Goldthorpe *et al*'s class analysis of the 60s reveals the cues and intimations to class meaning that were overlooked through a restrictive focus upon class as structural and pertaining to male occupational industrial grouping. Of course, the vocabulary of the self we engage in today, in the workplace (through appraisals and reviews), and in everyday socially mediated communication, (television, film and relationship literatures), was relatively underdeveloped then. Moreover, the women's voices, in Goldthorpe *et al*'s study, were obscured through an emphasis on the dominant working models of that era. This was, it must be noted, pre divorce laws, pre abortion laws and a time when benefit systems were structured around the working male head of household. Goldthorpe's predominantly, and unintentionally, (given the cultural landscape of the time), structurally focussed androcentric investigation failed to translate that which working classed women academics consider key to the translation of class meanings; that is, the links between culture, class and identity, (Walkerdine & Lucey, 1989; Skeggs, 1997a, 2004; Lawler, 2000a, 2004; Haylett, 2001, 2003).<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Given Savage's reinvestigations (2005), one can only speculate as to the trajectory this ongoing dialogue on class will take over the next thirty years, given the dynamic nature of the tensions between class culture and identity. Just as second wave feminists had a debt to first wave feminist writers, then class as emblematic of the post war heroic male worker was a necessary, if problematic, development in our current classing constructions, if only to recognise the ruptured and fractured subjectivities it failed to

The paradigmatic shifts that now make for the acceptance and excavation of emotive and affective dimensions of living class thus make the discipline of sociological research as susceptible to responses in political, economic and cultural environments as 'natural' sciences. As Savage's work demonstrates, the differences between 'us' and 'them' were simply ones of interpretive schemas implemented by researchers in the context of that particular stage of knowledge productions. Given that those strands of class meaning, currently key to the resurgence of class have been revealed in Savage's reinvestigations as always already there; how can we, with any certainty, lay claims to authenticity-to the privileging of 'our' working class lives? To paraphrase Ricoeur (1980) class becomes what it always was.

It is the relationship between research, researcher and researched that I now turn to.

### **Emotion and capitals in research(er) and researched**

Problems in qualitative research arise with attempts to balance the insights of the research participants, (the insider perspective), with the critical insights of the outsider, (researcher). I hope to unsettle assumptions around the consistency of the group identity 'mother' with data that evidences dis-similarity across maternity. In the same way that Elizabeth Roberts' (1995) oral histories reveal the centrality of class in the lives of women, (as opposed to the issue of patriarchal oppression), this is not primarily a study about gendered identity, but about the part class, cultural capital and historical narratives play over and above gender considerations.

I approach this research then, in a way that considers intersections. Drawing, in part on aspects of psycho-social approaches (Walkerdine, Lucey & Melody, 2001), this is a methodology that considers how social processes work through

---

explain. Responses by Lynette Finch (1993), Ian Roberts (1999) and the work of Elizabeth Roberts on women and families (1995) moreover indicate that classed, (and specifically gendered), meanings have always revolved around the self, bodies, emotion and affect; continuities that surface not only in my research centred on the maternal subject and production of the child, but in countless current writings around class.

subjects, psychologically<sup>15</sup>, culturally, and renders certain selves distinctive. Foucault (1988) argues subjects subjectify themselves to discourses in ways that not only gratify, but also limit the self; I am not saying, in any way, that there is a form of false consciousness at work here, but Foucault's discussion of subjection and subjectification allows us to trace the social relations operating between and within power and agency, with social relations becoming forms of flows and intensities that work through identity. So, I am interested in the way biology, ideology, and the development of particular institutionalised practices (flows and intensities), have privileged certain ideal types and pathologized others (or 'worked through' identities on the basis of morals/worth). Alternative constructions of female subjectivity are rendered unthinkable, precisely due to the way such practices 'liberate' us to accumulate cultural capital. Walkerdine, Melody and Lucey illustrate the psycho -socially nuanced nature of class distinctions;

Everyone, whatever their class position, detects the minutiae of class-difference signs and uses the information delivered by these signs in the making of difference every day of their lives. It takes place regardless of the fluidity of boundaries or transformations in economics. It is subtle and complex, but deadly, and gives us a way to explore class that goes beyond the economic and sociological disputes (Walkerdine, Lucey & Melody 2001:26).

This then, is a qualitative (interpretative) piece and recognises the necessity of the 'hermeneutic circle' (Denzin, 1989:141); the concept that there is no end to the interpretative process. Hollway and Jefferson<sup>16</sup>(2000) propose the psycho- social subject as a way of expressing this tension between structure and agency; here they note the relationship between subjects' self-accounts and experience;

---

<sup>15</sup>Though, I note here, this is not a Freudian model of the psyche emphasised by depth and internal drives.

<sup>16</sup>Hollway and Jefferson also provide justification for positing the psychosocial subject; It is psychic because it is the product of a unique biography of anxiety-provoking life-events and the manner in which they have been unconsciously defended against. It is social in three ways; first, because such defensive activities affect and are affected by discourses (systems of meaning which are a product of the social world); secondly, because the unconscious defences that we describe are intersubjective processes (that is, they affect and are affected by others); and thirdly, because of the real events in the external, social world which are discursively and defensively appropriated (2000:24).

Tracking this relationship relies on a particular view of the research subject; one whose inner world is not simply a reflection of the outer world, nor a cognitively driven rational accommodation to it. Rather we intend to argue for the need to posit research subjects whose inner worlds cannot be understood without knowledge of their experiences in the world, and whose experiences of the world cannot be understood without knowledge of the way in which their inner worlds allow them to experience the outer world. This research subject cannot be known except through another subject; in this case, the researcher (2000:4).

Given that I intend to examine the research process and all its parts, (researcher included), inductively rather than deducing solely from the subject; the concept of the psycho-social subject is applied. Whilst Chapter Four examines the manipulation of psychological theories about child development theory to maintain social orders, (and to reinforce distinctive citizens); the notion of a psycho-social subject maintains the (often neglected) integrity of externalities in shaping the subject, thereby freeing the subject from internalised versions of psychological essentialism. Taking a psycho-social approach also maps onto the researcher-researched relationship and takes into consideration dynamics within the research encounter.

Emotions are central to this research, not only the emotive involvement of the women in this study both towards their children and their own relationship to perceptions of motherhood, but as part of research matter.<sup>17</sup> The interview scenario itself produced, for my own part, identifications and dis-identifications; and though I cannot, with any authority, claim the women of the research felt similarly; I nevertheless draw upon those non verbal by-products of the interview

---

<sup>17</sup> Using emotion in exploring subject positions proves useful in evidencing the classed and moral verdicts that work to sustain classing (see Chapter Five regarding embodiment and Chapter Six regarding work). Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody note

Understanding subjectivity [therefore] demands an understanding of emotions not because it seeks to uncover an essentialist depth psychology but because the fictions of subject positions are not linked by rational connections, but by fantasy, by defences which prevent one position from spilling into another (2003: 180).

Further,

We suggest that social and cultural analysis desperately needs an understanding of emotional processes presented in a way that does not reduce the psychic to the social and cultural and vice versa but recognises their mutual imbrication (2003:185).

and claim them to be as valuable as the spoken data collected there.<sup>18</sup> The methodological tools, of Foucault and Bourdieu, offer here ways to consider subjects that, rather than being strictly psychologically determined in the Freudian sense, are interwoven with desire, affect and defence.

Part of the methodological outline here must incorporate a discussion of Bourdieu's concepts utilised throughout the study. Of course, in reviewing Bourdieu, it is not simply the empirical content of his works that interests, but significantly, his methodological contributions to sociological investigation. The starting point for a discussion of methodology must begin with Bourdieu's exposition Distinction; A Social Critique of the judgement of Taste (2005[1986]). It is here that the theoretical tools, field, habitus and capitals, central to Bourdieu's social theory of class relations, culminate. These tools remain, for this study, useful in explaining the intersection of power/knowledge complexes, class relations, and the question of what constitutes worthy citizens in the new moral economy. Bourdieu demands we take account of relationships between agents and structures, and in this sense, his methodological notion of 'field' stands for the specific relation under study, ( in this case maternal selves ), counterposed with its field of power, (here, psy disciplines and the rhetoric of classlessness). Within this field, the actions of social agents become developed through specific habitus<sup>19</sup>, that is, social agents internalize their relative positions to the field as a sense of self (and of future social mobility). Overlying this, Bourdieu applies a system of economic metaphors; social capitals that, though distributed in that specific field and deployed by agents, remain bounded not only by social relations, but in tension with agents internalized habitus. The value of such a

---

<sup>18</sup>As Valerie Walkerdine writes; 'that the feelings came up in me told me something...that I wanted to take as data'(1997:67).

<sup>19</sup> Bourdieu (2005:170)

The habitus is necessity internalized and converted into a disposition that generates meaningful practices and meaning-giving perceptions; it is a general, transposable disposition which carries out a systematic, universal application-beyond the limits of what has been directly learnt-of the necessity inherent in the learning conditions.

theory of class relations<sup>20</sup> lies in its consideration of both the individual and the ways in which wider systems of capital impinge upon individual social trajectories. ‘Social identity is defined and asserted through difference’ (Bourdieu 2005:172), and capitals provide material for the struggle over appeals to the self, meaning and difference.

Bourdieu’s capital framework of economic, cultural, social and symbolic goods that exchange across social space, can be outlined as follows (see Bourdieu, 2005 [1986]; Skeggs, 1997a, 2004);

- Economic capital; income, wealth, inheritance.
- Cultural capital; outlined in three forms; in an embodied state, (dispositions of the mind and body); in an objectified state, (cultural goods); and in an institutionalized form (for example educational qualifications). Appreciation of high culture signals the possession of cultural capital.
- Social capital; peer connections, networks, those persons known who, through their attained capital and by association, can enhance one’s life chances/ social standing.
- Symbolic capital; this is the form accumulated capitals take once they are recognised as legitimate, that is in order to be mobilised in capital markets, and generate the necessary returns. It is in the conversion process, to symbolic capital, that Skeggs<sup>21</sup> notes, not simply the activation of exchanges, but also of ‘use’ and value to relative groups.

These capitals are interwoven, so cultural capital in the form of cultural goods, (attending an ancient and prominent private school, for example), will be overlaid

---

<sup>20</sup> I am aware that Bourdieu’s concept of habitus has been criticised as suggesting a form of embodied, and therefore essential, state (Smith 2003:21). In this sense can it be seen as anything more than psychoanalytic depth; a vehicle for the transportation and internment of ‘experience’? I would argue that we can retain the concept of habitus, if we complement it with current theoretical extensions that have been made to his work, I am thinking most specifically here of Lawler’s notion of ‘fractured’ habitus (1999b). In this way, we can hold on to what remains a useful tool in writing power relations back into analyses of social movement across and within social space.

<sup>21</sup> ‘What may have a use-value for one group may not have exchange-value ...all capitals are context specific’ (Skeggs, 2004:17).

by wealth (economic capital) and networks (social capital). Yet in separating these capitals we can, not only trace their relations across social field; but simultaneously, through Bourdieu's concept of habitus, understand how social actors, located within the field, internalize their relative position therein as a sense of self. These relations are the central concern of Bourdieu's methodology, and particularly relevant to the methodological concerns of this study. Skeggs notes;

His work is an attempt to locate the economic within the symbolic organization of social space. Moral value is always attributed to the economic domain,....as it is seen to produce good or bad effects and good or bad subjects of value (2004:16).

In this sense, Bourdieu's metaphors instantiate something other than the economic market as external referent. Rather, the economic here, implies the values and deficits carried or contained by bodies across social space; the making and marking of classed selves. As such, literatures that utilise these frameworks are central to an analysis concerned with moral economies, and are further investigated in the literature review.

### **Researcher standpoint**

In the research process I place myself; as a white, working classed mother, these factors are important because they too impinge upon the interpretative framework. Addressing how differences between researcher and participants permeate research outcomes is an important consideration in the way knowledge is produced. By inserting myself into an academic process of knowledge gathering, (as a postgraduate student), and with the credentials of the university to background my research, it appeared I had presented myself as somewhat 'middle classed' to the women in the study. I can not, of course, vouch for their placing me as middle classed, but certainly the university stood, (given our later discussions around education), for a particular legitimate authority that enabled and bestowed privilege; so in this sense I also, as part of that process, became legitimated, though they were unaware of the complexities such positioning by them had for me.<sup>22</sup> Engaging with what subjectivity meant for the women, meant

---

<sup>22</sup> Diane Reay (1996b:447) continues her analysis of her own class disjuncture when she writes;

correspondingly, as researcher, placing myself, and the processes that have constituted my subjectivity under examination. To ignore my identifications and dis-identifications that were interned within the interview process, would be to claim some sort of detachment from the research study; Diane Reay writes;

..it is problematic for feminist researchers to try and find a space between theoretical standpoints which does not address the specificities of their own experience. The end result could be the objectification of both themselves and the women they interview (1996a:62).

Recent work by feminists that brings the question of emotion to the intersections between class, gender, ethnicity and sexuality, has (re) invigorated working class studies, (Reay, 1996b, 2005; Walkerdine, 1999; Lawler, 2005; Skeggs, 1977, 2005; Haylett, 2001, 2003). These works question precisely what current (and historical) constructions of working class stand for, exist for and are perpetuated by, and in this sense, such constructions are far removed from the 'sociological' codifying/ surveys that claimed to locate class in the post war era (see Roberts [1999] for a critique of constructions and classed narratives). Andy Medhurst writes, 'Class is felt, class wounds, class hurts, and those of us on the cusp between classes bruise particularly easily' (2000:21), and I found myself dealing with a classed narrative of my own, one that was compounded by being placed in the research process as middle class, (an academic); a classed position I did not easily identify with; but through the feminist interpretative works I noted earlier, I saw a way to, in some part, resolve this and make it integral to this research.

I have firstly to explain that I was not aware of 'class' as difference until I attended secondary comprehensive school. The wider catchment area that my school drew upon inevitably led to new friendships and though these friendships were balanced in terms of educational capital; they couldn't be more different in other ways; never more so than when invited into the homes of others. Visiting

---

My own past understandings of myself as a working class woman had always drawn heavily on images of myself in terms of an underdeveloped intellect coupled with an excess of raw feelings. This is not to deny the impact of gender. Rather, it is to suggest that there are no unmediated oppressions. I have never found linking 'clever' with 'female' as conflictual as putting together 'clever' and 'working class'.

their homes, I witnessed other ways of living and other spaces, their possessions became objects of desire; and spoke volumes to me, an eleven year old, as they translated into the existence of 'other'. As facile as it may seem now, it was objects<sup>23</sup> for me that demonstrated class. So the white telephone, the dimmer switch, the pendant lamp, the wooden salad bowl and utensils; it was these, (at that time), culturally vocal objects, that took on the fantasy of classed (be)longings.<sup>24</sup>

I envied and desired the markers of these positions; yet I felt an ambivalence, a dis-identification from these markers. Whilst I felt shameful about the things that marked me as lacking; I still felt it was 'real' and that it was these 'others' who were living unauthentic lives. I found these inconsistencies in my classed identity troublesome, (to claim authenticity is dangerous), but recognised them instantly in the work of Steedman (1986) and in Skeggs' (1997a) work on respectability and dis-identification. Moreover, embarking upon the interviews returned me to old ground both geographically and psychically. Skeggs notes that;

The value (and the destabilising quality) of feminist interpretative frameworks is that they engender reassessment of previous frameworks. They pull prior experiences back into the interpretative viewfinder for reassessment and in doing so they make us question who or what we are (Skeggs, 1997a:29).

In discussions with the women, I could identify with many of their dissatisfactions around opportunities and classing. At the family centre, one woman was curious as to what I was doing and had done educationally, generating a discussion about schools and careers. She recalled her school careers officer, claiming that; 'You were just told to get a job in an office, but what do you do in an office? There are loads of jobs- no-one tells you what you can do, what's actually out there'. Her subsequent recollections of her working class family position bore similarities to

---

<sup>23</sup> Carolyn Steedman similarly notes the relationship between gender /class and objects in her analysis of her childhood memories, specifically her mother's desires for the 'new look' (1986:24).

<sup>24</sup> I became aware of structural differences too; the apparent freedom in work structures that were available to some adults; I found that some parents could take holidays as and when they wished and worked 9-5 Monday to Friday, (as opposed to 'factory fortnight' and rotational day/nightshifts). This awareness was further overlaid in noting difference

my own experience. Parents who work in factories and want better for their children, want them to 'get a job in an office' and to 'keep out of the factories', but this is as far as their knowledge stretches, they too are limited in the horizons they can see. Diane Reay's work on mothers and primary school education is replete with similar incidences, mothers who don't 'know the ropes', who don't 'know their way around' an educational system, they want better for their children, they fear their own lack of experience will be reproduced in the lives of their children (1998a).<sup>25</sup>

These similarities that span across generations, demonstrate the durability of class distinctions. When Valerie Walkerdine (1997) and Carolyn Steedman (1986) write of their working class childhood, I recognise aspects of it in mine. When I speak to these mothers, again the same narratives are offered up. To read working class is to conjure up an image of lack, yet feminist literatures (Skeggs, 1997a; Lawler, 2000a; Reay, 1998a, 1998b) consider the respectable working class and the symbolic violence done in classing a working class that was never homogeneous.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, it is often, as Beverley Skeggs has written, 'excruciating' (1997a:15) to write about class; and I think this is recognisable by any of us who speak from a position of being in between what we were and are and now in the uneasy position of negotiating our dissonance through our work.

---

in the way leisure time was used (restaurants and dinner parties were preferred to working men's clubs).

<sup>25</sup> Perhaps this is better explained as yet another form of exclusion, rather than the 'poverty of expectation' referred to by education secretary David Blunkett (see Carvel in Lawler 2000a:46). It is here that class becomes re-inscribed against a proposed universality of middle classdom.

<sup>26</sup> My recollections are informed by a respectable working class childhood; a mother who took pride in her appearance, and distanced herself from certain 'sorts' at the factory, ('the language on some of them') and parents who, whilst never neglecting my demands on their time, certainly made social time for themselves; but to counter this I felt the anxiety when the atmosphere at home was heavy with talk of strike pay, of having to be careful with money; talk of serious injuries at the factory and subsequent conflicts with management. My mother claiming that the family thought we were 'rolling in it' because we were the first to have a mortgage, and the regular visits from relatives who came to borrow money, usually at weekends; money that had been put aside for household bills. As witness to these interactions I could discern my mother's sympathy, nevertheless it was tinged with a disappointment and a slight distaste; I was warned never to be like that, to not 'manage'.

There is always the fear we may be making 'objects' in the very act of presenting evidence of misrepresentation.

Recounting this, I hope goes some way to explain my position in any discussion of class/ surveillance, and I hope I can translate the ways in which, for the women in this study; motherhood was infused with producing class and capitals. The freedoms associated with the discourse of classlessness, which work neatly through the child, obscure how nuanced class has become, and though the 'enterprising self' inhabits a very different cultural and globalised sphere than that which framed the economic certainties and continuity of the immediate post war era, I am, nevertheless, reminded of Elizabeth Roberts analysis of freedoms in that era, in which she claims; 'Ordinary people had more but not unlimited choice than ever before' (1995:1).

Let me point out here that I do not intend to re-inscribe (working) class in any way that re-constructs or returns us to the fantasy of the left, that is, a particular version of working class culture. However, I do want to show that present claims to classlessness are a fiction; that class survives in a potent de-industrialised form, and moreover works through mother/ child personhood. Whilst the decline of industrialisation and the attendant fragmentation of global, social and economic structures has lead some commentators (Giddens, 1994, 1998, 2000; Beck *et al.*, 1994) to declare class redundant in terms of mapping/producing social identities; others (Savage, 2000) demonstrate complex shifts in the way class remains crucial to identity, particularly given that class under industrialised capitalism was never the whole story of class distinction. Similar to the hierarchies of the industrial/ classed self, though more complexly drawn, class has become absorbed by forms of cultural capitalism that maintain parameters for the 'enterprising self'.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Bourdieu's (2005) capitals indicate the ways in which symbolic value interacts with ways of being and self perception. In this model, the self becomes everything and exceeds the boundaries of the body, (currently evidenced by the cultural trend towards the home, the garden, parenting). Such an interest in the order of lifestyle is interesting as it becomes a way of marking (and making) class and identity. 'Respectability', an important term in the accounts of post war working classed identities was dismissed by the leftist anti-psychiatry movements of the 1960s, (of which R.D.Laing was a leading exponent

Parenting, in particular, becomes a site where worthiness is constructed through the 'project of the child', closely mirroring the cult of the individual.

The point here is that in making working class invisible and subsuming it under the title of middle class or a classless society, or by making it visible purely in the form of an underclass and the 'rest', ignores the real effects invested in accumulating amounts of cultural capital. 'Parenting' becomes a site of contestation around class, a form of capital framed by feelings of uncertainty and inadequacy that intersects with femininity and emotion, so subjectivity remains classed (across gender, sexuality and ethnicity). Class translates psycho-socially and relationally, as it ever did, (Walkerdine, Lucey, Melody, 2001), and the cultural and political work done to disrupt and deny class boundaries in British political and public life has emerged from the figure of the 'knowing' self. Rose claims,

The self is produced in the practising of it, hence produced as an interiority that is complex, contested, and fractures through the intersection of the multitude of activities and judgements that one brings to bear upon oneself in the course of relating to one's existence under different descriptions and in relation to different images or models, the sanctions, seductions, and promises under which one accords these therapeutic ways of practicing subjectivity a value and an authority (Rose, 1998:192-193).

I now set out my chapter outline.

### **Chapter outline and summary**

Chapter Two comprises a literature review. I review literatures concerned with the relationship between subjectivity, power and knowledge markets; subjectivity is examined as relational to power. Here I discuss the major theoretical frameworks used in the study, namely Bourdieu's (2005) concept of cultural capitals and the ways in which habitus informs our relations to identity,

---

[1990]). The organicist thought of the movement despaired at the drive for social order encapsulated in the rise of consumerism / suburbia; here the desire for order/ respectability was complicit with a denial of our 'instinctive' selves. It was during this post war economic boom that the 'affluent' working class became consumers; I make this link to attest to the ways in which the working classes have disappointed the left and the particular knowledge climate in which they did so.

Foucault's (1988) theorising of self, truth and power, and theories of inscription, intensities and flows ( Deleuze and Guattari, 1977, 1987; also Patton, 2000). I also examine the ways in which class has been produced as lack and how this informs contracts between the self and knowledge production. Literatures around the self and childhood with specific regard to capital exchanges and uses in making worthy selves are examined, with regard to Skeggs formulations of use and exchange values (2004).

Chapter Three is concerned with the self itself and the ways in which, in terms of (maternal) subjectivity, the social and biological are enmeshed. Meanings around childhood, shifting class interpretations, identities as morality and consequent identifications/ dis-identifications are discussed. As Ezzy notes; 'Meaning is not a thing or a substance but an activity' (2002:3). What do we understand as the self and can it be known?

Chapter Four comprises an examination of 'psy' disciplines (Rose, 1999) and the power relations that persist at the heart of child development texts; the question of 'needs' and the ways difference is written into parenting (Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989). The interviews demonstrate how knowledged selves are tested in the social space of the baby clinic, or when the health visitor visits<sup>28</sup>, and the sense of shared experience at the clinic is overlaid with instruction that translates into a classing of sorts; surveillance of some and tacit approval to others. Here, appeals to nature and instinct work to fix identity and similarity. Yet cultural capital, as we will see, is closely linked to mothering practice and proliferates in magazines and self help literature that are concerned with the formation of that valuable state commodity, the child and future citizen.

Chapter Five turns to the body and inscription. Though instinct and nature figured in the mother's accounts, I show how such tropes cannot be viewed as a-historical, essential and coherent. To fall back on nature is a way of shoring up certainty in an uncertain and risky world (Beck, 1992; Beck *et al*, 1994). Worthy

---

<sup>28</sup>I note here that my grandmother was deeply suspicious of health visitors.

identities are regarded through appearance and enactment in social space, and attention given to examples of media constructions and inscriptions.

Mothers' work and paid work is topic of chapter six; the women discuss their work, (responding to children's needs), as natural. This work for the child is also perceived as work upon the (maternal) self, in ways that may be unconnected with maternal concerns, but are implicated in full citizenship. This work is placed alongside other paid work and dis-identifications to the role of the mother are discussed. The Sure Start initiative is explored and implications therein for reading mother/ child personhood.

Chapter Seven concludes the study with an overview. I end the study by contesting the claim of classlessness and cite my study as evidence that (maternal) identities and class are bound up with governmental order in the search for the good citizen (in the interests of neo-liberal global economy). Such ordering makes class recuperable under the aegis of good parenting, and rather than achieving classlessness, spreads class across the making of identities and through the suggestion of otherness (Savage, 2000). Moreover, the inculcation of 'psy' disciplines, or rather the biological rooted in the social doing of parenthood, with the child as container for the hopes of good society, has wider repercussions for social and relational identities far beyond the maternal subjectivity explored herein.

Though my concern is a moral economy and the ways in which cultural currencies are recognised as exchangeable and of value; this is closely tied to economic process. Nancy Fraser's comments around the links between 'miscognition and maldistribution' (2003:3) take form, as citizens are cast and re cast in light of various economic considerations. The rolling back of the state, (initiated during the liberalist conservative governments of the eighties), and the simulating of freedoms to capitalise upon the self, has served to consolidate the workings and extent of a range of power/ knowledge complexes implicit in health, education and welfare. Notwithstanding, this reinterpretation of class is wholly reflective of

western capitalism's ability to initiate a tactical response to the fabric of social and economic change that materialised with de-industrialisation, and which further underscored an emergent political aggrandisement around individualism; I therefore trace the intersections between knowledge markets and selves. The best needs of the child driven through child development, and increasingly through competition in education markets, when positioned in relation to psy and the natural, become indelibly etched with the workings of distinction; as Stephen Ball (2003:115) notes '...middle class values privilege certain sorts of selfish, or at least short-sighted individualism; [and] the market feeds and exacerbates this to produce attenuated beings'. These shifts in the nature of capitalism, (and its relation to class), are important in explaining the rise of progressive individualism and the ways such progression is justified as witness to worthy citizenship and personhood. My literature review goes further in developing an explanatory theoretical framework on which to structure the study; that framework is informed by literatures that are concerned with technologies of the self (Foucault, 1988; Deleuze, 2000), and the capital driven nature of selfhood (Bourdieu, 1999, 2005, 1996; Skeggs, 1997a, 2004).

Empirical research on subjectivity is constantly relevant in highlighting the social and cultural relations at the heart of, what comes to be known as, identity formation. Identity is no longer simply an academic research interest, for the expansion of the media, internet and cultural forms, (along with the rise of celebrity); have made questions of identity the stuff of everyday life. How do these knowledges, expert and practical, map onto one another? I intend to examine how they are enmeshed, taking this particular subject group and consider where the gaps and 'sutures' lie (Hall, 1996). This study sets out to look at what these women know, ask how they know it and consider what they do with what they know. The next chapter reviews the literatures concerning the main themes of this study and the subsequent chapters are given over to the voices of the women in the study.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

The social, cultural and psychological are so strongly entwined with each other that teasing them apart does violence to the actual mechanisms.  
Walkerdine, V., Lucey, H. & Melody, J., Growing Up Girl, p15.

The literatures reviewed here work to point up two main concerns of this thesis. Firstly, the drive to self production and worthy selves, and secondly, the ways in which class becomes obscured through tropes of citizenship and the figure of the child (as future citizen). It is, notably, an opacity that endures within current constructions of the enterprising self (Rose, 1998), and one that necessarily frames this analysis of subjectivity. In considering the works that inform the theoretical directions of the study and those literatures that frame my analysis; two main sections, 'knowledge/ power' and 'distinction' will explore literatures that examine constructing and constructed selves. The first section 'knowledge/ power' outlines the later theoretical stance of Foucault regarding power and the self (1988) that informs this study and further, this section considers intensities and flows that work across the surface of the self, through processes of inscription (Deleuze ,1997; Skeggs, 2004; Rose, 1998). These works, used in conjunction with the interview analysis in the subsequent chapters, formulate my discussions around identity and class. The second section, 'distinction', introduces the work of Bourdieu (2005), concerned with self and movement in social space; more precisely, the drive to accumulate capitals that can be traded successfully across these spaces. Interestingly, psychological expertise promises to deliver this realization of capitals through the universal project of the child under the cover of biology (and care-giving), yet literatures discussed here attest to the containment, making and marking of selves which, Bourdieu claims, work through distinctive codes governing both whom and what (knowledge) can enter exchange markets. The work of Bourdieu is invaluable in exploring the social and cultural relations that instantiate what we call selfhood and is informed by his extensive empirical practice. I go on to examine the way his work has been extended and enhanced by theorists similarly driven by empirical research and whose work lends itself to the analysis thereafter.

The two themes of this study, identity and power/ knowledge, necessitate examining relationships between class, gender, childhood (and child development) and desire. The child, (as icon), and expertise (in the form of psychological knowledge), each gain strength from their dual association, and though they carve out a particular assumed historical subjectivity for women, it is a subject position which, nevertheless, remains fuzzy around the edges, and subject to endless reinterpretation within both public and personal domains. It is in this messy space that class and gendered distinctions are never far from view, or more appropriately, from a particular 'gaze' (Kaplan, 1984). Subjectivity becomes a container for a number of assumptions around citizenship, femininity and class.

Setting out the relationships between these themes is by no means an easy task; self, power, distinction and desire are inextricably bound together, and as the opening quotation indicates, any attempt segregate these complex issues, to make them reducible and orderly, in effect conceals the complex symbiotic relations through which they attain their cumulative effect.

### **KNOWLEDGE/POWER**

For the purposes of order, I have subdivided this section into three parts. The first, 'selfhood', outlines Foucault's central contribution to the theorization of power and the self and extends the analysis with Deleuze; these literatures inform the analysis of the interviews. The second, 'psy', traces the literatures that examine the role of psychological theory in producing the maternal subject and thirdly; 'power', the literatures here focus on power, pathology and surveillance.

#### **Selfhood**

There are two meanings of the word 'subject'; subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self- knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power that subjugates and makes subject to (Foucault, 2000:351).

...the subject is inseparable from the constitution of a machinic assemblage of fluxes of intensity, particles of affect and a-signifying signs. Desire produces intensities and the consumption of intensities wherever

and in whatever form these may be found. Subjectivity is an effect of this process rather than its origin (Patton, 2000:71).

The self, psychology and distinction underpin the subject position under discussion here and perhaps the starting point for relations between power/ knowledge and the self is the work of Michel Foucault (1980, 1988, 1990). The subject, for Foucault, is a space where competing discourses intersect and where attempts are made to exert control through these discourses, in this respect Foucault suggests that all 'experience' is grounded in philosophical and scientific discourse. His analysis is central to understanding why subjects are produced in particular ways, for 'being so' is key to instantiating our understandings of wider discourses around gender, class, and the child; there are relational connections here, and this being, moreover, reinforces power relations, (here, of psy<sup>1</sup> disciplines and classed distinctions). In theorising subjectivity, and specifically maternal / feminine subjectivity, we are never far from taken for granted assumptions which derive from the legacy of psycho-biology and scientific discourse; in this study these assumptions assemble around moral and reproductive capacity and child care/ development; discourses that work through and around the women in the study. And though Foucault has little to say about gender, or indeed the maternal subject, his concept of the subject as implicated in bodies of knowledge (psychiatry, medicine, sociology) however, fits neatly with research material gathered in the course of this study and further facilitates any theorization of the complex negotiations undertaken in producing personhood.

A concern with, as Gordon notes, 'the presence in modern history of a repertoire of techniques of power which do not bear the distinctive emblem of the regime-socialist, communist, fascist-that uses them'(2000; xv), drives Foucault's theorization of power/ self. Such repertoires elicit the co-operation of subjects regardless of political orthodoxy, hence, for Foucault; subjection is an oppression that feels like liberation. So power here, is seen as integral to the dynamic nature

---

<sup>1</sup> Nikolas Rose (1999a: vii) defines 'psy' disciplines as,  
..the heterogeneous knowledges, forms of authority and practical techniques that constitute psychological expertise [and make] it possible for human beings to

of social relations; the will to power invoking pleasures, with power understood as diffuse, engendered within the exercise of relationships; not located and isolated, but everywhere, and as a consequence, not wholly negative, but rather dangerous;

What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted is simply the fact it doesn't weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourses. It needs to be seen as productive network that runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression (Foucault, 1980:119).

I noted earlier Foucault has little to say about gender, and given the assumptions around the position of the subject positions I investigate here; does it not seem inadequate to use Foucault for this analysis? Lois McNay (2000) demands a more diverse conceptualisation of agency that can translate the struggle and appropriations over cultural forms and meanings. For McNay, poststructuralist works, (such as Foucault), lack this, and whilst feminist theory has appropriated post structural works, following Foucault, that envision (female) subjects formed through constraint, and which go some way to explain taken for granted assumptions about gender, nevertheless, such work, for McNay, ignores the ways in which;

[the subject] when confronted with difference and paradox, may involve accommodation and adaptation as much as denial. In other words, it leaves unexplained the capabilities of individuals to respond to difference in a less defensive and even, at times, a more creative fashion (2000:3).

Further, in Foucault and Feminism (1992), McNay questioned the passivity that Foucault's emphasis upon power instantiates. Given that feminists have drawn heavily on Foucault's work on power in order to develop an emancipatory politics, McNay is concerned about loss of agency claiming; 'This lack of a rounded theory of subjectivity or agency conflicts with a fundamental aim of the feminist project , to rediscover and re-evaluate the experiences of women' (1992:3). Arguably, this may be true of, for example, Foucault's earlier works that concentrated on the predominantly discursive (passive) subject, but the

---

conceive of themselves, speak about themselves, judge themselves and conduct themselves in new ways.

refining of his later works on ‘technologies’ (1988), and the way this has been taken up, for example by Nikolas Rose in the form of enterprising selves (1998), and further in empirically based work ( Skeggs, 1997a; Reay, 1998a; Lawler, 2000a; Walkerdine *et al*, 2001), offers us a theoretical basis through which to think about a more active, (though not necessarily cognitively centred), subject. McNay makes some concessions though, citing Foucault’s final works on technologies of the self as a change in emphasis, a turn to the self, and away from the docile bodies theorized in his earlier work (1979). Indeed, the relationships Foucault outlines between truth, self and power become evident in the dis-identifications brought to bear by the women in the study when they negotiate and enact, (in discursive terms), particular subject positions. I am loath then to jettison the relationship between self, truth and power that Foucault elaborates.

Still, agency cannot be privileged; it stands in conjunction with relations of desire, rather than embedded in the sorts/ senses of self that inhabit psycho-medical discourse. This representation of desire as immanent and productive, (for good or bad), is unlike the Freudian notion of psychoanalytic desire; which Deleuze and Guattari claim is part of a discursive knowledge complex organised to contain and order ‘disorderly’ desire.<sup>2</sup> Deleuze and Foucault’s theorizations converge around desire, ‘There is only desire and the social and nothing else’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004:31) (original emphasis); here desire sustains the organisation of both subject and knowledge/ power relations regardless of whether such interactions occur positively or negatively. This, then, is a subject both inessential and rendered an effect of flows and intensities. Furthermore, in ‘Preface to Anti-Oedipus’, Foucault entreats us to displace those Freudian/ Marxian analyses that centre the (essential) self in favour of theories of desire, and urges us to; ‘prefer what is possible and multiple, difference over uniformity, flows over unities,

---

<sup>2</sup> Desire works, in perpetuity, to produce a subject in constant flux as, ‘the self that awaited is already dead, or the one that would await it has not yet arrived’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:198-9 cited in Patton 2000:87). This is a concept that fits well with identifications/ dis-identifications and a vision of ‘freedoms’, not as power overthrown, but as indicative of shifting social relations. The promise of the self and its dissatisfactions are, in this study, located around mothering discourse and the implications of cultural capitals.

mobile arrangements over systems. Believe that what is productive is not sedentary, but nomadic' (Foucault, 2000:109).

In proposing the nomadic here, Foucault provides a bridge from his work to that of Deleuze, and towards the implication of the self in self-production; yet the nomadic is not effortless. Phillip Goodchild suggests interpreting 'the nomadic' as a repudiation of subjective ultimate goals/ directions in favour of 'A wandering along a multiplicity of lines of flight that lead away from centres of power' (1996:2). On the one hand there are liberatory tones at work here for subjectivity, yet the works of Deleuze and Guattari, whilst inviting freedoms, also take account of barriers to those same freedoms; namely 'values, expectations, economic structures and political entities, whether real or imaginary, [which] provide a script for social agents who merely play out the role', (Goodchild 1996:2). It is in this sense that Deleuze and Guattari precisely oppose psy disciplines, for by inviting freedoms to explore/ direct and explain selfhood, these knowledges curtail and repress the subject; they interrupt the flows and intensities of desire which they theorise as working through subjects. Deleuze and Guattari's subject does not stand apart from the immanent planes of desire that constitute assemblages, it is immersed in it. The tension remains then between structure and agency, and though, Deleuze and Guattari go some way in theorising this tension between the subject and values/ conventions; still, 'the nomadic' suggests the implication in social space of subjects who are always possible/ transformative/ transgressive.

I later resume this point, using Bourdieu's literatures to explore the resistances at work in the interviews, and Deleuze and Guattari do provide space for the disappointments in creating selves. Foucault's creative process of self construction provided in his technology of self, truth and power (1988), is echoed in the Deleuzian concept of 'lines of flight'. Patton explains that though these 'lines correspond to different ways of organising and occupying space' (2000:66), arranged across social space according to institutional and territorial divisions; the subject remains a composite of those lines. That the subject is a dynamic and

uncertain construction, Patton considers, arises from unpredictable reactions between lines.<sup>3</sup> This then, is not an overly optimistic analysis of the subject; and one that perhaps reflects the tensions contained in the research material; between subjects, capitals, fiscal and moral economies. Patton notes the immanence and implication of the subject do not guarantee positive movements;

Deleuze and Guattari's argument is not that lines of flight will always turn out badly, but that they may do so, for example, in the absence of productive connections with other forces, or in the aftermath of an all encompassing or too abrupt refusal of one's past or prior self (2000:87).

To expand this understanding of the Deleuzian subject, Rose's (1998) discussion is noteworthy. Noting that, for Deleuze, subjectivity assembles around four axes; Rose's account is useful in placing the subject as both interleaving with, and interrupted by, systems of knowledge production;

The first....concerns aspects of human being that are to be surrounded and enfolded...., the self and aspirations, perhaps, for our own period. The second, the relation between forces, concerns the rule according to which the relation between forces becomes a relation to oneself...., in our own day, perhaps the rule veers between the psychotherapeutic and the stylistic....The third, the fold of knowledge or fold of truth, arises in that each relation to oneself is organised on the subjectification of knowledge and hence the relation of our being to truth, whether that truth be theological, philosophical or psychological. The fourth fold.....is the fold of hope-for immortality, eternity, salvation, freedom, death, or detachment. And subjectivity, then is the interplay of the multiple variability of these folds, of their diverse rhythms and patterns (Rose 1998:190).

There are connections then, between Foucault and the work of Deleuze and Guattari that, taken up by theorists of subjectivity, continue to inform current analyses<sup>4</sup>. Judith Butler works through Foucault and Deleuze to question the subject as object, and in Gender Trouble (1999), brings the outside processes that constitute personhood back into view, appealing for a feminist notion of

---

<sup>3</sup> To expand, Patton continues; 'It is both the line of maximal creative potential and the line of greatest damage, offering at once the possibility of greatest joy and that of the most extreme anguish' (2000:66).

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Grosz (1994) uses Deleuze to conceptualise the body and social as seamless and intertwined.

‘woman’ as subject; she goes so far as to question the construction of gender that serves the feminist project;

The masculine/feminine binary constitutes, not only the exclusive framework in which the specificity can be recognised, but in every other way the ‘specificity’ of the feminine is once again fully decontextualised and separated off analytically and politically from the constitution of class, race, ethnicity and other axes of power relations that both constitute ‘identity’ and make the singular notion of identity a misnomer (Butler, 1999:7).

Butler’s discussions on the (gendered) subject are thought provoking and direct us toward thinking the gendered subject anew.<sup>5</sup> Chapter Three brings her work on performativity into the debate. Here, though, her discussion above alerts us to the privileging of forms of identity that are comprehended as singularly one-dimensional.

Yet Butler’s formations are a relatively recent development of subject theory. Much of the current work on the self owes a huge debt to the seminal work Changing the Subject; Psychology, Social Regulation and Subjectivity (Henriques et al 1998). The relevance of this text to the debate on subjectivity continues and this collection of writings provides instructive and transformational, (especially at the time of first publication), conceptions of how selves might be produced by and through discourse and how such productions remain oppositional to the unitary, rational subject that dominate(d) social sciences. The aim of this collection was, ‘to point towards recognition of the complexity of the relation between culture and psyche in the production of subjectivity and identity’ (Henriques et al, 1998: x). This is a theme central to the identities examined here; the exchanges between representations, gender, distinctions and power relations that emerge in the transmission of psycho-medical discourse evidently disable any notion of a

---

<sup>5</sup> Certainly, I hope to account in this study, for the ways in which the maternal subject is, in a sense, de-classed ‘decontextualised and separated off analytically and politically from the constitution of class...’, not simply through the shoring up of the child by machineries of expertise, but also through political drives for good ( and classless) citizenship. Correspondingly, I hope, in this study, to show that maternal instinct, the singular defining feature through which mothering identity is structured through power/knowledge complexes, exceeds its boundaries and is complicated through the intersections and disidentifications of class, femininity, citizenship and the child.

unitary subject. Furthermore, the methodological approach of Henriques *et al*; a psycho-social approach which draws in part from Foucault, (meanings become dominant through socially practised power relations), and indeed, presents a critique of mainstream psychology's obsession with the centred self, clearly investigates the subject body in social space. The work of Grosz<sup>6</sup> (1994) and Butler (1999) can be seen to continue and extend fragments of those discussions initiated in Henriques *et al* (1998); as bodies (here discussed in Chapter Five), and their recognition, reinstate the role of social relations through, 'actions that performatively institute ways of being and doing, that is to say, that performatively instantiate particular identities and subjectivities' (Henriques *et al*, 1998; xv) (my emphasis). Such actions find their expression through and within systems of 'psy' knowledge.

### **'Psy' disciplines**

'Truth' is linked in a circular relation with systems of power that produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it - a 'regime' of truth (Foucault, 2000:133).

Theories of the self are a kind of currency through which power over the mind is defined and extended (Hutton, 1988:135).

....the ethics of subjectivity are inextricably locked into the procedures of power (Rose, 1998:79).

---

<sup>6</sup> Grosz's work (1994), discussed in more detail in Chapter Five, continues within a Deleuzian schema, and posits the interleaving of the body/mind with external referents (psy knowledge systems/techniques). Grosz employs the concept of the Mobius strip to dismantle body/mind interiority and exteriority. This is a concept that works well with the work presented in this study, as systems of knowledge and government work upon the maternal subjects here through appeals to instinct and traits written on and in the female body;

The Mobius strip has the advantage of showing the inflection of mind into body and body into mind, the ways in which, through a kind of twisting and inversion, one side becomes another. This model also provides a way of problematizing and rethinking the relations between the inside and the outside of the subject, its psychological interior and its corporeal exterior, by showing not their fundamental identity or reducibility but the torsion of the one into the other...(Grosz 1994: xii).

The extensive systems and techniques generated through psy disciplines (scrutinised in this study through the link between child development and Freudian models of the psyche) must, as Hutton notes above, lead us to consider psychoanalysis itself as a discourse, immersed in, and derived from a historical narrative of self help; reformulated in medical terms to receive the stamp of truth and authority. Nikolas Rose (1999a) takes up Foucault's links between the will to power of psycho-medico institutions and the production of self and, in framing the development of institutions as a means of surveillance over the 'masses' borne out of a fear of social disorder, he questions the philanthropist basis of an emerging welfare state. An important step in tracing the project of the self; his work Governing the Soul; The Shaping of the Private Self (1999a) historically situates the central role of the family, (and the position of mother), as forming the bed-rock of patriarchal capitalism; at once supporting a capitalist economy through the reproduction of the workforce (the socialisation of children), and providing unpaid domestic labour. It is against these foundational assumptions and the development of recording, (as a means of governing populations), that Rose charts the production and representation of norms, the familial discourse and the subsequent demand for expertise. Thus, normality becomes, '... not an observation, but a valuation. It contains not only a judgement about what is desirable, but an injunction as to a goal to be achieved' (Rose, 1999a:133), and following this, attending to the self, or making a particular subject position, (for example, mother), becomes both a task and a basis for identity.

Rose's concerns with issues of governmentality continue with Powers of Freedom (1999b); not only are we 'urged to educate and bridle one's own passions, to control one's own instincts, to govern oneself' (1999b:3), but also, to think about who 'we' are; to be reflexive and more importantly become an active social agent. This self-actualising agent, Rose claims, becomes active in the process of government/ citizen work to manage capacities and development through work, education, and community. In this respect, Rose considers citizenship to become a capacity for government rather than a possession of the individual, and it is in this sense that I later present the new moral citizen as congruent to 'nation' and 'civil

society', ( insofar as nation means full participation in neo-liberal global economy).

Of course, Donzelot, had earlier begun an examination of this policing process in The Policing of Families, and firmly placed psychoanalysis at the centre of the birth of the self; 'Psychoanalysis supplies-directly or indirectly-responses of a regulatory and non-coercive type' (Donzelot 1997; xxiv). Donzelot's observation that 'values and norms are made to float in relation to one another, enabling the individual to circulate back and forth between them', reifies something that is central to the work of Giles Deleuze, who penned the foreword, 'The Rise of The Social' to Donzelot's publication. It is Deleuze, here, and in jointly authored works with Guattari, who opens up investigations into the role of desire/ power and self; and in restoring Donzelot's notion of the spaces between individuals and values/ norms, urges us to attend to the 'lines of mutation' deriving from the action within these spaces (Deleuze, 1997: x).

For Deleuze, it is in this transformation, in this mutation, that the surface of the social is reconfigured and where ultimately our understandings of self are informed. To clarify, for Deleuze and Guattari, the unconscious, key to legitimated understandings, not only of self, but more importantly, of the specific subject positions of mother/ child investigated here; cannot be located in the subject. Rather, 'the unconscious, which always lies outside the individual, is shaped by the affects that seize it' (Goodchild, 1996: 170). Relations of power remain intact then, and dispute the essential psychological and cognitive subject. Following these theoretical formulations which note the repressive nature of psychology<sup>7</sup> to the project of the self (Foucault, 1988, 1990, 2000); Deleuze, 2000; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987); psychoanalysis nevertheless remains evident<sup>8</sup> as an instrument of desire in producing selves. Indeed, the works of these theorists

---

<sup>7</sup> Rose (1998) charts the promise of psychology to provide devices of inscription to mark and make 'others'. Among those devices, Rose notes the various applications of the psychological test to decide destinies (i.e. for special needs children, job interviews etc.).

<sup>8</sup> On analysis of the data it becomes increasingly apparent that such formulations are wholly seductive and significant in mapping the complex interplay between subjects and psycho-medical discourse.

map neatly onto one another, and Deleuze's exposition on Foucault (2000) remains testament to their dual concerns about the surface of the self and the social.

A 'genealogy of subjectification' (Rose,1998:23); a concern with the practices by which the self comes to be known, is central to this study and in Inventing Our Selves; Psychology, Power and Personhood (1998), Nikolas Rose posits a self that arises wholly through the inter- dependency of psy disciplines across a range of sites according to the 'heterogeneity of authority'(1998:27), rather than understood as a site of psychological and interiorised understanding, (a historical narrative); this reiterates my discussion in the previous section relating to the interchange between bodies, minds and systems of knowledge. Moreover, Rose points up a central problematic in deploying a social constructionist approach to the self. For Rose, attempts to simply 'deconstruct' psy and its systems of organisation , in order to reveal a truth upon which they are based are futile since, 'as part of a complex and heterogeneous network,...many of the parts which come from elsewhere are stabilised by being locked into other circuits activity, technique and artefact' (1998:52). Though the aim of this study is necessarily to examine the mechanisms through which subjectivity and power/knowledge complexes are imbricated, and certainly expertise provides a language with which to 'speak' the subject; I am in agreement with Rose that ;

it is a vain exercise to seek to 'deconstruct' ...by revealing the processes upon which ... truth claims depend: something unsayable may lie at the heart of knowledge, but it is neither its origin or its death knell (1998:53).

Underpinning Chapter Four is a concern with the ways seemingly universal, a-historical truths about the nature of self/child can be adapted to fit to current concerns and social imaginings constitutive of good society. Child psychological theory is governed, for the most part, by a set of stock theoretical psychological frameworks, predominant figures remain Bowlby (1953, 1973), Winnicot (1958, 1964, 1965) and to a lesser extent, Klein (see Mitchell [1986] for a review of Klein's writings). Of course, the literatures that critique these theories maintain that even as these psycho-biological underpinnings seek to translate motherhood, (and associated discourses around moral worth/ femininity), into a universal

subject; into this a-historical fabrication creep unsettling notions of difference and dis-identification. Moreover these literatures take issue with the interpretative work that occurs in the transmission of psy knowledge as it is transformed into parenting manuals, parenting magazines, television 'documentaries' and pamphlets circulated at the clinic (Urwin,1985).

There is a group of literatures here that approaches a critique of that particular and enduring formation of maternal subjectivity which developed in accordance with the demands of post war child developmental theory (Phoenix *et al*, 1991; Riley, 1983; Singer, 1992; Doane & Hodges, 1992). The latter publication, (Doane and Hodges, 1992), critiques those core psychoanalytic texts that attempt to locate maternal subjects, particularly Winnicott's (1965) construction of the 'good enough' mother denied any agency. Doane and Hodges point is precisely; "'Good enough" according to whom? How are standards of maternal propriety established and maintained?' (1992:1); these questions point up major concerns around psychoanalytic feminism's embracing of British object relations theory, a union that Doane and Hodges claim denies maternal ( and ultimately non-maternal ) agency; they note,

Much of the writing[we analyze] is implicitly or explicitly prescriptive: it defines femininity in relation to mothering and then establishes women's agency as a set of approved behaviours towards infants, infants whose 'selves' are described as if there were no problem determining the contents of their unconscious (1992:1).

Furthermore they critique Chodorow's (1978) attempts to make maternal subjectivity an origin/cause, claiming this key feminist sociological research is similarly constraining. Rather, their discussion centres around the ways in which the subject position 'mother' cannot escape those subjectifications laid down in these core theories of the self and child.

Further, Denise Riley (1983) brings identity squarely into the political field. Riley's critique rests on the failure of the post war child psychology theories to address the social, cultural and economic considerations inherent in maternal subjectivity. Such theories ignore, Riley claims, the exigencies of housing and

economics, 'development happens on a terrain of pure (inter) individuality' (1983:20) and to this effect isolate the mother/child dyad. Presenting a historical analysis of the mother/child relationship, Riley demonstrates the ways in which the space left in the national psyche when women left 'production' was replaced by the 'creativity' of motherhood; the nurturing of the child's psyche. The needs of mothers in post war Britain were translated into the stasis or site of motherhood as a social function, and as Riley notes; 'motherhood as self evident value at the same time works directly against any admission of the real needs of women with children' (1983:154). This is something that is similarly addressed in Singer (1992)<sup>9</sup> and Silva (1996). I note here also a group of work, which though working from the subject position of childhood, demonstrates the ways in which psychology, the natural, and (historically) interiority, have worked not only to anchor subject positions (of mother/ child), but also to conceal the social and cultural affects those positions are embedded in (Stedman, 1995; Jenks, 1996; Woodhead, 1990).

### **Surveillance**

Power is not something that is acquired, seized or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations. Relations of power are not in a position of exteriority with respect to other types of relationships (economic processes, knowledge relationships, sexual relations), but are immanent in the latter; they are the immediate effects of the divisions, inequalities, and disequilibriums which occur in the latter, and conversely they are the internal differentiations; relations of power are not in superstructural positions, with merely a role of prohibition or accompaniment; they have a directly productive role, whenever they come into play (Foucault, 1990:94).

Tracing governance of the self involves a genealogy, an excavation. The self, as Foucault claims, has its roots in the ethos of those religious Eighteenth Century institutions that built upon the act of confessional disclosure, and in his seminar / publication Technologies of the Self (Martin et al, 1988), Foucault, drawn to the proximity between self and power, demonstrates therein the classical, and later religious, origins of the act of disclosure in so far as they became implicated in the

---

<sup>9</sup> With mother becoming 'psychic organiser' of the child (Singer, 1992:97).

construction/ constitution of new selves, (previously bound up with Christian renunciation). The later embracing of science and reason under the project of the Enlightenment, advocating liberation from religious order, become revealed, through Foucault's excavations, as complicit with the constraining and constructing of boundaries for human behaviour. Here, science led to measurement and the calibration, codifying and quantification of behaviours.<sup>10</sup> The central tenet of Foucault's work is in tracing the path of this policing process, from the religious through to the legal, the medical and the psychological, and ultimately to the regulation of, not only 'deviant' behaviour, but also normal behaviour. These concerns are relevant to the production of those subject positions that inhabit this study (mothers, children, citizens) and the contemporary networks that govern the self. Truth, power and the self constitute, for Foucault, a linked triad; and become 'technologies'<sup>11</sup> of the self (1988). An examination of the shaping and re-shaping of human practice over time by events, and how this process sediments within multiplicities (objects, domains, layers) that attenuate causal and deterministic patterns; Foucault's genealogical endeavour reveals particular historical moments where discourses become constraint.

The government and ordering of democratic selves then, is a complex process, and Walkerdine & Lucey's foundational critique of the democratic unitary (gendered) subject in Democracy in the Kitchen; Regulating Mothers and Socialising Daughters (1989) is exemplary in theorizing the classed and constructing practices embedded in these very psycho-medical models. Examining the research of Tizard and Hughes, Walkerdine and Lucey highlighted the normalisation of rhetoric, which places the mother as pedagogue, and the implications this holds for gendered classed subjectivity; such work was pivotal in

---

<sup>10</sup> See Rose (1999) for a comprehensive overview of the birth of psychological knowledge and its applications.

<sup>11</sup> Moreover, these technologies become evident in Chapter Four, where I discuss the role of child developmental knowledge with the mothers. Disclosures there reveal the lines of connection between self, power and truth; taking on a maternal identity elicits certain practices and values which become legitimated through the authority of psycho-biology, or more broadly, as Foucault names it, 'bio-power'. Paul Rabinow (1996) considers 'bio-power' and its extensive authority as defining, under what conditions we apply the terms 'human' or 'life'.

bringing class into the discussion of subjectivity.<sup>12</sup> Tizard and Hughes originally focused on interactions between middle class and working class mothers and their daughters, their subsequent analysis marking the interactions of working class mothers as 'equal but different'. Yet Walkerdine and Lucey's re-interpretation of the research posits the research outcomes as instantiating classed difference and distinction. The authors eloquently claim that the working class mothers and daughters of the study, and their refusal to sublimate their power in the mother/child relationship, (to make their power invisible), troubles psychological regimes of child care/development and further, the project of the democratic citizen. Marked as 'different', these working class mothers and daughters were, in effect, problematized and pathologized by Tizard and Hughes for not conforming to a classed and culturally instantiated version of subjectivity/ 'technique'. Contending that difference is here made into inequality and further that the basis of preferred techniques rests on broader issues of (gendered) class position; Walkerdine and Lucey conclude that transforming childrearing into pedagogy fails, not only working class, but middle class daughters, (and mothers to be), in a patriarchal society divided by class and gender. Such concerns form the basis of issues discussed in Chapter Four around psy disciplines, but remain consequential throughout this study. The psycho- social methodology and Foucauldian approach applied by Walkerdine is traceable through key works considered in the course of this analysis (Walkerdine, 1990; Walkerdine & Lucey, 1989; Walkerdine, Lucey & Melody, 2001; Reay, 1998a; Lawler, 2000a).

### **Knowledgeled selves?**

The links between knowledge, systems, techniques and the self have been explored here using key literatures relevant to the themes of this study; self, psy and surveillance. This is a subject then, that lends itself, though not exclusively, to Foucault's coalition between self/ truth and power; whose subjectivity is informed by the social and cultural, as in Foucault's later work on 'technologies' (1988), yet remains, as Goodchild notes, 'merely a surface effect of

---

<sup>12</sup> The influence of this text cannot be overlooked, it opened the way to discuss subjectivity within and across gender, race and class in feminist works (see Lawler, 2000a; Skeggs, 1997b, 2004; Reay, 1998a, 1998b).

resonance'(1996:151). For me, it is not that this is flawed, but that it is overly optimistic; too easily transformational perhaps; though I have noted that Deleuze makes space for the unsatisfactory outcomes of 'lines of flight'. Whilst it is adequate in demonstrating, in conjunction with interview material discussed later, the interleaving of the subject and systems/ networks of power (here, psy disciplines); I am not satisfied that such theorizations wholly point up the ways subjects recognise constraints (or 'feel' them at a subjective level); we need something to elucidate the uncertain and anxious 'doing' of personhood, yet not return us to the depth, (the psychological/ psychoanalytic), of the subject. For these reasons, the stepping stone to theorizing the efforts and effects of subjects within and across social relations, which, for the women of this study centred on class, gender and psycho-medical discourse, can be found by applying Bourdieu's empirically developed tools around cultural capital and habitus (2005). Though it is an attenuated link, the 'lines of flight'<sup>13</sup> and of 'mutation' (see later in next section) that Deleuze invokes, sit well with the focus of Bourdieu's concerns<sup>14</sup>, that is, the dynamic and shifting nature of social/cultural capital.

---

<sup>13</sup> I see a similarity between 'lines of flight', which escape across the terrain of the social and work organically to change meanings, and the shifts that are negotiated across social relations and fields (Bourdieu , 2005).

<sup>14</sup> Deleuze considers subjectivation as a 'folding' in relation to four axes. Briefly, the fold of materiality (corporeal desires), the fold of forces (power relations which induce desire for natural or aesthetic forms), the fold of knowledge ( the relation of truth to being and vice versa, that Deleuze deems conditional for knowledge production) and the fold of exteriority, ( expectations are interiorised) (see Rose, 1998: Deleuze, 2000). What is interesting here, is that Deleuze considers 'foldings' as a form of memory; 'Memory is the real name of the relation to oneself, or the affect on self by self'(2000:107). In saying this, he is careful to clarify that this is not simply a question of a mere opposition to forgetting, but rather, in his terms, 'absolute memory' is that:

.....which doubles the present and the outside and is one with forgetting, since it is itself endlessly forgotten and reconstituted: its fold in fact merges with the unfolding, because the latter remains present within the former as the thing that is folded Only forgetting (the unfolding) recovers what is folded in memory ( and in the fold itself ) (2000:107) (my emphasis).

This notion of memory sits easily with Bourdieu's concept of habitus;

The habitus-embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history-is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product. As such, it is what gives practices their relative autonomy with respect to external determinations of the immediate present. This autonomy is that of the past, enacted and acting, which, functioning as accumulated capital, produces history on the basis of history and so ensures the permanence in change that makes the individual agent a world within a world (Bourdieu, 1999:56) (my emphasis).

In bringing Bourdieu to the table, the analysis can go further in delineating just what enables/ disables selves in social space and this takes us to the second section ('distinction'), where literatures that incorporate his interpretations and have been relevant to this study are reviewed.

### **DISTINCTION**

Though by no means all the literatures reviewed here use Bourdieu to demonstrate the workings of class, a great majority do. I sub divide this section into two parts. The first examines those literatures that inform this study and extend Bourdieu's analysis of capitals. The second; those literatures that take issue with current rhetoric of classlessness and make evident the survival of class for personhood, here I also examine those literatures that historically trace the classed self (and childhood interiority), in order that we may see how we arrive at this particular point in time regarding worthy and distinctive citizens. An analysis of class and distinction appends the previous discussions on power/ knowledge and is pertinent to the study of subjectivity, given the central role of the mother child dyad in envisioning the 'good' society.

#### **Class and capitals**

In the theorization of social action as always embodied (of the social as incorporated into the body), of power as subtly inculcated through the body, of social action generative, and in his emphasis on the politics of cultural authorisation, recognition and social position taking, Bourdieu's social theory offers numerous points of connection to contemporary feminist theory (Adkins, 2003:5).

---

Both theorists then render the subject at once dynamic but not 'forgetful'. But what Bourdieu adds to an analysis of subject positions is the limit to exchanges, these habitus are not ultimately or effortlessly transgressive. For Bourdieu subject relations are always limited within social space, and transactions/ mobility there are confounded by pre-scripted, (though ultimately dynamic), forms of cultural (and moral) protectionism. Bourdieu and recent scholastic extensions of his theories (Savage, 2000; Skeggs, 2004, 2005; Lawler, 2005; Reay, 2005) provide then a way of situating uncertain and fragmented subjects, particularly so, given the moral climate of late capitalist society. Deleuze goes some way to accommodate this in his rendering of lines of flight that do not guarantee positive outcomes (Patton, 2000).

Bourdieu's methodological tools, have been taken up in the literatures discussed here as attempts to express how the subject and social space are negotiated. The women in this study negotiate their subjectivity and value in and around power relations with knowledge, but the second theme of this study remains distinction, and here the theorists whose work I examine are concerned with classed distinctions; the ways which, even as the emancipatory self project of neo-liberalist politics promises to eradicate class, difference is made, and symbolic violence enacted.

Subjects are implicated in a network of social and cultural formations and the drive to distinction; to produce a self, is based on social and cultural relations. The problem I face in limiting the analysis to those literatures that derive from a Foucaultian perspective, is that of the subject as totally delimited, a self for itself, unaffected by class, economics, gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, disability. We have the sense of a subject implicated in these machineries, but it is a subject that is equally specific. Earlier, I noted the dissatisfaction of Riley (1983) and McNay (1992, 2000) with much of the theoretical work attributed to post-structuralist theories of the self, on the grounds that such frameworks ignore corporeality/physicality and moreover treat selves as purely and effortlessly transformational. By applying the work of Bourdieu (2005) to the analysis, (and those works that gain inspiration from his empirical basis), we see that bodies are indeed implicated in social relations, and classed/ cultural distinctions stand prohibitive to transformation. Much of the feminist work across class and gender (Lawler, 2000a; Skeggs, 1997a; Reay, 1998a), that takes up Bourdieu's theoretical insights are invaluable in making sense of the dis-identifications and misrecognitions (Fraser & Honneth, 2003) that emplot (maternal) subjectivities.

Empirical work has shown the complex relationship between the accumulation of capitals and class; the dis-identifications that sometimes trouble the self and at other times provide a safe return to 'authenticity'. Steph Lawler (1999b) explains this relationship in terms of the 'fractured' habitus; here, habitus becomes fragmented, as one's classed roots, foundational to the self one has subsequently

become, remain socially informative and identificatory.<sup>15</sup> Empirical work that investigates the figure of the child and educational concerns (Reay, 1998a; Ball, 2003) reiterate those same fractures, anxieties and dis-identifications around class (be)longings for mothers and their children; with the child implicit in, not only, the movement of self (albeit vicariously)<sup>16</sup> across social field, but in the accumulation of worth.

Much of the literature that follows is a development of the themes Bourdieu elaborates in Distinction around cultural capitals, habitus and field, though their feminist interpretation and attention to the changes in both cultural and political landscapes<sup>17</sup> is precisely relevant to the subject matter of this study. Bourdieu's tools then, his analysis of both cultural and economic space, and of habitus, offer a method of investigating power structures and subjectivities without a return to psychoanalytic depth. Moreover, Lisa Adkins notes;

.....feminism itself no longer posits the sex/ gender distinction as one of its key objects, a social theory which does not place the concept of gender as central to its vision of the social- and particularly one which has at its core a critique of idealist thinking-precisely opens itself out to contemporary feminism (2004:4).

Beverley Skeggs' publication Formations of Class and Gender (1997a) put the issue of classed distinction, an area that was relatively under researched at that time, squarely on the feminist agenda. Skeggs provides a detailed ethnographic research, and applies Bourdieu's framework of capital to examine how women inhabit class, femininity and sexuality. The key argument Skeggs proposes is the

---

<sup>15</sup> It is worth noting here, however, that fracture is always a working class position. Working class is always positioned as lack, with social movement 'from (below)-to (above)' rendering the fracture between what one was and what one has become. Such fractures do not form the habitus of those who do not move across classed space. Depending on the field, of course, such identifications can work negatively or positively. The women in Skeggs (1997a) take delight in at once dis-identifying with the middle classes, nevertheless, they still scrutinise their own positions, anxious that they may be positioned, in relation to the middle classed, as lacking.

<sup>16</sup> Diane Reay's (1998a) study of mothers of school children testifies to the anxieties reflected in producing investments for and of the child. Systems, networks and capitals were vitally relevant to ensure the child's transition across social space.

irreducibility of class only to economic or fiscal matters, and the rich data she offers in the text demonstrate the vitally cultural and symbolic codes that instantiate class as they translate into real concerns about respectability, normality/ pathology and complex dis-identifications. These same concerns resonate in empirical works that reiterate Skeggs' demand to bring class into the debate on (female) subjectivity; (see Lawler; 2000a, 2000b, 2004; Reay, 1996,1998a,1998b, 2004; Walkerdine, Lucey &Melody, 2001; Haylett 2001, 2003; McRobbie, 2004). Moreover, Skeggs ethnographic research is underpinned by a desire to stem the 'retreat from class'; she makes a case for the inclusion of 'other' voices,

When a retreat from class is mounted we need to ask whose experiences are being silenced, whose lives are being ignored and whose lives are considered worthy of study (Skeggs, 1997a:7).

The capital frameworks outlined by Bourdieu in Distinction (2005) make cultural capital exchangeable only when it is legitimised and converted into symbolic capital. For this purpose, capital has to be recognised as legitimate, and this returns us to the question of 'who decides?' The analysis Skeggs (1997a) provides, regarding the legitimisation of capitals, (as indicative of worth and inherently a middle class decision adopted to exclude 'others'), is extended further in Class, Self, Culture (2004), where 'use' and 'exchange' of capitals across class that apportion worth and value are intricately theorized. Skeggs' point is that whilst some capitals, once achieved, retain use-value (apportioned to the self itself), such capital is not always exchangeable across the cultural field; this field being subject, as it were, to culturally instantiated boundaries that require so much more than the notational capital achieved and advanced (additional capitals could be, for example, parentage, education, informal friendships etc). Class, Self and Culture presents a theoretical analysis of the points raised by Skeggs' previous ethnographic study and provides abstractions that point up the complex endemic patterns of class distinction inhabiting and maintaining western liberalist economies. What Skeggs does here is to challenge seeing systems of capital

---

<sup>17</sup> Adkins notes that feminist theorists are, in a post-gender sociological critique, 'reworking and redefining the contours of the social as a new ground for feminist theory' (2004:5).

simply in terms of distribution across social space. Where Bourdieu's concerns lie with distribution (exchange value), Skeggs notes such exchanges similarly apportion recognition whilst diminishing the place of use-value. Skeggs analysis takes issue with collapsing use and exchange into a single model of distribution, because this de-values working classed lives.<sup>18</sup> This slippage of use into exchange devalues, Skeggs claims, on two counts;

... by hiding the workings of power (in the Bourdeurian sense), and also hiding the value of the working class. Recognition struggles are not only about the relative rates of exchange of different forms of capital, but also about the relative worth (use- value) of different kinds of goods/categories of people (2004:147).

Class here is instated as a cultural property; a re-consideration, in our de-industrialised age, of the Marxian concept of class emergent from relationship to means of production, so class inhabits a range of sites (becoming a 'property' of the self).<sup>19</sup> The subject positions under study here, 'mother/child', (one is constitutive of the other), and its conjunction with moral economy/ femininity/ citizenship is a site that differently apportions, if we apply Skeggs' terms, the use and exchange of capitals.

### **Emotion, affect and instantiating classlessness**

As I note in the Introduction, class and distinction are central concerns of this thesis and a great majority of works that frame this study have been borne out of dissatisfaction with the ways in which class and the subject have been theorised and ultimately diminished in both public and academic accounts. The Death of

---

<sup>18</sup> Whilst I do not wish to rehearse this argument here, Skeggs demonstrates that working classed effects must be known as valuable, or else why would the middle class affect them; strip them for their own use? Skeggs makes the point that an 'aestheticization of the everyday' (2005:136) takes place, as the middle classes 'sample' aspects of working class culture, often as a form of irony (i.e 'slackers') However, the ultimate irony remains that the middle class are themselves marked as immoral, snobbish, pretentious and competitive (Skeggs, 1997a). In a turn about, it is, this time, the middle class who fail 'to get it right'.

<sup>19</sup> Skeggs argues that even as Bourdieu refutes the concept of self as 'project' or coherent, preferring to see selves as 'disciplined bodies' determined by habit, he nevertheless makes investment the stuff of social relations, of accumulating value (and futures). So, Investment must be about a projection into the future of a self/ space/ body with value. We only make investments in order to accrue value when we can conceive of a future in which that value can have a use (2004:146).

Class (Pakulski & Waters 1996) was a summary execution of class, validated by the authors through reference to a changing de-industrial and global economic landscape. For the most part, discussions around class have been replaced by intimations of a classless society under the banner of risk (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1998, 2000), though more recent scholastic work continues to outline the symbolic violence of class affects (Skeggs, 2004; Reay, 2005; Ball, 2003; Lawler 2004, 2005; Charlesworth, 2000).

The new moral economy derives from political concerns to democratize according to a 'Third Way'.<sup>20</sup> This model, claiming to eschew neo-liberalism whilst dismantling the social democratic ideals of post war consensus, works through a discourse of social capital. Yet this is a discourse that, though claiming to encourage policy changes that are community-driven (bottom up), does in effect, 'disguise the reality of top-down policy implementation' (Gamarnikow & Green, 1999:4). The rhetoric of classlessness has found purchase in political circles<sup>21</sup>, in large part, through sociological writings concerned with the consequences of globalisation and by extension, reinterpretations around the moral nature of citizenship. The work of Beck (1992), Beck et al (1994) and Giddens (1998, 2000), are attempts to re-work notions of civil society, trust and opportunity as a response to the fragmentation of de-industrialised, globalised social relations. Little attention however, is given to social inequalities or economic polarization in these works, and rather, state policies have been realised through a deficit model (of working class lack) in order to invoke the inclusive society. Social capital

---

<sup>20</sup> See The Third Way to a Good Society Amitai Etzioni, Demos July 2000, for outline proposals of Third Way politics concerning citizenship and moral economy.

<sup>21</sup> Anthony Giddens's 'Third Way' theorizations (1998, 2000) largely informed the political ambitions of New Labour to find a middle ground between the neo-liberalist politics that framed the eighties and the social democratic ideals of post war economies. The development of a rhetoric of classlessness in the early nineties can be seen to arise from, not only a recognition of changing global economics and the demise of industrialisation, but also from political ambitions that recognised the inefficacy, for political projects of envisioning the inclusive (classless) society, that the underclass debates originating in the eighties offered. These factors coalesce as an attempt to make class disappear from public and private identifications.

concepts revolve around parents, welfare, education and community.<sup>22</sup> As Garmarnikow and Green note;

What this seems to indicate is that traditionally self-contained policy discourses are converging into a single explanatory framework; lack or loss of social capital explains unsuccessful outcomes and thus social capital building becomes an attractive strategy. The common thread is the rediscovery of civil society and its social foundation, trust (1999:4).

Mike Savage (2000, 2005) has written of the need to reinterpret class relations rather than dismiss them. Indeed, in response to claims by Giddens and Beck concerning the decline of class, Savage notes;

What Giddens and Beck read as the decline of class cultures and the rise of individualization should be better understood as the shift from working class to middle class modes of individualization (2000:xi).

Savage considers rather how class persists, in spite of individualization processes, and maintains that classed identities, however individualized, still draw upon relational comparisons with other classes. This formulation sees class spread across relations rather than producing the hierarchies associated with post war British analysis; the gaze sideways (as opposed to the gaze above or below) presents us, then, with a way to reinterpret class relations in a climate of progressive individualism; a reinterpretation that is intimately bound with inscribing difference and moral pronouncements. To place class in context, if we examine historical analyses of class (Finch, 1993; Roberts, 1995), we realise how little those class hierarchies based on economic production reflected the complexity of classed distinctions and the lives of 'ordinary working people', (Walkerdine, 1997:23; Charlesworth, 2000). Rather, the literatures here maintain that class remains dynamic and relational; so over and above the social, economic and material advancements that frame traditional class analysis, there exists a moral economy that continually draws upon processes of historical and political struggle.

---

<sup>22</sup> What is more, McRobbie notes (2000), is that Blair's Third Way politics attracts women voters for whom feminism has little appeal. Blair's community based rhetoric appeals to build social capital through the figure of the child, through proposals for widening participation, and egalitarian education policies.

Difference and problematized selves are central figures in Lawler's examination of mothers and children (2000a, 2004) as Lawler examines the construction of moral and proper selves through an analysis of 'fit' between maternal selves and the question of children's needs. Importantly, Lawler's analysis of the power relations immanent in the discursive construction of what constitutes children's needs and how they are best served, points up Nancy Fraser's observations around the political efficacy of 'thin' descriptions of 'needs talk' (1989); needs, which, for the women in my study are crucial to their constructions of self. Moral worth and future citizens are imbricated in any analysis of maternal subjects; these works point up and reiterate concerns raised around the status of childhood (and their guardians), as reflective of good society (Jenks, 1996<sup>23</sup>; Woodhead, 1990; James & Prout, 1990).

Continuities persist in the classing of selves as mothers and their children remain central to those classed constructions. In 'Mobs and Monsters; Independent Man meets Paulsgrove Woman' (Lawler, 2003), we confront again the classing gaze, as mothers and their children are scrutinized by broadsheet journalists for signs of moral citizenship; for possession of the correct and right amounts of moral and social capitals. Lawler considers the ways in which the middle class readership view the 'masses' as auto suggestible and in possessing a facile relationship to consumer culture (see Walkerdine, [1999] for further discussion). This disgust for the white working class is interesting, Lawler notes (2005a:430), for 'in a racializing move which, one might say, hyper-whitens them, there is, increasingly, an implicit coding of the 'working class' as white', from this Lawler imputes that whiteness is central to 'a continued disparagement' of all working classed lives (2005a:430), as 'an assumed ignorance and immorality is read off from an aesthetic which is constituted as faulty' (2005a:437). These fears and fascinations around working class existence are outlined elsewhere in Ian Roberts discussion

---

<sup>23</sup> Jenks notes the ways in which the child stands for the achievement of good society and studies of childhood develop around this feature; Jenks claims ;

..the child, as conceptualised both within the spectrum of everyday attitudes and the professional discourses of the social sciences, is employed, consciously though often unconsciously, as a device to propound versions of sociality and social cohesion (1996:9).

‘A Historical Construction of the Working Class’ (1999). Here, in an examination of early community studies, Roberts concludes such reports can be interpreted and invalidated as nothing more than middle class reportage, a mis-recognition of different lives; yet dangerous in that they serve to act as markers of class sensibilities.<sup>24</sup> Current constructions of the feckless, facile, white working class, Skeggs notes (2005), survive and take form in the figure of the ‘chav’, elsewhere Chris Haylett’s work (2001, 2003) on portrayals of ‘abject whites’<sup>25</sup> in policy initiatives renders any claims to classlessness wholly misleading.

Haylett has written (2001, 2003) about the place the white working class occupies in political imagination and the classifying practices policy makers impose upon poor white families as a form of ‘social racism’. Haylett argues that moves to welfare reform are invoked by more than concerns about economic impoverishment; ‘Theirs is also a cultural impoverishment, a poverty of identity based on outdated ways of thinking and being’ (2001:352). Moreover, she raises concerns about disparagement and/ or ‘retreat from people who are seen to embody an unsettling mix of whiteness, “working classness”, and poverty’ (2001:353).

Making and marking class continues as Nancy Fraser takes up issues of redistribution and misrecognition in her work, Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange ( with Axel Honneth, 2003), and gives us a way to hold onto the tangible effects of power relations, that is, inequalities deriving

---

<sup>24</sup> Similar caveats are raised in Carol Smart’s (1996) chapter ‘Deconstructing Motherhood’ in considering the tract of moral hygiene that attached itself to ‘woman’ through the efforts of late eighteenth century philanthropy and the rise of public records.

<sup>25</sup> It appears that advancements in recognising racial diversity have unfortunate implications, Chris Haylett (2001) notes, for constructions of a ‘too white’ working class. Haylett claims analyses of class have until recently been ‘squeezed out’ of academic discussion with poststructuralist developments in examination of other identity positions, though recent works by working classed academics have ignited a series of debates about racializing whiteness (Skeggs, 1997a; Lawler, 2003, 2005a; Roberts, 1999) However, Haylett’s main concern is the continual lack of space given over to positive representations of white working class in the public domain, this is most evident through welfare to work, New Deal policies etc and reiterates political concerns around ‘fit’ between ‘community’ and whiteness; she states ‘Might they be too ambiguous as victims? Too unfashionably unexotic? Too white?’ (2001:353).

from access to economic process and knowledge relations, without appearing to drown in the discourse of the discursive. For Fraser, we need to confront misrecognition but not at the cost of ignoring those tangible maldistributive effects of capitalist systems. Arguing that only,

....a framework that integrates the two analytically distinct perspectives of distribution and recognition can grasp the imbrication of class inequality and status hierarchy in contemporary society. The result is an account in which maldistribution is entwined with misrecognition but cannot be reduced to the latter (Fraser, 2003:3).

Drawing from the literatures here, mother/child subject positions, as central indicators of social order/disorder, turn on what constitutes worthy and valuable personhood, and must necessarily contend with pathology and problematization.

### **Distinctive selves?**

In the first section, 'knowledge', I examined literatures that presented a way of conceptualising the effects of desire; with desire the motor that organises components of systems (and subjects as integral components of that system); this gave an explanatory framework with which to overview the interdependency of systems, techniques and selves. By extension, the second section 'distinction', considers the immediacy and place of emotion, affect and the visceral in making and marking class and the worthy citizen; issues that are fundamental to the mothers interviewed here, and the moral implications inherent and read off potential citizens (children).

### **Literature summary**

Here, then, I have reviewed, under the expansive headings 'knowledge' and 'distinction', two of the main themes of the study. Foucault's claim that, 'it is one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals' (Foucault 1980:98), reflects the links made here to Bourdieu's study of distinction (2005); that is, the implication of power/ knowledge complexes in making and marking moral, worthy and recognisable identities. Correspondingly, in using

---

Deleuzian concepts of intensities and flows which work to dynamically sustain/mutate distinctions/class lines through subjects; a critical foil to criticisms concerning Bourdieu's concept of habitus is provided.<sup>26</sup>

Reviewing the literature concerning motherhood and subjectivity, I expected to be led to feminist literatures; and certainly more recent works<sup>27</sup> present insights into class, cultural capital and the self. Nevertheless, it struck me that much of this valuable literature has been fenced in by its feminist classification; there is much here that is perhaps untouched by scholars who prefer to eschew 'feminist' works. A great shame then, for much of this work centres on the family, childhood, selves, citizens and the realisation of capital; and informs across and within gender. Certainly there persist works (Campbell, 1993) that construct their feminist emphasis in pathologising and problematising the white working class male, and perhaps in the light of this, the taking up of feminine/ maternal positions by women/ mothers becomes an escape from classing and fear of slippage. Yet as we shall see in the following chapters there is no escape from class in terms of gender.

The crucial point is that these works reviewed here work across and within gender, thus opening up those very possibilities and 'lines of flight' Deleuze (Goodchild, 1996:2) alludes to. These then are the literatures that frame my analysis; a concern with the self and power, classed distinctions, use and exchange value, and the subject (mother/ child) as object of psycho-medical discourse. In setting out these themes, I now turn, in the next chapter to the interviews, to offer up what, for the mothers and children of this study, is the self itself.

---

<sup>26</sup> Bourdieu's concept of habitus has been criticised as somewhat reifying class as embodied (Smith, 2003:21), the property of the individual. However as a political and theoretical tool, habitus remains an important part of this analysis, a way of discussing the experiential, without returning to Freudian depth, and a way of demonstrating how inscription becomes institutionalised.

<sup>27</sup> Much 'first wave' feminist literatures (see Nicholson's edited collection, 1997) coalesced around woman as a site of emancipatory politics with reference to gender division but I would wish to take the publications Changing The Subject; Psychology, Social Regulation and Subjectivity (Henriques et al, 1998) and further, Democracy in the Kitchen; Regulating Mothers and Socialising Daughters (Walkerdine & Lucey, 1989) as key developments in the trajectory for thinking the self through classed relations.

### **CHAPTER 3: IDENTITY: CONSTRUCTING MOTHERS AND CLASS (BE)LONGINGS**

Identity is the dominant mystery of our lives, the numinous matter of self, and it can't help but surrender to its own ironic destiny. Which is this: the self can never be known.

Carol Shields, Unless p279

Identity formation takes shape within the[se] relational settings of contested but patterned relations among narratives, people and institutions.

Margaret R. Somers & Gloria D Gibson, Social Theory and the Politics of Identity, p70

The self is forged on the basis of truths, which, while claiming to speak about the self, work to produce specific forms of self. In this way, who we are, is an effect of what (or who) we know ourselves to be. And in this being and knowing, power is at work.

Steph Lawler, Mothering the Self; Mothers, Daughters, Subjects p19

SP: what does it mean to you to be a mother?

Pam: I think it means having someone rely totally on you for their wellbeing.

Lorraine: Resentment...just going from what I'd done before you know?...putting myself before anyone else. Then you have to put this little person first all the time whatever you do.

Louise: Well you shouldn't be going out, being a mother should do, and if you are going out and having a good time, especially if you're a single mother, you know. It's a bad thing isn't it...if you're enjoying yourself?

Opening with these quotations seems particularly appropriate to the purposes of this chapter. We perceive our identity as something essential yet it is always in flux; 'the self can never be known' (Shields, 2003: 279), but further, any search for knowledge in this matter is confounded as, 'who we are, is an effect of what (or who) we know ourselves to be' (Lawler, 2000:19). It is this tension around the nature of identity and the workings of power that I examine in this chapter.

In Chapters Four, Five and Six I examine 'psy' disciplines, the body and mothers' work respectively; considering the extent to which these features construct

identity. In this chapter I examine some broader themes around identity construction that inform subjectivities rendered acceptable, viable and congruent with the demands of the new classless moral economy discussed in the introduction and further explored in the rest of the study.

The very problem with naming and talking about identity lies in the suggestion of a fixed or essential self; such singularity closes down the possibility of alternatives<sup>1</sup>. The conversations here, and more specifically those in Chapter Five indicate that, for these women, their identity as mother is, it seems to them, inseparable from their biology, their bodies, and moreover the moral inscriptions implied in that female body. It follows then, that they work to present their identities as stable, coherent features (reflecting the stasis of the body). Still, sharing the same gender in no way informs positions in regard to transactions around personhood. This thesis' main concern is maternal subjectivity, but as Diane Reay claims, there are, 'no unmediated oppressions' (1996b:447), so the very (maternal) identity the women in this study render universal, and therefore equal vis-a - vis the body, is subject to calibrations around value and distinctions. It is useful, then, I think, to examine how such 'unmediated oppressions' are interwoven and impinge upon constructing and constructed selves; Bourdieu's work on classed distinction (2005) and cultural capitals is useful here.

Drawing upon empirical data, this chapter is divided into four sections, each exploring considerations around identity and social relations. I hope to show that applying Bourdieu's insights regarding exchange of cultural capitals and Skeggs' work on exchange and use value, alerts us to the centrality of maternal and child subjectivity in sustaining the 'myth' of classlessness (Reay, 2000:162); a theme I would ask my reader to hold onto, being central to this study. The first section deals with classed identifications, the second with choice and enterprise, the third with use and exchange of social capital, and finally the place of narrative in

---

<sup>1</sup> Deleuze is useful here in thinking beyond the boundaries instated by prefiguring the body and psyche. Nikolas Rose invokes Deleuze in his elaboration of the connections that bridge government and child/ parent identities ; 'Around the child, lines of force have

maternal/child subjectivity Somers & Gibson remind us 'Social identities are constituted by the intricate interweaving of history, narrativity, social knowledge and relationality, as well as institutional and cultural practices' (1994:80), so these concerns and sites are central to examining identity and the ways in which these mothers envision themselves at this particular cultural and political moment. Representing a more focussed exploration of identity over and above the introduction, this chapter sets up some discussions that have resonance throughout the study.<sup>2</sup>

### **Class construction and identification**

[the working class]... has been seen as a social problem to be controlled, a social problem to be helped (these two views are by no means mutually exclusive), a threat to cultural standards or as the subject and object of history, an agency for the transcendence of alienation bringing an end to the prehistory of humankind.  
(Roberts, 1999:147)

We are in politics to allow people to be themselves... [the] goal[ of labour] never changes; to be on the side of the people; to believe in the potential of each and every one of us, and to liberate it .  
Tony Blair, 10.2.06 Labour party centenary conference  
[www.labour.org.uk](http://www.labour.org.uk)

An appropriate starting point here may be to examine how (classed) distinctions become established in constructing and constructed mother/ child subjectivities and in what ways, remnants of a post war notion of class frame current personhood (if at all). Indeed, what does the term 'working class'<sup>3</sup> reveal and confer upon the self? Ian Roberts work draws our attention to the ambivalent position held by the working class in the historical imaginings of the intellectual

---

been established between the objectives of government and the minute details of conjugal, domestic and parental behaviour' (Rose, 1999a: xxix).

<sup>2</sup> The broader approaches here need to be borne in mind when the practical issues of later chapters are encountered. For although, later chapters may appear to deal with points specific to mothering, those practices are littered with assumptions about the nature of identity and self, assumptions that become common sense taken for granted and owe much to the current political climate and a historical legacy of making difference. In this chapter I demonstrate, through offering up the interviews as evidence, just how those tools, of genealogy and capitals, introduced earlier, can be applied to examine identity against current versions of personhood.

<sup>3</sup> Valerie Walkerdine uses the term 'ordinary working people' (1997:23).

left; it is here, laden with the heroic and emblematic fantasies around the ‘golden age’ of post war Britain<sup>4</sup>, that the term is equated, (when it suits), with a nobility or conversely a moral lack. Read this alongside Tony Blair’s intent to weave potential and classlessness into the rhetoric of progressive individualism and we see again how (culturally legitimated) potential is given a moral slant; as rendered always possible, already there, achievable and the responsibility of the self itself.

To make it clear, this study takes class, which I take to operate across a range of sites, though not always transparently so, as central to the ways in which identity is enacted. In discussing the work of new Marxist theory, Skeggs (2004) identifies classed relations as extending beyond the limits of Marx’s economic analysis, and this is further evidenced in work concerning historical constructions of class and the domestic sphere (Finch, 1993; Skeggs, 1997; Roberts, 1999). In part, readings of Marx’s analysis have obscured (cultural) classed relations by fixing them to industrialised economies; Skeggs discusses new bodies of work that indicate how classed relations survive and become rearticulated by way of shifts in the nature of capital ( from industrialisation / labour extraction to globalisation /individualist). These burgeoning analyses are a critical response to an established body of work led by Giddens (1998, 2000) and Beck (1992) that see classed relations an ineffectual method of understanding globalised subjects. Giddens and Beck suggest a subject forged, not through classing, but through intimate relationships and trust.

Class is central to the way in which identities are negotiated across social relations, though given the initial response of the mothers in this study, one might not think so. In order to qualify the interview material, that is, these mother’s responses around class, identity and values; it is perhaps necessary to place the history of classed associations in perspective to current frames of reference. Much of the historical relevance of class revolves around a predominantly male industrialised workplace. Coal and steel, particularly in North Eastern England, conjure up the idea of working classed communities and it is through this

---

<sup>4</sup> It certainly was not a ‘golden age’ for women or immigrant communities or people of

predominantly male space that class is imbued with heroic virtue, stability and community. Historically speaking, it seems to me that the working out of class through models of male employment has obscured our current (and past) understandings of class distinctions. Men, at least, were provided with a heroic working class position; albeit one that, as Roberts claims (1999), disappointed the left with a refusal to rise up and usher in a revolution, it nevertheless fulfilled a particular fantasy for the left. These heroic class distinctions, signified publicly through heavy manufacturing employment, have become worked out through the family and inevitably, it is the mother who becomes the focus of any condemnation; she becomes, in Walkerdine's terms (1989:15), the 'guarantor' of liberal social order, (ever culpable for social disorder). Such classed positions are far from heroic. They become a matter of taste and disgust, so the ways in which these distinctions persist, in current social forms, has shifted from associations with the predominantly male world of heavy manufacturing work, to the private and domestic world; a world that involves itself with, and is targeted by, issues of child development and education; a dialogue that inevitably circumscribes notions of taste, lifestyle and 'ways of being'. We need only point to media television representations; Wife Swap, Holidays from Hell, How Clean is Your House, Dinner Party Inspector, all point up the interest in the easily read surface of the self, the intimacy and intricacy of the family and its relationships. We look to recognise and mis- recognise (our) selves.

To recap, my interviews took place at two sites, a family centre and a rural playgroup. At the family centre, Laura feels that to speak of class somehow negates the value of others in society;

I suppose if someone asked, if I had to tick a box, I suppose I'd say middle class. But nowadays it has rather negative connotations, class terms, I think. For me anyway, I dunno, it can be a right sort of snobbish way of looking at yourself...a way of almost raising yourself above other people which I don't think is a really helpful way of classifying yourself really.(laughs).It's a bit of an outdated thing.

For Karen, who attends the family centre, working class means;

---

colour.

They want to make things better for themselves, and they want to get themselves from one place to what they can see is a better place, to advance.

Moreover, defining class posed difficult for Diane at the family centre;

Hard to distinguish these days,...y'know, cause it's not like when we did it at school, you had certain classes, but now everyone's made more to feel the same, so you don't feel any different.(my emphasis).

For Karen, to be working class means recognising that there is an 'other', a space of future occupation, an 'other' which is privileged, yet Diane claims no-one feels any different; we are all made to feel the same. So what process is occurring if we are made to feel the same? This is the way, Beverley Skeggs remarks, that class is made invisible; it no longer needs constant reiteration in the public arena, as it becomes embedded in a panoply of institutional frameworks.<sup>5</sup>

Making class invisible represents a historical stage in which the identity of the middle classes is assured. There was a time when the concept was considered necessary by the middle classes to maintain and consolidate differences in power; its recent invisibility suggests that these differences are now institutionalised, legitimated and well established (Skeggs (1997a:7).

But there is no escape from making hierarchies. Laura implies that class has 'negative connotations'; she still however, proceeds to define herself as middle class even though she understands class as 'a way of almost raising yourself

---

<sup>5</sup> Further Skeggs notes the rise of classlessness in the public domain is reflected in a similar shift within feminist theory itself. The subject of class and distinctions within feminist theory were subsumed under a 'high culture' ethic;

The movement in feminist theory from a Marxist perspective into more literary informed influences parallels a class movement, whereby feminist theory becomes more 'up-market', drawing on the cultural capital of those who have had access to 'high culture' and higher education; in some cases feminist theory has become a vehicle for displaying 'cleverness' and masking the inequalities that enable 'cleverness' to be produced and displayed (1997a:6).

This development in the status of feminist work, (as high culture) precisely indicates concerns around the de valuation of use value in favour of exchange value. The ethic of much initial feminist activism was the involvement of all voices, and this has been somewhat displaced by the development of feminism as a legitimated cultural, exchangeable resource. Such shifts have, however, turned back on feminism. The freedoms offered for young women in an 'up for it' culture marking 'the corrosion of

above other people'. In this sense, notions of superiority and inferiority are built into her understanding of class; an understanding that she will later claim rests on a model of occupational roles. Interestingly, Rachael, a mother from the playgroup explained that 'the class thing' was a purely British phenomenon. She and her partner are American, and after travelling the world, had settled to make a home (her partner was an academic). Rachael declared 'I just don't get it, the class thing .We just don't have it in America'.<sup>6</sup> She went on to talk about her childhood; her parents, she said, were quite 'bohemian', and there had never been any pressure on her to achieve; she hoped to replicate that for her own children. Bohemian is a description that contains references to high cultural codes and exchange-value; 'bohemian' behaviours would not be tolerated when dealing with parenting orders in areas of 'deprivation' (read lack of cultural capital). I think this is an interesting use of terminology; Rachael uses bohemian to suggest unconventionality or free spirited, it is a middle classed signifier. In the tabloid press; it is used to describe particular 'posh' celebrities when their behaviour is thought questionable (Sadie Frost, Sienna Miller, Stella McCartney are current celebrity 'bohemians' who come from similar middle classed backgrounds). However, this description is distinguished from the languages conferred on other celebrities, (for example Kerry Katona, Britney Spears and Katie Price from working class backgrounds) who, for similar behaviours and dress codes are deemed 'essex girls' or 'pramface'.

Was it possible to look for class distinctions in what seems a biological and natural arrangement between mother/ child relations with expertise? Bourdieu warns us that;

...the perfectly commendable wish to see things in person, close up, sometimes leads people to search for explanatory principles of observed realities where they are not to be found (not all of them in any case) namely, the site of observation itself (Bourdieu et al 1999:181 cited in Ball 2003:3).

---

feminist values', with, as McRobbie writes, many young women regarding feminism as humourless (McRobbie, 'Free to vomit in the gutter', Guardian comment,7.6.04).

<sup>6</sup> This is debatable given the work done at Youngstown, USA by the working class studies group, (and see Adair, 2005; hooks, 2000).

Bearing this warning in mind, and given the weighty symbolic baggage that attends the project of the child in citizenship driven policies, it seemed appropriate to reveal that class(ing) mattered; class distinctions and the profile of potentials in moral citizens underpinned taken for granted 'natural' relations. It may appear, as Bourdieu suggests, that asking what class meant to these women is too simplistic an approach and even naïve<sup>7</sup>; yet my purpose here was to highlight how class appears to inhere, (at least to the subject), as not in the subject, not part of identity, but as an abstraction. Moreover, most of the women deemed class 'outdated'. Furthermore, Phoenix and Woollett justify investigating social class; 'structural factors like social class are relevant not only to how mothers are socially constructed, but also to their experiences of motherhood' (1991:23). Asking them directly about class (through the questionnaires), led to discussions which framed further questions around identities and practices.

Laura, from the family centre, has a professional background and a university education; she claims class definition;

..has meaning in a broad sense that you think of positions in society. I suppose you think of the kind of jobs people do and the way they live their lives, so manual jobs and people who aren't paid so well -working class and then middle class -sort of middle management, professionals.

Suzanne, also from the family centre, a single, university educated mother, defines working class as;

---

<sup>7</sup> Bourdieu is strictly averse to reifying 'class' or attempts to raise and objectify class in the empirical process. The danger, Bourdieu (2001) claims, is that the researcher may use theoretical models (of class), derived within and for the purposes of academic/scholarly processes, to explain social life and start from the model rather than starting from the investigative/ negotiating process itself, rather developing insights emergent from social actors 'experience' within their social field. Bourdieu claims that invoking these theoretical frameworks can be construed as an act of symbolic violence in that research subjects do not have access to the knowledge- making processes that those in the academic field have. Similarly, I was aware that the interview method/ scenario is not without its problems. In interview situations, it is often not clear who some interviewees feel they are talking to, the flow and direction in naturalistic situations seemed lost; the 'staging' of the process itself causes pauses and repetitions in speech that do not occur in natural conversation, so interviewees may indeed assume they are simply involved in a process rather than a conversation.

Traditionally, it's people who leave school early and sort of follow the footsteps of their parents, sort of shipbuilding, work down the pits. That kind of thing doesn't exist any more, I don't think.

She goes on to define middle class as 'people who are a bit more educated', hence drawing, from her university education, a definition of her own classed identity.

Pam, a teacher from the playgroup, constructs her own classed meanings;

Pam: It could mean perhaps people who are working in more manual labour

SP: You mean heavy manufacturing?

Pam: Well, even lighter, sort of computers and shop floor, people who haven't stayed on at school and did other qualifications.

It seemed that class locations were bound up with the notion of unskilled work or heavy, predominantly male, manufacturing work. Again the sense that class, (taken here to mean working class), is aligned with an industrialised past and encapsulated in those who lack academic qualifications<sup>8</sup>. It is only Pam's account, however, which points to the ways in which the traditional signifiers of heavy manual labour are being relocated to the less skilled area of component work. Indeed, later employment forms, such as the call centre<sup>9</sup>, have been identified as the new sweatshops and white-collar factories, indicating that a classed differentiation of sorts survives the disappearance of traditional forms of heavy manufacturing, predominantly male, employment.

The women's comments regarding class definitions indicate that, for some, the term class appeared to hold no currency. Talking about motherhood, which these mothers saw broadly as a universalising experience some how transposed into

---

<sup>8</sup>Diane Reay points up the elision of class and education:

My own past understandings of myself as a working class woman had always drawn heavily on images of myself in terms of an underdeveloped intellect coupled with an excess of raw feelings. This is not to deny the impact of gender. Rather, it is to suggest that there are no unmediated oppressions. I have never found linking 'clever' with 'female' as conflictual as putting together 'clever' and 'working class' (Reay, 1996b:447).

<sup>9</sup> Employees there attend to the waiting screen of callers before them and are monitored according to the time they take on the call and the money they bring in whilst selling, drawing comparisons to 'an assembly line in the head' (Taylor and Bain, 1999).

thinking of class along the same terms. Talking from the position of a mothering identity allowed any social imbalances to become somehow levelled out under the universalising authority of the biological and expertise. However, if we agree with Ball (2003:175), that ; ‘...class identities are not to be found within talk about categories but in practices and accounts of practices-in practices of distinction and closure and in the “aesthetics of distance”[Savage, 2000:107]’; then we can make the link that expert knowledges, (the clinic/parenting class/ childcare manuals), implicitly code for class in the discursive formation of the autonomous child, (produced through the cultural competencies of his/her ‘knowing’ mother).<sup>10</sup> Cultural capitals work through frameworks that govern the family and education to simulate and mark class distinction, so it is in examining relationships that class materialises.

Reflecting upon these responses to class identification, I noted that for the majority of these mothers, their childhoods and adolescence were informed (whether directly or indirectly) and situated, in the social, political and economic environment of early eighties liberalism, that centred on free market rules of choice-freedom-competition and standards. Such unfettered markets required unfettered selves to make political being and seeming congruent. However, Ball (2003:17) claims continuities around class have survived initial enterprise politics, and cites Marshall (1997:5, original emphasis), who suggests, ‘we may have mistaken changes in the shape of the class structure for changes in social fluidity or the degree of openness’. Margaret Thatcher’s moral economy became established on the basis of moral citizens who would, upon taking the banner of choice, realize their enterprising and competitive potentials and, in doing so reject a dependency culture in favour of self help. Under free marketism, then as now, unfettered selves are presumed endlessly possible, endlessly value-accruing, but, and this is the crux, only through particular (self) marketing conditions.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> I discuss Sure Start in regard to this in Chapter Six.

<sup>11</sup> Ball (2003:10) considers Weber’s analysis of class-using markets and market exchange as the basis on which struggles for personhood occur. Not only does this provide some explanation for the implausibility of homogenous classes but also considers the ‘monopolisation’ of particular assets by particular groups. (Self) marketing conditions are

Enterprise, whilst opening sets of possibilities, does nothing to obscure the unequal relations that exist behind the arbitrary 'taking up' or adoption of middle classed identities.

### **(Ex)changeable spaces; choice, enterprise and value**

Before I introduce what these mothers had to say about values and calculations made around cultural capitals that suggest 'good enough' selves, I want to first examine the part played by the arrival of enterprise and choice in making identity.

Though enterprise culture promises potentiality, the other side of the coin is the 'risky'<sup>12</sup> business of negotiating and achieving identity. These risky and uncertain identities remain fuzzy and incalculable, and derive from the cult of the individual (Rose, 1996b). Current classed identifications may be characterised then, through the risky and anxious negotiations that involve constructing this enterprising self. Anxiety around knowing how 'to be', (and certainly the assumption that selves should desire to be particular versions of selves), revolve around a knowledge culture that generates, and is generated by, the proviso that the self, in a sense, owes it to itself, to work upon itself, credentialize itself and in doing so capitalise upon its assumed potentiality.<sup>13</sup> The self, using an economic analogy, becomes implicated in its very own 'futures' market, where returns are possible only if

---

further explored in Beverley Skeggs' theorization of use and exchange in cultural markets and remain crucial in exploring valued and value-able personhood (2004).

<sup>12</sup> If as Beck (1992) claims this global economic and political climate provides no space for class based politics and only space for a politics of knowledge-it does not yet rid us of privilege; for enterprise culture rests on assumptions around the privileging of particular (middle classed) forms of culture. The very invisibility and boundless nature of self enterprise, (returned to the level and responsibility of the individual), is a screen for the subtle inscription of classed distinction and this works upon the family, mothers, parenting and femininity.

<sup>13</sup> Daniel Bell (1973) in The Coming of the Post industrial Society foretold the connection between economic/ political shifts and the construction of the self. For Bell, 'knowledge' conferred power, particularly theoretical knowledge, (that is, medical/ psychiatry/ social science), and more importantly the institutions that legitimised it. The gatekeepers of such knowledge, Bell claimed, would assert their dominant social position as shifts in work markets saw the decline of class based struggle aligned to 'traditional' industrialisation. The rise of the service sector delivering a workforce who reinterpreted their interests in cultural terms through access to (self) knowledge would be the great divider. I include Bells predictions, (and later I discuss Blair's claims of 'classlessness'), to show how

current cultural trends, (which are closely linked to politically motivated models of citizenship), are closely scrutinised and applied. Such is the government of the self that Rose (1999a, 1998) points up.

Facilitated by the rise of liberalism and individualism; choice has impacted upon the forging of identities.<sup>14</sup> Choice presents possibilities and, central to identities and identification, reifies the ‘myth’ of classlessness (Reay, 2000:162). Ball writes of choice;

These values [of choice] stand over and against those of the fragile discourse of welfare, wherein the state represents collective interests, supports universalism and manages politics to support all members of the citizen community(2003:112).

Ball further notes how the political and economic underpinnings of choice and market societies become instrumental in producing social closure. Competition and advantage give rise to forms of ‘social protectionism’ (2003:112), thereby making any claims towards classless society disputable.<sup>15</sup> The point here is that that the discursive privileging of parenting and the needs of the child, central in the construction of these mother’s identities, appears to make maternal identity exempt from any charge of self interest, through reference to the moral subject and a privileging of the child’s self over and above symbolic markets. It is the self-interested ‘subject of value’ (Skeggs, 2004: 6), that walks the terrain of New Labour’s moral economy, but here classing operates covertly under cover of exemptions of self interest, (which is reintroduced under ‘the best interests of the

---

current notions of the (western) moral self derive from (global) economic and political endeavours and consequences, as much as from a privileging of expertise.

<sup>14</sup>The project of the self, embracing choice and enterprising selves, is one of a raft of discursive turns upon which claims of classlessness are floated. It seems that enterprise and identity are, in our Third Way post Thatcher political climate, just as reconcilable as social citizenship and identity were in the immediate post war era. Late liberal free market frameworks loom large in current considerations of the classless self, and it is these political shifts, in the space between structure and agency, that consolidate identifications and identity and implicate the subjectivity of these mothers and their children.

<sup>15</sup> It is through the discourse of classlessness and choice that some are able to take up mobile positions while others remain fixed, thus relations of power can be obscured. Ball intimates, that ‘our ethics are socially situated and realised within a variety of material and discursive contexts’ (2003:114).

child'); these exchanges fit neatly with classlessness and moral inducements. What emerges is a symbolic marketplace, comprising the child, psycho-medical discourse, and the exercise of choice and education, (mediated through the parent/citizen), and this coheres around versions of worthy personhood. Social closure then, becomes an intimate part of identity; for producing the child involves the transmission, extraction and negotiation of cultural capital.

The clues to classed and classing identities came in the form of talk around 'other' mothers, self-surveillance, expertise and motherhood as forms of investment/valued capital. Diane classified herself, 'Just normal working class y'know, I work, I have a normal life'; when Diane includes 'normal', she acknowledges an 'other', and this is not a simple case of economic identity, it does the work of making difference. She adds that working class means 'just like, everyday people that goes to work, has a normal life, y'know, nothing too extreme'.

To be working class, then, for Diane, means to be socially and morally acceptable in one's behaviour; 'nothing too extreme', maintaining socially approved standards, being proper, decent, respectable, maintaining particular moral values, and this was vital in maintaining a coherent, moral subject. And as Anne, from the rural playgroup, who identified herself middle class said, 'I think people aspire to be more middle class'. Of course, claims to respectability and moral outlook are ways of explicating oneself from the 'masses'<sup>16</sup>, from fear of slippage, (similar concerns revolve around the 'good enough' mother and feminine subject).

Looking through the transcripts of the interviews I had undertaken with these mothers, what stood out for me were issues of class (be)longing, because class here equated with moral and potential selves.<sup>17</sup> Bourdieu (1986) claims that

---

<sup>16</sup> The women in Skeggs (1997a) study of class and gender invoke respectability to avoid risks of being recognised as lacking.

<sup>17</sup> What became apparent in the analysis was the different way of fielding capitals. Later I show how Jackie and Louise were concerned with respectability; it was very important, and reflective of their value-able identities, that the child should, first and foremost, be a good citizen but rather in the sense of respectful/ considerate, as opposed to being a high achiever. I found similar issues of respectability and civility did not seem to be built into the mothers from 'professional' backgrounds, (this happened to be the majority of the playgroup mothers). Their practices were invariably 'child centred', focussing upon self

middle class dispositions are framed by a certainty that they are 'doing it right', the professional status of the middle class mothers legitimised their talk around the child, many were teachers or social workers. I asked Laura, who identified herself as middle class, ('I suppose'), about her aspirations for her child; her approach contrasted to Louise's wider concerns for 'decent' behaviour, for (be)longing, and being marked value-able;

Laura; Well..everyone hopes their child will grow up to be happy and healthy-you want them to be someone who values themselves, is secure .... I hope as well that they do well academically and get good jobs, but you're just aware of not wanting to put any pressure on as that will be negative (my emphasis).

Prioritising children's 'needs', (discussed later in more detail in Chapter Four), was acknowledged by all the mothers at some point. Part of the moral position of the subject mother, it is the main focus of child development texts and has become a classy thing to do; 'classy' in the sense that it invests mothers too, with certain forms of capital, most importantly, the ability to produce a good citizen who is reflective of the mother. We talked about differences; the way in which we may approve or not approve of the way some women mother;

Laura: Well, different values, different, the way you've been brought up. Sometimes I hear myself say things to Eve and, you know, it's my mother! Just things like the family atmosphere, you know, you take it in. But the things, values you pass on come from your own mum.

It was apparent that Laura retained her belief in transmission of (proper) values; she claims 'you take it in' as though this was an unconscious act, yet strongly reiterates her belief in the teaching of values. Talking about her decision not to work, Laura told me she would only consider going back to work if one of her family could care for her child;

Laura; Oh yeah, cos I think that's really important, well for me anyway. Just to think that someone who loves him, you know, as much as I do, in a sense, well like grandparents do, is important. The thought of putting him in a sort of quite anonymous place and paying someone to do it just doesn't feel right (emphasis added)

---

interest/ achievement, concentrated on the child, for the child, but simultaneously reflective of the parent, these values I read as attempts to produce classed distinctions.

She can not separate care from the work of values; the transmission of values, and the importance (as she says –for her), to place her child with someone who loves him, (she alludes then to other mothers for whom this is not important). Her need to place her child with a relative, (she would prefer, she said, if possible, her mother to child-mind), stems from her need to reproduce values that she perceives her mother transmitted to her. It seems that, for Laura, these values, dispositions of body and mind become legitimate currency in exchange for recognition as ‘good enough’ mother. Laura’s notion of ‘good enough’ mothering, if we take her earlier comments in which she dismissed class, is precisely ‘a way of raising yourself above other people’; this is the way classing is produced. The good enough mother that these mothers discuss in the next chapter must exceed common sense understandings of care, instinct and feminine traits and enter positions of classing (or classes). Placing herself as better positioned to resist infringements placed upon her role as mother; Laura conflates materialism with necessity when we discuss working mothers,

Laura: if you go back to work because you value your career or, like doctors, where if you go out of it, it’s very difficult to get back in. I can understand that. But I think the materialistic pressure is a very negative thing, they’re [the children] not going to remember whether you had a new kitchen or went abroad on holiday. They’re going to remember that you were there to tend to their needs.

Vocational work is prioritised, it overrides economic capital; vulgar materialism is, however, rejected; in this way profits of ‘legitimate’ work are perceived differently and given symbolic capital values. Later in the interview classed identities underlie Laura’s differentiation of how mothering engages others. It seems, to Laura, that ‘other(ed)’, working class mothers are more suited to the demands of mothering because they, (she implies), have lower expectations (less symbolic capital). Using the example of a young, unemployed, single mother she had helped through her work with the church, she justifies her opinion thus;

And I think, because I worked before I think I had really high ideals I suppose, and always had lots of responsibility and this kind of stuff. And I think she, in some ways, she did such an excellent job and because she didn’t have such high expectations of herself and she didn’t have any responsibility before really, she took on the

responsibility with a real joy and em, it's really been the making of her you know? She really enjoys being at home, spending time, cause I think its perhaps harder when you've been in a job and you've had people say, 'oh you did that really well' or whatever, and then suddenly it's just you at home with your child. Just you and them, and no one's telling you how you're getting on, and also you've got all these other pressures like I was saying before about this perfect house and the cooking.

Insofar as Laura understands child care, activities to feed the self, in terms of growth or possessions are seen as somehow selfish, of the self, and in opposition to children's needs. Effacing the self to produce the child is a common theme of child developmental texts, such a position is seen as natural and feminine yet it is, I contend, central to instantiate difference. But anxieties surfaced about keeping up appearances;

**Laura:** And I think there's a lot of pressure on women now to feel like they've got to do everything, you know, have a baby, and then its best to go back to work full time and then you're supposed to have a house that look like something out of 'House Beautiful', and cook all these amazing dinner parties on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and make home made cakes for your husband to come home to! Well, I mean, that's just totally unrealistic. No-one can live like that, yet there is that pressure there, you can try and block it out, but I suppose it's just coming to terms with that. To be realistic about what you can do with your life, em, you know, you're never gonna be this kind of superwoman, people have to accept you for who you are, and you know, you're not failing if you go and buy three frozen desserts for people coming to dinner, it doesn't make any difference!

Here, we have an indication that Laura is anxious about replacing her emphasis on her mothering role with that of maintaining respectable and capable appearances. Though this dilemma was for Laura earlier resolved through inscribing the project of motherhood and children's needs with a classiness/ value far in excess of that to be gained through selfishly returning to work; there remains a tension between her awareness of (and desire for?) conspicuous consumption. This is a move to stabilise her position as 'good enough' mother. Clearly, 'psy' knowledge is not enough to place her; by vulgarising consumption she makes her identity not simply wholly child centred but as aesthetically distanced. Exchangeable value consisted therefore not only of 'good parenting'

but of networks, access to other knowledges and the notion of particular value systems.

Laura perceived conspicuous consumption as 'very detrimental'. She went on to explain that materialistic pressure had forced many women she knew to go back to work and place their children in nurseries. I found it interesting that Laura, when talking about the relationship between mother child and practices, should make this link to consumption, she went on;

You are a living example to your child, whatever you do they are going to copy, so your life style, the way you live, the things you say, the way you spend your money and everything about you is what your child is imbibing from you, everyday of your life. (original emphasis)

This seemed in sharp contrast to the other dominant theme running throughout all the women's talk; that is, a concern with the need for the child 'to be their own person' (see Chapter Four), to develop independently from the mother as an individual. There was an implication that the child's psyche was not enriched in proportion to the carer's consumption practices. But for all this effacement of mother's self and consumption; the child is itself, product; 'The child is produced through particularly focussed hopes aimed towards vividly imagined futures', (Ball, 2003:169); an extension of the imagined self and good citizen.

Having pursued this point around product and consumption I now explore how far these ethics, (of cultural markets and consumption), make appeals to identity; in the current political climate they remain only partially exchangeable across social and cultural space, however equally absorbed and usable they may appear. I now turn to an exploration of use and exchange value (Skeggs, 2004), and the ways this can be applied to discussions of mothers and children, (who come to represent moral order).

### **Use and exchange value**

At the family centre, narrating and constructing maternal identity was, for Louise, a matter of respectability. For her, it was part of a moral inscription that

necessitated a coherent identity (she described herself as working class); her comments at the beginning of this chapter regarding going out ‘especially if you’re a single mother’ and the ‘bad thing’ about ‘enjoying yourself’, frame the codes of conduct that become common knowledge around properly caring and feminine selves.

Louise told me about the classes she had attended at the centre; a ‘positive parenting’ course, and an ‘alternative smacking’ course. I asked her what she thought of them;

**Well, I don’t smack, and I felt that the ‘alternative smacking course’, the lady who ran that didn’t believe me, y’know?, that I didn’t smack and I don’t know if anyone got anything out of it.**

Louise explains here that she felt as if her mothering practices, and consequently her social and moral behaviour were being judged as defective, she felt her position as ‘good mother’ being destabilised. Clearly judgements were transmitted at the family centre during these parenting courses, and they did not go unnoticed by Louise. Her comments highlight relationships between bodies (read as lack) and sites, and more importantly, for her, the ways in which the identity she worked to project is disrupted by that reading. What Louise had said in our interview contrasted sharply with the family development worker’s views at the centre, who offered a different reading of the impact parenting classes had on service users;

**Kate: They gain the tools to deal with children’s behaviour, they walk out of here with totally changed ideas and concepts of how to deal with their children that they didn’t know before. People have been empowered and their confidence has grown.**

At the family centre I asked Louise what her aspirations were for her children, she replied;

**Louise: I just want them to be good citizens, cos you see them around here drinking and stealing. I just want them to be nice people, caring people.**

Louise’s ideals centred on respectability and civility to others as did Jackies. When questioned about what makes the ‘good mother’ Jackie answered;

Jackie: Bringing them up properly, well mannered. He knows when he goes out that he's got to behave himself. Just things like that really. Show him, like, who's boss [she laughs].

Jackie's desire to 'bring him up properly, well mannered' demonstrates the desire for respectability, here the emphasis is 'outward' looking; with concern for society rather than 'inward' looking; making the child's self the priority. As Skeggs (1997:90) writes; 'This is the emotional politics of class...they care about how they are seen in the eyes of the "other" '.

The mother child dyad and its relationship with social capital and power relations can be interpreted within an exchange /use paradigm. In Skeggs' theorization (2004), exchange value legitimates the individual in amounts of capital composition and value, (that which is exchangeable across social space activated perhaps through networks, education); use -value, however, inheres as a general sense of self worth, it is not dependant upon exchange, having a value beyond that of market . The child is a 'future' to be capitalised upon and a present 'us', and though use value applied to all these mothers, in relation to a nurturing identity; nevertheless some mothers were able to exceed use, and enter into exchange because of symbolic capitals the pre existed their mothering identity. The existence and mobilisation of exchange values (cultural capitals) become concealed in the mothering role under adequacy as good mothering, and through more recent visions of self enterprising selves<sup>18</sup> that draw upon relations of intimacy and trust (Giddens, 1998, 2000; Beck, 1992).

---

<sup>18</sup> How did we arrive at this model of entrepreneurial personhood? Skeggs (2004:pp31-33) explains how the self interested individual of late nineteenth century western society derives from fragments of early liberal political writings (specifically those of economist Adam Smith). The transformation into moral citizenship evolved in the reworking of exchange terminology from a model of economic exchange to one of moral economy (and the responsible worthy citizen). So we see a move away, in contemporary times, from the market perceived as impersonal (though still ultimately effectual), to a more intimate model of inscription concerning bodies and dispositions; 'in this lack of fit between position and disposition, recognition and mis-recognition, we can see contemporary class struggle'( Skeggs, 2004:181) All the while this fixing in place of persons is concealed by the trope of the universal enterprising self; this is a trope in which the child is a central tool for ordering and promoting progressive individualism, and

The child then is a tool through which governance urges exchange value (as potential). It is through these conversions, (via the child), that some measure of appropriation and entitlement can be (vicariously) achieved. Potentials are unleashed, in current political times, through education and parenting, and the preschool child figures in this discourse. However, even as the women struggle over the child as commodity, (and reflective of their own worth), the middle class mums 'just know' what counts, and make confident assumptions regarding accessible futures for themselves and their children. Pam, from the playgroup, later discusses her plans to return to teaching; during our interview, which took place at her home, we chatted about the area-did she enjoy living there? She did , but noted sadly that owing to her husband's work it was likely they would have to re- locate adding 'but we will return when [child] goes to university'. Her child was aged seven at the time and this was taken as a matter of fact. This was in comparison to some of the mothers at the centre whose aspirations for their children revolved around lack of financial worries and happiness, if university was mentioned it was as part of a 'good job' scenario.

The ability to transmit, make values inherent, fixed and 'deep', seemed infinitely more preferable to the ways in which the surface of the self could be changed through, what were considered, facile notions of consumption practices. This was the way in which difference sought to manifest itself, through a set of values and ways to be for the child and mother that were already (class) positioned as worthy. Moreover, the needs Laura specified she would 'tend to' are a reflection of the mother, she claims; 'Everything you do your child is imbibing from you'. So we need to ask; is the child really being encouraged to 'be their own person' (as the interviews and child developmental texts of the next chapter relate)? It seemed that some form of cultural reproduction, demonstrated around 'values' and worth, (especially for those mothers who were teachers, social workers, nurses perhaps), was surfacing in the interviews that pertained to the desires of the mother, so rather than producing the child, it ultimately made for the (re)production of the mother. Moreover, Karen at the centre had transformed her perspectives on the

---

moreover it is a model of the self that revolves around accumulation and desire for

‘nurtured self/ child’ through using them to make more personal investments in building upon her cultural capital.<sup>19</sup> Training to be a counsellor, Karen demonstrates (in Chapter Four) an approach wholly attuned to such a model of self; agency and autonomy are key concepts in counselling work. She earlier defined working class as ‘wanting to move from one place to another’; I wondered if this was her way of making that journey.

In the majority of those discussions class was dismissed. Is it that class understandings have constrained and confined subjectivity? When we talk about class, what are we really talking about? Does class, without any specification, become synonymous, as Walkerdine and Lucey (1989:12) write, with the ‘masses’; as problematic, as signifying lack?<sup>20</sup> If so, then dismissal is not surprising. Location is organised, as Bourdieu (2005) states, around the possession of certain capitals<sup>21</sup>, and I believe the answers of the women I interviewed would perhaps bear that out. Cultural capitals were a way to shore up

---

recognised and legitimate cultural effects.

<sup>19</sup> Bourdieu’s capitals were discussed in introduction/ literature review. To recap; Bourdieu’s capitals (2005) are based on capital movements through social space (and take four forms;

- Economic capital-wealth and income.
- Cultural capital- further three forms: embodied-(pertaining to dispositions of the mind/ body), objectified- (in possession of cultural goods), institutionalised- (according to education.
- Social capital-networks and relationships.
- Symbolic capital-this form is the culmination of previous capitals legitimisation. Once it is perceived and recognised as legitimate it can be converted into symbolic power (from Skeggs, 1997a:8).

<sup>20</sup> Very often when class is mentioned, it is marked by a scale of distance/ difference from that which has been termed more recently –‘underclass’, that is; those working class who are seen as unrespectable, the socially excluded. Yet who would be anything but respectable? Beverly Skeggs (1997a) claims only academics would willingly be identified as working class; class definitions owe much to fear of slippage into forms of un-respectability. Moreover, to be able to select a location, and occupy that space, such space has to be sanctioned; not only by ‘others’, but also by the surveillant self itself. The (working classed) child inhabits an uncertain space in the new moral economy’s mantra for potential and education. It seems that some children are not universally construed as the potential subjects of value envisioned by parenting courses (see Garmarnikow & Green ,[1999] on social capital and education action zones).

<sup>21</sup> Skeggs (1997a:8) denotes the real social effects produced through the ascription of class distinction; such definitions are arbitrarily imposed and rest on Bourdieu’s notion of capital; economic, cultural, social, and symbolic.

the self, and this was how class came to be negotiated, through maternal practices and relations.

### **Narrative constructions**

Every biographical account takes place in the present time and in relation to the present. For the person who tells his or her life story, the first purpose is not to describe the past 'as it was', or even as it was experienced...but to confer to past experience a certain meaning, a meaning which will contribute to the meaning of the present (and eventually to the 'future', whose image lies in the present under the form of projections or children) (my emphasis) (Bertaux-Wiame, 1979:29).

We can never go back again, that much is certain (Du Maurier, 1975:8).

The search is for the self, and the past that is lost and gone: and some of the ways in which, since the end of the eighteenth century, the lost object has come to assume the shape and form of the child (Steedman, 1995:174).

Somers & Gibson write '...it is through narrativity that we come to know, understand and make sense of the social world, and it is through narratives and narrativity that we constitute our social identities' (1994:59). Further, processes of narrativity can either, Ewick & Sibley claim, 'function to sustain hegemony or, alternatively, subvert power' (1995:200). Certainly here the discussions around class belongings, dis-identifications and child rearing are indicative of both positions as the women and children here become 'storied' into being.

The key to constructing maternal subjectivity here is of relational and emplotted lives understood through a range of sites; the clinic, the centre, the playgroup, and through past (and future) childhoods. The centrality of the child in narrating and imagining the adult and good society becomes evident as Jenks notes;

The child cannot be imagined except in relation to a conception of the adult, but essentially it becomes impossible to generate a well defined sense of the adult, and indeed adult society, without first positing the child (Jenks, 1996:3).

This, and Carolyn Steedman's reflections that, 'Children are always episodes in someone else's narrative, not their own people, but rather brought into being for particular purposes' (1986:122), reinforces the central position of the child in

producing, not only the subjectivities of those significant others in their lives , but as fundamental to productions of a good society. These claims run counter to misappropriations and misinterpretations of the Freudian model that see the child as ‘container’ and basis of the individual adult self; for rather than claiming childhood as some sort of retrospective retrievable template of present self, (according to child developmental psychology); childhood here is seen as a continual discursive moment, one which is written and rewritten to accord with moral selves and the necessary work involved in producing (here, maternal) selves. This does not mean to say that inequalities evident between individual children do not exist; this is far from the case (see Reay, 2000, 2004), but that as a general phenomenon, childhood becomes a potential signifier for all things good or bad about current society. It follows, then that the guardians of these po(r)tential citizens<sup>22</sup> are similarly defined.

Present day panics on the crisis surrounding the family find their resonance in this very concept, the child as a story waiting to be told. Those social commentators who interiorise crisis in the lives and bodies of children and ‘troubled’ families are latching onto a specific way of thinking mothers and children into being. This classing gaze, trenchant in the discourse of psychoanalysis and psychological theory that gained popularity at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Finch, 1993), further reiterates something that Carolyn Steedman identifies as pertaining to potential and progress that was being instantiated through child-study movements; ‘ ...the idea of progress being embedded in the idea of development. In this way, the child’s developing mind and body could be understood as the epitome of a more general historical progress’ (Steedman, 1995:85).<sup>23</sup> It follows that, at this point in

---

<sup>22</sup> Steedman (1995:11) notes;

The idea of the child was used both to recall and to express the past that each individual life contained; what was turned inside in the course of individual development was that which was also latent; the child was the story waiting to be told.

<sup>23</sup> Steedman also reflects upon the basis of understanding derived from child-study in late nineteenth century. The child was, (before the advent of Freud’s unconscious), seen as a container of, ‘cultural and historical evidence enclosed within the child’s body and mind [that] could be retrieved and used’ (1995:85). In this respect, social meanings found their way into the subject position child in much the same way as for women. Knowledge therefore was enfolded into the child rather than a folding out. Steedman notes ‘child’ and

time, in terms of western identities at least, we are unable to think about mothers and children (for they rely on each other to inscribe their identification), or indeed to mother, without retrieving specific knowledges with which to carve out those historied selves. Identity can not be thought without 'psy'<sup>24</sup> (Chapter Four) but further, identity becomes constituted through what counts as historied, classed, feminine and moral behaviour.

The interviews gathered demonstrate how the women come to construct themselves through the production of their children, through drawing not only upon their own childhood, but also through the project of the developing child, (as told through 'psy' theory. Producing their own identities as mother, whilst simultaneously developing and 'telling' the child; renders their identities a state of flux, never reaching a point of termination. I asked about this maternal attachment to the children's lives and how it affected the experience of being mother;

Anne: You look at the time before you had children, it gives you a wider perspective, it gives you a sense of where you are in the scheme of things, continuity.

Narratives around identities, 'are constituted by the intricate interweaving of history, narrativity, social knowledge and relationality, as well as institutional and cultural practices', (Somers and Gibson, 1994:80); there is a sense of 'becoming' identity here, and these mothers understand their identity as embedded and told through these sites and networks. It is through the project of the child, that a series of desires or needs that pertain to the mother are being invoked and worked through the child; desires to be distinctive. Identities produced through the narrativization of the child said more about how mothers wanted to 'story' their self. In 'telling' the child, some sense is made of the teller's identity; narratives of

---

'woman' were, in the discourse of the time, envisioned as dependant and helpless, and these definitions similarly applied to 'colonials'.

<sup>24</sup> Nikolas Rose considers psy disciplines;

Their potency has been increased by their ability to supplement these practicable qualities with a legitimacy deriving from their claims to tell the truth about human beings...it has become impossible to conceive of personhood, to

the child and mother become entwined and traversed by past history, and a future imagined with reference to that past. In this way, maternal identity /narrative becomes, through the child as a cipher; 'the reworked...personal history that lies at the heart of the present' (Steedman, 1986:128).

Lyn, at the family centre claims, 'You don't live your life for them but you live it with them'; and neatly expresses the duality of potentials to be gained. Not a displacement then, or effacement; but some duality of formation occurring in tandem with the child. This is a project that, if worked upon well, has potential for reflections of worth and value for maternal subjects (use-value). In making this point I draw upon Stuart Hall's theorizations concerning identity formation, noting identity 'requires what is left outside, its constitutive outside, to consolidate the process' (Hall 1996:3); the child 'outside' completes the identity mother (and vice versa). Moreover, by inserting relations of power in the form of 'psy' disciplines, it is possible to elucidate Foucault's theories on truth, self and power. Without understandings that complete the identity child; the identity mother would be devoid of meaning, but still, I do not mean to say these meanings simply reside in the intangible abstracted realm of discourse, they are actively produced through the physicality of the child (and the sites where expertise is traced and judgements made); thus making a seamless link between the biological and the social. To make this clear then, rather than posit some sort of psychic interiority here, I prefer to place this relationship, between the mother, child, and the sites and range of practice, as that which Deleuze theorizes as the 'fold'. Nikolas Rose (1998) suggests the fold is one way of positing the self without reference to psychological interiority.

In ways that disinter any notion of interiority, or boundaries between the surface of the body and discourse; the self here is rendered a site of multiple lines of flight and intersections across sites of knowledge and discourse, echoing in part, Hall's claims around the 'constitutive other' and that which is 'left outside'. Rose notes, 'The fold indicates a relation without an essential interior, one in which what is

---

experience one's own or another's personhood, or to govern oneself or others

'inside' is merely an unfolding of the exterior' (Rose, 1996 142). Such a theorization informs not only the relation of bodies to sites but also the inter-relationality of body to body (mother to child). These sites of knowledge production play a 'constitutive other' in constructing identity; in Chapter Six I examine one of those initiatives, (Sure Start), that has emerged from New Labour's call to 'Education, Education, Education'.

## **Conclusions**

In the introduction and literature review I made reference to the work of Giddens (1998, 2000) and Beck (1992), who formulate the globalised citizen through relations of intimacy and trust. These theorizations and those of the 'pure' relationship that Giddens (1998, 2000) formulates to expound his vision of contemporary society, fit neatly with the aims and ethics of initiatives (such as Sure Start) that are based on potentials and human capital. These theorists see class relations as a redundant concept with which to understand the emotional lives of citizens in de-industrialised society. In terms of 'Third Way' or 'risk' politics then, their reformulated citizen, detached from the local (in terms of economic industrial activity, or more precisely, for objective purposes, not bound, in any tangible, empirical source to it<sup>25</sup>), is traceable/ known through individualism and the efforts, (of individuals), to produce a self congruent with democratic governance. Of course, to dismiss class relations as a way of explaining individuals activity, rather understanding class through modes of production, is to overlook exactly what Bourdieu (2005) states is central; that class is socially related and culturally produced, and moreover remains traceable,

---

without 'psy' (Rose, 1996:139).

<sup>25</sup> Ulrich Beck claims;

It is very difficult to work in a rich empirical way with class categories. You can only develop them on an objective income basis, or on structures of work or employment. You cannot relate them to how people live and think, eat, how they dress, love, organise their lives and so on. If you are interested in what is going on in people's minds, and the kinds of life they are leading, you have to get away from old categories (2000:43).

I argue here, and later in the thesis, through accounts of textual analysis, that class is precisely found in how people live, think, eat, how they dress, love, organise their lives and so on. These are the ways in which classing is pronounced, not as structural, but as cultural.

through empirical analysis. Paul Johnson and Steph Lawler regard Beck's dismissal of class as flawed;

Beck asserts that one cannot relate class to the meaningful activity of individuals because the 'objective' categories of work, income and employment do not relate to the way they 'eat', 'dress', 'think' or 'love'. Yet such an understanding of social class is premised on a methodology which conflates the notion that there exists in the social world economic classes (defined in relation to the capitalist modes of production) and a type of economic consciousness which pervades (or does not) the action of such individuals in real classes. What this effects is a further belief that, because such consciousness cannot be seen in a 'rich empirical way', class does not influence the ways in which people live (2005:3.2).

Many of the mothers struggled to define class, and explained their difficulties to do so through the decline of industrialised structures on which to pin 'traditional' class hierarchies. But the interviews here evidence the classed feminine distinctions, (as cultural relations), that inhabit their constructions of motherhood. These were reinforced through values, child centredness and respectability, (reinforced in the following chapter); there were subtle cues as to what was 'proper'; not drinking too much, not going out socially to excess, not shouting at the children, generally being self-less. Why did they produce a discourse of classlessness? Many of the family centre group were younger mothers whose citizenship developed alongside an ideology of self-made (wo)man; the discourse of a classless society prevalent in their youth as 'developing' citizens; ( most were reaching adolescence during Thatcher's conservative administration ). The rural playgroup mothers, (the majority were professional status and older), however, came to their positions of exchange-value, not through classlessness, but through their internalisation and exposure to knowledge from professional training / education and the networks built up, (as capital), in achieving those positions. Transmission or engagement with the institutions of knowledge, (as teacher, social worker, counsellor), seemed to give some women an extra 'edge' when it came to speaking with authority, not only did they 'just know'; they were able to mobilise the use value they accrued, (the caring identity of maternity), and exchange it with a range of sites for the benefit of the child's status and their own,

---

(this becomes more apparent in discussions around child development in the next chapter). Class then, exceeds the structural boundaries placed upon it in taken for granted discourses in occupational/social positioning; for as hooks (citing Brown) notes,

Class is much more than Marx's definition of relationship to the means of production. Class involves your behaviour, your basic assumptions, how you are taught to behave, what you expect from yourself and others, your concept of a future, how you understand problems and solve them, how you think, feel and act (Brown cited in hooks 2000:103).

The discourse of enterprise doubly binds these women to forging particular versions of the self, for not only are their selves made aspirational through talk of potentiality<sup>26</sup>, but the self of the child takes on the shape of a project (or investment); it becomes an enterprise, by which mothers can class and be classified; a tool with which to fashion 'classy' identities.

Ostensibly, de-industrialisation heralds the 'death of class', and I have demonstrated this in the women's comments around class hierarchies. However, the child family is a particular focus of New Labour policy; the drive for social mobility through an increase in educational opportunities and re-skilling/ back to work initiatives is aimed at raising a more meritocratic society, and in this activity classing is maintained. People 'do' class, and, through analysis of these mothers' discussions around identity and the child, I intend to indicate how class is 'achieved and maintained, and enacted rather than something that just is' (Ball 2003:7). Underpinning current discursive use of the term classlessness, class remains (indirectly) a resource, a narrative through which these women frame their (maternal) identities, and one which crucially, frames the values that inscribe their (and their children's) worth as valuable citizens, that is, as capable, knowledgeable and value-able.

The following chapter examines the role of the 'psy' disciplines in the construction of maternal subjectivity. This network of disciplines, developed around psychology and child development, is part of the process that discursively

produces the mothering self. Though this production is, in many ways, pleasurable and a form of investment; examining the accounts of all the mothers and those who act in an 'advisory' capacity at the family centre, attests to the translation of these disciplines into forms of self surveillance. For these mothers it was those certainties, of instinct and routine care, that appeared to inform their subjectivity, rather than class. Their responses and the claims they make of classlessness however, are fragmented in later chapters; it becomes clear that class inhabits talk of instinct/bodies and mother's work; it underpins their practices of maternity, femininity and child development. The figure of the 'good mother' is at once reinforced and at the same time thrown into sharp relief by considerations of the everyday practicality of mother child relations.

---

<sup>26</sup> We are saturated with talk of 'potentiality' at work (appraisals), in education, in the nursery and generally in self help literature/magazines.

## **CHAPTER 4: PSYCHOLOGICAL DISCIPLINES AND SELF**

### **SURVEILLANCE**

People who mother are women who, in any event, represent a threat to the social order.

Ann Oakley, Feminism and Motherhood, p.83

Modern power is calculating, it is suspicious and it always appears modest in its application. It operates through scopic regimes, through observation that is organised hierarchically, through judgements rendered normative within social structures and through scrutiny and examination.

Chris Jenks, Childhood, p.77

Duties, obligations and passive rights are counterposed to opportunities, choices, the engendering of the capacities and competencies for active citizenship in the subject of government, who is then seen to be a subject of self government, individual choice and personal responsibility.

Nikolas Rose, Powers of Freedom, p.257

In contemporary Euro-American cultures, surveillance of maternal subjectivity has operated most cogently through the development of, not only the maternal deprivation paradigm (Bowlby, 1953), which requires mothers to be constantly available to the child, but through the stratagem of the 'sensitive mother' (Winnicott, 1964). Here, the mother must be sensitive, she is 'naturally' equipped to read the child, and to be the 'psychic organiser' (Singer, 1992:97).

Development of a range of techniques of expertise has guaranteed that mothers do not necessarily need to be policed rather they police themselves. The pleasures and positive outcomes engendered in this process, and elicited through the authority of child psychology, provide a regulatory framework operating at both the social and intra-psychic level.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Foucault's 'technologies' of the self offer a way of theorizing the symbiotic relationship between self, truth and power (1988), demonstrating the ways in which we are intimately bound up with power relations, not as an oppression but as a form of freedom with which carve a self. Deleuze notes in his exposition on Foucault that power relations and expertise are central to subject positions;

Recuperated by power relations and relations of knowledge, the relation to oneself is continually re-born, elsewhere and otherwise (Deleuze, 2000: 104). Deleuze takes the basis of Foucault's theorizations around subjectivation and applies them further to his concept of the fold in ways that demonstrate how systems of knowledge and the subject enfold upon and in one another.

The last chapter looked at the ways in which the identity mother became more than a site concerned with the practicality of the interests and needs of children in that it assumed a wholly feminine, classless (and moral) self. Cultural competency played out, not only around 'knowing'/values, that is the validation of both the child's future self and the mother's present self, but also through the drive to distinction, was premised as the motor of constructing the mothering identity. This chapter places expert knowledges, discourses around the family and the child's psycho- social development as, in part, the fuel that is required (and reiterated)<sup>2</sup> to shore up and operate such an identity cogently.

This chapter is divided into four sections; firstly I examine the post war drive to order the family through expert knowledge; secondly; the legacy of child care knowledge. I follow this with a discussion of needs talk and 'good enough' mothers and go on to explore the role of the family development staff at the centre. Finally, the section on disordered subjects (mothers and children) considers social policy responses to those deemed lacking in citizenship; psy disciplines impinge, in no small part, on social policy initiatives. As the interviews here attest, biology, instinct and nature merge and stand for particularly social and moral indictments.

The core of this chapter then, considers child development discourse and the 'psy' disciplines that support it. To clarify, 'psy' disciplines can be defined as including;

.....academic and professional psychology and all the varieties of psychoanalysis sedimented in the clinic and diffused through the wider community. Professionals in the different sectors of the psy complex define what abnormal, emotional and correct mental functioning looks and feels like and how child care and family processes should be described and relayed to mothers and fathers ( Parker, 1997:4).

Having discussed, in the last chapter, the ways in which the self is fashioned through concerns for good society and how the self-interested individual of late capitalist economies might be matched with 'the best interests' of the child; I now

---

<sup>2</sup>Chapter Five discusses the 'performative' role of identity and its relationship to the body

turn to the legacy of psychological disciplines and an examination of appeals to instinct.

### **Post war: the impetus to expertise**

Truths developed in the 'psy' professions concerning child care/ parenting form attenuated links to the basis of state practice, (Sure Start, parent-craft classes); further, they gain public utility in the availability of child care manuals and television 'reality' programming, (House of Tiny Tearaways (ITV1, Supernanny (ITV 1)). These knowledges then, overreach their target audience and, by such repetitions, become 'common sense' regarding childhood and maternity.

Expert knowledges are concerned with more than the physical care of the child; they produce, maintain and specify certain parameters for mothering identity, not through coercion, but through invoking pleasure and self-fulfilment.<sup>3</sup> Working upon the mind of the child is therefore integral to this 'technology' of personhood; moreover, such work produces particular forms of self-surveillance and regulation for the mother that impinge upon her sense of self. In saying this, the reach of expert knowledges does not simply end at the self, for a whole system of governmental practice has developed that annexes these knowledges to manage whole populations (Rose, 1999a, 1999b), and central to this arrangement is the tension between structures and agents. Child care knowledge, facilitated around notions of authority and science, wherein the needs of the child are presented as paramount, present us with a set of questions. Whose interests are served by the

---

(Butler, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Roberts discusses the move to dependence upon expertise in the child's psycho- emotional care and the demands of such 'invisible' work upon the child, Women in the post Second World War period were spared the struggle against [such] terrible poverty, but they also lost some of the acclaim to which their predecessors had enjoyed. Mothers were the victims of a cruel ambivalence; in some ways their job was more demanding than ever before, given their newly perceived responsibilities in such difficult areas of their children's psychological development. Yet their success in these areas of parenting were much harder to assess than those of their mother's in earlier times, who were seen to have triumphantly fed, clothed and housed their children, often in the face of great hardships (1995:154).

adoption and maintenance of definitions of need? And, moreover, why are these techniques deemed fundamental to the basis of family life/ citizenship?

My discussions here begin with an examination of child-care knowledge, specifically those psychoanalytic theories that became popular in the immediate post-war era and were absorbed into child developmental theory/ practice. Contemporary discourses in parenting magazines, popular child care manuals and health literature can be traced back to this point of insertion and this synopsis is useful in substantiating, not only the later comments of the mothers at the playgroup and centre concerning their child care practices, but also, the views of the family workers at the centre, thereby demonstrating the constancy these foundational concepts enjoy.

Before embarking on a discussion of needs talk, interview extracts, the ways psychological theory informs established child developmental theory, (and its practical applications at sites of expertise); it is productive to look at the way in which the family became the focus for social moral welfare, for needs talk is closely linked to the establishment and maintenance of proper, legitimate and moral selves. In 'family', however, it is specifically the natural relationship of the mother and child that is invested with the hopes for a good society.

Historically speaking, the establishment of social medical discourse from the late eighteenth century onwards was interleaved with specific changes in the constitution of women's bodies. As Finch (1993:123) notes;

In the process the woman within the family was truly being constructed, not as wife, but as mother, for by re-articulating pregnancy as the nurturing of a human being, rather than as a type of female condition, or as part of a woman's health pattern, women were repositioned as nothing more than bodies-in-waiting.

The intervention of middle class reformers, concerned with mortality and morbidity rates among the urban poor, initiated a move way from traditional midwifery practice and birth management was repositioned inside the hospital. Moreover, the subsequent development of new techniques of emotional care,

enshrined later in the work of the British Object Relations school, and subsequently popularised by Winnicott (1964, 1965) through mass market publications, led to distinct calibrations in the work of motherhood requiring teams of health visitors, doctors and social workers to oversee these tasks (Rose, 1999a).

These techniques constructed woman as ‘mother, educator and medical auxiliary’ (Donzelot, 1979:21), thereby positioning her as the central pivot through which the ‘psy’ disciplines could interpellate the family. Implicit in this intervention was the control and management of the attitudes and behaviours of the working class, and it is in this sense, through the discourse of a benevolent welfare state that progress and the interests of the child were invoked; indeed Nancy Fraser claims (1989:162) that; ‘In welfare societies needs talk has been institutionalised as a major vocabulary of political discourse’. This collaboration between techniques of classification and observation and the growing popularity of psychologically knowing the (moral) progressive self is important in understanding how identities were, ( and are still), constructed and granted.

Much of this foundational knowledge around child development and care was produced in the 1940s and refined in 1950s and 60s (though it originated much earlier in the philanthropy of the nineteenth century). At a time when social democratic ideals were being realized through the introduction of Beveridge’s welfare reforms and Keynesian economics, the ideological function of the family and role of motherhood was being prioritised. The backdrop and conditions for the insertion of expertise into the home can be noted in Beveridge’s 1946 insurance act;

The attitude of the housewife to gainful employment outside the home is not, and should not, be the same as that of the single woman. In the next thirty years housewives as mothers have vital work to do in ensuring the adequate continuance of the British race and British ideals in the world (in Clarke, 1979:243).

It was then, favourable economic conditions, generated by a National Health Service and full employment<sup>4</sup>, and further reinforced through gendered forms of welfare provision and access, that shored up the structure of the nuclear family with its particularly gendered roles. Moreover, this social and political backdrop paved the way for the psychological knowledges to take up an uncontested authoritative position as expert; for the family was seen as the bedrock of post war social planning initiatives. Under the aegis of these reforms, in that particular post war social climate, it was possible for expertise to lay claims to authority; to map out a route to the family and install itself, at the heart of the social, in ways of 'being'.

The 'intractable truths'<sup>5</sup> around child psycho- social development then, find their authority in a well-established discourse of child-centred theory. Between the world wars, behaviourism was the dominant philosophy in childcare, but post war psychology focussed on the self expression of the child (Phoenix *et al*, 1991). The post war writings of John Bowlby (1953) and Donald Winnicott (1958) remain influential and their theoretical frameworks for the psycho- social and emotional care of the child persist in modern popular childcare texts. With this in mind, I want to briefly outline those 'psy' developments that remain canonical, and to which current popular child care texts and the instruction these women receive at sites of expertise (clinic/ nursery) are indebted<sup>6</sup>. I go on to trace the debt these

---

<sup>4</sup>It was not full employment in the real sense; immigrant communities, people of colour and women were not visible in the labour market.

<sup>5</sup> Steph Lawler notes ;

Theories of children's needs become so naturalised, so much part of common sense that they cease to be recognised as theories. This can make them particularly intractable; they are not part of a debate, but authoritative knowledges through which normality is constructed (Lawler 2000a:144).

<sup>6</sup> Urwin (1985), in her analysis of childcare texts, suggests expert literatures are predicated on identifying pathology, (rather than normality) and effectively become, in the Foucaultian sense, a method of regulation. Her analysis indicated child development was understood in terms of maternal success /failure in implementing child-centred approaches. It is interesting to note how this discourse survives shifts in socio-political climate; the ethic of the self-interested individual of late capitalism does not unsettle 'psy' and finds its niche in the best interests of the child (Ball [2003] notes its elision with education and civil/ moral progress). As in Urwin's study, mother/ baby sessions were more than instruction for these mothers; they were an opportunity to meet other mothers,

currently favoured texts owe to Freud and Klein noting how that lineage has become somewhat obscured through a pre-figurement of needs and maternal environment, (considerations which, in turn, underwrite and inform what constitutes the worthy, moral citizen).

The question remains; how did the formulations laid down by Klein and Freud around the insatiable realm of the psyche come to be couched in terms of (children's) needs that can be met through specific applications of current child rearing? If we investigate the origins of these popular readings we find a very different interpretation of psychic behaviour. It appears there was a definite move, through the taking up of British Object relations, to calibrate some specific, once and for all, timeless, configuration of the mother/ child dyad; one that is far removed from a darker Kleinian or Freudian understanding of psyche.

### **Childcare knowledge and theories of 'psy'**

Freudian psychoanalytic theory circulates around the gratification of insatiable desires. For Freud, energy generated through biological drives is demonstrated through a series of phases- oral / phallic/ anal; ultimately resulting in the management of the 'id' to the 'ego' (Thomas, 1996:298). What is relevant for current child developmental theory here, is Freud's legacy of the child as father to the man, though this has been misappropriated somewhat, by psy networks, and presents the child as container for adult behaviour. As James *et al* note '...childhood became the province of retrospectives', as 'Freud opened up a concern with childhood as adult pasts' (1998:20). Freud's original thesis then, concerned itself with desires/ wants that could never be satisfied, but in Freudian terms this demonstrated precisely a normative psyche. Whilst non- Kleinian Object Relations<sup>7</sup> posit the satisfaction of the child's desires, for Freud and Klein such desires, (regardless of adult/ child maturity), are immanently insatiable.<sup>8</sup>

---

share information and in doing so, make small resistances/ reassurances regarding expertise.

<sup>7</sup>Jacqueline Rose notes the role of the British Object Relations School in relocating Freud's original theories; that is, mapping his psychic topography onto a linear model of child development. Rose sees this as an attempt to, during that particular environment of

Although British Object relations theory presides over child developmental theory, with a specific debt to Freudian theory around childhood sexuality, it is interesting to consider Melanie Klein's work on the mother/ child relationship (in Mitchell, 1986). Klein, unlike Winnicott, places the psychic development of the child within the unfolding of a series of unconscious fantasies, regardless of 'real' experiences with parents/ carers, (thereby disrupting mother as cause or origin). But Klein's theories disappointed much of British psychoanalysis and child development, for as Jacqueline Rose claims, whilst they proposed 'something as intractable, as creatively unmasterable as what many readers have become accustomed to discovering in Freud' (Rose, 1993:39); they further posited a violence and negativity at the very core of those early psychic processes around the mother child dyad. Such violence has subsequently disturbed the feminist project of the mother daughter relationship, for here, 'against the idyll of early fusion with the mother, Klein offers proximity as something which devours' (Rose, 1993:140). Klein's descriptions of the psychic processes of splitting/ projection that formulate the psyche followed Freud's prescription for a psyche that was necessarily fragmented, (see Mitchell 1986 for Kleinian works). Nevertheless, the psychotic flavour of these processes and Klein's move to locate these processes in fantasy rather than in observable social, (though ultimately instinct- based), interactions between mother and child, troubled the British Object Relations school of psychoanalysis. The intense gratification required by the child, (Klein likens it to 'devouring') is, in a psychoanalytic turn towards the work of Bowlby and Winnicott transported and reworked into 'needs'. The selective use of psychoanalytic theory, for the purposes of child developmental theory dominated by the British Object Relations school can then, be interpreted

---

post war reconstruction; place order, direction and control upon and within psychological processes. Processes that Freud claimed were infinitely unquenchable (Rose, 1993).

<sup>8</sup> What is worth noting here is Freud's question around female sexuality; 'What does the woman, the little girl, want?'. Juliet Mitchell in a Lacanian reading of feminine sexuality (1982) replies 'All answers, including the mother are false; she simply wants' (see Lawler 2000a:32). Such free floating unfettered desire, which has no object, becomes the object of manipulation in power/knowledge struggles. Deleuze notes desire is everything, it is all matter; and flows and intensities of desire produce subjectivity, though this is counter to essentialist Freudian readings of the subject as origin of desire (Patton, 2000).

as a move to alleviate, not only the post war social panics around the family, but also to fashion 'psy' and child development as authoritative and powerful in eliciting particular identifications; identifications that Riley (1983) and Walkerdine & Lucey (1989) note are crucial for democratic ordering. Nevertheless, needs became a necessary and influential strategy in the British post war era with which to consolidate the family and it is the works of Bowlby (1953) and Winnicott (1958), dominating the British Object relations school, and prioritising the needs of the child, that paved the way for a non coercive democratic project of social ordering, rather than that of Klein's 'negativity', which threatened to explode the family romance.

The reaction to Kleinian approaches, spearheaded by Bowlby's influential maternal deprivation hypothesis (Bowlby, 1953), focussed upon the maternal environment. This hypothesis, later refined by Bowlby (1973) and Ainsworth *et al* (1978) as attachment theory, posited the effect of lack of maternal care on infants, and Bowlby drew upon the field of ethology, where imprinting, evident in animal specific behaviour as a means of attachment, was transported as a way of understanding mother/ child relationships. This was a move away from Freud and Klein's initial conclusions that what was represented in children's internal worlds was not directly the result of actual experiences in the mother/ child relationship.

Whereas Bowlby's work (1953) centred on the mother's presence to fulfil the infants needs, (according to 'attachment theory'<sup>9</sup> derivative of the biological

---

<sup>9</sup> Ainsworth *et al* (1978), following Bowlby, devised the 'strange situation' technique to code infant responses to the removal and return of the mothers presence. Believing a secure base to be foundational to the child's self worth, Ainsworth *et al* coded the sensitivity of the mother to the child (Cowie, 1995:13). Indeed, the Ainsworth experiment is the setting in Chapter Five for a discussion on observation and reading bodies. Here though, I think it is fruitful to explore some issues that Urwin raises around the focus of child developmental psychology (1998 [1984]). The Ainsworth 'strange situation' settings were read as evidence of adequate/ inadequate bonding in the mother/child dyad, thus making the mother the origin of proper child development. Urwin (1998), however, offers a different reading of the 'strange situation'; the anxiety shown by the infant is, rather than a reflection of bonding between mother and child, evidence of the desire for control and of power relations in emergent subjectivity formation. Here the infant perceives the stranger as detrimental to its emergent subjectivity and its ability to control interactions, there is the fear here that the stranger will not interpret the child's wants and

concept of imprinting), Winnicott expanded the repertoire of the mother by invoking a maternal environment/ space responsible for the child's social and intellectual development, thereby making the mother, as facilitator, central to child development. The 'good' mother, according to Winnicott, finds her 'whole self' in the work of being at home with her children (Doane and Hodges, 1992:31). Winnicott reinforced this message by offering his expertise as simply being cipher, in a sense 'reflecting back' that which was already 'known' by the mother. In acting as a mirror, he claimed not to be prescriptive, yet, as Doane and Hodges point out, 'non prescriptive reflective discourse has its own style; just as it mirrors the natural, it too is closer to the natural-oral rather than written' (1992:22). His popular radio broadcasts, then, were the perfect vehicle to present his theories; to reach out to the mother who was not, as he claimed, 'usually a learner from books' (Winnicott, 1986:127). It was here that Winnicott reiterated the responsibility of 'good enough' mothers to aid the creative unfolding of the child's self through making a space for expression, this was to be achieved through guidance rather than overt instruction.<sup>10</sup> Further, consistent with current practice, Winnicott's work elicits the mother's involvement through requests that she calibrate or 'attune' her responses to the child's lead. If gauged correctly 'the

---

additionally the threat that the stranger may dominate the child, thus forestalling any attempts the child may produce to control interactions/ processes. Discussing stages of emerging subjectivity in the infant, beginning with Lacan's mirror stage (1998:276), Urwin notes, after Lacan, how control and continuity, (of the self for itself), always out of reach and unfulfilled in all subject positions, is replaced with desire. As Urwin notes, the child's concern in all this remains primarily that; '...adults are now necessary to interpret and complete the infant's own communicative initiatives' (1998:301). Using this particularly well known piece of psychological research, Urwin claims that the process of observation collapses what is essentially social into the interpersonal and individual; and rather than addressing questions of the infant's imagined control, make mothers accountable/ responsible. She comments; 'these ambivalent and contradictory feelings in babies show how inadequate are accounts of 'mothering' which presume that this task is simply a question of meeting the baby's needs'. The broader point that Urwin makes here, is that the child's wish to control the mother is about power relations; implying that 'desire itself is produced through power relations as they operate in particular social practices' (1998: 314).

<sup>10</sup> The ways in which mothers are urged to conceal their power and become child centred are taken up by Walkerdine and Lucey (1989) as central to democratic ordering. Walkerdine and Lucey show in their critique of Tizard and Hugh's study, how those mothers who retain agency within the dyad, (working class mothers and daughters), are pathologized.

infant's "true self" will emerge from activities in the "transitional space" (Thomas, 1996:306), failing this a 'false self' overly conformist or delinquent was a possible development. This Winnicottian image of the 'good enough' mother does nothing to alleviate the anxieties of the new mother.

Is there yet then a theoretical formulation that can free up the mother from her place as origin? Nancy Chodorow's (1978) work was influential for feminists in returning some agency back to the maternal subject. However, her prescription for mothering is not without its problems. Though importantly giving consideration to the position of mother, Doane and Hodges (1992) note that Chodorow's theorisations fail because they take as fact some of Winnicott's basic assumptions about children's needs. Chodorow uses Object Relations theory to sustain a sociological argument; claiming Object Relations is social-relational, her account rather maintains the part played by mothers in the reproduction of oppressive subject positions for themselves and their daughters. But Doane and Hodges take issue with the basis of Chodorow's analysis;

Chodorow creates the mother as an origin so that the mother's agency seems the key to her own oppression (the sexual division of labour). And in addition to reconstituting the mother as origin, Chodorow recreates the implicit gendering of the infant in object –relations theory (1992:38).

This section then, briefly addressing the major psychoanalytic shifts to child developmental theory and the simultaneous efforts to codify populations through, what were deemed, social techniques (Rose, 1999a), sets the scene, not only for these mothers current understandings around the relationship with their children, but also for those interpretations readily on offer in child care texts, at the clinic or in television broadcasts. These developments in post war Britain have been documented elsewhere in more detail by Riley (1983), Singer (1992), Doane and Hodges (1992), and it is important to note in these authors discussions the interleaving of an awareness of 'society', (that is, through historically produced techniques of observation) and psy development, as simultaneously constitutive of identities and their imagining.

Next, I will examine needs talk and some of the criticisms that have been levelled against appeals to biology made by the use of language that invoke particular versions of childhood and gender. The prevalence of such psychological theories in everyday practice and their place in making identities ‘lived out’ will be questioned, not only from the viewpoint of the mothers who receive knowledge, but also from the viewpoint of those who transmit advice as experts. I intend to show the ways in which psychological knowledges around the child and nature of the self are taken up through an appeal to expertise and biology.

### **‘Needs’ talk**

- **Needs gratification**

The political desire to rebuild the family in post war Britain; and the publication of child care texts for the mass market led, more pointedly, towards considerations of social order and moral citizenship, achievable through the ‘nature’ of mother/child relations. At a deeper level, this discourse revolved around the projection of a particular sort of self, complicit with the demands of democratic government and made desirous to citizens through a compulsion to self-knowledge, autonomy, fulfilment and natured-ness. The rise of personhood through tropes of universality and human nature assumed selves then that approached knowledges equally. Yet, as we shall see, knowledge becomes the means of making difference; a gateway through which a priori notions of capital are taken into account in calculating worthy selves (Walkerdine & Lucey, 1989; Skeggs 1997, 2004). Becoming part of common sense, it is this everyday knowing that points up the Foucauldian notion of production; the making of a self whilst simultaneously subjecting oneself, ‘giving oneself over’, to knowledge power complexes. As a technology of the self, ‘psy’ is well established to covertly order self-scrutinization, producing the ‘good enough’ mother who in turn produces the ‘good enough’ citizen. In the interviews, needs and their gratification were perceived as intimately part of a feminine, classed and maternal position.<sup>11</sup> Though just as needs resonated with the circumstantial requirements to build the post war family; we can see that

---

<sup>11</sup>In Chapter Six, I discuss the way in which psy knowledge itself, rather than conferring a truth and interiority to the self, creates an antithetical freedom and can be considered a repressive move.

needs, in these mothers talk, go far beyond care and are reflective of social, relational and wholly moral behaviour;

Christine: I suppose, as far as I can see it, if you have a child you've got to put that child first, your needs come last.

SP: You think they come first all the time?

Christine: Yeah they've got to.

Christine, at the family centre, felt this was incontestable; children's needs were a priority. A young single mother, I detected a resignation in her reply, she was the only one amongst her peers outside the centre who was a mother. Ambivalent about her position as mother, invested through her child yet at the same time divested of freedoms enjoyed by her friends; she explained the losses in terms of freedom and material goods for herself, 'Going down the town [Newcastle] and buying clothes, that's had to stop. You can't do that when you've this one [child] to buy for', but she was quick to add she 'wouldn't be without him'.

Children's needs, set down in relation to certain truths about their socio-emotional and cognitive development, are laid down in an open and generalised manner, so that the mother is never certain that she is attaining the levels of need satisfaction deemed appropriate. Such a 'thin' description of needs, Fraser (1989) notes, guarantees the self-regulation and self-monitoring of maternal subjectivity. Further, Woodhead points out that needs are continually presented as inherent; 'Cultural prescriptions for childhood are presented as if they were intrinsic qualities of children's own psychological make-up' (1990:72). The inculcation of needs, rather than 'wants', is a device that carries substantial moral import and obscures any political agenda that may be underlying such discourse.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Doane and Hodges (1992) analyse the search for the good mother through an analysis of psychoanalytic readings of the child mother relationship and claim;

All object relations theorists preserve the idea of the mother as origin; we hope to show how this 'origin' and 'cause' is, in fact the effect of a discursive practice that itself has multiple origins. This discursive practice is a process of selective emphases; the insights of one generation are often recast to buttress the values of another (1992:3).



Indeed, as the focus of this section will demonstrate, the good mother is well advised to adhere to received wisdom, particularly to those expert knowledges that are concerned with the psycho-social and emotional well being of the child. I was interested to find out what the women thought about popular childcare texts, were they relevant still? At the group discussion in the family centre, Joanne claimed she regularly bought Parents magazine, using it as a reference resource; 'They tell you all about toddlers and what to expect', Lyn added that she referred to child care texts 'just to see where she [child] should be up to'. Many of these parenting and women's magazines, not specifically denoted as child care reading, but more generically produced under the genre of 'lifestyle', draw, in a more accessible way, upon academic psychoanalytic literatures. The mothers were ambivalent about such texts; it was clear many of these texts were not seen as realistic;

SP: Can I ask if any of you still refer to any of the books or magazines on childcare?

Pam: Yeah, I still do, but the things I've read recently! I looked something up about toilet training the other day and it suggested that when your child had pooped his pants for the tenth time that week, you should remain calm, and say, 'Oh dear you didn't choose to put it in the toilet this time!', which isn't generally my reaction, so, no, I didn't find that helpful!

Rachael: You're looking to find out if your child is actually in the range of normal behaviour, and sometimes you think they're way off the scale, but really they are normal (my emphasis).

How does Rachael define 'normal'? In looking for abnormality she draws on an already sedimented version of normality. Here, Pam and Rachael at the playgroup, differ on texts; Pam mocks the impracticality of the advice whilst Rachael refers to normality, but this is presented as a range of behaviour, it is never too specific, precisely foregrounding Fraser's point around 'thin' descriptions (1989). Alison, at the playgroup preferred childcare texts by Penelope Leach, it seemed everyone had their favourite expert who they claimed was on the same wavelength as them as mothers. The playgroup mothers conceded that, 'With the first pregnancy you read everything, and then you never pick it up again.', but felt these texts were very much concerned with the birth act, the biological rather than post natal feelings, relationships, and 'baby blues', though they noted that it was the

biological that initially, as first birth mothers, had been their primary concern when the birth act and bodily changes were a source of apprehension. Parenting magazines and popular child care texts then, trade upon constructing a relationship between the biological, the social and the psychological, closely mirrored by relations with experts.

The needs of the child, established in the theories of the British Object Relations School, were indivisible with maternal subjectivity in our discussions. Amanda, one of the mothers I spoke to at the family centre, was conversant with 'psy' through her recent training to become a counsellor. She demonstrated, in her constructions here of her child's emotional states and her control over them, that enduring trope of 'maternal culpability' (Urwin, 1985:180);

**Amanda: Just an even balance throughout...rather than ...y'know ...my temperament going up and down...not let my moods influence him. I know that's impossible somedays ...but to try and keep things level for him, and not confuse him...y'know.... he hasn't done anything so why's mammy shoutin' and bawlin'...y'know...cos children tend to think everything's their fault. If mammy's in a bad mood that's their fault , if mammy's in a good mood, that's their fault. That kinda thing, I think children tend to perceive these kind of things...so just to keep things nice and calm and even as possible.**

Though femininity, instinct and respectability were interleaved in these women's constructions around what constituted motherhood; the identity mother, appears to impinge upon subjectivity, not through any claim to 'authenticity' that can solely be linked to femininity, but because it exists as a technology of the self. Foucault notes how we monitor our own self; we do the work of power whilst we are actively engaged with sites that enable us to reveal our true self; 'If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you think one would be brought to obey it?' (Foucault 1980:119)

Such a Foucauldian portrait of power frames the relationship between these mothers and 'psy'. The 'good mother', defined and known, (publicly and privately), through relations of expertise as meeting the needs of the child and producing the good citizen, is a trope that links biology (reproduction and

mothering instinct) with psychological 'traits' (nurturing /sensitivity), and pre figures maternal identity as essential. How does such knowledge remain co-terminus as timeless, authentic and moreover scientific, yet responsive to changes in cultural and socially recognised moments? One only has to consider Aries' (1962) studies, which trace the development of the discourse of the child, demonstrating how malleable mother/child identities are across time, how responsive they are to socio-cultural prescriptions and how they become a vehicle for political agendas. More recent moral panics around the 'Bulger case'<sup>13</sup> or single mothers on benefit<sup>14</sup> detect the instability of this knowledge base, revealing the foundational instabilities upon which these truths are constructed. The constant reiteration of expertise and child/ parent discourse in the face of social disorders, reveals a reliance not, in effect, upon nature, but upon a particular socially organised and deployed network, comprising the 'psy' professions (clinic, education, social work, health visitor, child care texts); here scientific knowledges around the child are invoked only to render what has been eroded as whole again. Jenks claims; 'In an efficient "caring" society child rearing and education liberate

---

<sup>13</sup> The Bulger case ignited a significant moral panic about children and childhood. On 12<sup>th</sup>. February 1993, Jamie Bulger, aged 2, went missing; his body was found two days later on a railway line. The security videos showed James being led away by two older boys. The boys, Jon Venables and Robert Thompson (both aged eleven years), were convicted with his murder, becoming the youngest convicted murderers in Britain for almost 250 years. Detectives handling the case declared the boys 'evil,' 'freaks' and 'fixated on killing' and Judge Morland claimed it an act of 'unparalleled evil and barbarity' (Pilkington, 'Boys guilty of Bulger murder-detention without limit for "unparalleled evil"' *Guardian*, 25.11.93). What is important here is that this event fed into what were existing concerns around social order, the breakdown of the family and the loss of childhood innocence. The families, spaces and places the two eleven year olds inhabited were demonised and they were rendered, in public imaginations, as un-real children. Blake Morrison's account of events surrounding the case (1997), was however, rather an attempt to recapture the fundamental notion of childhood and make it safe; his attempt to do so, however, was overwritten with a pathologizing of 'sorts' of mothers, families and places. Morrison's writing serves to highlight a particular way of writing working class pathology, (see also Lawler, 2005a), that Walkerdine and Lucey note is informed by disgust, the spectacular, and maintenance of difference;

Academics often ask, 'How can they endure these conditions? But this question is asked in several ways. Not only, 'How can working -class people survive?', but 'How can they be so horrific?' as though somehow these questions were not connected. For the academic can record, can theorise, but will never have to live that life (1989:12).

<sup>14</sup> Murray's (1994) work, and its subsequent crossover into the broadsheet press, initiated a panic over the perceived detrimental effect of single mums on the traditional nuclear family.

the individual into compliance' (1996:43), so by inviting the mother to produce her self through the expertise of child care, she comes to police her self, she liberates herself into compliance. Overt forms of regulation are not required, only her desire to produce herself as the good mother who, in turn, produces the good child.

Louise, from the family centre group, had older children who had grown up and since left home. I asked her if she noticed any changes in raising her three year old daughter, as opposed to her other children. She claimed; 'Everything's more relaxed, less strict'. But is it? A less invasive approach that calls upon what is 'natural' opens the way for mothers to work upon their selves and their moral responsibilities as properly feminine selves and as mothers. Thus it is not only the interests of the child at stake here, but also the presentation of the mother herself as respectable and 'good enough'. It remains debatable then, as to whether instruction has, in effect, been replaced by a more 'relaxed, less strict' approach.<sup>15</sup>

- **'Good enough' (and better) mothers; pedagogy and resistance**

In Chapter Five, I discuss the ways in which the mothers invoke 'drives' and 'instinct' to explain socially organised arrangements around gender and the domestic sphere. Here, (emotional and social ) needs of the child became indistinguishable from biology as Winnicott's naturally equipped 'sensitive' mother (1964), able to meet the child's psychic 'needs', is produced by the psy professions to normalise child rearing practices and regulate mothers. After Winnicott (1964), this remains a symbolic point of identification; for, not only is the mother invested as a powerful creative force in the constitutive 'other' of the mother child relationship, but she also, through the rhetorical devices of such themes, approaches self-effacement and finds a self reflected in the child's needs. At least this is how these theoretical formulations envisage the mother child relationship; later I note some resistance, on the part of these mothers, at attempts

---

<sup>15</sup> One only has to read Gitta Sereny's (1995) account of the Mary Bell case, for instance, to see that the freedoms enjoyed by children in the sixties would be unimaginable in present day climate of curfews and 'stranger danger'. Meanings and constructions then,

to instantiate what is seen to be a restrictive closeted relationship and an often impractical one. At the playgroup, I asked about controlling one's feelings in the presence of the child;

SP: Do you think that's important, to be calm?

Lorraine: Oh yes, I think they pick up all sorts from you, how you feel.

Denise: Mothers care much more, I think, about the loving, caring and nurturing.

Anne: I do believe there's a difference between how men feel about it. I don't feel there's that feeling of ultimate responsibility. That has to be with the mother.

For Suzanne, at the family centre, such skills are not inherent or natural; she claimed 'You learn it as you go along'. Indeed when I ask her how she copes with conflicts between her and her child she replies; 'Sometimes, if I lose my temper with her, it's because I can't be bothered.' Suzanne indicates that the mothering self has to be brought forward to interactions with the child; it is not always present. However such comments are thrown into sharp contrast when we talk about the needs of the child, needs that Suzanne claims must come before the mother's needs;

SP: So what would you say is being a 'good mother' then?

Suzanne; Mm.. putting them before yourself really...taking care of their needs before your own.

SP: What would you say those needs were, children's needs?

Suzanne: Being happy, happy all the time, apart from the practical stuff, their emotional wellbeing.

How can a mother ensure her child is happy all the time? It seems that the 'psychic organiser' (Singer, 1992:97) or mother must work constantly to interpret the child. Suzanne is a single mother and her pregnancy was not planned, she had planned a career before children and finds the pressures of single parenting a strain. Later in the interview;

---

change over time. Yet, not, it seems when they can be rooted in (motherly) nature, or in the 'needy' child.

SP: So you feel it's a big responsibility in terms of your needs, what you want to do? You come second?

Suzanne: Oh yeah. Especially as I'm on my own, that makes it harder to go out places, and I can't just sit down and say 'Oh, you bath her tonight', I've got to do it every night, and that's difficult as well.

SP: This self sacrifice, was it something you expected? Were you ready for it?

Suzanne: No, I didn't expect it quite so much, it's difficult because I'm with her 24 hours a day, that's more than I expected, she sleeps in my bed. So that makes it feel, at the minute, its too much, the sacrifice I'm making and I don't want it to go on much longer so I'm taking steps to try and sort of ease that, so y' know?

Phoenix and Woollett comment on the difficulties arising when psychology demands a uniform approach from mothers regardless of family forms;

Prescriptions about children 'needing' their mothers and hence mothers 'needing' to stay at home with children and about mothers 'needing' to behave sensitively arise within psychology because many psychologists accept dominant ideologies about ideal families and reproduce them in their work (Phoenix and Woollett, 1991:35).

At the family centre I asked Suzanne;

SP: Do you feel valued being a mother? Do you feel you've gained something in terms of authority or social standing?

SUZANNE: Not really, I know for some people it does, and I can see it, but me? No. I think I felt almost embarrassed in a way, at first, to be seen out with a pushchair. I thought 'this isn't me, this looks odd', y'know? I just couldn't identify with it.

ME: So you felt distanced from it?

SUZANNE: Mmm... I'm getting used to it, but I wasn't like 'Oh wow, I'm a mother!' That wasn't me at all. It wasn't the lifestyle I sort of saw for myself.

In Winnicott's schema, Suzanne should easily have sought a self reflected in the needs of her child, but here there is a sense that maternal identity can never fully encompass her subjectivity (Hall, 1996). That it does not, troubles the universalist /essentialist claims of Object Relations theory. Doane and Hodges critically assess any claim to an appeal to 'correct' views of mothering;

Once we take seriously the importance of determinant social conditions, the construction of a timeless 'good enough' mother seems a necessarily conservative gesture. Universalizing discourses about motherhood have benefited women very little. Despite the feminist impulse behind the

revival of object-relations accounts of the mother child dyad, the desire to elevate the mother has worked to define women narrowly as mothers, and to define mothers as the idealised and blamed origin of the child, the family and the state (Doane and Hodges, 1992:6).

Elsewhere, Walkerdine and Lucey (1989) note the infiltration of pedagogy in childrearing practice; Laura was the only mother in the group from the family centre who had professional status in her previous employment; by conflating issues of love and security with educational development, she demonstrates motherhood as a pedagogical device,

SP: So generally what would you say is being a 'good' mother'?

Laura: Offering security and love to a child, always being there, having time, to just sit with them and listen to them and disciplining is part of being a good parent, teaching them good boundaries and values. Obviously the practical stuff as well, but I think that building love, trust and security in your child and teaching them how to interact with other people and social skills is one of the most important things.

SP: So you'd say that's more important than educational development?

Laura: Well, I think that follows anyway. If they're in an atmosphere of love and trust and security and you're spending time with your child, and you're talking to them, and listening to them, and reading to them, then they are going to develop anyway.

The group at the family centre often made their power visible, and this was in comparison to the playgroup mothers where the child had to be shielded from displays of power. From the family centre;

SP: How do you feel when he's throwing a tantrum?

JACKIE: I get myself upset. I think 'Why's he doing this for', I mean, I shout at him, then he knows, but I don't shout very often.

SP: What would you say then is being a 'good' mother.

JACKIE: Em, just looking after him properly, well mannered. He knows when he goes out to behave himself. Just things like that really. Show him like who's boss [laughs].

Diane, at the centre told me how she felt when coping with her child's unacceptable behaviour;

Diane: Some times I just feel like running away! (laughs). Sometimes I just have to sit down and watch him for a while and calm myself down before I say anything, cause I don't want to just go in and blow my top, he's little and he doesn't know. I just have to sort of think 'ooh, stop it! 'Like most people I think I try and move him away. I try to sort of sit back.

SP: Does that make you feel better coping with it like that?

Diane: Yeah, it makes me feel a bit better because I'm not actually going in and either smacking him really hard or losing my temper with him or anything like that. I mean if you lose your temper with a baby it reflects more on what you're like yourself, cause they're too little really (my emphasis).

SP: So do you think that's what generally what would you say is being a 'good mother'?

Diane: Yeah, I don't think anyone can say they're a perfect good mother, because theres always times when you think, mm, you could do it better but you haven't, y'know? I think just sort of being there for the baby or child and just sort of helping them. I think the best thing is when they start doing something that you've been helping them with, and doing it on their own, like if you're reading a book to them.

Diane accepts that she becomes impatient with her child, though she knows that she must be rational in her approach. She notes the good mother as 'being there' for the child and once again we see the example of pedagogy infiltrating mothering practice. She invokes the bad mother when she notes the consequences of losing your temper, it demonstrates a lack; 'it reflects more on what you're like yourself'. I ask Christine, also at the family centre, how she manages tantrums;

Christine: I just ignore him, if he starts taking a tantrum I ignore him, and that usually works, and when he comes over and he's nice I give him a cuddle. I mean, I feel guilty then but it's got to be done in the long run.

Christine expects that she has control of the relationship in terms of demands; she wants to make it clear to her child that his demands are not paramount and that he must consider power relations. These differences in techniques reiterate the findings of Walkerdine and Lucey (1989) in their analysis of mother daughter

relationships.<sup>16</sup> Expectations rooted in such parenting are fraught with anxiety, as Anne at the playgroup explains;

**ANNE:** I used to think, 'Oh, my God!' But you're forever judging yourself, it's very difficult, and it's very hard not to judge yourself against other people, given the expectations. You know, what is a 'good mother', what should a good mother be able to give? I think you do gain confidence, but you're constantly challenging yourself, and thinking I could be doing this better. You know, my mum's got excellent parenting skills, she's an ex teacher, and when she comes in for the weekend, she does things that, well, I think 'Am I doing a good enough job?' Your confidence gets knocked at times and you think "I could be, should be, doing more". And I find that hard.

Anne here highlights how, in our discussions, we were moving between notions of natural, needs and teaching. What had been natural and inherent in the child and mother now became something that needed instruction. Earlier in discussion at the family centre, Jackie voiced her disregard for parenting courses, due to her already legitimised position as in receipt of knowledge (she had previously taken a qualification in social care). I asked her how she thinks other people would describe her as a mother,

**Jackie:** I think I'm a good mother, my Mam always says I am. When he was a baby my Mam used to say ' God, you cope very well '. I think everybody would say I'm a good Mam, I try my best anyway. I give him what he wants.

Jackie views her child's needs through the lens of an already embedded apparatus of knowledge. She knows 'what he wants' because her template for mothering practice is derived from an established apparatus involving the clinic, her social care course, the health visitor and the recognition of her own mother in the reproduction of her own good mothering practice.

---

<sup>16</sup> Walkerdine and Lucey (1989) reinterpret Tizard and Hughe's original observations of the working class mother daughter interactions where visible power relations were considered pathological. They claim that the inculcation of autonomous childhoods (and making power invisible, through specifically monitoring the self in accordance with preferred techniques), not only regulates the middle class mother through its effacement of the mother's self, but fails those middle class daughters in later life, as they face the

In looking at how the mothers approached needs it was clear that personal capitals were mobilised to construct the self (and child). Those mothers working/trained in teaching, nursing, social work, presented with versions of motherhood that equated 'moral' (predominantly middle classed) citizenship. Was this because they were schooled in detecting resistance? Certainly they presented a good understanding of the need to produce the 'autonomous' child<sup>17</sup> and moreover, to hide their power as mothers, though as Walkerdine and Lucey note this is how difference is made into inequality (1989). Like the middle classed women in Walkerdine and Lucey's study, these mothers were doubly bound to the project of needs; both policed and policing.

In her previous employment as teacher, Pam noted how she had to try and keep a professional distance in dealing with parents;

Pam: Well you know, I'm not saying this is generally the case but some of them, the parents, you look at them and you see, you know you understand why, some of them, the children, are the way they are.

SP: What exactly do you mean? How are they?

Pam; Just, well, all depends what sort of school you're teaching in, but by and large you just know these kids will have a struggle to achieve.

SP Because of the way their parents look?

Pam: No, not just that. I mean, ...attitudes. Parents' evenings are so telling, most of the parents sit there and it's unfortunate, but they don't have a clue what is required, the work they need to do to help a child reach their true potential, you know? Of course, a teacher can only do so much, the rest is parental responsibility, interest, ... environment, but some children, and their parents for that matter, are...well...without sounding cruel, beyond hope. They are hard work. I'm sure you know what I'm getting at.

---

failure of autonomy. Indeed the making visible of power relations, may prepare the child for the failure of autonomy.

<sup>17</sup> It is to this end that the autonomous child, in receipt of such social/ dispositional capital through the correct childrearing practices, is the medium and cipher upon which the basis of a liberal bourgeois democracy rests. Parenting skills advocated by expert knowledges and administered in middle class households are offered as the template for child-rearing practices everywhere, regardless of social context. Control is further configured by the very product of such practices; middle class women professionals, thus developing a circular trajectory in which women effectively police other women (as mothers police 'other' mothers).

Diane Reay has investigated the anxieties and pressures mothers of primary school children face against an educational system that they feel excludes them in terms of networks and knowledge systems (1998a). These are the very people that are Pam's 'hard work', they just don't know, (and, being 'beyond hope', we can assume they never will). Their children, however are, in part, absolved of their lack as it is returned upon the family ( and environment). There are echoes too here, of the 'disgusted subjects' that Steph Lawler has explored (2005); as Pam notes 'you look at them and you see'; their bodies are easily read and facile, taken as containers for a wealth of historically sedimented assumptions of ill judged parenting and lifestyle mistakes. In saying this, I mean not to highlight Pam's 'beliefs', but show how central these discourses are to classed distinctions; they are always partial imaginations, a fear and fascination that is pronounced as visceral disapprobation.

Later in the interview I pressed Pam as to whether she called upon her expertise, not just as mother, but as teacher, to develop her child's potential and attend to their needs;

Pam: Oh, definitely, I'm intending to go back to teaching anyway, so I'm keeping up with new developments in education. And, naturally, my insights and training will be a source my children can draw upon, I'm sure its bound to give them a head start in many ways, but I think if you have a certain approach from birth....an educational approach....because you can do that as well as being caring...then It's not a problem, is it?

Pam takes for granted that her access to educational knowledge, (and indeed knowledge of what makes success at school possible), is available to all parents. She states it's a matter of approach that ascertains the satisfaction of needs and drawing potential, but also inscribes her own expertise as a resource.

Beverly Skeggs' disussion (2004) around 'use value' and 'exchange value' is relevant here, for it was obvious that some mothers were able to fashion a 'good enough' sense of mothering self that had 'use value' pertaining to the self; yet other mothers having access to extra capital by virtue of their professional status and networks, were able to make their mothering identity replete with 'exchange-

(able) value'. Their values were eminently more marketable (in terms of 'needs' of the child) and as Ball (2003) has noted, and Pam demonstrates, such values can be mobilised structurally (through educational networks /practices), for the child. Values and practices thus control both working and middle class mothers by mapping onto the many complex (dis)-identifications of class operating within social and psychic space. The only space that offered resistance came with maternal displays of power, but as I go on to discuss, moving on to those who implement 'psy' as part of their professional role at the family centre, we will see how important needs are in judging moral, feminine selves.

### **Family development**

The assumption is that change is a process of social and cultural 'engineering', a design problem, which can be solved by expert 'planning' procedures. A basic premise of this kind of thinking is that adjustment is the mechanism whereby a condition of relative material affluence can be achieved, a set of essentially middle class values can be (re)established, and a stakeholder ideology widely absorbed, without any radical attention being paid to the fundamental and systemic causes of inequality, exclusion and dysfunctionality (emphasis in original) (Bromley, 2000:51).

Having discussed how these mothers related to needs talk, I now want to turn to those agents of expertise that use needs and psychological knowledges, not simply in response to the child, but also to make value judgements upon family forms. This involves looking at the work of the family centre staff, and discourses of classlessness. My interest here is, as was Urwin's, not simply the everyday activity of these sites of expertise (health visit/ clinic/ family centre), but rather 'how they may function in the construction of mothering more generally' (Urwin, 1985:166). This is entailed, as the previous section regarding the women's discussion and interpretations of needs shows, with the mother's active role in sustaining the model of needs and the power relations of expertise.<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth

---

<sup>18</sup> On reading Urwin's work, I was struck by the similarities between our findings. Whilst Urwin's article was written almost twenty years ago, it was surprising to note how the interview responses echoed the responses of her sample. The constancy of the notion that mothers needed to be wholly responsible, the pleasures gained from this position, even to the exclusion of fathers taking on more 'mothering' work, and the feelings of inadequacy were noteworthy.

Roberts, charting the rise of individualism and privatisation in the post war period (1940-70) family, notes not only that; 'individuals contribute to and in turn are affected by the times in which they live' (Roberts, 1995:1) but also that her respondents 'perceived their lives as being inextricably interconnected with, and influenced by, both possible future children and those already alive' (1995:1). Whilst there is a general shift in emphasis since the immediate post war era, at least around interpretations of class (see Chapter Three); my discussions with these women found striking continuities. Perhaps not in the way the women perceived their selves as classed, (they aligned their selves with middle classed sensibilities; a response, after Roberts {1995}, that may be attributed to the leverage obtained by liberal free marketism and the term choice); but certainly continuities existed in the ways that expertise and its agents can 'class'. In this sense classing always conjures up the term working classed and the possibility of negative associations.

The family centre promoted a child centred ethos. Kate and Gill were employed as family development workers at the family centre specifically overseeing 'drop-in' mornings, toddler groups, women's groups, out of school facilities and creche facilities. I thought it would be useful to interview them in their capacity as professional advisors regarding the child and family. How would 'psy' knowledge and the implementation of their training affect their view of the child/ mother dyad? What could their practices reveal about the reiteration of 'psy' knowledge at the level of everyday interactions? Moreover, would the investigation of the sites where child developmental issues were prioritised point up the links between 'knowledge' and the construction of maternal subjectivity? Their talk was interspersed with references to qualifications they had obtained in the course of their training, courses they had participated in and meetings they had attended around areas of child policy and protection, this spoke of the interweaving of numerous sites and discourses around psychological 'knowledge' and the institutionalised practice of it.

Kate explained her role in the centre as 'meeting the needs' of the community. She felt it was all about how the centre could 'adapt our ideas to meet what the community wants'. There was a feeling that the work of the centre was attracting more interest from the community, though Kate did mention that it was vital to promote the centre through social service and health agencies. Such comments made it difficult therefore to perceive whether increased interest came from mothers finding out through word of mouth or through social service referrals. The mention of new attendees, (refugees from Kosovo), suggested that social services were promoting the centre as a support system. She told me how the various courses offered were taken up in the community;

**Kate:** Well, I don't want to contradict ourselves, it's not just about numbers, we run parent courses with the health visitor, and sometimes the numbers are low, but it's the immeasurable things, things that you can see they are gaining such a lot from, they [the mothers] gain the tools to deal with children's behaviour, they may walk out of here with totally changed ideas concepts of how to deal with their children that they didn't know before. You know sometimes we've just had two people on the course, so it's not just about numbers but these things are immeasurable, do y'know what I mean?

**SP:** You mean it changes their perceptions?

**Kate:** Yes, and that's so valuable, you can't always put that down on paper, but people coming back and saying –you really helped me and I'm using that. People have been empowered and their confidence has grown.

So, Kate felt that expertise, and the particular way she was able to transmit that expertise, empowered mothers. It seemed as though expertise could somehow bridge the gap; bringing something that resided 'naturally' in the mother to fruition. It enabled any lack, any gaps in knowledge, (note, not naturality), to be sealed. I asked Gill how she saw her role at the centre;

**Gill:** Building up rapport. I know a lot of the clients now and people come in and just want to talk, it's more or less counselling. I've got a parent who will ring and say; 'Can I pop in', so I'll book aside an hour to see her and chat. I don't do counselling as such.

Gill's terminology was interesting, especially her qualification of the 'client/counsellor' relationship as part of her remit. It is within this 'psychological or

therapeutic' (1996:29) relationship that Rose considers selves/ identities are produced. I asked Gill about the implementation of her training; how did the centre promote its ideals? It seemed that parents come to take knowledge on board through discussion and negotiation; 'psy' elicits selves that are self compliant with its practices.

**Gill:** Our emphasis is on trying to encourage parents to find solutions with each other, to get them to talk to each other, at parenting courses for example and not to say 'Hey this is how you should do it'. The parent courses are very laid back and comfortable and it's just about getting them to talk.

**Kate:** it's the social aspect, once parents get talking they find they've been through the same things with their children and they realise they are not a bad parent.

Though it was apparent that the centre had a role in supporting mothers in child care practices, Kate claimed that worries were surfacing about bad parenting, I wondered as to what extent mothers initiated such concerns, or whether it was the planned activities/ discussions, managed by the family workers, that gave rise to such concerns. Perhaps the 'group social' aspect of planned sessions around child care held at the centred storied concerns into being, creating a space for expertise. I suggested to Kate that there must be situations when she felt that she wanted to give advice even when it had not been asked for. Did she find this difficult to resist? It appeared that the immediacy of this problem was soon diluted through the formal procedures of referral;

**Kate:** We come across situations like that all the time really. Gill and I usually get together, bounce things off each other, see the health visitor and see our line manager too, as a team. We have just had a review where the parent is very negative towards her child and we are trying to think of ways for her to be more positive, star charts etc, because parents can be so negative...but its about not being judgemental – it's complex.

Other networks, under the umbrella of 'psy' knowledge, were also implicated in the work of the centre. I asked Kate about the involvement of, for example the health visitor, the social services etc. The centre took social service referrals and was involved, as Kate said, in; 'networking to liaise with other departments, just to see if we can bring people in or refer people on to them really'.

The changing development of child- care was an issue to both family workers, but child centredness remained a prime concern. I asked Kate if her work had thrown up any new issues around families and childcare in her time at the centre. She reiterated the notion of a child centred approach;

**Kate:** Well, the same issues about behaviour and dealing with children come up at the groups, but I think just to get parents thinking on the level of their children, just to get back to that, just to get back into the minds of the children, and think about their frustrations. And not to preach at parents, that's why we call our parents course 'coping with kids'- its about terminology as well, not to categorise parents but promote positive parenting

**SP:** So, you'd say try to get parents to be more child centred?

**Kate:** Definitely, definitely. Many of the parents don't understand it from the perspective of the child, you know it's about stepping back a bit and thinking about how the child is feeling.

Discourses around the child/child development serve a variety of individual and political purposes; not least the production of mother as origin.

Gill talked about the origins of the centre. Initially a church concern, it still retained tenuous links to the church, further funding through the National Lottery, sponsorship from business and access to enterprise funds had enabled the centre to become purpose built, offering a comprehensive child care service. Gill told me the centre provided an out of school group, nursery, family based women's groups, parent toddler drop- ins, creches and toddler break (an off- site creche). At the time of interviewing, the centre was accommodating two social work students on placement. Gill noted, '...one of them asked the parents to fill in a questionnaire asking what info they wanted things on and a lot of its on behavioural problems so we're looking at that need'. In order to respond to this need, Gill said she would run one session per week over the summer break and give handouts to parents each session. These sessions were always administered by the centre staff, she felt there was no need to bring in other expertise, given the training she and Kate had undertaken, and though she felt

they were responding to the demands of the centre users, she nevertheless admitted some initiatives had been unsuccessful;

SP: So you decide at the centre what provision you can give?

Gill: Yes, but we look at what the parents demand.

SP: So the directive comes from the parents and you discuss it?

Gill: Sometimes we've put things on, tried them and they haven't worked so we don't continue.

The centre was promoted by both development workers as being autonomous. I asked Gill if the work of the centre had links with other official bodies; social services, health, education, health visitors etc? Did they share information with other bodies about their service users? Did they make or receive referrals?

Gill: 'Out of schools' [service] is very linked with social services –we get a lot of special needs children there, also we have 'family break', we get referrals there through the health visitor or social services. We network with these agencies to inform them about these provisions.

Training appeared to be an ongoing concern, a response to what Kate saw as the emergence of new developments in issues around parenting. She was enthusiastic about the need for updating knowledge, which she saw was specifically linked to changes in policy and law;

Kate: There is opportunity to train for staff- we are always looking to do training suitable to the post; child protection, counselling, domestic violence. We would like to do training in child therapy- it's constantly changing and family work constantly needs updating (my emphasis).

Again, note a return to the changing nature of the family and knowledge. On the one hand instinct and nature were seen as immutable; a cornerstone on which the notion of motherhood is built, but still knowledges that circulate around motherhood, childhood and parenting had to constantly change. As Kate explained, child centeredness was the ethic of the practical work of the centre. In this way then, with the centred child as key to progressive individualism, good society and good parenting; psychological knowledges make links psychically and structurally to identity through a discourse of naturality/ biology.

When I asked Gill about the emergence of new developments in issues regarding parenting, she considered there was 'more emphasis on having child care, giving child care [and] opportunities for women to go out and work'. Was this move to encourage mothers to seek employment outside the home something that was being actively encouraged by the centre? Did this not interfere with the needs of the child? Moreover, did it not contradict the ethic of the centre? Gill explained that mothers complained of boredom, encouraging them to come to women's groups and undertake training not only increased their confidence but also led to employment opportunities. However, these courses for employment revolved around employment in child-care itself; with a view to crèche work or classroom assistant. In this way, 'psy' inveigled itself into the domestic and public lives of the women, knowledge becoming, not only a practice operationalized to the needs of the child, but also an invested skill in terms of the self; an employment that would fill both working and domestic time. Making 'psy' inhere as a form of expertise/ skill, (as opposed to an appeal purely through the psychobiology of a particular body), extends its symbolic value in terms of capital. In this way the boundaries between structures, agency and the psyche become seamless.<sup>19</sup>

Gill told me that she knew the mothers 'who were the more needy ones', they were the ones who sought her out at the centre. The needy mothers' demands for advice usually surfaced around issues on tantrums, sleep, stress. Gill offered mothers,

...the information to try things, discussion helps. Often it's in the other activities, like glass painting, that the mothers discuss issues. Women are like that when they get together, they talk about things.

---

<sup>19</sup> I note here though use and exchange value (Skeggs 2004). Taking Bourdieu's analogy of economic metaphors (2005 [1986]) and extending them, Skeggs theorizes capitals which pertain as 'use' to self-value and capitals that pertain to transactional/ exchange value across social space. Exchange value remains mobile across a range of sites. A previous example is Pam (teacher) whose caring role as mother outstrips its use value (to her) and becomes transactional; drawing upon her pre-maternal capitals (education, networks, training, partner).

The 'talking cure' was prevalent in both development workers' constructions of their role at the centre, though this often transpired during group activities. Nevertheless, it seemed that there was an active drive by the centre workers to, as Gill said 'sell trips or training'. I was also told that health visitors would bring parents in and introduce them to the group. Many of the activities here then, were not simply client led, but emerged from specific concerns of the staff in their interactions with those who used the centre. Being non-judgemental is, of course, a prime concern of the psychological and therapeutic. Gill expressed her concerns when advice had to be worked through the needy person. She admitted the difficulties in 'standing back'. Only by coming from the parent and being wholly taken up as part of a reconfiguration in the self, itself, could knowledge do its work. She gave an example;

Gill: We did a review of this little girl that we have in for family break. And this parent is just so negative, it's unbelievable, the child can't do anything right, she won't go to school, she has to drag her to school kicking and so we've come up with a plan to encourage her to go to school. At times like that you just want to say 'do this or that and this'll happen'. We try to put it back in their court, but it's difficult because you really want to say look, 'this is the way to do it', y'know?... Well, I said to Mam, 'what do you need to do?', she said she needed help, so that was our way in (my emphasis).

### **Disordered subjects; social policy responses**

I consider now, the ways in which 'psy' knowledges, maintained through their claims to the constant nature of the mother child dyad can, nevertheless be manipulated to match particular political endeavours and cultural shifts, and translated into social policy and sites of action. It appears the post war emphasis that the mother should remain in the home 'for the good of the child' has given way to something that is complicated by what currently constitutes worthy and moral citizenship. This is bound up with potentials, (of the child and mother as separately configured citizens in their own right), and is reflected in the rise of policy initiatives such as Sure Start (see Chapter Six), New Deal, and 'welfare to work'. Further complexities arise, not only with the historical emphasis of middle classed feminism on equality in the labour market but also with the rise of enterprising selves under liberalism and the legacy afforded by the discursive

formulation of 'underclass' debates (Murray 1994). 'Psy', which alleges a primary concern with the exclusive nature of the mother/ child dyad, now intensifies its focus, paradoxically it may seem, upon the mother and child as constitutive yet separate identities. The real worlds of work, education and poverty become interspersed by fuzzy notions of self, psyche and parenting, and these knowledges, married with the notion of an enterprising self, become, along with current debates around classlessness; interpretative devices with which to demonize particular versions of motherhood and (future) citizenship.

I noted in the first section, the favourable economic conditions for the insertion of welfare into the lives of family members, the growth and mass market dissemination of 'psy' knowledge through the works of Winnicott (1964), and the ways in which psychological disciplines, (and its authoritative texts), owe much to an interest in codifying populations. The measurement and testing of worthy and worthless citizens is storied through the development of social surveys in the 1830s; surveys which began the transition of the urban poor into a distinct class, and provided the middle class with a template with which to gauge their own standards of normality; the 'working class' thus became 'the abnormal, against which the normal could be identified' (Finch, 1993:48). Ian Roberts (1999:153) discusses the many and varied opportunities to write class distinctions into the family, through 'sociological' reports from turn of century up till 80s, one example reads;

If in 1939 and earlier, before the break up in the pattern of working class life, the heroic women ruled the roost, how do you account for the transition to the notorious bingo-women who neglect their children and who have allowed family life to go to pot on the large new housing estates in Sunderland and elsewhere? (Hopkins cited in Roberts, 1999:153)

Accounts like this continue the legacy of much early nineteenth century philanthropist study and make a mockery of the 'myth' of classlessness (Reay, 2000:162). Reports that lament the plight of the unworthy working classes and their hopeless child rearing locate class firmly within practice, attitude and appearance, the almost visceral rather than visible, an outside looking in. Roberts (1999) concludes that these reports were, and are, nothing more than middle class

reportage, a mis-recognition of different lives; but such reports serve to act as markers of class sensibilities. (see Lawler, 2003; Skeggs, 1997a). This massification, ( the creation of the ‘mass’), whilst considered a fictive repository for the displacement of bourgeois fears, continues however as a set of ‘fictions functioning in truth’ (Walkerline, 1997:14); an imaginary that becomes real, with real effects for those who have the most to lose by being classified as such. The durability of these constructions persists in literatures that are concerned with child development and parenting; (and more worryingly, are considered useful text for psychology training courses);

Working class people use less active styles of coping, passive rather than active problem solving, and are low on ‘internal control’ (the belief that one can control events). These personality differences are in turn caused by child rearing, which is rigid and punitive, together with the experience that events cannot be controlled (Argyle, 1994:223).

We can read this and think, ‘Who indeed would want to be that person?’ Worse still, is to realise this as a diagnostic tool, to be subject of someone’s analysis of type is truly a hidden injury, hidden and effected as judgement upon those it observes and classifies. Yet it is not without a position it can be marked from;

Middle class families are more child-centred, with the father playing a larger part in child rearing, and there is more likely to be a father in the home. Working class parent are more authoritarian, perhaps reflecting the way they themselves are treated at work; there is a higher incidence of physical punishment of children, and discipline is directed towards respectable behaviour, obedience and conformity. Middle class parents are more accepting and egalitarian, make more use of explanation, and emphasise the importance of achievement and responsibility; (Argyle, 1994: 157-158).

Urwin (1985) notes how the interleaving of ‘psy’ theory, (particularly childhood developmental stages), and the process of ‘stimulation’, (to enhance cognitive development), has been used, not only in pre school practice, but also in social initiatives with disadvantaged groups; such linkages then become synonymous with slippage into pathology/ unworthiness<sup>20</sup>, (the ‘Sure Start’ program is a

---

<sup>20</sup>Urwin writes ;

The aim was not simply, to promote infants’ intrinsic motivation, but to forge a bridge between correlations taken to indicate a link between impoverished homes

current example). The mis-recognitions outlined above, have a long and chequered history, but coupled with the sensibilities fostered by the focussed individualism of the Thatcher and post Thatcher era, it seems that class and capitals, although pruned linguistically from the lexicon (especially by New Labour), are doing very nicely without an identification to old industry; translated as they have been into the realm of community and family and nowhere is this more enabled than through appeals to 'psy' and the self.

Carolyn Steedman notes; 'Children are always episodes in someone else's narrative, not their own people, but rather brought into being for particular purposes' (1986:122), and certainly the child appears to hold a central position in the 'doing' of 'knowledge' through appeals to needs, (it is informative too, I think, that these are formulated as needs and not 'wants'). Further, Stephen Ball (2003) highlights how choice, along with education and 'the best interests of the child, allows middle classed sensibilities to inflict 'hidden injuries' (Sennett and Cobb, 1977). Here, strategies to make others are justified and certainly, at the level of the pre-school child, this was evident in my study. The child is the locus of such enterprise; parenting and education transpose then, into cultural competencies and have real effects on communities with the identification of 'good' schools and those under 'special measures'. That is, those schools that have been identified at government level through OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) inspections, to be under performing in line with expected targets for implementation of the national curriculum.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, current moves towards

---

and lack of parental involvement, and poor school performance and high drop-out rates (1985:183).

Further, Steph Lawler makes the point that 'needs', become inscribed into social policy and child care practice; 'in this way, the commonplace distinction between the social and the psychic can be seen to be undermined' (2000a:32) as psychic states and material life become conflated.

<sup>21</sup> For an excellent analysis of 'crisis' in schools see Guardian newspaper report 14.9.99, Nick Davies 'Crisis, Crisis, Crisis, the State of our Schools'. Davies investigates government policy attempts to locate education as the container whereby 'troubled' children can be targeted and worked upon to redress moral panics. Davies concludes that this piecemeal approach, injecting resources into disadvantaged schools to work upon particular bodies/ minds (children), neglects to focus upon the wider political issues of widespread poverty and distressed families which lie outside the remit and social space of the school, yet are an integral part any answer to the solution. I use this example to

‘Sure Start’, ‘welfare to work’ and ‘New Deal’ operate on the notion of self help as a means of escaping slippage into ‘exclusion’, even as Blair insists on the demise of class and classed distinctions.

In this way, democratic government utilises the hopes and aspirations around child/family to further the political project of classlessness. Attempts made to level out and nullify distinction, by focussing on human work and potentiality, (as much of parenting skills work does), ignore the real effects that impinge upon relationships between citizen and legitimated frameworks, particularly when those citizens are seen as deficient, as lacking, as not having the correct or right amount of cultural capital . Judgements are cast upon their geographies; their networks; their school league tables, they are all systems of making difference recognisable; attempts to make it easily read by others.<sup>22</sup>

Parenting and education work closely in political formulations of classlessness.<sup>23</sup> Yet classlessness acts as cover, (not concealer), for the rendering of an underclass (Murray, 1994) or the ‘socially excluded’; in this way the spectre of the mass is re established. Chris Haylett presents the portrait of the excluded, the ways social policy initiatives imagine the working classed;

The cultural nature of the project is apparent in the representation of the white working class poor as impoverished by more than their economic situation. There is a cultural impoverishment, a poverty of identity based on outdated ways of thinking and being (Haylett, 2001:352).

---

qualify the investment placed upon the agency of the child supported over and above the economic and the social.

<sup>22</sup> Haylett (2001:358) notes;

Underclass works as a discourse of familial disorder and dysfunction; of dangerous masculinities and dependent femininities; of antisocial behaviour; of moral and ecological decay.

<sup>23</sup> In the present government’s theme of a ‘classless’ society; we are urged to recognize classed identity as a redundant concept through which we may choose to define ourselves. In the light of the Prime Minister’s comments perhaps we should consider, as Diane Reay claims, how;

Contemporary discourses of both widespread social mobility and classlessness are myths which operate to ensure dominant class hegemony and perpetuate class inequalities (Reay, 2000:162).

Re-invention then is offered through initiatives to prosper the moral health of the nation. So, 'welfare to work' and 'Sure Start', initiatives that aim to support the disadvantaged and work on the premise of the contributing citizen, are forged as a 'New Deal'. But what is painful here, are the multiple injuries to be sustained. I noted the work of the centre and its opportunities for women to train for employment in child care. What seems supremely unfair, is that these women, under a 'welfare to work' initiative grounded in a notion of the moral, worthy citizen, are being urged to give up looking after their own children so that they can care for other women's children.<sup>24</sup> There is a sub text at work here; along the way their training educates them and confers upon them a self attuned to, what are offered as, middle classed sensibilities. It seems to me that, in the eyes of those staff at the family centre, many of these mothers threaten and resist social order, not because they do not 'care', but because they do and in doing so they refuse the commodification of the child as project. Chris Haylett comments on the 'New Deal' and its narrative of becoming;

For the white working class poor the deal is that you leave behind the inadmissible elements of your class culture and when you arrive you do not complain about the class inequalities riven through the mainstream (Haylett, 2001:364).

The canon of knowledge around child development, (which serves also to formulate good parenting), is hardy and survives political and policy change. It survives through the process of obtaining institutional authority; of becoming 'expert'; and its expertise is manifested through those who will deal with the family either in the school, the clinic, and the family referral system.

## **Conclusions**

Classed differences, encapsulated somewhat negatively in the majority of this canon, (thereby producing inequality), were formulated through traditionalist views around particular working practices and cultures; in turn complicit with the spirit of a post war British economy and history of welfare. Social, legal,

---

<sup>24</sup> Barbara Ehrenreich explores this phenomenon in her study of low paid nannies and maids (2003). Ehrenreich draws the uncomfortable conclusion that some women's advances in the labour market have been achieved at the expense of others exploitation.

economic and technological changes have redesigned working practices and family forms, yet still these authoritative psychological canons survive as 'guides for living' (Ezzy, 2002:2). They remain as commentaries from a social world that is no longer recognisable, one that neglects to recognise the diversity of family forms. Their persistence, however, is testament to their influence around the way we gain pleasure through organising a self, incited by legitimated sources of expertise. Yet, do we have any choice but to make pleasure out of such discourse, given Nikolas Rose's claims that the framework of social life is governed in every sphere by the psychological?(Rose, 1999a)

Winnicott's 'good enough' mother was the progenitor of an era of credentialism. But precisely how good enough does the good enough mother have to be? This figure remains the staple of child developmental discourse. Walkerdine, Lucey & Melody (2001) discuss the present drive towards 'credentialism' (for the self and child) that exacts pedagogy, value and classlessness to shore up the production and reproduction of the middle class. Though, they add that 'the idea that one can be credentialised enough, as a metaphor for being good enough gets lost, opening up an emotional space where anxiety breeds'(2001:71); it is this anxiety, for these mothers, that not only binds them to correct parenting, but to 'moral' recognitions and the fear of slippage.

The paradox here is that, whilst knowledge around the mother and child is rooted in terms of aetiology and the psycho-biological link, it nevertheless makes a huge leap by an overriding concern with the importance of the socialisation process for the child; thereby moving at once from the biological to the social. Furthermore, this immutable natural discourse, implicating bodies, instinct and drives, serves to obscure the social construction of a series of practices that have been (and are) interpreted according to specific socio-cultural and political climates. Parenting and needs talk, enshrined by child development texts and current emphasis on education and key stages, takes no account of the private and hidden injuries sustained in realising cultural capitals. Diane Reay's (1998a) work on mothers and primary school education is replete with such incidences, mothers who don't

'know the ropes', who don't 'know their way around' the education process. They want better for their children; they fear their own lack of experience will be reproduced in the lives of their children. Perhaps this is better explained as yet another form of exclusion as class becomes re-inscribed against a proposed universality of middle classdom.

The interviews demonstrate that competencies and uncertainties exist side by side. The good enough mother then, regulates herself, she 'just knows' correct child rearing, and requires no policing, she governs herself through her engagement with expertise, and the truths contained therein around the mother-child dyad. Bearing in mind the classed distinctions brought to bear upon the knowing mother, how far is the construction of identity framed by these authoritative, and ultimately moral knowledges? (And how far framed by comments such as Pam's; that there exist feckless parents 'beyond hope'?) It is extremely difficult to tease biology and sociality apart, for making a respectable, feminine self is bound, not only to distinction, but to internalisation of a number of assumed psycho-social traits reiterated in psychological knowledges concerned with child development, and by reference to a whole raft of historically sedimented discourse around class, lifestyle, femininity and morality. The embeddedness of such knowledge and its, (in this case), intimate links to biology were difficult for the women to resist; the pleasure, worthiness, and 'femininity' to be gained in becoming compliant with these psychological prescriptions was compelling (as Urwin similarly found [1985]). Of course, 'psy' knowledges are inescapable; supported by, and within, a whole structural system encompassing schools, the clinic, social service departments and the judicial system, reinforcing its centrality in everyday lives and similarly extending its influence beyond the mere biological boundary of the body.

Why then is current child care practice equated with nature when it has been developed through a series of historically and politically sciented discoveries? I would suggest that these practices have developed, not only to bind women productively to the project of the family, but also to enable the continuous panics

surrounding the breakdown of social order to be located around the private (family) at the expense of the public failure of structural and economic (re) generation. Inevitably it is the 'incomprehensible masses' (Walkerdine, 1997:32) that are brought to blame for social disorders. Focusing on the child, the ultimate motif for the future of society, returns our gaze once again to the mother. Yet other mothers, in the material here, whilst demonstrating complicity with discourses around the family and child were able to somewhat contest the boundaries of the maternal subject position; to foreground their agency.

In the previous chapter and here, I used class identifications and expertise respectively, to examine how maternal subjectivity is shored up, accorded status and regulated. The next chapter discusses how these women interpret identity and traits as written in the mind and on the body, further the arenas/ techniques that lend themselves to the implementation of 'psy' knowledge are shown as a platform for the making of moral judgements. So, rather than looking at forms of self-surveillance that inhere through an alleged psyche of the mother, it is to the body I turn and the relationship between the surface of the body and the myriad of expert agencies that fashion the identity mother. What the body is capable of; what it is expected to do (and refrain from doing); its naturalness and how, as an assemblage, it appropriates and is appropriated by knowledge power complexes. The intersection where the physicality of the subject and the concrete sites around the clinic, family centre and playgroup meet produces certain selves.

## **CHAPTER 5: MATERIAL(ISTIC) BODIES AND VEXED TRANSITIONS**

Motherhood is not a natural condition. It is an institution that presents itself as a natural outcome of biologically given gender differences, as a natural consequence of (hetero)sexual activity, and as a natural manifestation of an innate female characteristic, namely the maternal instinct. The existence of an institution of motherhood, as opposed to an acknowledgement that there are simply mothers, is rarely questioned even though the proper qualities of motherhood are often the subject of debate. Carol Smart, 'Deconstructing Motherhood', p.37

It is by mapping the way in which the body circumscribes subjectivity that feminists can begin to describe how gender is constitutive of identity but, at the same time, never determines it completely. Lois McNay, Foucault and Feminism, p.24

The body is in the social world but the social world is in the body. Pierre Bourdieu, in L.J.D. Wacquant, 'Towards a Social Praxeology; The Structure and Logic of Bourdieu's Sociology', p.20

Lyn: I was frightened; I didn't know what to expect, I was scared by it, a bit fazed by it.

SP: You mean the birth or coping afterwards?

Lyn: Well, both really, its just nature I suppose, you can't control it.

There are problems in negotiating the position mother/ subject/ self arising from the dichotomies of nature/ culture and mind/ body (see Everingham, 1994:6).

Women's experience of mothering is linked inextricably to the body and is made incontestable and 'essential' by an implicit acknowledgement to the intractability of laws of nature. Lyn claims there is a 'truth' to the (female) body that is privileged by its uncontrollable physicality at childbirth; we are fearful of its nature. Making motherhood, or rather the social arrangements that adhere to it, synonymous to nature obscures the ideological function behind what, Smart notes, remains the 'institution' of motherhood.<sup>1</sup> Further, in times of moral panic regarding social order/ disorder, the discourse of nature and natural prevails as a

---

<sup>1</sup> Smart (1996) notes that the position motherhood has held, as a lever for the early proto feminist struggle regarding the position and rights of women, has, in many ways, prohibited any deeper analysis of the meanings that inhere in motherhood, culturally and socially. This, Smart continues, and the rise of a located class- specific ideal of motherhood which supersedes diverse family arrangements, now simply homogenizes into bad and good mothers.

means of re-locating particularly disorderly selves to what are deemed their true origins.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter has as its focus the body; biology and sociality become enmeshed as these women recount the ways in which their subject position as mother occupies corporeal, psychic and social space. Nature, femininity, instinct, space and needs are integral to understanding the ways in which the historical and discursive, carried by the body (and its actions), bestow selfhood. So, my intention is to approach the body as mediated corporeally (sexed, feminised and natural), psychically (psychic effects sustained through bodily experience), and spatially (occupying social space within the gendered arrangements of the mother/child dyad). And though this is in the frame of maternal subjectivity, much of the discussion raises issues that apply across and within class and gender.

This continues my concern with classed distinctions and psy knowledge through processes of subjectification (Foucault, 1988). Subjecting oneself to normalising discourses of expertise is to produce distinction and is inculcated in pleasurable outcomes which are perceived as part of an individual's 'nature'. In this case, outcomes are, to large extent dependant on and compounded by, what is taken to be the 'truth' of the maternal body, (that is; its techniques, approaches, congruence). So, following Foucault (1988), subjectification then delivers ordered selves in a democratic state where appeals to freedoms are privileged; desires 'to be', or become, a certain self render subjects both culturally and psychically authentic.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> 'Babies On Benefit' (Panorama BBC1, televised 20<sup>th</sup> September 1993) was indicative of a moral panic that matched single motherhood, benefit claims and social disordering; the programme received the accolade of having the most complaints of any TV program that year ([www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)), reflecting the then conservative government's fears around the fragmentation of the nuclear family. The single mothers in the programme were portrayed as making rational choices to procure benefits/ housing, as feckless, as fecund. The documentary exceeded its reportage by scrutinizing appearance, lifestyle, and in including footage edited to effect moral outrage traced the absent fathers, filming them at the local pub. Whilst the public response was palpable, Panorama's editing of the programme was not without its critics.

<sup>3</sup> Bauman considers culture as '...neither a cage nor the key which opens it, or rather it is both the key and the cage at the same time' (1997:137). Whilst I am not sympathetic to

This chapter (and the next) take, as their theme the ways in which bodies and mothers' work, (on and for the child), become inseparable. Mothers' work, as I will show in Chapter Six is read and accorded value through attention toward mothers bodies, space, home environment (health visitor /midwife visits). Similarly, if we invert this reading, bodies themselves, (and how they occupy space), are read as evidence of deficient mothering; in this way practice and bodies are immutable, they become indistinct from one another. Elsewhere I have discussed Bourdieu's concept of habitus and it is central here as an explanatory tool to situate maternal bodies and practice in social and cultural space. Habitus, for Bourdieu, is a structure that both structures and provides us with a way to recognise the subject as agentic, yet simultaneously socially conditioned. The 'field', (here, the 'institution' of motherhood), and habitus, (female bodies; sexed, 'raced', and classed in historicity), are linked. The field structures habitus and habitus produces a social world that, for subjects, 'fits'. Bourdieu succinctly puts it that socially ordered arrangements are turned back as natural in order to represent taken for granted truths; and this goes some way to explain how, for these women, the primacy of the body and nature translated into and served as veridical truth to gendered social arrangements around care of the child.

Practical sense, social necessity turned into nature, converted into motor schemes and body automatisms, is what causes practices, in and through what makes them obscure to their producers, to be sensible, that is, informed by a common sense (Bourdieu, 1999:69)(original emphasis).

This chapter has three sections; my intention here is to explore how the women in the study understood their embodiment as mothers, that is, the ways in which they understood their bodies as constitutive of 'good enough' mothering (and how this was resolved towards good selves). Firstly I explore corporeality read as femininity, instinct and reason; in the second section I discuss how minds and bodies were seen as mutually bound together pointing up issues of space; thirdly, I turn to explore bodies as carriers of 'proper' maternity and femininity.

---

many of Bauman's insights; this metaphor illustrates precisely the complex relationship women have to the social and the biological in terms of re-producing the child through attention to the mothering self, and reproductive corporeality. Justification for the former is shored up by the instinctual connotations of the latter.

## **Corporeality: bodies and feminine traits**

[femininity] is at best shaky and partial; the result of a struggle in which heterosexuality is achieved as a solution to a set of conflicts and contradictions in familial and other social relations. That the little girl appears willingly to accept the position to which she is classically fitted does not, I would argue, tell us something basic about the nature of the female body, nor the female mind, but rather tells us of the power of those practices through which a particular resolution to the struggle is produced. (Walkerdine, 1990: 88)

This section foregrounds issues of power that work through appeals to biology and bodies, and questions the feminine discourse that underscores understandings of motherhood. Grosz notes; ‘if bodies themselves are always sexually (and racially) distinct, incapable of being incorporated into a singular, universal model, then the very forms that subjectivity takes are not generalizable’ (1994:9). In saying this, she points up the complexities inherent in straightforward attempts to match sexual functionality with the ‘natural’<sup>4</sup> socially sanctioned roles of bodies. Grosz’ (1994) claim around the problems of fixing subjectivity, underpinning it through sex distinctions, have been documented by Foucault elsewhere; where sex historically became the means of framing/ bestowing identity (1979). The nexus between the biological and the social however, is one where social relations, particularly, in this respect parenting, become complicated and moreover rendered a site of moral contestation. Regardless of the simple biology and ‘fact’ of producing the child; complex dis-identifications around constructions, of femininity and naturality, prevalent in the interviews, point up the uncertain and fuzzy boundaries surrounding bio-social identities.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> ‘Natural’ here alludes to the taken for granted socially sanctioned social arrangements that underpin producing the child.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Rabinow explores, in his discussion on the human genome project, the development of ‘biosociality’ (1996). Rabinow poses a series of questions regarding technological innovations into what it is to be human, and warns us;

In the future, the new genetics will cease to be a biological metaphor for modern society and will become instead a circulation network of identity terms and restriction loci around which and through a truly new type of autoproduction will emerge, which I call ‘biosociality’. If sociobiology is culture constructed on the basis of a metaphor of nature, then in biosociality nature will be modelled on culture understood as practice. Nature will be known and remade through technique and will finally become artificial, just as culture becomes natural. Were

Natural and instinct were central features of the group and individual interviews, but the natural knowledge of the new mother was uncertain. In the group discussion at the family centre, Karen mentioned her experience in hospital at the birth of her child;

SP: Did you find it intimidating?

Karen: I think it would have been better if I'd been put in a room with other first time mothers. I think they should put the first time mothers in a room together because you're up a height about everything and the ones with kids already, well you feel as if they're looking at you.

Such disclosures revealed the real fear of not being able to demonstrate mothering (naturally) before other experienced mothers. It was as if by the act of delivery/ birth, Karen believed instant knowledge would follow from 'natural instinct'. I suggest that the uneasy rupture between, what she saw as the truth of her body and the truth of natural knowledge troubled her; the body knows (to reproduce), so why can't she translate that knowledge to her practices? Acknowledging the gradual development of childcare knowledges in terms of organising daily routines; the women constantly referred to nature and its ability to, as it were, bestow knowledge. The body and its reproductive function, had to, Karen expected, guarantee maternal knowledge and more importantly a social arrangement that would instil confidence and contentment. Though she said; 'Women always have more, better instincts, are more maternal', her experience in hospital had proved otherwise and left her feeling inadequate. Karen appeared uncertain in taking on a mothering identity; particularly in that clinical social space, it was as though instinct had failed her, when for her, the body was the truth of her identity and femininity.

---

such a project to be brought to fruition it would stand as the basis for overcoming the nature/ culture split (1996:99).

Though Rabinow here is discussing material practices; the mothers in this study use body/practices to represent biology/ culture. Insofar as these mothers work to obscure culture by privileging biology, we can say Rabinow's caveats are already partially operational; culture (classing) is turned back upon the body in social space, and in terms of unfolding potentials/ morals, given its own codes. Biology (instinct as code) then becomes synonymous with cultural codes, and the need to obfuscate one with the other is no longer necessary; culture becomes written in, (as well as on), the body.

In the group interview at the playgroup, Denise links physical/ biological shifts in the corporeal body with knowledge;

When you're pregnant you've already read the books and by that time you're about seven months anyway, so you know it all anyway, don't you?' (my emphasis)

For Denise, a psychological shift occurs which she sees as a concurrent temporal development, the mind somehow follows, is subsumed by the physical. Though these psychological changes are read as following on from bodily changes; the social space taken up by mother is almost psychically absorbed as the child occupies her practical routines. Denise conflates the notion of the body 'bringing' knowledge with the activity of reading manuals for knowledge. At once prioritising her body as a means of knowledge production; she claims to elicit knowledge from her body; though their interviews demonstrated that knowledge was also absorbed from child-care manuals, from social ties with the clinic/health practitioners and through childhood narrative (Marshall, 1991; Steedman, 1995; Urwin, 1985<sup>6</sup>). The productive self is evident here and Denise works to foreground a self who 'just knows' against the internalisation of any external referents. This is the mechanism by which Foucault considers the self to be disciplined, through a process which disguises its regulatory power in the name of self direction; a process,

..whereby individuals, by their own means or with the help of others, acted on their own bodies, souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being in order to transform themselves and attain a certain state of perfection or happiness (Foucault, 1988:4).

Notwithstanding the women's accounts regarding knowledge attained via nature; Jacqueline Rose finds this conflation of bodies, development and femininity too neat<sup>7</sup>. From a psychoanalytic standpoint she reminds us that, 'Feminism's affinity

---

<sup>6</sup>Marshall's analysis of childcare and parenting manuals demonstrates the stock themes that make up such texts; motherhood as fulfilment, mother love as natural, and 'unnatural' mothers; these texts also claim to be prescriptive of 'modern' parenting. Urwin's study (1985), investigates the normalisation of mothering practices through scientific knowledge and the establishment of a range of social regulatory apparatus.

<sup>7</sup> Jacqueline Rose (1982) notes those 'practices' that normalise femininity, have much to do with the influence of the British Object Relations school, (and the subsequent mass market publications that arose from the dissemination of Winnicott's work). Rose notes

with psychoanalysis rests, above all, I would argue, with [this] recognition that there is a resistance to identity which lies at the heart of psychic life' (Rose, 1987:184). I would, however, prefer to argue against a depth model of self, rather instantiating a framework where, even a definition of 'psychic life' as resistance<sup>8</sup> floats with definitions of 'femininity', 'motherhood' and 'child', and remains subject to a range of intensities and flows within and between relations (Goodchild, 1996; Fraser, 1997; Rose, 1998). This Deleuzian schema allows for fluctuations in meaning and responses to discursive terms, demonstrating the fragmentary and fluid movements around dynamic identifications. For Elizabeth Grosz, to take the body as object and receiver of cultural and social transmissions is to misunderstand the complex relationships and flows between the two. Grosz professes;

I will deny that there is a 'real', material body on one hand and its various cultural and historical representations on the other.....these representations and cultural inscriptions quite literally constitute bodies and help to produce them as such...As an essential internal condition of human bodies, a consequence of perhaps their organic openness to cultural completion, bodies must take the social order as their productive nucleus. Part of their own 'nature' is an organic or ontological 'incompleteness' or lack of finality, an amenability to social completion, social ordering and organisation (1994: introduction xi).

---

that Freudian psychoanalysis accepted femininity as not normative, resistant and non coherent, but the work of the British Object Relations School overlaid Freud's non linear model of the psyche with a developmental model; this ran counter to Freud's emphasis on a psychic 'life'. Later attempts to resolve femininity and mothering, Rose claims, are similarly inadequate. Conceding Chodorow's (1978:3) claim that 'woman's mothering is one of the few universal and enduring element of the sexual division of labour', Rose nevertheless problematizes Chodorow's sociological account of gender, which infiltrates psychoanalytic ground and makes too straightforward the internalisation of norms. Chodorow develops an analysis of female relational needs and posits that, whilst these cannot be met in the (hetero)sexual relationship, they are realized in the reproduction of mothering and the replication of the mother /child relationship. Here, on producing the child, psychic closure is achieved. Claiming, 'women come to want and need primary relationships to children' (1978: 203), and further, 'capacities which enable mothers are also precisely those which make mothering problematic' (1978:205); Chodorow then concludes that 'women thus contribute to the perpetuation of their own social roles and position in the hierarchy of gender' (1978:209). As I noted earlier, Chodorow's argument is circular and draws upon the 'facts' of maternity laid out by British Object Relations theory.

<sup>8</sup> The literature review considers the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1977, 1987) and Deleuze (2000) in citing psychoanalysis as repression; as one of many 'truths' which seek to contain and order selves and desire.

What Grosz offers here, is a way of understanding the body, psyche and the social as interconnected. In conceptualising the body as a Mobius strip; 'the inside flips over to become the outside, or the outside turns over on itself to become the inside'; Grosz' theorisation enables us to envision interiority as externally referent and vice versa. She asks;

Can accounts of subjectivity and the psychical interior be adequately explained in terms of the body? Can depths, the interior, the subjective and the private instead be seen in terms of surfaces, bodies, and material relations? (1994:160)

Discourses of femininity underscored talk about 'natural' traits and bodies, in this sense femininity remains a form of cultural capital that can be traded; these mothers recognise femininity/ female instinct/ traits as legitimate capitals reinforced in 'moral' social arrangements of mothering. Skeggs notes in her study of working class women and respectability; '[The] women constantly enter implicit trading arenas where their sexuality, femininity and respectability are judged in terms of value in which the rate is established by others' (1997:12) (my emphasis). Though these women render motherhood a common grounding on the basis of biology/ reproductive capacity; immediate moral and socio-historically sedimented concerns around femininity, sexuality and respectability complicate claims to equality in terms of exchangeable capitals across female personhood.

Femininity and respectability, care and negotiation were brought to dealing with children's behaviour; asking about care brought quite different responses;

Denise: Sometimes it really gets to you, I could really, y'know....lose my rag, but you just stop yourself, don't you? I don't know how anyone could hurt their kids. But you know you're not the only one who feels like that.

SP: How do you know?

Denise: Well....my friends with kids....we all say the same thing. You need other things, y'know? Friends, time out....like a night out with mates or partner or something and then you come back to them, then it makes you feel better about it. Bit of a love hate relationship I suppose, except you know they love you to bits and that makes you feel so special, that they want you and no-one else, worth all the hassle.

Denise, from the family centre group, was not afraid to tell me that she could almost 'lose her rag'; she felt no need to conceal her emotions, telling me that all her friends with children felt the same way. I recognised the way Denise addressed her emotion, bringing an immediacy and emotive quality to the mother child relationship. This was in contrast to Pam, from the playgroup, whose account of dealing with behaviour follows;

**Pam:** Sometimes they drive me to distraction, but if I've had a really bad day, I just leave it till we can discuss it and decide what to do... I usually discuss approaches with my husband. As I said, sometimes we might ban sweets that week, but it's difficult because they can't seem to carry that idea and you feel it has no effect. You're trying to make them see reason; to understand the consequences of their actions that their bad behaviour has caused the ban, but I don't know if they, as children, make that link.

What is clear here is that emotions, in both accounts, are core to social relations. Pam's attempts to displace her emotion by coolly asserting reason to situations, may come in part from her teacher training. The whole of post war pedagogy is based on reason, educational training practices and child care literatures and expertise posit these reasoned approaches, but here, in her role as mother, (even influenced by her professional capacity as teacher), she seems doubtful of its effect. Where Denise prefers time out, escaping her role for short periods, and accepting conflicts are inevitably part of the relationship; Pam does more work, building 'reasonable' solutions, in effect immersing herself more in the project of the child. This work follows the edicts of much professional training in child care and is congruent with widely disseminated child care practice/ literature, (distributed at clinics/ parenting classes etc). Of course, I can only report what was said to me at the interviews, whether this is actually how Pam dealt with her child's behaviour (or Denise for that matter), I must take as data. But any information given may have been influenced by 'being in' research, these women may have felt scrutinized, objectified and were giving me a response they thought appropriate for (their and) my purposes. Pam particularly, had already told me in previous discussions that she was a teacher, so from her point of view, to deny a professional approach would , in some part, deny her exchangeable capital as teacher. Capital that, for all purposes, has longevity beyond the use value of

identity as mother to dependant children. I mention this because I was struck by the different responses to emotion, Denise was ready to accept emotion as normative, her solution was to seek time out; whereas for Pam emotions, (central to all literatures on childhood), were to be made reason and accountable. This differentiation between reason and emotion is precisely the ways in which Walkerdine and Lucey claim distinctions are made between working class and middle classed mothers; these differences (of approach) are made into inequality Pam's approach is concurrent with Walkerdine and Lucey's (1989) conclusions concerning the position of middle classed women in childrearing practices , specifically to questions of who counts as, (and who can produce), moral and socially ordered citizens. Walkerdine and Lucey note;

We want to insist that middle class and working class families are not 'equal but different'. They are grossly unequal. The women oppressed by their labours in the middle class household act out a set of scientific ideas which tell them that they are right, that this is the proper thing to do, this deeply oppressive truth holds them responsible and full of unspoken guilt. But it also renders them powerful in their morality, and prepares them to be the very members of the caring professions who will come to regulate the working class mother, who may come to be seen as frightening, rigid and pathological (Walkerdine & Lucey, 1989: 9).<sup>9</sup>

Walkerdine and Lucey's reinterpretation of the Tizard and Hughes research found 'difference' made into inequality in the observations given to working class and middle class mother child interactions. Similarly here, reason rather than flight stands for producing (potential) and orderly children.

### **Bodily (in)formations**

Here, I intend to discuss the ways the women in the study perceived changes in the body/ mind that they claimed coincided with the act of nurturing the child both practically and emotionally. On the one hand, they claimed instinct led them to nurture, on the other, they contested the social organisation of mothering that governed their practices and constrained aspects of their selfhood. Notions such as

---

<sup>9</sup>This seems relevant considering the two groups I interviewed. The group of mothers from the playgroup were predominantly employed in precisely those sorts of professions which, Walkerdine and Lucey claim, authorise middle class templates of mothering practice. Practices that, produced within the discourse of the expert, are promoted at the expense of pathologizing the working class mother.

instinct were understood as written on (and in) the body and became linked to the domestic organisation of the family in the narratives of the women I interviewed.

I noted earlier, Grosz' consideration of the body, psyche and social as interchangeable and fluid, so I am not, in this chapter only concerned with the boundaries of the corporeal. Psychic space cannot be neglected, indeed the interviews point to subject positions assembled from a complex interlacing of discursive and psychic factors.<sup>10</sup> Throughout the discussions, expertise and discourse around bodily capability and psychic traits, becomes enmeshed within the social actions of that body. But rather than making a claim for some inner psychic life which works through biology mapped onto the social; I want to present a psyche that merges with the biological and social; as enmeshed. Judith Butler (1997) proposes such a reading of the psyche; and though this is a reading that radically differs from a popular reading of a 'deep' Freudian model, it nevertheless points up a Lacanian interpretation. For here, mother becomes one of the performative gendered gestures of the self drawing on, not only a common sense biological 'essence' of the body, but also common sense social knowledges. It is a construction both of and for the social. Here, then, I explore the part played by such a reading of the psyche in making body and identity seamless. Without returning then to the Freudian concept of psyche as depth; it is, I think, useful to run with Butler's interpretation of the psyche;

To dispute the psyche as inner depth, however, is not to refuse the psyche altogether. On the contrary, the psyche calls to be rethought precisely as a compulsive repetition, as that which conditions and disables the repetitive performance of identity. If every performance repeats itself to institute the effect of identity, then every repetition requires an interval between the acts, as it were, in which risk and excess threaten to disrupt the identity being constituted. The unconscious is this excess that enables and contests every performance, and which never fully appears in the performance itself. The psyche is not 'in' the body, but in the very signifying process through which that body comes to appear; it is the lapse in repetition as

---

<sup>10</sup> Butler;

One way that gender gets naturalised is through being constructed as an inner physic or physical necessity. And yet, it is always a surface sign, a signification on and with the public body that produces this illusion of an inner depth, necessity or essence that is somehow magically, causally expressed (1997:312) (emphasis in original).

well as its compulsion, precisely what the performance seeks to deny, and that which compels it from the start (Butler, 1997:312).

These subjects desire to be distinctive and knowing, for to deviate from a correct model of motherhood, one that was always mindful of the child, brought a lack of status, a less worthy sort of mother. Even so, a tension was discernible in the data; Rachael, from the playgroup, said, 'Whether or not you're actually with them, you are responsible for them, and you never get a rest, it can be so frustrating'. It was an effort then, to maintain the selfless standards such a model demanded and one which Rachael remains always mindful; a psychic responsibility that overrides practical care. This 'mind-full' time mothers give to accommodating the child is reflected in the way they made connections between the body and the mind; they find themselves overcrowded in both a psychic and physical sense; the body and mind reacting to the social demands and practices of child rearing. Though valued tropes of instinct and nature somewhat orchestrated the role of the good enough mother, and this was a role they often objected to; however frustrating this seemed, nevertheless the value of their position, or perhaps the value of a future investment, (the child), was maintained.

Ambivalent about the demands that were placed upon them, even when these demands were the by-product of that very discourse they themselves invoked, (that is the essential nature of female bodies/minds), these mothers made valuable the psycho biological suitability of women in attending to children's needs. What 'conduct of conduct'<sup>11</sup> occurred in the role of good enough mother? Did they feel they had to change their selves once they were mothers, did they monitor their conduct? The body's performance had to reflect a conscious (conspicuous) effort. Jane, from the playgroup;

Jane: Oh definitely, I feel as though I've had to grow up a bit. I feel as though I can't...I've noticed I'm not as silly as I was!

SP: In what ways?

Jane: Well, I'm always concerned about how much I drink, because I've always got to get up in the morning, it's always me that has to

---

<sup>11</sup> Rose (1998:64) draws upon Foucault's theorization of 'the conduct of conduct' to illustrate the self regulatory practices conducted through psychological regimes; the self and 'psy' are implicated in the incitement of ethical and moral codes.

see too them, y'know? It doesn't matter how you feel, they expect you to just get up and just be normal for them.

The normal motherly self is not then, for Jane, fixed; there are times when this normality is replaced by something other, removed from her daily practices. The act of repetition then, denies the existence of a fixed absolute self reduced to essentialist biological forms; and Butler's work engages with questioning the concepts of natural, universal and foundational.<sup>12</sup> Such fluidity of identity counters the essentialism laid down in British Object Relations theory discussed in the last chapter<sup>13</sup>, and opens up a way to view the ambivalences around identity.

Psychic work encompassed education, care, emotional and physical security of the child. Talking about their daily schedules, the homemaker and mothering role were separated; maternal duties were seen as somehow having to be allocated a certain amount of space during the child's day. These duties equated with Walkerdine and Lucey's (1989) findings, that mothering is used a pedagogical device. From the family centre group interview,

**Karen:** Sometimes you don't have time to do anything for yourself, it's impossible. Other times, it's not too bad, but sometimes....

**Lyn:** Yeah, you know you've got things to do, but you see, I feel guilty if I spend a day in the house with her. I feel she should be out somewhere, that's my personal choice. I still try to set some time aside to be with her or she'd be bored to tears (my emphasis).

**Karen:** We're never in the house, always out. I think the fresh air, seeing people, I like him to experience things, be stimulated.

Lyn tells me it is her 'personal choice' to be out of the home with her child, but this discourse of choice can be traced to a series of preferred practices deriving from expertise and 'proper' maternity /femininity. These choices involve

---

<sup>12</sup> Butler writes; 'If the "I" is a site of repetition, that is, if the "I" only achieves the semblance of identity through a certain repetition of itself, then the "I" is always displaced by the very repetition that sustains it' (Butler 1997:304).

<sup>13</sup> Doane and Hodges (1992) note the appropriation made of Object Relations theory by feminists, (most importantly Chodorow's sociological account of psychoanalysis 1978), to reclaim 'essential' components of biology/ femininity/ womanhood in attempts to privilege the position woman. They conclude that such a move denies the mother any social subjectivity and reduces her to a biological subject.

stimulating the child educationally/ aesthetically, that is according to child care texts and advice, and in this respect, as Riley (1983) has noted, mothers are addressed universally regardless of financial or cultural constraints. For Lyn, the multiplicity of tasks existing around the home include ordering and arranging the psyche of the child, (to 'be stimulated'); thus taking responsibility for something which is beyond the remit of the mother and only within the psychic realm of the child (Singer 1992); indeed taking on the psychic work of the child for the child and internalising it.<sup>14</sup> As Singer notes the environment created by the mother for the child is deemed prescriptive of future outcomes for the child, (in terms of its normalcy in society); hence mother becomes the 'psychic organiser'(Singer 1992:97).<sup>15</sup> These psychic demands are foregrounded in the women's conceptions of space, time and physical demands on the body as Anne, from the playgroup, had previously claimed, motherhood, ' puts you in the scheme of things, it gives you a sense of where you are in the scheme of things, continuity'. To this she added; 'And another thing is, I think, it changes your sensitivity to things' (my emphasis).

For Anne, her sensitivity is linked to reproduction in two senses. Firstly the birth of her child (re-producing another), and secondly; the reproduction of her self (she re-produces herself as mother in a continuous cycle of mothering practice). She invokes this metaphor of reproduction on more than one occasion when she reflects upon her grandmother and her mother; reflections that work to produce a narrative around which to make sense of her identity. Subjectively, it was the

---

<sup>14</sup> Sandra Harding writes about the ways in which maternal psychic space becomes occupied by others;

A good woman does not have to be told what her husband and children think or need; she knows-often before they do. It's her job to know them better than they know themselves, at least in certain ways. One effect of a woman engaging her thoughts in the lives, minds and bodies of children is to free them from the responsibility of thinking about and meeting certain of their own needs, and this gives them time; time to work and time to grow up (1975:290-1 [cited in Beechey & Whitelegg 1986:27]) (my emphasis).

<sup>15</sup> Singer (1992), in her analysis of the psychology of child development, discusses how the British Object Relations School, foregrounded by the work of Bowlby and Winnicott, instituted a 'management model' of child care. Theoretically, links were made between maternal love, regulation, and the production of the good citizen; and as Singer concludes, this specific managing of emotions carved out a new niche for the mother; who was to become the counterbalance between freedom and attachment.

body that was the basis of changes at a social level, though 'mind' featured together with those changes and signified a 'deeper' abstraction of self, one that was beyond their control. Anne, at the playgroup saw these changes as inevitable,

Anne: Your body becomes attuned to it, doesn't it? I cannot get more than 3 hours at a time; my body will just not let me sleep. It's all geared up to them, your whole body and your mind. It's a difficult change for you, both in your body and your mind, you know? You feel you don't know what's going on (my emphasis).

Suggesting that biology/ instinct overrides and excludes the intrusion of other selves, the mind becomes, as it were, 'soma-tose', at the mercy of bodily drives. Using a natural discourse of instinct, could in these accounts, be read as a strategy to, unconsciously, deny the authority of socially constructed arrangements and further, complicity with them. Clearly, there is interplay between the somatic and the psychic here, but the women render themselves powerless against immutable instinct. They give themselves up to this discourse in ways that they never would when we discussed social arrangements. Discussing the social and marital arrangements around childcare drew out the tensions in 'having their own space' and yet perhaps instinct was their 'get out' clause, a position from which they could stake a claim that they were not willingly complicit with the maintenance of arrangements. Furthermore, Karen, at the family centre, claimed motherhood had been, 'her main focus'. Claiming she always knew she wanted children and expressed this achievement in terms of how she felt 'wholer', more complete; it was, she said, as if the child was her 'missing piece' and enabled her to 'reach her full potential'<sup>16</sup> (that is, in terms of her inevitable biology). However, Karen was very expressive here, in 'psy' terms, and I suggest her mode of expression was influenced by her recently obtained knowledge of counselling.

---

<sup>16</sup> Instinct, motherly traits and social arrangements were interwoven and could not be separated; Karen verified her status as maternal subject and worked to negotiate albeit indirectly, the social structures of gendered domestic arrangements. The birth and its naturalness then, despite the privileging of instinct, merged into talk of 'sensitivity' and daily practical care; so we again revisit, through practical parenting, the principles of gendered traits and women's nature.

Anne, from the playgroup, later contradicts this seemingly subservient self; a self over ruled by nature and instinct;

Anne: I don't think its natural, I mean, I did read quite a lot of books and things but I don't think you're ready for how ambivalent you'll feel about situations. It's also about trying to remember you're a person first, and trying to keep that apart, it all gets muddled up and you get lost in it. You know, if you always put being a mother first, I mean it suits some people, but it doesn't suit me, I've got to be me as well (my emphasis).

Asserting her ability to be herself, Anne is more able to resist; 'it suits some people, but it doesn't suit me'. Here, she presents her self as 'more than'. Taken in the context of the group discussion, this appears to be a discursive move to amplify her self; she has other forms of capital to outstrip her reliance on the identity mother. Anne had part time work as a social worker and reinforced the fact that she needed work outside the home to help her cope with the responsibilities of her parenting role. One of her children was disabled and this placed additional strains upon her and her family. Her claim, 'it all gets muddled up and you get lost in it', points to a fluid surface to the self rather than a fixed interiority or depth. The mothering self, for Anne then, exists as 'other'; something that constantly, in the Butlerian sense, disrupts her true self.

At the playgroup, Lorraine expressed how difficult it had been for her to get used to considering someone else's, (the child's), needs constantly,

Lorraine: ....so it was a hell of a shock to me, when I had this baby. I can honestly say she was approaching nine months by the time I got used to it, expecting the change. I think Anne used the word resentment, and I felt an awful lot of that, just going from what I'd done before, y'know, putting myself before anyone else. Then you have to put this little person first, all the time, whatever you do.

Space, constant responsibility for, and demands of, the child upon the mothers' time were issues that resurfaced again and again in the interviews; talk of being 'overwhelmed' and 'feeling that you'll never get out of the house', having to plan and prepare for outings, losing spontaneity.

Space was a premium concern for many of the professionalised mothers, I suggest they felt swamped by discourse, their domestic and public lives revolved and

merged around similar themes and practices (Walkerdine & Lucey, 1989) in their teaching and welfare occupations. Most of the women commented on the lack of freedom; in the group discussion at the playgroup, Pam said;

... you just don't have any space to just sit and concentrate on something for a time because there's always somebody making demands on you, and they're always fairly immediate...it seems you just don't have a minute to collect your thoughts.

It was apparent here, that the discourse of needs Pam had given herself up to was now being re- interpreted by her as demand. This surfaced again in the playgroup mother's group session when I asked if there was any resentment about being a mother;

Rachael: Sometimes ..I feel resentful of the fact that I haven't got any space to think about things calmly, they are always around, and always making demands upon you, but I wouldn't say I feel this all the time generally.

And these were the same women who had earlier reiterated the needs of the child, yet when it came to shifting the focus and talking about their own needs, as women, ( rather than mothers), for physical and psychic space; the needs of the child were altogether demanding.

I asked Pam (playgroup), if she needed her own space;

Pam; Yes.. well I do . I do a drawing class once a week ..2 hours.. and that's great because I can't do anything else... can't do the ironing..can't stick the washing machine on..just sit drawing.. and that's wonderful.

The immediacy of the child and lack of space was reflected too in the comments of some mothers at the family centre; caring and nurturing were inscribed in the body and personal space .At the family centre, Karen, Lyn, Diane had this to say,

Karen: Anything you want to do has to come second. Basically you do whatever they want rather than yourself. Before, you would think of yourself first, even if you had a partner you'd think of yourself first.

Lyn: I can always remember my health visitor saying that you can't live your life for her. Well, I don't think you live your life for them.but..em....

Diane: You live your life with them. Everything you do is with them, it's not separate.

Karen: Even when they're asleep you're alert. You don't even sleep the same way you used to, you're more alert.

Diane claims 'it's not separate'; as if there were no physical boundaries between the child and mother. But Karen reveals that 'even when they are asleep you're alert', this suggests that the child is being accommodated; its needs are being anticipated by a mother who must be aware and focussed primarily on 'need'. The effects and practices of childcare were rooted in the operationalization of the body disposed to the child and family; needs and maternal instinct were understood as biological truths that could not be denied. I asked the women, at the family centre, what changes were most recognisable; in what ways did they find their routine lives changed. Time, or rather the issue of space, came up again in discussions;

Laura: In the evening, when it gets to that whingey time and they're hanging around your legs all the time. It's very frustrating, you don't know whether just to get on and do it, or what.

SP: So really, it's when you're trying to... it's not really the mothering part that's restricting, it's trying to do everything else as well.

Laura: Then when you do do it, it's still frustrating! You feel like you shouldn't do it, you should be spending time with them.

The comments were attempts to make space within the daily routine of home for maternal tasks but the ways in which, for example, Laura, works to make her mother-work separate from house-work. For Laura issues of space were problematic, she attempted to separate domestic and mothering time and make her mothering role part of a personal recreational space to be separated and accorded value over and above the domestic and the mundane. But Laura is spending time with her child. What appeared to be problematic for her was that she did not consider this to be her preferred interpretation of time; it was either not of the

correct amount or not of sufficient focus to the child. So time was, for her, segregated into household task and mothering; she saw them as divisible. Karen, Diane and Christine on the other hand, appear to pack their work (mothering and domestic) into the day without recognising the mothering role purely as a form of recreation for them or as non-work.

In our group discussions, many of the women revealed that they were not ready for the changes that motherhood would bring. Laura, at the family centre; 'I was just really, really, just overwhelmed, I suppose. I just sat down in the room, you know and just cried and cried. After a week or so, I mean, you feel better'. Diane agrees, 'That first week's terrible, you feel you'll never get out of the house'. Asking what they found particularly unsatisfying or restricting about being a mother; the general feeling of the women in the playgroup, who were legitimately middle class, (if we use occupational markers), was that issues of space and autonomy were very important. Pam, there, recounts;

Well I did get some good advice from a health visitor. With my first child, he went through a stage, if I left the room or wanted to go to the loo or something, he went totally berserk, because he didn't want to be away from me. And I was trying to leave him, because that's what friends said was a good idea and the health visitor said, 'No don't leave him, take him everywhere you go, keep him with you all the time'. And in a way I think that was what I wanted to hear, and she'd sensed that, and that, for me was good advice, I did it, he grew out of it, and everything was OK.. It's very frustrating at the time, not having your own space.

Here again the issue of space, but also the justification of attempts to have space from the child, and to convince us that all along, the advice she received must have been what she wanted to hear, because, after all, that was the advice of a professional. Did Pam require the health visitor to create that space for her? Something that without, would have made her appear a 'bad' mother? If we look at what Pam says, it appears that her needs and wants are the same as her child's needs. If we envision Pam's subject position here as a 'technology of the self' (Foucault, 1988), we can see that the needs of the child cannot be treated as a separate construction; they are bound up with the production of her subjectivity, and sanctioned by expertise, here the health visitor.

So, issues of body and psyche are, in this sense, conjoined<sup>17</sup>, and Butler's theorisation around performativity provides us with a way of employing the psyche without essentializing the subject. Here, repetitions, of a preferred (maternal) model of the self, were reiterated in accordance with a desire for investment and respectability, as the value of the body and its biology becomes bound up in the process of credentializing the subject.<sup>18</sup> The women in this study all make investments in the identity mother, with the child as the locus of their efforts; but as it transpires, the position they work from, in terms of their capitals, and the value ascribed to their efforts, differs. It is therefore difficult to explore the fluidity of self without attending to those threads of class and culture that complicate any simple claim to transformations of identity. Not all women stand equally relative to the subject position 'woman', and this has implications for the ways in which their identity as mother is read.

### **Distinct(ive) bodies**

But the body had its own cultural forms. It had its own art.  
(Attwood, 2003:85)

---

<sup>17</sup>In the same way, Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody (2001) link body and psyche to consider the ways in which bodies and capitals translate into classed distinction within social space; this is then an interleaving of bodies, psyche and social space that extends any psychoanalytic reading. It is the gaps in between such performances that, for Butler, constitute what may be explained as excess. And which offer up dis-identifications.

<sup>18</sup> Whilst Butler's theory tackles the fluidity and reactivity of performance in social relations, it was obvious that performances (and how they are received) draw upon particular investments and capitals (not only for the performer but for their audience). This was not a 'free for all', with equal repetitions in equal social relations. In terms of performing coherently, much was at stake. Bourdieu's cultural capitals are useful here to substantiate unequal positioning, but singularly relevant here is the use and exchange (Skeggs, 2004) with which maternity accords transactions and attracts value across social space. Indubitably, maternity excels in use value (to the self) and no one would deny these women that pleasure, but whether exchanges follow is debatable. Successful maternity, (that is producing the worthy citizen), requires capitals that far exceed physical care/love; the self-interested mother (and child) is required draw upon a range of resources. Valerie Walkerdine (1999) notes the ways in which many middle classed children are constantly timetabled in order to shore up their future capitals; Walkerdine calls this 'full diary syndrome' (music lessons, extra curriculum tuition, etc); these remain attempts to shore up exchange capitals for the child.

Finally, I hope to level out some problems with the theorisations offered so far in this chapter. Though the ‘inside out’ of Grosz and the performativity of Butler answer some of the questions arising from embodiment; they do not answer all of them. It is the body in social space, that is, the cultural specificity of bodies that troubles any blanket theorisation of universal subjects or, in this instance, maternity. Bourdieu offers us a way of theorising and identifying how lack is instantiated in the play of cultural capital and social space, where the body becomes, in social space, a productive creative site in the struggle over power relations.

Wacquant (1996) notes the role of the body as part of the active generative process of structuring knowledges. Reiterating Bourdieu’s rejection of the duality between mind and body, subject and object, Wacquant renders the ‘socialised body, not as an object, but as the repository of a generative creative capacity to understand, as the bearer of a form of “kinetic knowledge” [Jackson 1983] endowed with a structuring potency’ (Wacquant, 1996:20). In this sense, (parenting) practices of the body (re)generate “kinetically” the incursion of knowledges. The body, therefore, is implicit in the rendering of knowledge as expert and necessary. In this way, Bourdieu’s concept of ‘habitus’, which Bourdieu claims organises social actions of the body, offers a way to situate the bio-social processes of subjectivity. Habitus remains defined as;

A system of lasting, transposable dispositions, which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks, thanks to analogical transformations of schemes permitting the solution of similarly shaped problems (Bourdieu, 1977:83).

Cultural capitals and taste, Bourdieu notes, always vary with class practice. The interviews here are replete with values, distinctions, proper selves; but rather than accorded to class, they are invoked through the best interests of the child and feminine traits, into a classing of ‘sorts’.

The options offered to the female body, ‘Sexual activity - pregnancy- birth-mothering- motherhood’ (Smart, 1996:39), reflect a historically and culturally specific patterning of choice laid open to women. Carol Smart charts the

incidence, during the Victorian era, of three major discourses; the rise of the psycho-medical sciences; the ordering of bodies; and the making pathological of sexual practices other than heterosexual intercourse linked to procreation.<sup>19</sup> These themes and the concurrent rise of legislation that outlawed abortion and criminalized sexual acts other than heterosexuality, and further the interest of the courts regarding care in working class homes<sup>20</sup>, provided a stage for the ‘natural vocation’ of motherhood, (as pregnancy became inescapable<sup>21</sup>). Changing child care practices too, instantiated through continual calibrations of practice, did little then, as now, Smart notes, to destabilise those embedded power knowledge systems and rules maintaining discourses around motherhood; discourses that incidentally become over extended with diverse readings of femininity, respectability and scienced selves.

It is difficult to make a biological and social divide in any sense; bodies and social meanings become seamless in constructing the women’s identities as mothers. One way of conceptualising this relationship between the biological and the social is through the work of Deleuze. Deleuze invokes ‘zones of neighbourhood or indiscernibility that produce passages from one to the other and constitute their inseparability’ (Goodchild, 1996:4), to account for the interlacing of bodies and social process. The installation of socially embedded knowledges around the role of woman/mother, promoted by a framework of ‘psy’ and patterned through particular political agendas (regarding panics around the family) finds its truth in the ‘essence’ of the body; so bodies, knowledge and politics are integral to marking and making subject positions. Many of the women used the certainty of the body to explain their natural work as mothers, yet resisted in many cases the limitations such gender attributed roles placed on their daily lives. Implicating the

---

<sup>19</sup> Foucault (1990) too considers this period as crucial in fixing sexual identities

<sup>20</sup> In effect then; ‘...the naturalistic chain of events that supposedly leads inexorably to motherhood only became inevitable at the end of the nineteenth century’ (Smart 1996:43).

<sup>21</sup> Having noted these developments, Jacqueline Rose (1982:188) further demonstrates the ways in which the female body is made reason (when it suits) to instantiate control. She notes, for example, how issues concerning educational opportunities for women were historically returned to the body, either excess sexual reproduction meant (working class) women were beyond education or conversely, (in the case of middle class women), reproductive capacity could be damaged by an overtaxing of the brain.

body and its natural drives makes truths inescapable, makes them an ‘essence’ (though one which is reconfigured by the women in their constructions as offering considerable cultural capital).

Inevitably we discussed attitudes toward treatment and ante/post natal care, the birth, and body. What initially seemed to be a discussion about hospitals and birth rather came to be grounds for proof of ‘proper’ maternity. Laura, at the family centre, explained how she had intended have a natural birth; this was why she had attended National Childbirth Trust (NCT) classes and meetings, though ultimately, she did not have a ‘natural’ birth. In the interview, there followed a detailed explanation (excusal/ apology?) why she had to ‘give in’ to pain relief which ended by stating,

Laura; .I was quite interested in the whole psychology of the thing because so much of it is to do with your attitude. I think that I could have stood that level of pain if I’d known it was going to be that short time (my emphasis).

Could Laura then control her natural relationship to her biology through her attitude? Her involvement with NCT had presumably led to an interest in ‘the whole psychology of the thing’. Moreover; natural birth imprints a stamp of authenticity on the maternal body.<sup>22</sup> But the attainment of the natural birth requires, ironically, close co-operation with expertise. Paradoxically these potent medico-psychological discourses encourage independence/ choice amongst women in their preferred birthing techniques as a means of eliciting reliance and continued support. Such tropes work particularly well with those middle class mothers who invest motherhood with its own psychological actuality. Laura said she had discussed natural births at their NCT<sup>23</sup> classes, and as it transpired, was

---

<sup>22</sup> Childcare texts are careful to maintain a relationship with their audience and caution mothers against feelings of inadequacy if they need pain relief/ give up breast feeding after a short time etc. There is a sense that mothers, even at this early stage, are only required to be ‘good enough’. Of course, the implicit assumption here is that these texts construct a textual subject position of ‘good mother’ as a marker in order to sustain and elicit engagement with psy. The body here is the vehicle for shoring up both self and networks of psy.

<sup>23</sup>It had, Laura said, seemed ‘a good start’, ‘the way she meant to go on’. The NCT literature promotes natural birth as a ‘right’. Laura’s enthusiasm for NCT, her

unable to go without pain relief at the birth. She talked about her disappointment at having to give in to her bodily needs at the birth;

Laura; You feel completely out of control. I'd like to have another baby and I'd like to have it at home. I feel quite strongly about that now. I think in the hospital you feel so, you just feel so out of control because other people are there and you're looking to them for a lead (my emphasis).

Laura felt that placing her body in the hospital at the birth denied her the agency she had expected over childbirth. Once there, she felt unable to resist expertise, the presence of 'knowledgeable' others led her to enlist aid; she 'looked to them for a lead', rather than being self reliant, or 'listening to my own body' as she put it. Her comment about loss of control struck me, particularly given the ways in which Laura had previously spoken about transmission of familial values and preferred ways of nurturing the child. Of all the mothers at the centre, Laura's comments showed a marked insistence on the need for control of the self, this I noted along with her disclosure of cultural capitals in the form of 'values'; controlling capitals which she felt were essential in constructing a successful mother/ child/ family relationship.

Christine, at the family centre, was the youngest mother of the two groups. She claimed investment from the fact that she was an able mother and made direct links to natural behaviours;

Christine: It just sort of comes to you, like natural. Mind, in some people it isn't natural, in some it is. I mean, it was natural to me the day I had him, I could cope with him. I came out of hospital the second day (my emphasis).

She was one of the youngest mothers at the centre and in our discussion expressed how difficult it was socially and financially for her to be a mother; she was not able to socialise as her friends did, but being an able mother was a form of capital

---

involvement in the meetings and her disappointment at not achieving natural birth led me to investigate their website, ([www.nct.org.uk](http://www.nct.org.uk)). Certainly there is a sense, in the language and tone of the website material that natural births translate into more capable parenthood/ motherhood. These are the languages that elicit involvement, that inculcate subjects in the pleasurable practices of 'inventing' a self (Rose, 1998).

to her. Her natural knowledge/instinct linked to knowing expertise constitutes, for her, a worthy identity and one that compensates for other areas of her life that she feels she has sacrificed. Indeed, her new skills, which for Christine, were always 'just there', authenticate her sense of self in comparison to that of her childless peers. She felt able, and here she makes a point of telling me that she discharged herself from hospital as soon as possible, expressing her self reliance and confidence in her own abilities. We cannot deny Christine the pleasure and self recognition she derives from her credentials as mother. For all the mothers, their parentcraft shored up the self and schematically provided a coherent and valuable identity; one that remained use –ful(l) in terms of the mother child and familial relations, but as Skeggs notes; it requires much more, in terms of Bourdieu's capitals, to create recognitions that can be exchanged across markets, and thus make effective social mobility and difference; I make this point because mobility and difference crept into discussions about children.<sup>24</sup> Earlier, Christine discussed her sacrifices in terms of material goods; buying clothes and going out. Before her pregnancy, she worked as a model and in promotional work; appearance and body image were extremely important to her, not only in terms of a sense of self, but as a source of employment. Though her pregnancy was unplanned and she was a single mother, she had the support of her parents. I asked her how she had felt when she discovered she was pregnant;

Christine: I was devastated..a real shock ...really...that sounds terrible cause I do love him to bits now but I knew I 'd have to cope on my own, then...as I got bigger and bigger ... I just felt a mess, all my mates were spending money on clothes and that and there was me, I couldn't get anything on.... I just didn't go out much as all

---

<sup>24</sup> I make this point here because I was struck by differences between the two groups' aspirations for the child. At the playgroup, where the majority of mothers were older and had been university educated, it appeared many of the children were used as a language of cultural reproduction and a source of continuing social capital. I came to this conclusion from discussions I had with these mothers regarding school provision and the general location they lived in; they were satisfied with school provision (and this was largely based on their consultation of OFSTED reports and league tables). They also liked the area and said that if they had to relocate at any point (probably through their partners work), they would definitely return when their children went to university. Not *if*, but *when*. These (middle classed) pre school children were already positioned in a rite of passage; university was expected to be part of their trajectory as it had been for their parents. The classing of education is further highlighted by Ball (2003).

Later , in the interview Christine told me that she was a recovering bulimic and said that, when she looked at photographs of herself pregnant, she was ashamed; she felt she, (in her own words) ‘looked like a clip’ [mess]. She went on;

Christine: I still like my things though, clothes, makeup and that ...but now I haven't got as much to spend, because I need stuff for him and anyway I don't go out as much. My mam babysits, but I don't like to overdo it, y'know?... It looks as if you don't care doesn't it? I mean, I wouldn't want him to think that, I mean he's the most important thing. I still like to make the effort though, just because I'm a Mam doesn't mean I've got to look like a clip...in leggings and that like that whatd'youcallher...on Sky , Waynetta Slob... God no.

Waynetta Slob was a comic character performed by actress Kathy Burke, her partner Wayne is performed by comedian Harry Enfield, who wrote the characters, and they represent all that is imagined in a portrayal of fetid, excessive and feckless parents. They are track-suited, unclean, unhealthy (obese), tasteless, work-shy, violent and inadequate as parents. In many ways they are the precursor to current renditions of the ‘chav’, and a more recent rendition of this character is found in the popular television comedy series Little Britain (BBC 1) in the character of Vicky Pollard. Vicky possesses all the above attributes but the audience have the added piquancy of knowing she is performed by a man, thereby rendering her impossible but simultaneously, in the portrayal, closer to her intended characterisation, that of an ‘unreal’, feared though fascinating, girl. These characters frame part of a widespread post feminist symbolic violence against women. Angela McRobbie (2004, 2005) has written of the critique to women who don't manage to ‘get it right’ and are scrutinized for lack in their bodies and postures through media devices; as McRobbie notes, these programmes ‘actively generate and legitimate forms of class antagonism particularly between women in a way which would have been socially unacceptable until recently’ (2004:100).

As I already mentioned, Christine was the youngest mother in both groups and the only one who mentioned issues of self –appearance. Angela McRobbie notes a change in the way women, and in particular young women, have been addressed

in the media and through celebrity culture regarding self preservation. The ‘feminisation’ of the labour market, that is the rise of a tertiary economy rather than in any way a more equal deal for women employees in labour markets, has been equated with the breakdown of traditional class hierarchies. The core of this study proposes the prior ordering (and concealment) of much class antagonism under occupational hierarchies is now, through social and economic shifts that centre the self-interested individual, vehemently read as moral concerns traceable through corporeality, taste and postures. McRobbie sees this as a development of increased individualization and competition<sup>25</sup>; advice and ‘tips’ from expert (middle classed) sources bestow a semblance of taste upon those who are culturally lagging.<sup>26</sup>

## Conclusions

A concept always has the truth that falls to it as a function of the conditions of its creation (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994:20).

This chapter investigates the tension between bodies and social arrangements; we return to the lines of action, intensities and flows that fashion personhood, for the biology of the body cannot be divorced from its sociological context. When the women spoke about their identities, biology and instinct pre-empted any social construction of the role of motherhood; most of the women’s considerations of maternal identity were enabled through a (bodily) potential and a ‘true’ self

---

<sup>25</sup> Elsewhere, McRobbie has noted the ways in which celebrity culture, for young women, presents an impossible picture of high income/ high maintenance ‘yummy mummies’. Status and income here collapse into tropes of femininity and McRobbie notes how this focus on self preservation, (in a moral economy), serves to bolster government messages on teenage pregnancies. Celebrity magazines/ websites reinforce this message with references to ‘chav’, ‘essex girls’, or ‘pramface’ mothers, ‘...that is the face of impoverished, unkempt, slovenly maternity and re-stigmatised single motherhood’ (McRobbie, *Guardian*, 2.3.06). This is certainly a rearticulated, but no less damaging, individualist turn from the economic concerns around benefit- scrounging single mothers of the early 90s (as depicted by Panorama 1993), and their effect on the moral circumstance of the nation. Rather, this othering is rendered doubly effective through a focus, not simply on the social impact of moral behaviour with reference to nation, but through appeals to self-preservation and true femininity.

<sup>26</sup> What is more, these experts (Trinny and Susannah from *What Not to Wear* BBC1), as part of the programme schedule, check up on the women to ensure they have not slipped back into their old ways. There is an insinuation here that their victims are simply masking their ‘true’ nature, that of tastelessness, which in reality will remain at their core.

(linked to inherent attributes/ traits, as in Amanda's claim to feeling 'wholer'). In a sense, instinct becomes known as a hidden depth, a driving interiority that attunes the self to socially constructed arrangements, reflecting those arrangements as natural order. Others were less convinced. For Lorraine, it took a while to 'get used' to motherhood and Suzanne referred to feeling that motherhood 'wasn't me'. But just as psy disciplines are seductive in the way they allow us to invoke the concept of an interior self, (a self that is hidden and uncovered only when we become complicit and engage with psy), then the discourse of instinct and nature similarly provide a vehicle to justify our complicity with social, gendered arrangements. What the psyche is to psy knowledge and its maintenance, so the discourse of instinct, (essential and undeniable), is to the patterning of social arrangements. Biology and the social, understood as mothering and made sense of through the act of birth, were jointly embedded in a range of socially constructed mores concerned with the (cultural) representation of the mother (and child).

This is why the body is central to identity, for it draws and is drawn upon in the interstices between power/ knowledge complexes and the psychic 'holding' of a self, an identity. The body performs the actions asked of it by psychological disciplines and in doing so reinforces its sense of self kinetically; the practice of practice, so to speak, whilst those same (maternal) bodies are subject to constant investigation and surveillance. The clinic/medical and welfare, that is to say the ante and pre-natal clinics, health visiting etc, thus make their incursions into the life of the family through the body and its actions. Rabinow documents this in terms of 'bio-power'.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Such power relations have a double bind. They serve democratic politics through covertly ordering selves, yet they engineer the notion of self-fulfilment for/of the subject. Rabinow discusses Foucault's identification of 'bio-technico-power', which Rabinow claims clusters around two poles; the actual body, 'the anchor point and target of disciplinary technologies' and, engaging with this body; forms of institutional machinery- 'a regulatory pole centred on population with a panoply of strategies concentrating on knowledge, control and welfare' (1996:91).

In effect the statement, 'biology is destiny' has been somewhat contested by the women here. Whilst they drew upon a discourse of instinct that implicated their selves in particular ways of being, it was evident that they resisted dominant versions of 'correct' mothering with attempts to accommodate other aspects of their selves. In many instances, it seemed they contested, not their biology, which was not, to them, in any way problematic in the patterning of their identity mother, but the patterns of social and working life that overlaid and were predictive of their everyday routines. They, in effect, privilege biology, without considering the seamless joining of the biological to the social, a site where biology has been and is manipulated socially and historically through systems of psy governance to project versions of (classed, gendered, 'raced') female subjectivity. Many of them, though not all, felt invested by biology (instinct) to develop the project of the child, they used biological discourse to maintain versions of maternal subjectivity.

It is not presumptuous then to claim that biology itself becomes disposed/ utilised to the search for distinction, particularly with regard to needs talk. This is a powerful and enticing discourse, for appeals made by psy disciplines to biology, (biology is rendered inescapable, more base, instinctual), through the mind/ body, make the production of a self appear natural and self-actualising, always already there.

The next chapter is concerned with work and knowledge. Not only the work these women feel is valuable and worthy in producing the child, but also attitudes around combining paid employment and parenting. Knowledge is further examined through one of the recent government educational programmes (Sure Start). And in scrutinizing mothers' work, we are returned to surfaces and actions; for 'proper' and moral parenting practices are read as written in and on the (female) body.

## **CHAPTER 6: A LABOUR OF LOVE; MOTHERS' WORK**

Production and its relations, is social and cultural to its very roots, to its very surface.

Paul Willis, 'Shop Floor Culture, Masculinity and the Wage Form', p.187

What fabrications they are, mothers. Scarecrows, wax dolls for us to stick pins into, crude diagrams. We deny them an existence of their own, we make them up to suit ourselves-our own hungers, our own wishes, our own deficiencies. Now that I've been one myself, I know.

Margaret Attwood, The Blind Assassin, p.117

In Alan Bennett's play 'Our Winnie', Ida, (the aunt of a learning disabled woman, Winnie), comments to her sister, Cora (Winnie's mum); 'It's a good job there's love' (2003:21). This observation comes after a touching speech from Cora, telling us of her daily struggle to cope with daughter Winnie and family responsibilities. It seems to me that it is indeed a good job there's love; not just for the obvious reasons such as family commitment, but in a broader sense the ties that bind the family provide an arena for a variety of techniques, through which democratic rule orders society. It is through appeals to love that governance does its work, and love, of course, is mothers' work. In this chapter, I want to give some examples from both textual sources and the interviews that demonstrate the ways in which parenting/ pedagogy (as mothers' work), and education link with biological/ natural discourses; providing the perfect insertion point for governance and the perpetuation of classed distinctions. I will show how class sensibilities and hidden injuries (Sennett & Cobb, 1977), have not disappeared as Mr Blair would have us believe<sup>1</sup>; they just become obscured by a tacit acceptance of the project of the self. And as a response to claims of classlessness; I demonstrate that it is a good job there's love, at least for the purpose of social control within the

---

<sup>1</sup>Tony Blair, from White, M., 'Blair Hails Middle Class Revolution', The Guardian, 15<sup>th</sup>. January 1999,

Slowly but surely, the old establishment is being replaced by a new, larger, more meritocratic middle class.

A middle class characterised by greater tolerance of difference, greater ambition to succeed, greater opportunities to earn a decent living.

A middle class that will include millions of people who traditionally may see themselves as working class, but whose ambitions are far broader than those of their parents and grandparents.

process of democratic rule, for this is how the family is scrutinised and regulated- with the child as motif. Love linked to mothers' work and the interpretation of needs becomes the avenue through which government drives appeals for the self interested individual (and best interests of the child). Mothering and its work, upheld as universal, in accord with nature and biology, is nevertheless, governed through social relations and knowledge; it does not escape struggles around distinction.

This chapter then, investigates mothering work, not only the practical work of parenting but also work outside the home and the impact such work has upon the way these women constructed their identities. Willis' subject is the industrial workplace, but here I want to suggest that the practical undertaking and interpretation of knowledge around mothering is an activity which, in its relations with the family centre, the clinic and the school, is open to a taxonomy of distinction, in effect making it 'social and cultural to its very roots'. In the light of current 'uncertainties' around the family<sup>2</sup>, social values implicit in mother's work/ or parenting skills are closely bound up with political and ideological endeavours. So this chapter looks at the women's attitudes to paid work, domestic work and responsible work. Responsible work, in discussions with the women, was morally linked, through nature, to needs. Though, as I discuss later; meeting needs, the premise on which sensitive mothering is founded, is not always enough to obscure particular classed versions of motherhood and femininity. In Chapter Four I examined the production of knowledge through the psy disciplines, here I want to look at its re-production in the practices of the women; how love is made into work and further, in an examination of the Sure Start program ; how that work is made into order.

---

<sup>2</sup>Moral panics around the breakdown of the family appear unfounded if we study the continuities in family forms illustrated in Social Trends, 2002. Data on live births outside marriage indicate that, 'in 2000 about four fifths of births were jointly registered by both parents and three quarters were to parents living at the same address... These figures seem to be showing a turning away from marriage towards cohabitation rather than a turning away from shared parenthood' (Sherratt and Hughes, 2004:56). Whilst lone parents are, and have been, the focus of much media attention, 20 per cent of all children were living in one parent families in 2001, yet the data indicated 79 per cent were still living in a

This chapter then begins with an investigation into mothers' home and care-work, I then explore meeting needs and processes of inscription that judge mothers' work as worthy/ unworthy. Next, employment and fathers' roles, and finally I examine Sure Start, the process around emergence of moral problems and how these processes link into, and elaborate, discussions around children and their mothers.

### **Mother work and domestic tasks**

In the group discussions at the family centre and at the playgroup, it was the impact of domestic work upon daily routines that led to grievances, rather than the impact of maternal duties. Yet there were subtle differences in emphasis. Some accounts, whilst expressing irritation at the intrusion of domestic work, nevertheless saw such work as necessary, and childcare imposed upon it. It was, regardless of the child, work that had to be done. In other accounts, domestic work was seen as an impediment to time better spent focussing on the child. In the latter accounts, it was not then the tensions of being responsible for children that were problematic but the domestic routines that interrupted maternal space.<sup>3</sup> Some accounts interpreted the caring and nurturing role as a task within the round of daily domestic work, whilst others accounts prioritised maternal work, separated it from the mundane and assigned it privileged status. Parenting, addressed as a universal arrangement in childcare manuals<sup>4</sup>, regardless of the variety of familial and cultural forms, was differently disrupted and disrupting in the women's accounts of everyday routines.

Yet doing domestic work is often 'done for yourself'. Creating order in the home was part and parcel of the responsible work that reflected a respectable, maternal self. It was important to retain order in the home and they managed to do this around their caring work. If this was the case, how then could domestic work and

---

family with two parents, 1 per cent in social/ health care (Sherrat and Hughes, 2004:56 from Social Trends , 2002).

<sup>3</sup> Karen and Diane, from the family centre expressed concern about fulfilling both their childcare and domestic tasks (see Chapter Five).

<sup>4</sup> See Urwin (1985), Marshall (1991) for analysis of child care manuals.

the demands of the child be managed? Lyn conceded, 'If I've got to be stuck in I try to involve her in what I'm doing, cooking and that or whatever'.

Laura, from the family centre talked of the difficulty in doing mothering 'properly' when faced with the added responsibility of domestic work. She saw mothering work as that which should be privileged against mundane domestic work, the separation of these two spheres appeared important as a marker for her identity as mother. Mothering work is understood through discourses of the 'sensitive' mother to the point where many of these mothers felt guilty (or ashamed) regarding the optimization of their child's capacity for experience and learning<sup>5</sup>; the risk here being that their identity as 'good enough' may be called into question. Nevertheless, Laura resigned herself to what she felt were the mundane requirements of occupying domestic space; it was, as she said in Chapter Five, 'restricting' to her maternal work. Similarly, Lyn from the family centre had noted, (in Chapter Five), that she felt domestic responsibilities intruded upon her relationship with her child, she admitted to feeling guilty when caught up in the dilemma of orientating herself to her child or the home claiming, 'I still try to set some time aside to be with her or she'd be bored to tears.'

At the playgroup, Lorraine validates the amount of mothering work she does by accounting for the amount of space it appears to take up physically and mentally;

Lorraine: From the media I think there is, you know, all these articles, about how you're supposed to be able to have it all, the career and be a good mother. I know for one that I can just manage one, there's just no room for the other. I hear about people who study when they've got children and I just don't know how they do it, where they get the time. I assume they have these children that play, or they don't need much sleep, when they've gone to bed, I'm just exhausted, I just flake out! (my emphasis)

This is Lorraine's way of attributing a depth and status to the duties she has to attend to as mother. Like Pam, also from the playgroup, who claimed that

---

<sup>5</sup> Lyn seemed anxious that her child would be 'bored to tears', as if each and every moment of the day must be designed to be a stimulating experience for the child. Parenting, framed by the project of the child, has become inculcated in appeals to 'progressive individualism' (see Savage, 2000; Skeggs, 2004).

anything else seemed 'too much for me to do', Lorraine presents herself as a worthy mother; even if she wanted to do anything else, she could not; her mothering position appears to override all other possibilities for the self.

The material above and in the previous chapter demonstrates the ambivalence felt by many of the women in creating their own space and negotiating domestic responsibilities whilst meeting the needs of the child. For some mothers however, efforts to meet such needs, which are the prime directive of mother's work, are interpreted as unsuccessful or inappropriate due to an analysis of their very bodies and social circumstances. In such cases the meeting of needs, demanded through child developmental discourse, is contorted into an analysis of legitimised cultural capitals and becomes rather more complicated than first imagined. I will discuss some examples here to indicate how good enough mothering rests on much more than simply meeting children's needs.

### **Love's Labour Lost; working to meet needs**

Fran, desperate, taps him on the leg, not hard, but he starts to scream. Several women turn to stare at her. Rotten lousy mother, she hears them thinking. Can't control her child without resorting to slaps.....Fran kneels down and tries to reason with him. Several women turn to stare at her. Stupid, middle class, Hampstead-style mother, she hears them thinking. Can't she see what that child needs is a good slap?  
(Barker, 1999:136)

In chapter two, I considered Woodhead's (1990) analysis of the persistent use of needs talk in child care/ development discourse as opposed to wants or desires that are ultimately seen as selfish and destructive. The linguistic implications of needs are that they must be gratified upon recognition by the mother; this then comprises mother's work. Recognising needs is not however a simple process read off the child; needs are susceptible, as Woodhead writes, to cultural and social change and occupy a space that demands constant legitimisation.

Nevertheless, the recognition of needs is overcast with classed and gendered assumptions around the construction of correct maternity and femininity, and as I discuss now, some mothers are critiqued precisely for doing the work required to meet needs.

One such case is that of Heidi Colwell, (documented in Wallbank 2001:126). This single mother chose to go out to work rather than rely on state benefits.

Registering as employed qualified her for access to better housing and support for her and her child; whilst she went out to work however, her two year old child was left 'home alone'. The subsequent coverage given over to this case by the media instigated a debate concerning the problematic nature of combining work and lone motherhood, highlighting the lack of childcare facilities on the one hand and the inflexibility of the government's 'back to work' policy on the other.

Following what had been a period of demonization for lone parent families<sup>6</sup>, the Colwell case drew a mixed response from public and press; for Heidi Colwell was attending to her child's needs in one sense, yet sorely neglecting them in another. Lauded, surprisingly so, by the right wing press for her attempts to escape the benefits trap yet castigated for neglecting to meet the legal requirements demanded of prime carers, she was deemed defective in attending to her child's emotional and psychological needs.

The attention from the press, and judicial solutions to the case, were caught up between, on the one hand sending out the right messages about parental responsibility, yet on the other, recognizing the ways this mother had made attempts to improve her lot, as it were, for the sake of the child. Colwell was, under the 1933 Children and Young Persons Act, charged with neglect, ill treatment and abandonment and given a six month prison sentence. A court of appeal reduced the sentence to two years probation after seventeen days of her sentence had been served, citing 'the best interests of the child'. Wallbank (2001) concludes that Colwell's case was supported over and above the legality of her responsibilities as prime carer due to the construction of Colwell's pleasure (from work) as derived from the root of her maternal duties (to fulfil needs). The discourse of needs was writ large in judicial and popular representations around the case.

---

<sup>6</sup> 'Babies on Benefit', Panorama, BBC1 20<sup>th</sup>. September 1993.

Furthermore, the press coverage on the Paulsgrove ‘riots’ that erupted following the events around the Sarah Payne case<sup>7</sup>, became carnivalesque in its reportage; the story becoming a way of exorcising what was a fearful yet fascinated gaze upon ‘others’ (Lawler, 2003). These riots within the Paulsgrove estate in Portsmouth followed the ‘naming and shaming’ of paedophiles in the News of the World tabloid. The Paulsgrove mothers’ violent actions to remove those they believed to be child abusers were seized upon by the broadsheets in an attempt to demonstrate bad mothers among the dangerous masses.<sup>8</sup> The subtext here is that such unmotherly/ unfeminine behaviour is the traceable root of a generalised social disorder and moreover, reinforces the child as icon.

The action of seeking out abusers reported as residing on the estate, and thereby safeguarding the needs of their children, was reinterpreted in press representations as wilfully irresponsible. Lawler (2003) notes how the Paulsgrove women, through their actions, (and their bodies), were seen to be devoid of reason. They, and the children they were protecting, were rendered as monsters. Bearing these caveats in mind, a similar protest in the affluent London suburb of Balham against a proposed residential centre for ex offenders, (including those with sentences for sex offences against children), was presented sympathetically by the broadsheet press.<sup>9</sup> The distinctions drawn between these protests, both circulating around

---

<sup>7</sup> The call for ‘Sarah’s Law’ was launched by the News of the World newspaper in July 2000 following the life sentence of child sex offender Roy Whiting for the murder of eight year old Sarah Payne, five years after he had been found guilty of abducting another girl. The newspaper’s notorious ‘naming and shaming’ of suspected paedophiles had previously led to riots in Plymouth, London and Manchester. Many of the points of ‘Sarah’s Law’ have been granted; Jack Straw, then home secretary however, refused to grant publication of offenders names and addresses amid fears this would force paedophiles underground or encourage them to give false addresses (Hall, S., ‘Argument Rages over Sarah’s Law’, Guardian Society, 13/12/01).

<sup>8</sup> Steph Lawler’s discussion (2003) indicates how Aaronovitch’s report in The Independent newspaper (11/8/00) sought to make the women and children monstrous and ‘other’.

<sup>9</sup> Lawler (2003) writes

...the [Balham] women were represented as devoted mothers, vigilant rather than vigilante, identification was invited, so that they became part of a fictive ‘we’ who are right to be worried about ‘our’ children... There were no references to these women’s appearances, their homes, or their incomes. The only personal details reported were about their jobs (solidly professional), the ages of their children, and, in one case, their title (Lady Cosima Somerset).

meeting the needs of the child, Lawler (2003) writes, rest upon recognised (sanctioned) social and cultural worth, and go far beyond the boundaries of an analysis of economic capitals. This example circumscribes precisely Fraser's (2003) admonitions around politics of recognition and the re-interpretation of cultural worth. The attention to needs is not, and has not been, historically<sup>10</sup> then, material enough with which to calibrate the position of good mother. In this way, women are not universally recognised within the identity mother; rather they are mis-recognised, and as Nancy Fraser (2003) claims; 'mis-recognition' complicates those discussions around economic/ material resources, which remain the enduring basis of classed/ social identity.

As the Heidi Colwell case and reportage concerning the Paulsgrove women indicate, the identity mother rests on a series of classed gazes and values, the least of which is the attention to needs and mothering work. Discourses around needs and maternal duty serve to make 'difference into inequality' (Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989). Identities, here, have been produced (Fraser, 2003); the cases here are testament to the production of complex judgements around cultural and feminine embodiment that Bourdieu (2005) claims cluster around markers of correct middle class sensibilities and taste.

### **All work and no (dis)play; appearance and inscription**

Appearance, adequacy and recognition are closely linked as the series Child in Our Time (BBC 1, series 1, 2004) indicated. Explicitly aiming to investigate sets of mother child dyads from different socio economic and cultural backgrounds and to deduce if differences in behaviour were biologically or socially determined, these investigations resulted in a variety of observation settings which, as part of the commentary on mothers work, were analysed by child developmental experts. In one particular example, mother/ child attachment was scrutinised through a re-enactment of Ainsworth's 'strange situation' experiment (discussed in Chapter

---

<sup>10</sup> Ian Roberts (1999) work examines accounts from community studies that observe working class families. Roberts finds these accounts, far from an examination of material/ economic deprivation, rather riven with a middle class disgust directed at what are

Four). Two mother/ child sets were observed, one mother engaged her child in play before leaving the room, and on appearance of the 'stranger', the child became distraught; this was observed as a close dyad. The other mother allowed her child to explore the room, whilst she sat quietly. On this mother's exit from the room, and on appearance of the 'stranger', the child showed little anxiety. This was observed to be an extremely problematic relationship; interpreted through the child's lack of concern over her mother's absence. It is interesting that this could not be interpreted as an extremely secure relationship because it appeared to display precisely all the qualities that child centred approaches strive for; confidence, self esteem etc. As it was, much of the interview material gathered from my sample of mothers was concerned with nurturing these qualities in the child and expressed such qualities as evidence of 'good parenting'.

In Chapter Four, I outlined Urwin's (1998) argument that the child's response in the Ainsworth experiment correlates with the infant's desire for control and power over others rather than as a signifier of mother/ child bonding. Moreover, in response to this particular scene, it seemed to me that what was being read here, what was really problematic for the male academics observing the scene, was this mother's appearance. A single mother with three children from two different partners, and extensive body art; she did not fit into a preferred construction of middle classed femininity and motherhood. Dis-invested and mis-recognized (Fraser, 2003) through 'legitimate' scientific processes, places of observation, and the judgements of expertise; this women's body, read as (working) classed and facile, is ultimately seen to be lacking

I exemplify these cases and make these points to illustrate that the work these women make central to their identity, and their recognition of themselves as that 'good enough' mother, ( natural and immutable in child developmental discourse), is a construction at best fragile<sup>11</sup>; a risky labour of love, compounded by and open,

---

deemed to be abnormal/ deficient psychologies, and moreover, concerned with a lack of complexity (i.e. facile feminine embodiment).

<sup>11</sup> Knowledge comprising psy disciplines is central to these women's understanding of motherhood. But knowledges understood as universally applicable, neutral, immutable, and congruent with the stasis of the body are populated with moral, aesthetic concerns, as

perhaps unknowingly so, to scrutiny by others. It seems, in these examples, as if mothers' work is secondary when scrutinised against the easily read surface of the (female) self or the circumstantial. On one level, the women in the study, interpreting such work primarily through child developmental disciplines, made claims to universal instinct and nature. On another level, their interviews, particularly those drawn from women professionally trained (as teacher, nurse, social worker), showed evidence of fearing absorption into a generalised other; hence their attention to social closure through values, education, cultural materialism.

Being and seeming a good enough mother are informed, in no small part, by a variety of media interventions that often 'leak over' into more general family documentaries such as Wife Swap (Channel 4), where the family is scrutinised for moral worth and distinction or, Holidays from Hell (ITV 1). These features are compelling in the sense that we look to recognise our selves, and what is recognised as 'other'. One of the most recent television series, following the success of Supernanny (ITV 1) and The House of Tiny Tearaways (BBC1) is the series, Honey, We're Killing the Kids (BBC1). The focus of this program is, each week, to examine the lifestyle of a family and analyse the effects of parent's care upon their children. The family are interviewed and the scene is set to establish the goals they need to achieve. Given what interactions and lifestyles are observed by the experts; a forecast is made to establish the appearance and social habits of those same children at age forty. The parents, (without the children), are brought

---

evidenced in my synopsis of the psychological observation here. Deleuze aptly presents knowledge as an 'assemblage' which is constantly evading a 'being in the world' status and moving, (though not straightforwardly), towards formal scientific status (legitimate authorization). Deleuze;

Knowledge is a practical assemblage, a 'mechanism' of statements and visibilities. There is therefore nothing behind knowledge, (although, as we shall see, there are things outside knowledge). That is to say that knowledge exists only according to certain widely varying 'thresholds' which impose particular layers, splits and directions on the stratum in question. In this respect, it is not enough to speak of a 'threshold of epistemologization': the latter is already moving in a direction that leads to science, and will cross a threshold of 'scientificity', and ultimately a 'threshold of formalization'. But the other thresholds, moving off in other directions, also leave their mark on the stratum: thresholds involving ethics, aesthetics, politics, etc. (2000:51)

into a large hangar which has been completely made stark and stripped of all effect. All, that is, except for a full size wall screen photograph of their children which morphs, before the parent's eyes, into the projected vision of their children aged forty. What is interesting here is the effect of such an arresting screening. The effect on the parents is visceral; here all their errors are made into visible disgust and excess.

Without exception, the photographs morph into unsmiling, overweight and anxious adults who scream lack. The mother particularly, in this scene, becomes distraught absorbing ultimate responsibility for this projection; as the projection on the wall is, in this encounter, projected onto her as bad mother. What follows is instruction, as a schedule of parenting skills devised by experts is imposed, and progress relayed through a series of daily video reports given by each member of the family throughout the transition process. At intervals the whole family regroup with the expert to receive the next stage of their task and a progress report.

Here then, we do not simply observe the family in question as in Wife Swap or Holidays from Hell, we are instead faced with the indisputable truth of the image made into biological evidence; future being is at once instantiated as biological. The structure of future and of narrative has been disrupted as faces from the future make appeals to those in the present. Following the analysis, (a week has been condensed into the schedule of the programme), the parents are called back in, without the children, to receive their assessment and, in the light of their achievements, they are, now, given a glimpse of what could be, if they maintain their new regime. The photographs morph again, but this time into pleasing, attractive, and happy adults to the grateful thanks and relief of the parents. A morality tale in miniature, this then, returns us to that old chestnut; child as container, but what occurs here in that unfolding of potentiality is the inscription of recognition and lack, and the ultimate one dimensionality of being and seeming written on the surface of self. Here the image on the screen becomes a mirror; reflecting and reflective of bad parenting, and their auto-suggestible offspring. Valerie Walkerdine (1999) has explored the reinvention of this trope for the

twenty first century family; the feckless and the vulnerable children of the 'masses'. I now turn to advice given to mothers on practical child work.

### **Practical advice**

I asked about practical management of the child, the actual mechanics of handling, bathing, attending to the bodily needs of the child. Did these mothers feel they had benefited from advice given to them by professionals, (health visitors/midwives), after the birth of their child? At the family centre they had this to say;

Diane: They're full of good intentions, but they don't have the time, they haven't got the time to sit with you.

Karen: Not practical things.

Lyn: Their intentions were good, but, practical things, changing nappies, even in the hospital I was like 'what do I do now', 'well do I change her', 'do I bathe her', It sounds really ignorant now but...

Karen speculated on the ways expertise addressed mothers as though all parenting situations were similar; she commented; 'I don't think its that the health visitor doesn't have the time but they don't know what situation you're in, as a family like'. Diane added; 'No, that's right. Everyone's different'.

Their initial anxieties revolved around advice concerning practical management rather than emotional management. The need to schedule care and the ability to display knowledge through parent craft, in terms of feeding/ cleaning/ handling was important. Such craft conferred knowledge and produced self- confidence in the new role of mother<sup>12</sup>, and it was these skills that were important in the mothers' construction of authentic identities. Karen had previously commented that, in hospital, she felt that experienced mothers judged her; 'Well, you feel as if they are looking at you'. Paradoxically these comments were made alongside a version of parenting that came simply naturally and instinctively (.see Chapter Five).

---

<sup>12</sup> Paradoxically the women upheld a discourse of instinct, 'naturalness' and innateness [discussed in Chapter Five], whilst expressing the lack of such resources upon the onset of childcare.

Yet practical attendance to the everyday maintenance of the child was not the only work to be done; Laura felt solely responsible for her maternal work, which she perceived as being the child's social and educational development. The pre school stage was, for her, a place to lay down foundations of social, cultural and educational development that she could not entrust to anyone else;

**Laura:** The thought of putting him in a sort of quite anonymous place and paying someone to do it just doesn't feel right.

Laura elected to resist work outside the home, claiming the importance for her that it is she who does the work of developing her child and his 'sense of self'; she told us in Chapter Four that educational success followed care, attention and 'teaching [child] how to interact with other people and social skills'.

'Love, trust and security' somehow impart education then. In making this claim, Laura accounts for the investments she makes in such a project, not only for her child's self but correspondingly her self, in ways that she makes pedagogic practice seamless with attachment and care; she does not distinguish between childcare and pedagogy. Previously, she had dismissed the drive to materialism that returned some mothers to work (see Chapter Three); for her, this work, her mothering work, was materialism of an altogether different strand. One that, whilst invisible/ intangible and less concrete than the immediate gratification consumerism brings, nevertheless would return a greater investment if she got it right.

### **Working mothers: Father's work.**

The group interview at the playgroup demonstrated the impact of paid work upon mothering work. Anne, whose eldest child is disabled, feels that her mothering is less fulfilling; this undoubtedly reflects the normative values placed upon mothering practices and 'normal' children. However Anne mothers, she will not be rewarded with the textbook responses promised in the child care manuals.

**Anne:** Since I've done my work part time, I find its better for me, because I'm going to something where I am valued, where I can be successful, and where I can do something totally different. Because its 24 hour a day, constant, and you know, you've got to

separate it out completely, do a good job at it and return. That break is just so important, even with all the impossible balancing.

In this sense Anne claims value from her work outside the home, value that she can never recoup as other mothers might from their 'normal' children. She went on to say that work outside the home helped her to distance herself from the immediate day to day pressures involved in the caring of her disabled child and her long term worries about his future. For Anne, her mothering role extends and is defined by her child's disability; it will outlast the role currently destined for many of her peers in terms of the responsibility required in her child's future.

Pam had been a teacher, doubly invested through her previous training and her current position as mother, she felt ambivalent about her duties, yet reasserted her value, and the worthiness of her child, by emphasising how much time needs consumed;

Pam: I think I felt, when I stopped working, that I had...um... less confidence, that I felt I could achieve things when I was working, and I think maybe motherhood is not valued as it should be. There are pressures on the one hand, but there isn't the value given to it by society generally, and I think that can lead to a lack of confidence. I felt that I wasn't actually doing anything, and you're feeling that you're having to, kind of, make excuses, when you see other people working as well. You think, 'gosh, they must be so much better than I am, because I can't manage to do that' (my emphasis).

This is in direct comparison to Louise from the centre;

SP: For what reasons did you return to work?

Louise: Had to. For the money, I'd worked 12 year...

SP: Any other reasons apart from money?

Louise: Yes, people were talking about babies! For a while when I went back I couldn't get babies off my mind, then, going back to work again and meeting other people, I thought ' God, there is life' y'know?...like out of the house.

Also Diane from the centre;

SP: You said you worked part-time, so what were your reasons for returning to work, financial or any other reasons?

Diane: A bit of both really, financial, I didn't have to but the money would be missed. It's different from going from a full time wage coming in to nothing, plus it gives me a bit of a break- some people

think that sounds horrible, but I thought about it and I thought I don't fancy being stuck in the house 24 hours a day.

This resistance to constant work upon the child was a form of dis-identification, but those who did not resist, who found resistance 'too much', were I suggest drawn into capitalising on the child and self. Resisting the dicta of psy knowledge is a heroic act but the price is a hidden injury, those mothers who comply with knowledge are made distinctive through their constancy, through their application to work (through love, care and needs) upon the child. Diane, here resists being a full time mum, and challenges that role in opting to have a break.

Employment outside the home was not only necessary financially, it was also satisfying to escape the confines of domestic and mothering spaces for a small time at least; Kath, at the centre; 'Sometimes you just come out, shut the door and think, "it's brilliant" '. Kath, then, directly confirms her desire to escape the identity of mother, to extend her self, at least for short periods. This balance helps her to retain other aspects of her identity that become compressed by parenting responsibilities. Diane reiterates this when she claims work is 'some sort of normality, seeing other people who aren't mothers', this gives her the opportunity to escape and exceed the self laid down through her daily parenting duties.

Full time work and caring for children created a tension, with mothers often feeling torn between both positions. As Jo noted;

Jo: I certainly didn't feel that my children missed out when I did work, and they were with a childminder. They probably had more attention with her, than they do with me now, cause I've got housework to do, and things to fit in at the same time, whereas they got attention all the time.

Anne agreed, she felt that allowing the children to be cared for by a childminder was good for mother and child,

Anne: I know that Sophie's getting as good, if not better, parenting than she gets from me. She gets something different, and she enjoys that (my emphasis).

Paid childcare, or lack of it, figured largely in discussions. Much discussion revolved around the fact that what could be earned would be cancelled out by cost of childcare. Many of the women had left less well paid work where the incentive to return was minimal, there were no incentives to promotion within the work they did and any earnings would be cancelled out by childminder costs. There were also reservations about leaving children with unfamiliar adults, though having family members as carers was acceptable. Karen claims,

**Karen:**...so my excuse was that it wasn't worth going back, but even if I had the best paid job in the world I wouldn't go back and let someone else look after him. I wanted to be his Mam, I didn't want to let someone else be his Mam.

**SP:** Would you consider part time work, then?

**Karen:** Actually if I could get something maybes about 1 or 2 days a week I would, I could have got a job somewhere else with the company, but again what I'd be getting paid I'd have paid out for someone to watch him. Yes it would be nice, the break and that, but I'm not stupid I'm not going to work for nothing!

Here, Karen is undecided, she does not rule out the possibility of part time work but neither does she want to relinquish her role as prime carer. Ultimately, her decisions rest upon the complicated arrangements and cost of childcare. She intends to work but is in the process of retraining in counselling work. Diane works part time; her partner's shift-work patterns solve the childcare issue for her. She reasoned that, apart from the income, it allowed her a break and placed her partner in a responsible role. Often, she claimed, this led to arguments, though she disregarded her partner's complaints about the constraints of childcare, claiming it was only fair that he experience it too. Again, as many of the other women responded, she would have second thoughts if she had to pay for care;

**Diane:** If I'd had to put him in a creche or anything I wouldn't have gone back. I didn't want to go back if I didn't have anyone to look after him y'know? At first it was my mother in law, my husband or my Dad. If I'd had to pay it wouldn't be worth my while going to work. I wouldn't like the idea of someone watching him who didn't know him anyway.

Single parenting, however, produced many more problems. For those single mums, such as Suzanne and Christine, any return to work had to be postponed. Suzanne planned to go into teaching and constructed her desire for a professional

life outside of mothering through the discourse of children's needs; 'I think I'll be able to plan for her more, when I can put myself first' (emphasis added). In a sense, she used a 'future' life outside of mother work as a strategy to deal with the difficult physical and emotional pressures she was under. Suzanne, (as noted in Chapter Four), was having particular longstanding problems with her child's sleeping habits and as a lone parent was finding it hard to cope with. Her experience of mothering is overlaid with considerations for the future, she negotiates her present time as a mother as an unplanned, difficult though unavoidable period through which she must work in order to satisfy both her need, to fulfil her ambitions for a career, and her child's future need.

Whilst some of the women who had left poorly paid work expressed their concern about strangers caring for their child, many of the professional mothers who had returned seemed less concerned with using childminders. Their main concern was that someone registered and creating a safe and stimulating environment for their children was doing the caring work. It seemed to me the incentive to return to work here was bound to their status and the investments they had made over time to secure their positions in the workplace. The promotional packages and maternity leave conditions that many of these women's employers had in place were flexible and favourable, (teachers/ social workers/ computer analysts), so the transitions back to work were more relaxed. In many cases, I could understand the ways in which certain of the group saw more investment in full time mothering when this was juxtaposed with the lack of conditions and pay structures being offered in many workplaces. For many it just was not worth returning financially, given the cost of childcare, for others, at least, it meant waiting until their children started full time school before re-training

Talking about family arrangements on a daily basis inevitably led to discussion of the role of fathers in managing children. There was ambivalence about the role of fathers. Lorraine, from the playgroup 'hated the thought' of her partner bringing up the children on his own, she said she would feel sorry for the kids; ('He would

just be such a grumpy bastard.’) She qualified her reason by explaining what happened while she was at work and he had responsibility,

Lorraine: I got sick of people saying 'Oh, isn't he coping great with the kids' when I was at work, and I got sick of this, because he wasn't coping at all, he was really bad tempered at home, y'know? Really short with them. And I suppose, it was just this big macho man thing, he liked to give the impression to other people that he was coping, when he wasn't. So he would make a big effort when other people were there.

Lorraine noted that her partner's efforts were 'all show' for the benefit of other people and were easily put aside on her return home.

Anne, added;

I went into this thinking it would be a joint venture, but I feel he's just like a managing director, who pops in once in a while to see how everything's going. Fatherhood is definitely not the same as motherhood.

Denise, from the playgroup, followed up this comment when she re-established the primacy of the motherly role, claiming; 'Mothers care much more, I think, about the loving, caring and nurturing'. Anne's reply; 'I do believe there's a difference between how men feel [about childcare]. I don't feel there's that feeling of ultimate responsibility; that has to be with the mother.' Lorraine conceded that; 'There are a few men out there who'd make better mothers than some women, but generally that's not true'. There was a feeling that men did not have the capability of coping with the demands of children. As Jo from the playgroup said,

I feel that we have the sole responsibility, they are there to help out a bit, now and again, but you can't sort of rely on them, not 24 hours a day like you have to do.

Anne here produced a discourse of gendered difference as the basis of responsibility. The work of mothering, the practical restrictions that many of the women complained about were being made sense of, and in many ways made unavoidable by, a psycho-biological discourse of traits and nature. Jo couldn't bring herself to rely upon her partner; her investment was that she knew best.

Lorraine's previous comments that observers delight in the father excelling in his unnatural role, is set against a general frustration at the uneven division of labour within the home between the genders. Were the women resentful of the role they were expected to fulfil, a role that was underscored by some address and obligation to natural machineries? Or, in the same breath, did they relish their indispensability as mother? Did it confer a form of status in its demands? Management, organisation of the domestic somehow was returned to the realm of the biological; socially constructed arrangements were being married to the constancy of natural gendered roles and body and feelings, instincts and responsibilities became indivisible. The majority of the women reclaimed their role as prime carer, only Diane and Pam conceded their partner's contributions to caring responsibilities.

Diane, from the centre, makes her partner's role pro active by claiming her decision to return to work was in part based around making him take a more responsible, active role in childcare, she believed he needed to see what she had to deal with. Yet Pam, from the playgroup, framed both her and her partner's role in terms of teamwork, but this was primarily concerned with discussion on joint approaches for managing and dealing with the social and moral behaviour of the children, rather than practical 'hands on' care.

An initial reading of the responses drawn around mothering and paid work could conclude these are contemporary narratives that could never have been imagined by women in the 1950s and 60s; that some structural changes must have taken place concerning the domestic and the public sphere for working mothers.<sup>13</sup> There appears, in their talk, to be a discourse of choice, of opting in and out of labour markets. Yet I am concerned that this talk of choice is simply that; talk. A Foucauldian analysis is concerned with the ways systems of discourse are made and spoken through us as subjects. In the same way, the paradigmatic shift from

---

<sup>13</sup> These changes are driven by new moral and capital economies which 'displace the burdens of adjustment and market failure onto the family (for which read, in most cases, women) or the institutions, networks and solidarities of civil society' (Jessop, 2002:37).

the social democratic collective self to the enterprising (self-interested) individual under liberalism and its reiteration in the rhetoric of Third Way politics, is constantly spoken culturally and institutionally through the subjectivities here.<sup>14</sup> In their talk, the women moved in and out of images (perceived?) of their public and domestic selves, their basis for doing so always bore reference to, and had implications for, moral interpretations of the child, and reflexively for mothers' work.

I turn now to explore briefly some of the issues raised in the implementation of the Sure Start initiative; the implications it has for mothers work, and its place in accounting for social order and good citizens.

### **Sure Start: raising the ante?**

Empirical evidence shows that Britain is a long way from realising equal opportunity; the life chances of an individual in Britain today are significantly influenced by the economic and social position of his or her parents. But the countries which have succeeded in facilitating greater intergenerational mobility, notably in Scandinavia, have only done so by promoting greater material equality.

Jackson & Segal, (2004; executive summary: 5)

[www.catalystforum.org.uk](http://www.catalystforum.org.uk)

A Sure Start....is not only right but the best anti-crime, the best anti drugs, anti unemployment and the best anti-dependency policy for this country's future.

(Gordon Brown cited in Haylett, 2001:363)

The excerpts above demonstrate two very different approaches regarding disadvantage and social mobility. On the one hand, Jackson and Segal's concerns correspond with those of Nancy Fraser (2003) regarding the relationship between maldistribution and misrecognition; that is the need to attend to the material basis of economic and social inequality. Gordon Brown's comment however, sees individuals, (their potentials or stasis, and what lies contained therein), as

---

This labour, though outside the cash nexus, remains significant and as Jessop notes, the family 'are always objects of governance as well as sites of struggle'(2002:47).

<sup>14</sup> Under Blair's Third Way politics; work appears to be central to way the 'full' citizen avoids exclusions and inequalities. The New Deal, for example, carries sanctions for those not participating in labour markets.

indicative of social order/ disorder. Disorders and differences are rendered, in Brown's account, as aspects of educational 'adjustment' and moral knowledge, rather than inequalities of social distributive justice.

As part of this analysis, I briefly investigated the implementation of the Sure Start programme. The foundations of the program were laid in 1999 with government's pledge to eradicate child poverty; part of a strategy to increase social mobility and widen participation. A program that brings health, social welfare, education and employment services for children and families under one umbrella; the value of the service and impetus to continue was raised with the publication of the green paper Every Child Matters. This document, borne out of Lord Laming's Inquiry report into the tragic death of Victoria Climbié<sup>15</sup>, reinforced much of the ethic of child protection and development that Sure Start entails. The green paper, Every Child Matters, published September 2003 proposed extended schools with childcare, health and social care, life long learning, family learning, study support, sports, art and access to information and communications technology, and children's centres providing integrated early education, childcare, health services family support and help into employment. When I started the study, Sure Start was beginning to develop from already in place children's facilities; the projected £3 billion subsidy to ensure its success enabled the co-ordination of a variety of health, educational and jobseeker services to be delivered under the umbrella of family services.

Earlier in this study, I discussed the replacing of underclass rhetoric with that of classlessness. The Sure Start initiative, launched as part of a wider strategic policy remit to eradicate child poverty, forms part of that discussion in its drive to make

---

<sup>15</sup> Following the starving and torture to death of Victoria Climbié at the hands of her great-aunt and partner in February 2000; Lord Laming led the most extensive tripartite inquiry into child protection in British history. Investigating social services, the National Health Service and the police; his final report in January 2003 found these services had failed to work together to protect the child. Lord Laming made 108 recommendations, one of which was the establishment of a new agency for children to be led by a children's commissioner as chief executive. The green paper Every Child Matters, published in September 2003, and the Children's Act 2004 that followed, established a Children's Trust and a national child database of information drawn from 150 local authorities.

education and social mobility part of that endeavour through asserting ‘human capitals’. These are the capitals that encompass part of the work mothers ‘naturally’ do, albeit in partnership with agencies that have been prioritised as essential to early years care, (and upward social mobility), that is; health, education, employment agencies. Here, in the light of comments made in the working paper published by the Catalyst think tank above, and through recent findings drawn from the evidence based evaluation research on Sure Start, I intend to explore whether targeting education and parenting can, in effect, deliver the promise of social mobility under the aegis of love, (made into mothers work and the ‘best interests of the child’).

- **Human capital**

I had read in broadsheets<sup>16</sup> and elsewhere the growing trend for parenting coaches and was initially sceptical of the wholesale take up of such services. However, when researching Sure Start, it was clear that many of these agencies, (Positive Parenting and Family Caring Trust, for example<sup>17</sup>), provided in house training for Sure Start centres practitioners, and were involved in developing a range of materials for use in the centres. Parenting is big business and these policy initiatives feed into the proliferation of expert advice, generating considerable financial capital to the same agencies. PAFT, (Parents As First Teachers), is an organisation that the Sure Start manager I had discussions with mentioned was involved with the approach and interventions of the centre. Originating in the United States, PAFT works on the principle of supporting parents in their role as creative educators of their children (Hilary Wilce, ‘Mums make a difference’, Education Independent 3.4.03).

---

<sup>16</sup> ‘Do I need a Naughty Step’ (Lucy Atkins, Guardian G2 16.03.05), is a look at parent coaching sessions.

<sup>17</sup> Both these businesses provide not only for Sure Start but for Barnardos, the National Children’s Homes (NCH), and the Children’s Society among others. The Family Caring Trust was the subject of a BBC1 program Bringing up Parents (see [www.familycaring.co.uk](http://www.familycaring.co.uk) for publications/ training). ‘Positive Parenting’ similarly provide publications/ training ( [www.parenting.org.uk](http://www.parenting.org.uk)).

Though the Sure Start centre I visited was in the preliminary stages of set up, in discussions with the manager there, it was the joined-up provision of the service that was emphasised to me. I was given a tour of the centre and the range of services was reflected by the layout. Space was provided for health appointments, jobcentre appointments, a separate annex for pre, day and after school care/nursery. Space had also been arranged for observations; a room with a one way mirror installed would enable psychologists/ behaviour therapists to observe child /mother and child /staff interactions. Like the family centre, the Sure Start centre offered a wide range of services; some were health based or jobseeker orientated, but a great majority were aimed at parenting, behaviour and communication<sup>18</sup>.

My discussions with the manager, a nurse- practitioner seconded to the post, focussed on the work and outreach of this particular centre, which qualified for funding on the basis of its economic and social location; of all wards in England, 20% are flagged as deprived and allocated priority Sure Start funding. The centre is informed of pregnancies via health centres/ ante natal clinics and is required to call in mothers within eight weeks of giving birth. This is achieved via letter with a voucher to call into the centre and receive a free birth pack; registration is completed on arrival. Training courses, with a view to getting mothers back to work, were planned, but again, as in the case of the family centre, these were mainly NVQ childcare courses, (the centre had reserved ten free places with a local college through its funding package). An employment link officer is integral to the centre; the manager stating that employment and training was one of the main aims of the centre. I asked her why she thought there was such a political drive to childcare; was it because children were more complex or were there issues about parenting?

**Manager:** In fact much of the political drive behind the initiative is concerned with getting people [single mothers?] back to work and off benefits. There are also issues about anti-social behaviour, y'know? Children are coming into primary education with all sorts of

---

<sup>18</sup> For example 'Mellow Parenting', 'Playing with words', 'behaviour support group', 'Basic skills club'. Also a '2 year old birthday party' which was an incentive to invite parents and children into the centre, and register them as part of what was to be a baseline study.

problematic behaviours, so Sure Start has a part to play there...so it's a social control mechanism.<sup>19</sup>

More generally speaking, given the above point, the scheme has been the subject of criticisms in the national press, revolving around its direction and what many claim is a betrayal of its founding aims. Norman Glass, one of the architects of Sure Start, claims the scheme is in danger of becoming a 'New Deal for toddlers'. To quote Glass,

It was initially run by health ministers in order to get health and education to work together, but then it became integrated more into DfES and the role of the health minister was very much reduced. So Sure Start is now seen as part of the childcare employability agenda. The 'what parents need is work' policy line has come to dominate it' (Benjamin and Inman, 'Far from certain', Society Guardian, 8.10.03).

Ministerial responses, of course, point to evidence that links increased household income with a decrease in child poverty. Further, Jane Held, chairperson of the Association of Directors of Social Services children and family subcommittee comments that the scheme 'is uncovering a huge amount of unmet need that social services is not able to cope with' (Held in Benjamin and Inman, 2003).

Foucault's (1979) theorizations around the production of categorisation and making visible that attends working upon populations<sup>20</sup> become writ large; Held's comment begs the question as to whether agencies and the ways they communicate are, in part, generating 'needs'.

Further, Patrick Diamond, special advisor to number10 stated;

Where measures such as early years education parenting classes or literacy classes are shown to boost human capital significantly, there could be benefit penalties where individuals fail to attend or comply (Wintour, 'Force workers to boost skills, urges Milburn aide', Guardian 15.10.04).

Fears around protocols for sharing information may not be unfounded then. Sure Start is involved with pre and after school care and the introduction in 2003 by DfES (Department for Education and Skills) of penalties regarding Anti social

---

<sup>19</sup> Later in our discussion she claimed that the introduction of Sure Start, by Labour, was the government's way of 'achieving social justice'.

<sup>20</sup> See also Rose, 1999a.

behaviour powers (Asbos) within schools, demonstrates the networks existing between welfare, social services, education and policing, and the will to impose penalties through information sharing (DfES press release 3.10.03, 'Making best use of anti-social behaviour powers', [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk) ).

The National Evaluation of Sure Start<sup>21</sup>, when pressed to publish initial findings under pressure from government departments, suggested those disadvantaged areas under evaluation have fared worse, (Ward, 'Doubts over value of £3bn Sure start, Education Guardian, 13.09.05). The Scandinavian model has been operating for over thirty years, similarly the US model, (on which Sure Start is modelled), found that for every \$1 spent on early years intervention for children at risk of failure, approximately \$4 was saved later in life in crime, social security and mental health costs, but this model was scrutinized and analysed over a period of twenty three years. In view of this, the research body reiterate along with ministers, the need for further longitudinal analysis before any outcomes can be adequately evaluated; claiming this too remains a long term policy.

Though initial findings suggest there is less incidence of 'negative' parenting, the researchers conclude that much of the target group for Sure Start remain 'overwhelmed or turned off' by it, and moreover 'the utilisation of services by those with greater human capital left others with less access to services than would have been the case had they not lived in Sure Start areas'(Ward, Education Guardian 1.12.05, for published report findings see [www.ness.bbk.ac.uk](http://www.ness.bbk.ac.uk) ).

- **Child centre(d) to job centre(d)-the emergence of moral 'problems'**

The initial child-centred plans for Sure Start are becoming much more closely linked to economic targets and deflecting from its original directive. In an report regarding the progression of the scheme ( Benjamin, 'If it ain't broke...', Society Guardian, 19.01.05); a Sure Start volunteer claims there is more emphasis on providing childcare so mothers can return to work, and on making links to

---

<sup>21</sup>The ongoing £20 million Sure Start Evaluation at London University's Birbeck College will run till 2008.

Jobcentre Plus. The promised free places too have come under review with the introduction of child tax credits for those in employment, but where does this leave those unemployed mothers, for whom care is unaffordable?

Though the ethics of Sure Start initiatives remain commendable and specifically the ways in which they remain locally based; I want to draw attention to similar approaches made with welfare mothers in the United States and tie this in with the ‘atlanticist’ approach of government here to moral concerns (Haylett, 2001, 2003; Jacobs et al, 2003; Goodchild and Cole, 2001). In Chapter Three I discussed the historical continuities regarding moral interpretations placed upon working classed mothers, children, and families. What is apparent when we trace this history, which has been instantiated at various political junctures as ‘respectability’, ‘underclass’, ‘social exclusion’, and its current form; ‘classlessness’, is that these remain narratives predicated on making imaginary others. How do these shifts in emphasis occur? Making single mothers morally reprehensible is a multi layered assault which works through education (Sure Start), law (Asbos), welfare (New Deal), and housing (the emergence of lone mothers as subverting needs-based allocation policies); all these assaults work together to produce the spectre of the morally questionable woman. Such imaginings are crucial to the ways in which mothers/ children and families are targeted both in policy initiatives and in popular media devices.

Jacobs et al (2003) explore the process of emergence of ‘social problems’, the placement of these problems onto policy agendas by vested interests, and the role played by media, politics and institutional interests (police) in their establishment as ‘truths’. Their discussion maps the linking of lone mothers as a social problem subverting housing allocation policy with the re emergence of anti-social behaviour as a problem on housing estates; they note also the expansion of this discourse; whilst anti social behaviour is firmly entrenched as problematic to estates, the ‘lone mother’ problem now expands to include refugees and asylum seekers, (thus absorbing new moral panics regarding terrorist activity.) Such policy ‘problems’ exist, for Jacobs et al, not as free floating discursive struggles,

but rather through ‘the combination of structural factors and effective argumentation by policy lobbyists and the media that determine the political agenda’ (2003:432) (original emphasis).<sup>22</sup> Though their remit is a discussion of housing policies; Jacobs et al point up that; ‘...myth making is an essential part of the policy process. Very often it is needed to generate inspiration and conceal contradictions in policy making’ (2003:433). I suggest we can apply this formula to the inculcation of the child linked to policies that encourage the self interested individual.<sup>23</sup> There is certainly a contradictory relationship here in the way that welfare policies, (New Deal back to work policies), are placed adjacent to and in contravention with initiatives like Sure Start (child centred policies).<sup>24</sup> The figure of the lone mother and anti social youth held as moral indictments to self-improvement and preservation, and moreover, as ‘problems’ that require intervention, respectively grant political justification for those New Deal and Sure Start interventions (See Brown’s comments at the opening of this chapter). These narratives<sup>25</sup> persist due to two conditions outlined by Hajer, (in Jacobs et al 2003: 434) thus;

---

<sup>22</sup> Further, Jacobs et al (2003) note that fiscal problems of state expenditure and a narrative of the deserving/ undeserving poor in the 80s fashioned government approaches that chose to deflect concerns about social environment (i.e. lack of public works) and their effects, and reinterpret them in terms of human (individual) costs, thereby instantiating moral agendas.

<sup>23</sup>This brings us back to Fraser’s (2003) concerns about material process, for often as not, inequalities in life styles/ chances are re-branded as originating in problems of community, educational success, crime and disorder, unemployment. Of course, the moral overtones are particularly relevant for ‘classlessness’; the underclass of the 90s has shifted and re-branded into social exclusion, those who remain literally under (and out of) class; against those who eschew class (willingly?) Classlessness is invoked by policymakers, according to Levitas (1998), in order to sanction and present new legislation; in the case of moral arguments about ‘underclass’ then, poverty becomes rendered as feckless behaviour and this enables a legislative process of disincentives and punitive action.

<sup>24</sup> Goodchild & Cole note; ‘In the context of social policy, discipline is about the policing of problem individuals and families by welfare bureaucracies and is also about the production of a distinct lifestyle’ (2001:106).

<sup>25</sup> Returning to my previous comment re the emergence of ‘social problems’ then, we see the transition of issues of poverty (in the 70s) becoming rather, in the 80s under free market principles, issues of moral behaviour and benefit fraud. It is these transitions and the narratives they generate that map onto structural inequalities and forms of self-preservation (classlessness), and a ‘help those who help themselves’ mentality.

First the narrative has to dominate the discursive space and second the narrative has to be reflected in institutional practices.....in both the case of the lone mother and anti social behaviour, these conditions are met.

### **Mothers' work as social capital**

Parenting is a central plank in the development of Third Way political ambitions for political and social governance, civil society and trust; closely linked to education and welfare as a means of endorsing social capital discourse. Moreover, this privileging of social capital is driven by bottom –up policies that centre on, paradoxically, both self interest and a community base (in terms of moral society and potentials). Regarding these initiatives; Garmarnikow and Green note (1999:4) such a focus on self improvement linked to civil order conceals the ‘key effect [which] may be to disguise the reality of top down implementation’, rather constructing ‘the state as partner, enabler and provider of frameworks for opportunities for improved outcomes by regenerating social capital’ (ibid.1999:6). Third Way politics has, under Blair, accepted free markets in goods/ services and flexible labour markets; in the process, wholly reneging on ‘old labour’ macro solutions to economic and welfare provision. Notwithstanding, the necessary provision of support, vital for those who floundered in Thatcherite Britain, has been reworked in terms of individual responsibility and social capital projects. What Blair does here, and this is what Garmarnikow and Green take issue with, is to make ‘society’ and potential pre exist and underpin economic and structural development, and moreover makes them ‘causally implicated in its production’ (ibid .1999:7) and, I would add, performance. The ways in which social capital is envisioned in current political projects, however, is far from Bourdieu’s theorization (1999, 2005) of social capital, (which Bourdieu indicates as universal, albeit in different forms and subject to class specific recognition), and is rather more akin to his theorization of cultural and economic capitals, which remain underpinned by unequal and privileged networked systems of recognition and hierarchy. This is then a deceit, for by reformulating achievable use values, (of social capital), into possible exchangeable values across social and economic markets, (cultural capital); government complexly undermines social mobility projects by doing nothing to unsettle structural and cultural privilege.

Further, Chris Haylett traces the ways in which these policy initiatives impinge upon the way we understand our identities, both culturally and politically, (our place as citizens), and by extension our understandings of mothers, children and the family. Exploring the linking of welfare reforms with initiatives for social mobility, Haylett suggests there exists a political and cultural discourse, underpinning welfare change, that marks the working class as problematic to projects of citizenship;

As a subject which bridges developments within economic and cultural geography, welfare change provides the opportunity to pursue a number of important questions about relationships between cultural difference, economic inequality and political governance...As well as a system of social regulation and economic distribution producing economic geographies within and between nations, 'welfare' is a culturally situated process, constituting material lives and the meanings of our most intimate identity markers-our femininity, masculinity, whiteness, blackness, middle and 'working-classness'-the way we know ourselves and others. The production of those identity markers in welfare related knowledges and practices is a fundamental part of the processes through which modern societies and subjectivities are formed (Haylett, 2001:354) (my emphasis).

Sure Start forms part of such a 'welfare related knowledge' base; instantiating requirements for potentials and full citizenship, it provides, not only for 'welfare to work' initiatives under the banner of equality of opportunity, (rather than simply equality), but also occupies a space between the mother/ child dyad and the transition to education. My discussions with these mothers indicated they were well aware of the importance of preparing the child for entry into education (and future success), in a sense their pedagogical practice could be seen as a first stage that worked and projected forward to the structure of educational institutions; the second stage being the transition of the child into education 'proper'. Yet, looking back at Pam's comments regarding 'parents evening'; we see how the second stage works and projects retrospectively, as a platform for making parents (mother) and culture a source or cause of untapped potential.

Engaging a series of 'labour imaginaries' (Haylett, 2003) that invoke not only a particular form of middle classed based whiteness, but forms of working classed cultures and subjectivities that fail to square up to appeals to modernise, (that is to

engage with neo liberal projects of the self and become ‘cultured’)<sup>26</sup>; Haylett notes the culturalist agenda that underpins welfare change and formulates these oppositional ‘imaginaries’. Indeed, political projects in Third Way terms make the citizen accountable for the easement/ transition of social democratic ideals into ‘classlessness’, achievable through appeals to potentials, moral and civil society; the sub text of Sure Start is testament to this type of initiative, with one eye on acculturation (under self improvement) and the other on reducing claimants (‘welfare to work’). These shifts in register, however, from victim of poverty under social democratic ideals to ‘chav’ or ‘pramface’ in current constructions of ‘illegitimate subjects’ (Haylett, 2001), is a particularly virulent and culturally instantiated exclusionary device, indicative of the central place of women in these images of lack and cultural aberration. It is no surprise the mothers in the study concede to such appeals in the name of moral citizenship; the alternative is fear of slippage and misrecognition.

The hope inherent in the Sure Start programme is that education, parenting classes, health advice and literacy could boost human capital and in doing so drive social mobility.<sup>27</sup> My apprehensions here lay, not with the mechanics of the initiative, but with the assumptions behind it. The key locations for Sure Start development are places where there are high structural levels of disadvantage, deprivation and alienation, but there is an assumption here that these can be driven

---

<sup>26</sup> Haylett notes;

In these circumstances a representative middle class is positioned at the vanguard of ‘the modern’ which becomes a moral category referring to liberal, cosmopolitan, work and consumption based lifestyles and values, and ‘the unmodern’ on which this category depends is the white working class ‘other’, emblematically a throwback to other times and places. This middle class dependency on working class ‘backwardness’ for its own claim to modern multicultural citizenship is an unspoken interest within the discourse of illegitimacy around the white working-class poor (2001:365).

<sup>27</sup> Regarding social mobility, in a report, ‘Force Workers to Boost Skills (Wintour; Guardian 15.10.04); over a 10 yr cycle, only 7% of the bottom fifth of the income distribution will make it to the top 25%. A total of 40% remain in the bottom fifth throughout that period. Regarding poverty; between 1999 and 2001 the UK figure for persistent poverty was 11%, compared with 6% in Germany and Norway, and 5% in the Netherlands.

away by the sheer force of parenting.<sup>28</sup> These structural effects, borne out of long periods of political and economic failure, focus on a discourse of ‘opportunity’ rather than equality. Parenting itself then, becomes a technology, with outcomes measured in education, health and welfare; government appears not, however, to concern itself to such extents with the parenting of those whose children do not commit crimes and who perform well at school ; so the weight of middle class aspirations on the wellbeing and emotional life of children is left unspoken (Walkerdine, Melody & Lucey, 2001) as political focus retreats from managing economy to producing economically viable subjects. Without sounding pessimistic in my analysis, the program has, without doubt, developed a more ‘joined-up’ level of service provision; yet it is how these capitals, can be translated across the social and cultural field into a material process that is my concern, particularly when this is routed as an agenda for change rather than equality.<sup>29</sup> Attention to the use and exchange value of capitals (Skeggs, 2004) across such sites alerts us that accruing capital is not, simplistically or routinely, the harbinger of social mobility. Indeed, capitals such as those that derive from

---

<sup>28</sup> On 7.9.99, BBC1 broadcast *Eyes of a Child*; an attempt to record deprivation and suffering through the eyes of children living in disadvantage. The moral platform it stood on was Blair’s promise to wipe out child poverty within the next ten years. Criticised for its voyeurism (Orr, ‘This is Pure Voyeurism’, *Independent on Sunday*, 5.9.99), and its lack of engagement with causes of cycles of deprivation; the programme failed to convey the need for investment in employment, housing, education, and made the family (mother) instrumental in the ruptured lives of the child; often the ‘ordinariness’ of their lives was translated into pathology. Whilst making the children objects of horror it was implicitly concerned with the stemming or containment of such lives, rather than structural solutions for improvement.

<sup>29</sup> The aims of the scheme and their local nature however, remain driven by national policies in education and welfare. The foundation stage introduced in Sept 2003 (QCA, 2000), sets out learning goals for the development of three, four and five year old children and is now formally the first stage of the national curriculum; the six learning areas are personal, social and emotional development, and communication, language and literacy. It is not difficult to see that the first three goals are tremendously weighted in cultural terms. Jackson’s (1998) study of boy’s underachievement, cited in Gove and Watt (2004:71), finds that working class children’s narratives, and similarly black and Asian children’s, were not valued in the arena of academic structure and discourse; education development for Jackson (1998) remains predicated on a model of western white middle class culture. One wonders exactly how these households are envisioned when educationalists claims for the efficacy of Sure Start revolve around justifications such as ; ‘the kids are being engaged on a cultural level so that they don’t just go home and turn on the television’ (DfES press release 24.09.03 ‘Local communities to benefit from new joined up services –Hodge’, [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk) ).

parenting classes, whilst having use value within the confines of the family and incremental self value, (always necessary for the continued elicitation of and co-operation with power knowledge complexes), nevertheless make no great shakes against the geopolitics of material deprivation or its locally mediated effects. Movement across social and cultural space is much more complex, and the assumption that it is education, or more implicitly, particular cultural codes translating into worthy and proper citizens that is being called into being here, is reminiscent of various attempts to, not only order class (see Roberts, 1999; Finch, 1993; Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989), but also to disguise maldistribution (Fraser 2003). Carolyn Steedman, citing Smelser, notes;

To work within the framework of the term 'educational' is itself informative, for, no matter how much historical qualification the meaning of the term may be subject to, it articulates the desire to change something, the desire for the; 'Amelioration of the identified social problems by transforming the ideas, outlooks and behaviour of the present and future subjects as citizens....Such a diagnosis is ultimately a psychological or moral one because that is the kind of effect envisioned by reformers; changes in the values, attitudes and social behaviour of individuals' (Smelser, 1991:35, original emphasis, in Steedman, 1994: 215).

Capitals here concerned with care work and education, (or rather pedagogy), are carefully elaborated and mobilised through political, cultural and market conditions and positioned as essential to current maternity and responsible citizenship.

## **Conclusions**

Discussions initiated around instances like the Colwell case, the Paulsgrove and Balham protests, and media representations are complicit in the way mothers make sense of their identities and of the work to be done for and on the child. The work involved in producing the moral subject of democratic society then, is complexly bound up with self reflection. Much moral behaviour seemed couched in terms of parental aspirations. Louise, from the family centre appeared to be concerned that her children were not associated with certain sorts; 'I just want them to be good citizens, cause you see them around here drinking and

stealing', this was a real fear for her; that her children could possibly be mis-recognised, the margin for slippage concerned her.

On the other hand, the free behaviour of some of the other children, specifically the children of professional parents<sup>30</sup>, seemed unproblematic and acceptable when it was understood as free 'expression', or as a way to 'nurture' the child.

Walkerdine and Lucey's (1989) analysis reveals the privileged position of the perceived autonomous behaviour of some children against the unruly child<sup>31</sup>.

Clearly some sort of distinction based on class is being made which invalidates the unruly child, making both mother and child 'other'. Jackie's claim that her son 'knows who's boss', against Laura's worry about discipline, self esteem and her son 'valuing' himself, illustrates the dilemma for mothers regarding moral work. Who is the unruly child? Is it the child whose mother ignores the stricture to create the autonomous child and makes her own power visible? Or is it the

---

<sup>30</sup> I undertook some of the interviews with the playgroup mothers at their home. These were middle classed women, with the symbolic capitals that Bourdieu outlines (2005). Though I felt extremely uncomfortable with the way their children's unruly behaviour during our interviews was accepted and honoured as expressive and inquiring. I felt sympathy with these mothers. They may have been aware of observation from what they believed a 'legitimate' source/ authority, (but from my point of view, of course, I did not identify as such). It occurred to me, that I too had entered the scene with preconceptions, I noted the untidiness of their homes, and these to me, were 'posh' people. Was there something here to address about placing myself as 'respectable' working class (and/ or as authentic)? I resolved this by realising Walkerdine and Lucey's positioning of middle classed motherhood (Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989); though privileged as middle class, these mothers were inexorably bound to producing autonomous children. Nothing prepared me, however, for the way these children's lives were already mapped out, educationally, socially and culturally.

<sup>31</sup> Walkerdine & Lucey (1989.410) discuss the classing gaze of the expert;

If working class children were quiet in the waiting room of a doctor's surgery they were repressed. If they were noisy they were hooligans. If middle class children were noisy and ran around they were independent and autonomous. Walkerdine & Lucey's work (1989) explores how the valorisation of the middle class norm incites mothers to call upon expertise to guide them in rearing the autonomous child; this is achieved by practices which make the mothers power appear invisible; to make power visible is seen as deviant. Parenting skills advocated by expert knowledges and administered in middle class households are offered as the template for rearing practices everywhere, regardless of social context. Such practices thus control both working and middle class mothers by mapping onto the many complex (dis)identifications of class operating within social and psychic space. If mothers make their power invisible this not only regulates the mother psychically in terms of 'sensitivity', but has the added bonus of producing an autonomous citizen who, in the belief of autonomy, allows power to work covertly, albeit in a productive form.

child who falsely believes they have autonomy through the 'work' of a visibly less powerful mother? This is where particular forms of mothering practice stand as evidence both to classify others and produce distinction.

Sure Start, too, paves the way for change, but at what cost? I was troubled by the manager's mention of 'social control mechanisms'; the therapeutic techniques through which power elicits subjects into projects of liberation and autonomy are central to social relations that work through the family. Sure Start, then, is doubly an agenda for (cultural) change; the spectre of the 'bad' mother (single, working class), and her child, (the potential anti social youth), is never far away from such policy driven initiatives. And as Walkerdine & Lucey (1989) have demonstrated, making autonomy an issue, that is, making the autonomous child/ citizen a necessary project of maternal work, becomes part of the distinctive process of creating and targeting certain mothers and future citizens. As far as policy makers are concerned; the child is reflective of the mother; a (cultural) re-production in the purest sense. Mothers' work becomes then, not merely bound to the natural, emanating from natural responses, but is tied to the desire for particular sorts of moral citizens required to fit with the project of self-interested market economies and social order.

## **CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION**

Class isn't what it was: or nowadays perhaps people's embarrassments are differently located.

Alan Bennet, Writing Home, p.60

The intellectual no longer claims the right to be a critical conscience for society; he or she merely becomes a worker in the collective production of subjectivity.

Felix Guattari, in Phillip Goodchild, Deleuze and Guattari-An Introduction to the Politics of Desire, p.104

Outsiders articulate new paradigms.

Susan J. Hekman, Moral voices, Moral Selves-Carol Gilligan and Feminist Moral Theory, p.3

The ability to propertize culture in the making of a self, therefore becomes central to how class is made in the contemporary.

Beverley Skeggs, Class, Self, Culture, p.177

The quotations above encapsulate what have been some of the main themes of this thesis. My concern with identities has focussed upon the apparent disappearance of class, only to find it returned to its origins; the family. The 'embarrassments' now turn, in the sound-bite of widening participation and classlessness, upon issues of education and exchange of capitals across cultural space; exchanges that become complexly ameliorated and obscured through instantiating use-value capitals. A further overarching concern of this study has been the research process itself and I use the term outsiders in contradistinction. Firstly, the women in the study are, in a sense, outsiders. Though they stand outside the institution of academe, they remain integral to the production of new paradigms. It is their voice that provides the empirical evidence to this study; their articulations, for which I remain grateful, that constitute a contribution to knowledge. Taking this analogy further, I similarly stand inside/ outside the research process; 'a worker in the production of subjectivity' (Guattari, cited in Goodchild, 1996: 104).

Uncomfortable in laying claim to a position of legitimated authority via academia, I nevertheless, understand my part in this endeavour as similarly integral to the research process; researchers do not stand above or outside the research produced (Haraway, 1991).

This study has discussed the social relations of identity production and throughout this study class distinctions, moral worth and capitals have been my concern; Skeggs (2004:174) notes, 'Morality is always present in the 'social contract'; through the ways we know and relate to others in civil society', and in this respect 'psy' disciplines; bodies in (or indeed, out of) place and the agencies that work with and upon mothers as subjects, have been scrutinized in their attempts to produce moral citizens and fashion particular sorts of 'social contract'. I want to use this conclusion to draw the study together and extend those discussions of class and moral society; to think about how these issues around mother/ child translate for future selves.

### **Dynamic principles; movement and stasis, the order of things**

Much of the content of this thesis has attempted to engage with the question of classlessness, particularly the methods to accelerate and offer up that position through tropes of enterprising and autonomous citizens. The study took the primary relationship around the mother and child and explored the 'lines of flight' that occur between that relationship and power knowledge complexes, (psy, medicine, education and welfare); such 'lines of flight' enjoin and return us to distinctions. In shoring up appeals to self interested individualism, some selves will necessarily be marked and made lacking, this is the process that Patton (2000) offers when he elucidates the works of Deleuze and Guattari; the uncertainty surrounding positive and negative outcomes of those 'lines of flight'. As Patton notes, Deleuze claims it is not necessarily the point of outcomes that we should focus on but the relations or machineries that propel these movements, and send them to flight. Making potentials simultaneously marks, and in that process problematizes government policies of inclusion. Nonetheless, making and marking illuminates precisely what constitutes moral citizenship offered in discourses of potentials and empowerment. In other words, without seeming to labour this point, it is important to claim that (im)moral selves are a necessary, (if somewhat imagined), component at this contemporary juncture in British politics, not only to drive order and the aims of democratic society; but also to carve out

middle class aspirations/ potentials; understood in relation to 'others' who remain fixed in the here and now.

I have acknowledged that I have no desire to invoke the image of traditional working class constructed and understood through the gaze of the left; that is those heroic 'salt of the earth' narratives that Walkerdine & Lucey (1989) have critiqued. Such narratives have been and are reinforced through specific literary and cinematic devices and become instantly recognisable, not only through the efforts of inter and immediate post war cinema, but in more recent productions. Brassed Off and The Full Monty, are films that shore up the notion of a 'gritty' working class struggling against the demise of industry and the fragmentation of community and identity. Nevertheless, I made plain here that I am left unsatisfied by strands of sociological theory that dismiss class relations in preference of relations of 'trust' or 'risk'.<sup>1</sup> Differences that do make a difference cannot be accommodated through such themes and the re-interpretation of contemporary identities in the light of global economic and technological changes; changes introduced through the education process in terms of curriculum, NVQ and AS levels, or new welfare deals, have little impact on the gate-keeping activities enshrined in education, law and science which work through particular cultural codes; it is here where difference is (re)made. The 'minutiae of class difference' Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody (2001:26) note, are subtle, unspoken and riven from 'fictions'. That is not to say that structural inequalities are fictional, that is far from the case, but certainly there are attempts to write and read moral rectitude and potential on and in bodies, relationships and geographies; the figure of the child (and mother) remain frequent features in these inscriptive devices.

I set out to show how (maternal) identity is not fixed as British Object Relations depth models of the psyche claim ( Bowlby, 1953, 1973; Winnicott, 1958, 1964, 1965, 1986), but rather malleable and responsive to subtle movements in moral and political tone; a tool, as it were, for framing social and moral order, for the

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Trust' (Giddens, 1991, 1994, 1998, 2000) and 'risk' (Beck 1992, 2000; Beck et al, 1994) are attempts to accommodate shifts in global economies, (a decline in 'old' industry and shift to 'tertiary' industries), into and across social relations.

making of good citizens. By extension, this also creates a space for making difference and judgements upon those (m)others who are judged as not fitting or displaying certain forms of, mainly cultural, behaviour. By way of empirical research and through reference to inscriptions produced through media effects, I made the case for such differences to be interpreted as class differences, but not without some discussion of the ways in which working class has been, (and remains), appropriated as, and associated with heroic, male, industrialised pasts.<sup>2</sup>

### **Geographies of time and place: unequal interpretations?**

Investigating maternal subjectivity entails an examination of the subject position child, or rather current concerns around childhood as constitutive of maternal identities. Furthermore, it is the translation of concerns around social order/disorder into the figure of the child as future citizen that invites investigation. Class was central in this thesis, or rather classlessness was. Emerging as cover, (though not concealer); classlessness forms part of a defensive self-interpretation in the social, cultural and economic environment of late neo-liberal policy (and in the iteration of the enterprising self). Given the ages of these young mothers, I suggest that the classless identities offered in current New Labour rhetoric, seem eminently preferable to that which had gone before. Those imaginary others who occupied the fears and fascinations of Thatcher's political landscape populated the formative years of these women. I do not mean here to assume that these women were, during that period, particularly motivated or de-motivated politically with such identity definitions, but rather I wish to attend to the ways in which the lack inherent in portrayals of those identities, either through media affects or personal/work experiences or policy developments, work to, defensively speaking, elicit classlessness as an attractive and safe space; 'respectability' often serves a similar

---

<sup>2</sup> It is for this reason I remain ambivalent about working class studies, (when we invoke class it is always the working class that remain the object of discussion, rather than why they remain constructed as such). Perhaps we should be asking what purpose these constructions serve? To shore up a middle class? It certainly seems so. The disparagements heaped upon, for example, 'the chav', remain the ultimate contemporary disidentification across class. What purpose does this figure serve? Disgust? Disgrace? Desire?

purpose (Skeggs, 1997). My point here is that in talking to these mothers, I traced the survival of classed distinctions under cover of biology and instinct.

The uncertainties arising from the breakdown of those traditionally stable signifiers through which class was instantiated in the public domain, and a concurrent individualization of the self (Savage, 2000) have been discussed in Chapter Three. Likewise Finch (1993) and Roberts (1999) show that the gendered domain of the home and childcare has always been riven with moral judgements that translate into class and, as I noted, these were classed positions that had little to do with the heroic identities carved out for the white working class male in leftist fantasies.

Though I interviewed these mothers about parenting practices and moral judgements, it is not difficult to make attenuated links to wider social and moral concerns that gravitate around education, upward mobility and concerns around moral rectitude, currently invoked in numerous media affects through the form of the 'chav/a'.<sup>3</sup> The less potent but attenuated links to this figure underpin concerns around identities and childhoods here, as these mothers dismiss class, (in its traditional linkages), only to reinstate it in concerns around proper moral and worthy selves. The comments in the study, of those whose work involves family development, imply that there is something still to be produced and conferred upon others; though whether those imagined identities bestowed are accepted by those they are directed at is debatable<sup>4</sup>, there remains, in the study, resistance to occupying that fictional space. Even so, given what has been a noticeable

---

<sup>3</sup> Underclass debates have not disappeared but have expanded into the sign of 'chav/a' Not always directed at the figure of the child /adolescent; this figure reflects imagined gendered assumptions about (predominantly white) eroticised /feckless working class femininity and masculinity. Such figures are produced in the pages of the broadsheets and tabloids, neither the auto-suggestible children of feckless parents (Walkerdine, 1999), nor popular celebrities escape. Interestingly, some of the most 'chav/a'd are those celebrities who have reached celebrity status in spite of their very 'ordinary' family circumstances, it seems the marking here works as a form of exposure, an attempt to return and re-place those who, as often as not, simply reflect the desires of ordinary people (and the fears and fascinations of those who mark them). It is these formulations that fit neatly with Savage's comments on individuation and the gaze sideways (2000).

<sup>4</sup> Steph Lawler writes that this inscription is 'imposed on people rather than claimed by them' (2005b:802).

departure from the underclass debates of the conservative administrations to recuperable communities in New Labour initiatives; this move nevertheless, in a circuitous gaze, returns the focus to the family and those responsible for children's selves; mothers.

### **Knowledge agents**

...power is not a property of individuals per se, but a relation, and its directionality depends both on the particular discourse in operation and the positioning of individuals within that discourse (Urwin, 1998: 284).

My discussion on Sure Start focussed upon the drive to education as gateway to upward mobility and eliminating poverty. Without doubt, the social trajectories of children's selves, according to these mothers, were fashioned through parental desires to occupy and plan child time. Sure Start aims to take this up and much of planned activities mimic and reinforce what it is that middle classed families have practised as routine; Stephen Ball (2003) has discussed the pre-occupation of the middle classes with cultural/ learning development. Yet initial findings to Sure Start indicated a failure to close the gap between disadvantaged areas/ children and the sustained upward trajectories of middle classed areas/children. Could this be traced to the expansive cultural capitals that middle classed parents are able to mobilise through exchanges across social and cultural spaces? If so, it will take more than education to fulfil political ambitions regarding the poverty gap<sup>5</sup>, which is always linked to cultural lag /social mobility rather than investment in social infrastructures and trade economies. Further, Blair's rallying election cry of 'Education, Education, Education' (1997 election speech), directs us to Valerie Hey's (2005) work regarding the use of education as culturalist agenda. Much of the child developmental discourse these mothers invoked revolved around the child 'being their self', but there is a complex process at work here. Calls to education invoke requirements to change, suggesting that some subjects must do the necessary work to produce a 'valid' self; the legitimate space of education is offered up as gateway, but this is a process that does more than educate;

---

<sup>5</sup> Or welfare to work, for that matter. As Bunting (*Guardian* comment, 11.10.04) reports, 'More than half the children in this country living in poverty have a parent in work', (predominantly in low paid insecure employment).

ultimately reiterating the privileging and ubiquity of (middle classed) cultural spaces. Hey has written extensively on these relocations (1999, 2002, 2005).

Key to these discussions around maternal subjectivity was the figure of the good mother; a uniform collective figure, both in discussions and in childcare texts; yet the child, the other half of the equation, develops 'individually'. This individualized child however, is a fiction, produced through machineries institutional knowledge and expertise; distinction the lever through which such power relations<sup>6</sup> become realized. Maintaining a process of distinction through the attainment of expertise becomes a means of maintaining the social order and control at the level of the individual.

Did the spaces these mothers inhabit influence practices? The family centre provides space for mothers, space that extends the boundaries of the mother child relationship through group activities and that extends their future options by providing training for employment, albeit predominantly within the care sector. It also provides leisure activities and childcare facilities that extend the range of social activities for women. Notwithstanding, the family centre has no choice but to adhere to current discourse around the child and parenting. In a circular system, the centre's links to agencies, its staff training and ultimately the expectations of the mothers themselves are complicit in defining and shoring up discourses around the form mothering identity should take.

Nevertheless, the centre's provisions provide more in terms of expressing / extending identity than the playgroup. There, the mother's expectations and practices were often overlaid by their professional training, making less room for manoeuvre in their daily (motherly) lives; (findings expressed in Walkerdine and Lucey's work [1989]). For these women, the discourse of the good enough

---

<sup>6</sup> As the interviews show, there were underlying concerns around moral and cultural worth which, while though concerns of these mothers in terms of shaping their children's social trajectories, were also implicit reflections of their own moral and worthy selves. In this way individuals 'govern' themselves and moreover vie with each other to appear knowing subjects.

mother seemed more entrenched; its components saturated their public and private worlds (home and workplace) and adherence to this discourse was a necessary way of making sense of and eliciting distinctions. Did this have something to do with their awareness of the ways class can be conferred, alluded to or made visible to expert eyes and ears? Training, or working within occupational settings<sup>7</sup> dominated by psy disciplines, appeared to more completely govern these mothers.

### **Political intrusions**

The aim of analysis is partly to identify contested and contradictory interpretations, where these exist. The aim is also to identify discontinuities (gaps in application and gaps in history), inconsistencies, and shifts in meaning and emphasis (Goodchild & Cole, 2001:106).

Distinctions for these mothers were complexly drawn. Though locally grounded in education, parenting and child development; their interpretations of being in the social world drew upon establishing and challenging past/ present and potential investments to produce full or partial citizens. In the study, I scrutinised myself as part of the research process, I recognised and misrecognised my self in discussions with these women. I noted earlier my anger at the dismissal of class, yet it was naive of me to expect these women to respond as I did simply because my history was tied up with their geography. I needed to address how the individualist project initiated in the Thatcher years of these mothers' childhoods effected a shift in current class perspectives. Anxious that my working class background did not intrude, there were places where I felt I could use it reflexively in my work. Nevertheless, I found myself thinking; how could they truly believe that 'self' development was all, when it seemed so obvious to me that systems and techniques in law, education<sup>8</sup> and welfare were riven with

---

<sup>7</sup> See appendices for occupations of mothers at the rural playgroup, (social workers, teachers, nurse).

<sup>8</sup> Blair's 1997 election manifesto called for 'Education, Education, Education' as the answer to underprivilege, social and economic imbalance. Yet the publication and drawing up of school league tables increases marginalization; the ethic of the comprehensive and local is lost as parents gravitate to the 'best schools'. This leaves us with sharp divisions, carving cities up and making distinctions visible and in the case of the league tables, publishable. The PTA that draws from a parent pool of 'professionals' will be able to draw on many more culturally capitalised resources through which to consolidate the future capitals of their children than the school on 'special measures'. In

difference? Whilst my position as social researcher influenced these considerations, (for I had privileged access to knowledges, to other ways of knowing through my position as researcher), I did consider that the difference in our readings of the social might be through the systematic inscription of individualism; in the workplace, in the home, and in the media. As a child of the welfare state, I had, likely, taken for granted a framework that implied I was worth investing in<sup>9</sup>, one where my parents could, under trade unionism, have some bargaining power to effect changes. I could only suggest that these young mothers' interpretations of class sensibilities were produced as witness to the individualist ethic of Thatcherism and the various subsequent moral panics around single mums on benefits, 'scrounging benefit fraudsters' and 'troublemaking trade unionists'. Who would want to be identified with that? What value could that identification offer? As Beverley Skeggs notes:

I argue,....that we are produced as subjects through our experiences, that these experiences always involve interpretation and that the ability to interpret depends on the discursive frameworks to which we have access. We can only know ourselves through these frameworks of value and processes of interpretation (1997b: 127).

---

this way, the attainment of educational capitals will be reinforced as the desire of many but the privilege of chosen few.

<sup>9</sup> Carolyn Steedman expresses this structure of feeling;

What my mother lacked, I was given; and though vast inequalities remained between me and others of my generation, the sense that a benevolent state bestowed on me, that of my own existence and the worth of that existence-attenuated, but still there-demonstrates in some degree what a fully material culture might offer in terms of physical comfort and the structures of care and affection that it symbolizes, to all its children (1986:123).

The liberalist philosophy of late 70's /early 80's underpinned a reinforcement of 'self' in all spheres of public and private life. This was evidenced by changes in workplace personnel practices that gained popularity in the early 80's towards person centred approaches, self appraisal and more privately considered ruminations on 'can do' philosophies in media and publishing. The social democratic framework that Carolyn Steedman (1986) expounded became unrecognisable in 'Thatcherisms', (much has been written around Thatcher's famously declared; 'There is no society. There are only individuals and families', in *Woman's Own*, 3.10.87). Individualism was the key word for the enterprising self and distinctions moved closer to home; mapped upon the nature of family life, practices and responsibility, and reformulated through the cipher of the child.

It is in the interests of these knowledge markets and political governance to retain difference; promoting cultural capitals and encouraging work upon the self, provides conditions for projects of late capitalism that continue, under New Labour, to reflect neo-liberal free market solutions. Such enterprises however reach their nemesis in the failure of knowledge to deliver its promise, (that is, to lose difference and close the cultural [capital] gap), thereby making inequality and making difference. But neither does this tell us the whole story, for whilst many of the mothers in my study produced their selves through knowledge, they also resisted and mis-recognised aspects of the self they were being asked to produce.

### **Capitalising on (enduring) love**

The push to ‘Education, Education, Education’ that attended Blair’s 1997 election speech, even for these mothers of pre school children, was central to their mothering work, reflecting the emphasis nationally on education as moral and social health of the nation ( and economy). Whilst it is laudable to provide resources, such an emphasis ignores the inequalities that lie at the base of ‘underachievement’. Using love, family, community, is a neat sleight of hand, a way for democratic rule to make individuals responsible for their selves through ‘potential’, whilst simultaneously ignoring inequalities around recognition, which as Fraser (2003:3) states, are ‘entwined with maldistribution but can not be reduced solely to it’ (my emphasis).

Underachievement here can be translated as the ability to convert capitals into something usable and progressive, into symbolic capital and according to what is currently deemed (culturally) legitimate. Failing is then re-located within the family by the education system (at its extreme it becomes referral for diagnosis), becoming an individual (’s) problem. So using education as a point of insertion, (Blair uses it to sweep away inequality), is not an egalitarian move if large sections of the community are excluded from a symbolic order. This rhetoric looks to the individual (child/ family) effort rather than towards a rearrangement

of models of education and geographical inequalities<sup>10</sup>; failing becomes then, not only individualised, but also a way to massify the ‘dysfunctional’ and ‘disaffected’.

(Maternal ) love and aspirations then, appeal to our biggest post Thatcher incitement; our ‘selves’(and moreover imbricate future citizens; children). Yet the universal ‘project of the self ‘, is a chimera, for not all selves have access to capital frameworks that can legitimate conversion. Positive images of the new citizen and communities draw on new forms of eclecticism; there appears to be an extension downwards, almost a dumbing down of middle classdom to those formerly ‘dangerous masses’, framed in terms of a new capitalism. Whilst this move may be seen as a levelling out of difference and promotion of equality; the freedoms offered to legitimise cultural capital, in the form of training and education can also be translated into forms of government, as Nikolas Rose has written (1998), or indeed they reiterate claims to distinction.<sup>11</sup> The twist is that education, whilst promoting progression, also has its hidden agenda, which is the desire to change. Historically speaking it has been the desire to change values, attitudes and social behaviours of particular citizens (as in early philanthropy).

Reinforcing worthy parents means pathologizing others, so the then Education Secretary David Blunkett’s comments reinforced a pathologised ‘type’ when he referred to families where ‘too often there is a lack of expectation, [reinforcing] generations of disadvantage’ (Blunkett in Carvel, 1998). Yet on the basis of the interview material I found no evidence to suggest a ‘poverty of expectation’. Certainly all the women had expectations regarding their children’s futures, so the lack of expectation could not be located within the family. Such lack, I would suggest, is located outside the family and has its roots in the marking of what

---

<sup>10</sup> League tables reinstate, in publishable form, the uneven nature of education and classed geographies.

<sup>11</sup> There is a sense that the working class somehow ‘lag behind’ the middle class culturally speaking (Rose, 1999a, 1999b). They need to be more like the middle class, however, they keep getting it wrong. Moreover, the dis-identifications of class neatly expressed by working class women in Skeggs work (1997a) suggest resistance to a wholesale adoption of middle class culture.

counts as symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 2005), and the value such capital represents when families interact with the ‘movers and shakers’. That is, those prime social structures such as education, law, and the psycho-medical professions whose involvement in family welfare can have such a crucial impact. Whilst economic global change has heralded changes in the fabric of communities, and the spaces where class certainties could be traditionally located are indeed under a process of re-negotiation; ways of thinking about classed identity have become complicated. However, that is not to say they are not felt<sup>12</sup>, in positive or negative terms or indeed are being reinterpreted through new forms of labour.

Echoes of this lack are not new, as discussed earlier they can be sourced throughout psychological, child developmental and social survey texts. There is a paradox here at the heart of ‘class’; in that it is at once nostalgically lauded for its ‘community’; it’s ‘salt of the earth’ qualities so beloved of the cinema, and yet considered beyond hope, due to its conformity and lack of creativity. Its currency currently lies in the appropriation of a set of working class stereotypes (that have much to do with middle class fear and fascination).<sup>13</sup> So, in the same way that for the Marxist intellectual left, the working class would remain invisible until they reached a class conscious state (and serve the purpose of ushering in the revolution), then current constructions and visibility are fabricated through media, expertise and art. What stands for class here, then, is not that which ‘is’, but that which can be imagined.

---

<sup>12</sup> At a conference, I overheard one of the women academics referring to the behaviour of her daughter’s ‘funny little working class’ friend. The little girl in this encounter was being made peculiar for her habit of tidying her friend’s toys away after play, unlike her middle class counterpart. Clearly the working classed girl is being respectful and concerned, no doubt drawing on her mother’s warnings about how to behave in other’s company-warnings imparted so that she may pass as ‘respectable’. But see what is happening here, the little girl, for all her mother’s work, does not pass, instead she is made visible by her actions, her middle class counterpart produced within an ethic of ‘child centred’ parenting is purely focussed on play alone. I felt shamed and angry, as though I had been made visible like the little girl in the encounter.

<sup>13</sup> At one extent this results in dramas such as Shameless (Channel 4), the sub-text of which is ‘escape’ from (working) class and at the other extent results in ‘reality’ TV; Wife Swap (ITV 1).

But, I think we need to ask why and how (class) difference survives as a discourse to articulate identities if we are living in a classless society? From my research experience I note that anxieties around difference and distinction do persist, but they need attending to, by listening to the lived experience of, as Valerie Walkerdine notes, 'ordinary working people' (1997:23). These anxieties and more are outlined by Reay (1998a, 2004, 2005), Walkerdine, Melody and Lucey (2001), Lawler (2000a, 2000b, 2004) and Beverley Skeggs (1997a, 2004, 2005). Even when these differences are not articulated in terms of traditional classed identities, based on occupation; I contend they become magnified through contestations over cultural capitals in the name of love and the making of maternal and childhood identities.

### **Aspirational identities: potential and static structures**

Identity is then always a struggle over power relations.<sup>14</sup> The postmodern take on identity is of a negotiated and (seemingly) negotiable position, but this take on identity is an illusion, for identities that locally (individually) are experienced as valuable and worthy (through recourse to identity 'work') are, in the wider net of social power relations (law, education, welfare) bounded; constrained by symbolic violence of a classed/ gendered/ 'raced' and sexualised nature. In terms of the identity 'mother', such symbolic violence has its origins in expertise and its 'advice', studies of the family, and media and historical representations of the child and femininity. So to occupy that space mother, (or indeed 'man', 'woman', 'child', 'employee'), also means to be subject to the classed, gendered, sexualised and 'raced' power relations that circulate identity narratives. None of us escape confronting this taxonomy in the struggle to maintain identity.

---

<sup>14</sup> Nikolas Rose claims;

To analyse political power through the analytics of governmentality is not to start from the apparently obvious historical or sociological question: what happened and why? It is to start by asking what authorities of various sorts wanted to happen, in relation to problems defined how, in pursuit of what objectives, through what strategies or techniques (original emphasis) (1999b:20).

In asking these sorts of questions, Rose claims, we can trace how;

...the conduct of persons, individually or collectively, have come to be problematized at specific historical moments, the objects or concerns that appear here, and the forces, events or authorities that have rendered them problematic (1999b:21).

Though power-full and power-less identities are enabled and disabled through the discrete allocation and constant (re)-establishment of what , within a particular historical and cultural framework, counts as cultural capital; this is in no way to fall back on the ‘free for all’ post-modern account of identity. Such identity shifts and transgressions are not possible for all social subjects. So whilst this discussion negates the rigid foundational interiority of identity suggested by psychological models, neither does it find it efficacious to suggest that identities are presented without material considerations, they may be always possible, yet impossible given the hidden injuries socially and culturally sustained by such action. The presentation and calibration of identities, I would suggest, is concerned with a struggle over cultural capitals, social relations and perceived social valuation. The cleaving to and refusal of ‘expert systems’ is the arena for classed identifications and they are never straightforward or fixed but multi faceted, responsive and relational.<sup>15</sup>

This is the point, that identity is relational and the ‘performative’ (Butler, 1993) of identity occurs within social relations. Identities are not, as it were, located in ‘the site of observation itself’ (the subject); but within the wider vista of social relations (and that includes the legacy of historical associations<sup>16</sup>). Subjects can not, therefore, of their own efforts, transcend the real effects of relationships between structural and cultural inequalities for they are wholly implicated in those same structures/cultures; they do not stand outside such networks, and this is what I suggest remains a central flaw with current political calls to potentials.

### **Mothers and children.....naturally**

These women use maternal identity as a baseline, as it were, returning to the certainty of the biological /natural in their constructions of their selves as mothers; the truth of the body and maternity evidential for these women’s identity

---

<sup>15</sup> Ball (2003:6) notes classed identity as; ‘an identity based upon modes of being and becoming or escape and forms of distinction that are realized and reproduced in specific social locations.’

<sup>16</sup> I refer here, not only to the good-enough mother and the influence of psy disciplines, but also to the historical making of femininity as classed and respectable (see Finch, 1993).

constructions. Yet it is clear the 'fact' of the body alone does not constitute proper maternity or femininity; distinctions remain part and parcel of negotiating a coherent and socially acceptable self. These women's position then, (and the position of their children) as 'full' citizens, rests on the negotiation of the cultural; through an understanding of what it means to be female, a mother and 'worthy' within the confines of a particular western construction of the enterprising self.<sup>17</sup>

Much academic work exists that investigates the prioritising of children's needs fashioned from the desire to govern populations and order 'good' citizens, (Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989; Woodhead, 1990; James *et al*, 1998; Lawler, 2000). The natural/unnatural distinction remains a central underlying cultural resource, one that we fall back on as a form of protection against uncertainty, not only as a way of shoring up identities, of making personhood, but of realigning and stabilising the natural social order. What better way for knowledge to engage us in a set of power knowledge relations than to link with that, which appears to be universal and visceral-our natural selves. In claiming to know what is natural, we cannot fail to project socially defined attributes onto nature; our knowledge of the natural is therefore always mediated and encoded with socially generated interests and attitudes of a scientific or evaluative manner. Notions of the natural, perceived as fixed and essential are easily manipulated when presented through expert knowledges as ways of securing cultural investment and respectability. Chapters Four and Five explored how knowing child/parent discourse and executing it correctly, secured, for these mothers, their social position, their acceptability and respectability; the 'social world in the body' and vice versa (Bourdieu cited in Wacquant, 1996: 20).

---

<sup>17</sup> In the same vein, burgeoning consumer culture and buying power has been met with escalating concerns for the moral life of the family. Improvements in earning power/housing and medical advances are assembled against adolescent crime, child poverty. There seems to be an implicit admission that the market can not rectify the social by products of its economic activity, therefore it falls upon the family to do the 'human' work; to build and repair worthy citizens, worthy selves. Of course, in any project like this, invocations of monolithic figures are inevitable, and thus we see the invention in the 1980s of an underclass to contain public fears. The 90s take is, however, a discourse of classlessness, it may be argued that striving to be classless involves more emotional anxiety than striving to avoid the label underclass.

The child is held, through psy discourse, to be individual, and to have inherent needs; the mainstay of that discourse is that the children should be nurtured to ‘be their own person’. This instruction, understood through the project of the self, (Rose, 1996), is maintained through particular frames of reference; enterprise culture, civil society, moral economy, and the spectre of ‘illegitimate subjects’ (Haylett, 2001), and goes far beyond simply an interest in childhoods.

In everyday, ‘practical’ maternal work, a blanket agreement with expertise was not the case and the women questioned much of the advice they had received, taking on a more independent relationship with the child. Nevertheless, discourses around motherhood were understood through the notion of gender traits; many of the women eager to talk about instinct and nature, and to link this to the body. To claim a purely biological basis to the identity mother however, ignores the sedimentation of historically and culturally located discursive practice. As Chapter Three noted, the knowledge these women drew upon in their daily mothering work, could be located in their desires to project, not only versions of the child, but sub-textually, to project a particularly distinctive self-identity. Moreover these selves, radiating around social relations, were overlaid with a generalised discourse attuned to the biological (see Chapters Four and Five); in effect tracing a social organisation of subjectivity back to the body and its biologically located drives/ traits. What emerged was the positive investment such discursive formations played in the women’s resignation to some of the more negatively perceived aspects of the mothering identity. Reiterating Riley’s (1983) considerations, the interleaving of the social with the biological obfuscates the social patterning of maternal lives under the incontrovertible stasis of the body and biology.

### **Good enough mothers (and full citizens)**

In Chapter Four the bad mother was not simply the mother who could not meet the child’s needs, but one who, morally speaking, is not a good citizen, one who is unwilling to project her self or (more tellingly), her child’s self. Further, Chapters

Five and Six, concerning bodies and work indicated that there is no escape from a set of socially historic assumptions concerning women's bodies and what they stand for in terms of moral worth. In current New Labour constructions of the democratic citizen, such projections are expected and linked spuriously to the self through 'psy', self development, work and education. Mothers and children then, become the litmus for the moral health of society; the spectre of the bad mother is complicit with social disorder. In Chapter Three, dislocation from class, (or rather traditional popular readings around class), was evident in the discussions I had with these mothers, but classed distinction was forged through practising knowledge and appearing classy about parenting, this credentialized mother and child, (one is constitutive of the other) and guaranteed a relationship with 'psy'. Levelling difference out, (and class with it), is facilitated by appeals to love and the child. Universal love, (maternal love), is linked to instinct and needs with intent to shore up the project of the child, and onward to social progress, (though ultimately this reinstates progressive individualism). Making needs/ love into forms of distinction results in, as Rose suggests, a position where the family is:

...governed at the level of subjectivity itself...Parental conduct, motherhood, and child rearing can thus be regulated through family autonomy, through wishes and aspirations, and through the activation of individual guilt, personal anxiety, and private disappointment (Rose1999a:132).

(Maternal) identity becomes worked out through contestations over class. The interviews show that simply knowing 'psy' (or having access to such knowledge) is clearly not sufficient. Good enough mothers must correspond with what is necessary in the good enough self, but this plainly consists of far more than simply child developmental knowledge. This being the case, motherhood throws up some interesting nuances in respect to the intersections between class and gender, as instinct and parenting skills are overlaid by judgements about class, femininity and taste. Underpinned by particular economic and politically embedded versions of a Euro-American self; class and gender, then combine to produce a particular notion of 'natural' motherhood lodged in psycho-developmental discourse. Though on closer examination, these social and relational identities owe much to that sociological staple; the tension between

structure and agency. In 'good enough' mothering then, some children were tokens of exchange value (as part of an already mobilised facility for exchange) whilst others could be counted in terms of use value (to shore up the self value). Yet use value need not be secondary to exchange; Bourdieu theorizes an exchange model of capitals, but Skeggs notes (2004:11);

By shifting attention away from objects and assets being exchanged to the relationships and power that make the exchange possible in the first place, we focus instead upon whose perspectives makes something valuable, hence exchangeable.

**Dangerous liaisons: the fit between classlessness and abjection, (making use count)**

Class has not gone away: and especially not within psychology: it has entered psychological categories as ways of regulating normality and pathology, not disappearing, but simply changing its form (Walkerdine, 1996:357).

So the woman of the different class is also suppressed in the tale of identity and development (Childers & hooks, 1990: 6).

The family then, always a site of observation becomes now, with current policy emphasis on parenting and education, the site and vehicle of making difference, as class is replaced with a discourse of community and classlessness. Stephen Ball notes, 'we think and are thought by class. It is about being something and not something else. It is relational.'(Ball 2003:6). The maternal identities here derive then, from social classed relations and this runs counter to much of the natural/biological discourse that framed these mothers' notions of the maternal self and child potentials. Potentials, which, though deemed inherent to the child and 'already there', are nevertheless dependant on external systems of recognition, development and extraction.

The point I set up here, and which has traversed this study is an attempt to temper the multiple, transgressive and fluid selves that walk the pages of some sociological texts. The self that transacts exchanges in cultural space across social relations, and receives returns that can further mobilise and make difference to that self, (in practical rather than psychic terms), remains the privilege of those middle classed and legitimized selves. The fixing of some in cultural and social

space means their exchanges are value-less; they have no currency, no exchange-value that can profit the bearer, until, that is, such values/ affects are appropriated and made 'value-able' by other legitimate selves.<sup>18</sup> Distinctions are made through the moulding of aspirations and expectations regarding the child, though whether these can, in fact, be realised and come to fruition is often the story of how class is made<sup>19</sup>, and further how it works through identity and identifications.

All these features stand over and against constructions of feminine/ motherly identity. Regardless of the class they identified with in interview, the women in this study were clearly anxious and uncertain around the maintenance of aspects of their identity deemed maternal/ feminine; they were anxious to distance themselves from particular versions of what they believed to be classed maternal and feminine constructions. The fuzziness of the rhetoric means that though all the women, in terms of enterprise culture, work extremely hard to assert and produce their privilege; it is the middle classed 'knowing' selves, fearing absorption into a generalised working class, that make 'difference'.

Diane Reay claims;

We need to rethink social class as a dynamic mobile aspect of identity that continues to permeate daily interactions despite its marginalisation in prevailing discourses (Reay, 1998:259).

The bodies and lives of working class subjects remain under scrutiny and my question remains; what purpose does their construction as fearful spectre provide? What is the political project that calls for widening participation and a rolling programme of enterprise (and thus a reformulation of self), whilst simultaneously marking 'abject' spaces (Haylett, 2001)<sup>20</sup>. Skeggs notes;

---

<sup>18</sup> Beverley Skeggs (2004) notes that the channel 4 drama, *Shameless*, is considered as 'art'; yet similar themes considered in 'reality' TV (for example, *Wife Swap*, ITV1) become a matter of distaste. Only those affects then, that can be stripped from working class lives and reinterpreted through, for example, 'art', are viscerally acceptable.

<sup>19</sup> Diane Reay (2004, 2005) examines the obstacles to mothers in crossing classed boundaries (for the sake of the child). One such obstacle was access to 'hot' knowledge involving amounts of symbolic capital/ networks.

<sup>20</sup> Following a conference to discuss progress on the 'Northern Way', a government initiative to close the north-south divide; Neil Murphy, an economic advisor on secondment from the Treasury, claimed, 'Newcastle is, to coin a phrase, hideously white. What drives creativity? It's immigration', (Peter Young, 'Is this racist?', *Evening*

This value generating process is very much about class struggle and the shifting emphasis on culture as a source of economic value means we need to pay close attention to how culture is being deployed (2004:174).

Of course, what irks this self-interested economic project is those populations that resist attempts to culturally educate them, those subjects who remain in middle classed imaginations as facile and without reason (hence they need parenting classes). Rose (1999a) has written that the working class are often disparaged for their 'cultural lag', their refusal to adopt legitimised forms of culture (art, cinema, leisure, 'healthy' bodies), and moreover their refusal to appear anxious about not doing so. More attention needs to be placed upon gross economic inequalities and social polarizations and here Fraser's comments on attending to, not only recognition, but maldistribution are crucial. What remains extremely unjust and troubling is that in the drive for the self; those who have created use value (for themselves) are rendered partial. They are rendered use-less to current economic projects in new capitalism, for these are subjects who can not exchange their value across social/ economic space for material effect, ( that is to generate economic

---

Chronicle, 09.03.06). Though indubitably the North East of England remains extremely white, we may ask, why 'hideously' so? Haylett (2001) has written about the ways in which multiculturalism is raised to obsfucate both class politics and failures of structural and economic reform; failures that continue to displace poor black and white subjects in visions of citizenship. Haylett's argument centres on the production of disgust at those who threaten the political project of civil and moral society and the potential of that society in global free market systems. In a reverse move, class, traditionally understood in the public domain, as externally drawn from the safe place of fixed structural workplace identities, is rendered unstable, innate, as in and on the body; the work of government to make these 'others' recuperable through their own efforts. Though all the women in this study identified as British white, I raise these points to indicate the efforts of government to displace class, across ethnic identifications, with potentials and moral order. In this way, those white and black citizens with the least capitals are made the source of dis-equilibriums. Though they stand as 'imaginaries', rendered politically problematic for Third Way projects, their welfare, parenting and educational progress deemed less than that required for 'full' citizenship, their potentials questionable; such 'imaginaries' become marked 'real' through policy initiatives, (education action zones, schools on special measures, Sure Start, New Deal). The 'hyper-whitening' of poor white people (Lawler, 2005) serves also to obscure the problem of class relations for British born blacks and Asians; whose class politics is made into 'dissaffection', understood politically and popularly through moral panics around, in the former, the influence of US 'rap' and gun culture, and in the latter, through religious fundamentalism and the threat of terrorist activity. In this way, attention is subverted from the structural and cultural inequalities endemic in visions of multicultural and civil society.

substance for the economy, cultural or fiscal). Nevertheless, their reiteration remains singularly important to the project of new capitalism; to invigorate good society and produce the sorts of worthy subjects complicit with global capital agendas. This deceit is played out in the subject positions investigated in this study; the mother and child providing a bio-social canvas on to which the growing influence of biological/ developmental issues are made to stand for cultural and social mobility. Yet, use values here, in these women's accounts provided evidence of real value in communitarian concerns, in a refusal to be that self-interested individual required of neo-liberalism.

Classed distinctions remain then, a gendered question for these women, in ways that impinge upon motherhood and femininity and ultimately the status of the child (Steedman, 1986; Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989). The site of motherhood indeed has use value to democratic government, as selves govern the self, and simultaneously use value shores up individuals in terms of development, but what is more questionable here is whether such value is equally exchangeable (and recognised) between selves. Exchangeability is neatly obscured through political focus upon the child and parenting, for what is more universally usable than instinct and nature? What can be noted however, is that the enterprising self of our late liberalist era, (which takes the middle classes as a marker for models of citizenship), is always to be worked upon; working upon the self and making identity is never complete<sup>21</sup>; for these women, class and 'classiness' works through identity, under the guise of essentially natured and valued selves. (Use) value production is thus served through the discourse of classlessness and obscures limited exchange facilities.

In the 'death of class' (Pakulski & Waters, 1996), a well rehearsed argument emerging out of the changing neo-liberal economic and political landscape of late seventies de-industrialised Europe; we can trace a retrospective move from the

---

<sup>21</sup> Ball notes (2003;163) how;

Middle class ontologies are founded upon incompleteness, they're about becoming, about the developmental self, about making something of yourself, realizing yourself, realizing your potential.

respectable working class of the post war era to the underclass debates of the nineties (Murray, 1994) that focussed on the increased fragmentation of class. These discussions have, ultimately transposed into current claims of classlessness that suggest forms of equity, but these claims of progressive individualism are fraught, as my data present, with the persistence of class distinctions. Moreover, for these mothers, these distinctions are closely overlaid and complicated by body/ gender distinctions that carry with them the authority (justification?) of nature and child psychology/development. The holding or carrying (of childhood) that Jenks (1996) discusses, married to the individualist ethic of the late liberalist government administration of the eighties, (in office when the majority of these women grew up), works to formulate current understandings around potentials, the borders of the 'self' and citizenship cultures enshrined in work/ good citizen. There are strong associations here then, toward a moral economy<sup>22</sup>. I have, therefore, drawn upon the continuing trajectory of progressive individualism in the west and framed it in terms of those influential economic/ political shifts which, in turn produced a changing emphasis in both social policy making and of thinking class.<sup>23</sup> Such turns in social climate become possible through at once imagining 'others', and simultaneously through the ways social agents become complicit in undertaking the necessary psycho-social work that serves to avoid misrecognition (Fraser 2003).

---

<sup>22</sup> As we saw making class into classlessness through a trope of progressive individualism got us nowhere as cultural (middle/working classed) difference became translated into citizenship. Those imaginary others who repelled and fascinated early middle classed philanthropists such as Mayhew (Steedman, 1995) are imagined still; (see Mark Hudson's [1994] despairing account of working class community in a north east mining village). Angela McRobbie (2004) discusses the symbolic violence done to construct others through primetime television programmes, such media programming schedules enable forms of class distinction that neatly fit with the shifts in making class that Savage (2000) describes. That is, that a hierarchical model of class has been overlaid with a more fluid horizontal arrangement of responsive, malleable and instructive classed distinctions.

<sup>23</sup> Skeggs notes (2004:1);

So what we learn to recognise as categorizations of race and class are not just classifications or social positions, but an amalgam of features of a culture that are read onto bodies as personal dispositions, which themselves have been generated through systems of inscriptions in the first place.

These women interpreted parenting style as the broad brush stroke with which to obscure the social immobility that 'old class' implied; where parenting courses, child developmental advice and education are the route to achieve what is the, already there, true self/ good citizen. Their accounts indicate that there is something much more complex evolving from the retreat from class and the embracing of the self. This necessitates, not only an examination of the ways 'classlessness' has been invoked through the use of family, love, aspirations, (and more specifically the motif of the child) within current New Labour constructions of community and society; but also, a critical analysis of what validity the term class, as historically evinced from sociological/ psychological work, provides for these women and their children. This is not to say the self is a blank canvas on which constructions are easily fixed and absorbed; if this was the case then the discursive constructions around the child and their implication for good parenting would have been met without resistance, but that complex belongings and dis-identifications around motherhood, instinct and cultural capitals did surface in the interviews, disrupting discursively produced versions of maternal subjectivity. They ebbed and flowed across discussions involving instinct, work and the 'true' nature of motherhood (and childhood), extending beyond the confines of the mother child dyad as evidence of the wholly social and relational place of self (and moral citizenship).

### **End commentary**

My aim in this thesis has been to present an analysis of how personhood, or more specifically maternal subjectivity, is placed in current political desires to engage populations in 'full' citizenship. The ways in which identities are known and retold is through their relationship with other circulatory social discourses<sup>24</sup>; in this respect, the mothers in this study make sense of their selves through a

---

<sup>24</sup> I do not intend to discount the press representations examined in the study as an attempt to vouch for alternative or 'true' selves of the individuals discussed, but make the point regarding discourses simply to point up the durability of stories like these and their moral purpose. The axis around which these narrative devices circulate is congruence to a preferred and sanctioned version of (middle classed) femininity and motherhood (Lawler, 1999, 2003, 2004). Such stories perpetuate and raise again the spectre of the mob and the dangerous masses.

mediation of the social and the cultural, worked up through the legitimisation of correct feminine practice in the private and public domain. Mothers' work, however, stands for more than that confined to 'work' upon the child; it encompasses appearance, femininity and, in the event of judgements such as these, constantly works to avoid slippage. Though my findings reveal much in common with Urwin's study, regarding the ways mothers 'experience' mothering identity (1985), and with Walkerdine and Lucey's (1989) study of middle and working class positions across the institution of motherhood; I nevertheless contend that examining such positions now is a timely exercise, given the political impetus to potentials and moral economy exerted in targeted policy initiatives such as Sure Start. The child, (and mother), remain central to visions of classless society.

These investigations resonate far beyond the subjectivities of the women and children of this study. The project of the child and the implications for citizenship exceed those relations; spilling over into political concerns around 'abject' selves (Haylett, 2001) and 'subjects of value' (Skeggs, 2004: 6). Political spin to potentials, exchange, and credentialism make possible imaginings about unworthy and partial citizens, and though refusing to enter and recognise those systems of exchange can be a resistance to the mechanism by which the middle class defines or sustains an identity (and moreover, stake a claim to difference); it remains evident that, troubling as it may be to that mechanism, it does not totally disable it.

To this end, the renewed analysis toward thinking class differently, and moreover, examining use value over and above exchange capitals (Skeggs, 2004) remains crucially significant to displace the individualist focus that suffocates late liberal governance. I hope this study succeeds in demonstrating that the use value these women produce can evidence communitarian visions. Nevertheless, such efforts remain stifled under progressive individualism; relationships of exchange point up the ways in which some are marked and made into 'causes' for political moral ends that entail, not only visions of moral and civil society, but ultimately a desire

to make populations congruent to the conditions of global free market enterprise. In this respect 'abject' citizens are anathema to Third Way projects; not only are they interpreted as 'backward' in (multi)cultural terms, but more importantly their foregrounding reveals that which government must conceal; the extent and depth to which structural and cultural inequalities persist (in education, law, welfare). The work of inscription is then, a cathartic strategy; firstly to imagine 'others'<sup>25</sup> and, having done so, render that imagining a 'fiction functioning in truth' (Walkerline, 1997:60); hence real effects in generalising households and geographies in terms of welfare (New Deal), education (the damning of 'sink' schools) and law (asbos). Making, marking and classing selves achieves much more than simply a discursive slight; such inscriptive practices maintain and conceal, albeit in the 'safe' place of abjection, a plethora of structurally enduring and emplotted injuries.

---

<sup>25</sup> McRobbie notes, with irony, in her analysis of post feminist symbolic violence, 'It is now possible, thank goodness, to laugh at less fortunate people once again' (2004:100), as denigration is made acceptable through media entertainment

**APPENDIX (i)**  
**Indices of deprivation**

According to 2004 English Indices of Most Deprivation; the area in which the family centre is located has a rank of 26 out of 354 local authorities and ranks 49 on the income measure; the area in which the rural playgroup is located has a rank of 207 out of 354 local authorities and ranks 317 on the income measure.

A score is calculated for each area; a low score represents a deprived area; the measure is within the range 1 to 32482.

The lower layer super output area (LSOA) in which the family centre is located in has a rank of 1985 out of 32482 overall and a rank of 2885 on the income measure.

The LSOA in which the playgroup is located in has a rank of 30140 out of 32482 overall and a rank of 28547 on the income measure.



- 1= most deprived LSOA
- 1985 =area of family centre
- 30140= area of playgroup
- 32482= least deprived LSOA

Compiled from [www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk)  
Datasets referenced; Index of Multiple Deprivation (source ODPM).

## **Appendix (ii)**

### **Group interview (family centre/ playgroup)**

- How would you define motherhood? What does it mean to you to be a mother?
- Since becoming a mother your lives have obviously changed. Can you tell me how it has changed?
- What about in yourself...in your feelings... do you think this has changed you...your personality?
- If someone asked you if you recommended 'motherhood'...would you recommend it?
- What are the most satisfying aspects?
- What would you say were the most unsatisfying parts, then? Perhaps to do with your own time or your personal life?...the way your life has changed?
- Was it what you expected being a mother? Before you had the baby...during your pregnancy...did you prepare yourself for the way you would 'mother'? Did you think about things like that?
- Have any of you any other children?
- Have you noticed differences between bringing up a child now compared to when you had your other children?
- When you were pregnant and after you had the baby...whilst you attended the clinic...do you feel you drew much of your knowledge from there?
- Do you feel there's a lot of pressure from the health visitors to do things their way?
- How did you cope with the hospital environment?
- How about when you came home from the hospital environment? On your own...how did you feel?
- I want to move on now to talk a bit about baby books and literature at the ante-natal and baby clinics. Have any of you bought any baby books/ magazines?

- What about these magazines? Some of them go right from pregnancy, through toddlers right up to adolescence. Do you still buy them, do you intend to continue?
- Many of these literatures discuss feelings and 'baby blues'?. Has anyone been affected in this way? Do you think this area is given enough attention?
- Would you source advice from other agencies/ persons (parents/ friends)? Which of these groups would you be most likely to ask advice from?Reasons?
- Are these groups/ these persons helpful? In what ways?
- Meeting other mothers, you must have noticed differences in the way mothers 'mother' their children...perhaps at the clinic or even here. How do you think that happens? Why are there differences, and what do you think about those differences?
- What about your other relationships? (apart from mother/ child relationship)-conflicts?
- Do you think there are more/ different pressures on mothers today as opposed to when you were a child?
- Do any of you work? How do you arrange that? (child care)
- Finally, I'll be using this material as part of some feminist research concerning issues around motherhood and what it means to different women. If I was to ask you what 'feminism' meant ...what would you say?

### **Individual interview- family centre/ playgroup**

- First of all, I'd like to ask some background questions. At what age did you leave school?
- Did you sit any exams? Gain any qualifications?
- Do you do paid work?
- What were your reasons for returning to work, financial / other?
- At the group interview we discussed employment and motherhood. Just to go back to that; if I was to ask you about employment/ lifestyles and values using the term class; what would those terms middle and working class mean to you?

- How would you place yourself in those terms?
- Again –with reference to the group discussion-we talked about advice and baby literature; I wanted to ask you if you'd attended anything like a 'parentcraft' class, either here at the centre or the clinic
- Do you think going to those classes changed any ideas you had about child care and being a mother?
- What do you think of those sorts of classes? Do you think they are helpful?
- Can you explain how you feel when you're coping with a difficult situation with your child. You know, when they are being particularly difficult - how do you feel- what makes you feel good about the way you approach it - what makes you feel bad?
- Generally what would you say is being a 'good mother'?
- Do you think being a mother involves a certain amount of self- sacrifice?
- Do you feel valued as a mother?
- What about other people and their attitudes to you as a mother. Do you think in the eyes of other people you gained status/value?
- If I was to ask someone else or your child to describe you as a mother what do you think they would say?

### **Interview with family development workers, family centre**

- How long have you worked here?
- What do you see your role here as?
- Does this coincide with the way you think the client group respond?
- One of the things I want to touch on the idea is the idea that childcare/ mothering is not purely a natural occurrence do you think it has much to do with the ways in which childcare is promoted.
- Do you liaise with other official bodies, (education/ social services)?
- The women's group: is it mainly women whose children attend the nursery?
- Why have you set up the women's group?
- What sort of professional training experience was required to do this work?
- The training you undertake; is it ongoing? Do you see new developments in issues re parenting emerging?
- What do you see as your main duties?
- Would you say the main focus here is the family, the child or the mother?
- Do you have children yourself?
- Do you find this helps/obstructs your ability to do this kind of work?
- Do you think there have been new developments or issues generated around families and childcare in the time that you have worked here? details?(child centred)
- Can you tell me something about the social aspect of group activity here at the centre regarding parenting/ parenting skills? Is this the aim of the centre(as opposed to being at home with the child)?
- Do you place any structure on the groups you take?
- Do you find yourself being asked for advice on activities/coping strategies that a parent might want to carry on at home with their children?

- Do you see the role of the centre as one of trying to improve something in this community? Or is it trying to maintain conditions as they stand now?
- Do you find yourself in situations where you feel you should give friendly advice when it has not been asked for? How do you approach these situations/ difficulties?

**Appendix (iii) questionnaire re housing**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

Please complete the following questions, all information is confidential and will only be used for the purposes of the research project. (Actual names will be substituted to maintain confidentiality).

YOUR NAME;

YOUR AGE;

**FAMILY STRUCTURE**

HOW MANY CHILDREN DO YOU HAVE? - \_\_\_\_\_

Age/ sex of each child? \_\_\_\_\_

ARE YOU- (please tick one)

- a) Married? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Divorced? \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Living with a partner? \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Single parent? \_\_\_\_\_

**HOUSING**

ARE YOU- (Please tick one)

- a) Renting a council owned property? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Renting a property from a private landlord? \_\_\_\_\_
- c) An owner / occupier? \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Living with Parents? \_\_\_\_\_

e) Other? (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

**PRESENT EMPLOYMENT**

Which of the following applies? (please tick).

a) You have paid employment. \_\_\_\_\_.

Is this full time? \_\_\_\_\_

Is this part time? \_\_\_\_\_

What type of work is this? \_\_\_\_\_.

b) You are a single parent and unemployed? \_\_\_\_\_

c) Your partner works \_\_\_\_\_.

Please state what type of work your partner does \_\_\_\_\_.

d) Neither you nor your partner are in paid employment. \_\_\_\_\_.

**PAST EMPLOYMENT**

**DID YOU HAVE PAID EMPLOYMENT BEFORE YOU HAD CHILDREN?** \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE TICK ONE; a) full time? \_\_\_\_\_

b) Part time? \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT TYPE OF WORK WAS THIS? \_\_\_\_\_

**HAVE YOU EVER UNDERTAKEN ANY VOLUNTARY WORK?** \_\_\_\_\_.

If so, what type of work was this? \_\_\_\_\_.

**DO YOU USE THE PARENT/ TODDLER GROUP (please tick one)**

a) Every session? \_\_\_\_\_

b) Once a week? \_\_\_\_\_

c) No more than around once a month? \_\_\_\_\_

In what way do you feel using the centre benefits you as a mother?

Thank you for your co-operation in completing the questionnaire.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the group discussion and for filling in the questionnaire.

If anyone who participated in the discussion would like a copy of the finished product -please let me know.

May I again stress that this material will only be used for the purposes of my study into motherhood, participants will not be named, (fictional names will be used) and details will be disguised to ensure confidentiality.

I would like to follow up this discussion with some individual interviews.

Would anyone in the group be willing to do this?

Please let me know today so that arrangements can be made. Alternatively you can contact me;

Sue Parker.  
Department of Sociology and Social Policy,  
University of Durham.  
DH1 3JT.

Or at my home number;

If you have any questions about the study /discussion please do not hesitate to contact me.

Once again, thank you for your time.

## **Appendix [iv]**

### **Interview with Sure Start manager**

#### **SURE START**

- Can you tell me about the aims of the Sure Start programme?
- How does it extend childcare services?
- Can you outline the services provided under Sure Start?(health /education /mother and child/ social services involvement).
- This centre has been established for two years, do you anticipate an increase in the use of the centre's services given the coverage Sure Start has had in the press, and its importance as one of the governments key policy initiatives?(around education/care and parenting/ citizenship/ deprivation etc).
- Have you received extra funding to provide services given the government emphasis on education and care following the Victoria Climbié case?
- How will the pledged funds be used to improve the service? Which areas do you see it being channelled into?
- As I understand it, Sure Start's success rests on the close co-operation of education/ health/ social service agencies. What are the protocols in place for information gathering and sharing between agencies? (Formal procedures? Reporting? Documentation? On file records etc?)
- Can you give me a brief profile of the client group using the centre?
- Does the centre have classes for mothers/parents to attend? (Parenting classes and other-training?)
- What sorts of classes do you offer? Do you decide what to offer? Or are they requested?
- What is the take up like on these courses?
- Why do you think that is? (Low take up- resistance/ disinterest. High take up-needs /feelings of inadequacy).
- Do you think these classes are important?
- How will they benefit the mothers that use the centre?

- Do you place any structure on the toddler groups or is it purely a meeting point for children and mothers?
- Do you arrange educational pre school activities? Or advise on activities to do at home?
- Do you think 'home work' is important given the current emphasis on key stages and testing at primary school level? Would you say this is the main focus of child work? (and an expectation of parents placing children here)
- Do you see the role of the centre as one of trying to improve something in this community? Or is it trying to maintain conditions as they stand now? If so, what is it trying to improve?
- Do you get feedback from the client group? Requests for help/advice?
- Which areas do you find yourself advising on?
- Why do you think this is the case?
- What is your position in the centre? And what does it involve? What do you feel your role is here? What other staff are employed here?
- What training have you had to undertake for this job? What previous experience do you have?
- What would you say are the major changes in childcare since you started working within this field?
- Have you children yourself? Do you find you carry your professional training over into your domestic situation? Do these roles conflict and how do you resolve this?
- The training you undertake; is it ongoing? Do you see new developments in issues re parenting emerging? What are these new developments?
- Why do you think issues on child care need continually re developed? Is it an ongoing process? What do new developments respond to? (is it that children more complicated or parents less able?)

## **APPENDIX (v)**

### **The mothers in the study.**

#### **Family centre**

JACKIE: Single mother. Age 22yrs. One child; (m) age 2years old. Not in paid work. Did not identify with class positions. British white.

SUZANNE: Single mother. Age 27yrs. One child; (f) age 14 months, not in paid work. Identified with middle class. British white.

LOUISE: Married. Age (undisclosed). Five children; one(f) age 3yrs, 4(m) ages 6yrs,15yrs,17yrs,23yrs. Works part time-shop assistant. Identified with working class. British white.

DIANE: Married. Age 24yrs. One child; (m) age 16 months, works part time-cash office. Identified with 'ordinary' working class. British white.

KAREN: Married. Age 27yrs. One child; (m) age 8 months. Not in paid work. Identified with middle class. British white.

LAURA: Married. Age 30yrs. One child; (m) age 15 months. Not in paid work. Identified with middle class. British white.

CHRISTINE: Single mother. Age 21yrs. One child; (m) age 17 months. Not in paid work. Did not identify with class positions. British white.

LYN: Married. Age 37yrs. One child; (f) age 20 months. Not in paid work. Identified with middle class. British white.

### **Rural playgroup**

PAM: Married. Age 42yrs. Three children ; one (m) age 9yrs, one (f) age 7 yrs, one (m) age 3 yrs Not in paid work. Identified with middle class. British white.

ANNE: Married. Age 41yrs. Two children; one (f) age 4 yrs, one (m) age 8yrs(disabled). Part time work-social worker. Identified with middle class. British white.

DENISE: Married. Age 34yrs. Two children, one (m) age 3 yrs, one (f) age 1yr,. Part time work-computer analyst. Identified with middle class. British white.

LORRAINE: Married. Age 35yrs. Two children, one (m) age 3yrs, one (F) age 5yrs. Not in paid work. Identified with working class. British white.

RACHAEL: Married. Age 35yrs. Two children, one (f) age 2yrs, one (m) age 6yrs. Self employed, catering business. Did not identify with class positions. American white.

### **Family development workers**

KATE: Single. Age 28yrs. No children. Did not identify with class postions. British white.

GILL: Married. Age 36yrs. Two children: one (m) age10 yrs, one (f) age 12yrs. Identified with working class. British white

### **Sure Start manager**

CATHERINE: Married. Age 38 yrs. Two children: one (f) age 11yrs, one (m) age 13 yrs. Sure Start manager (secondment); midwife. Identified with working class. British white.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Aaronovitch, D., 'Why I am so scared of Paulsgrove Woman'. The Independent, 11.08.2000.

Adair, V.C., (2005) 'US Working –Class/ Poverty-Class Divides' in Sociology (special issue on class) Vol. 39, no. 5, December 2005: 817-834.

Adkins, L., (2003 [2002]) 'Reflexivity and the Politics of Qualitative research' in May, T (ed) Qualitative Research in Action, London. Sage.

Adkins, L., (2004) 'Introduction; Feminism, Bourdieu and After' in L. Adkins & B. Skeggs (eds.) Feminism after Bourdieu. Blackwell.

Ainsworth M., Blehar, M.C., Waters, E. and Wall, S. (1978) Patterns of Attachment: a psychological study of the strange situation, Hillsdale, NJ, Lawrence Erlbaum.

Andalo, D., (2003) 'Solid support', The Guardian, 25.06.2003 (Produced by the Guardian in association with the Department for Education and Skills and the Department for Work and Pensions).

Argyle, M., (1994) The Psychology of Interpersonal Behaviour. Penguin.

Aries, P., (1962) Centuries of Childhood, London, Cape.

Atkins, L., 'Do I need a Naughty Step?', The Guardian G2, 16.03.2005

Attwood, M., (2003) Oryx and Crake. Bloomsbury. London.

Attwood, M., (2001) The Blind Assassin. Virago.

Ball, S. J. (2003) Class Strategies and the Education Market; the middle classes and social advantage. RoutledgeFalmer. London

Barker, P., (1999) Another World. Penguin.

- Barnes, P, (1995) (ed) Personal, social and emotional development of children. Blackwell. Open University.
- Bauman, Z., (1997) Postmodernity and its discontents. New York. New York University Press
- Beck, U., (1992) Risk Society: towards a New Modernity. London. Sage.
- Beck, U., Giddens, A. and Lash, S. (eds) (1994) Reflexive Modernizaion, Cambridge. Polity.
- Beck, U., (2000) 'Zombie categories' in J. Rutherford (ed) The Art of Life: On Living, Love and Death. London. Lawrence and Wishart.
- Beechey, V. & Whitelegg, E., (1986) (eds.) Women In Britain Today. Milton Keynes. Open University Press.
- Bell, D., (1973) The Coming of Post Industrial Society. London Heineman
- Benjamin, A. & Inman , K., (2003) 'Far From Certain', Guardian Society, 8.10.2003.
- Benjamin, A., (2005) 'If it ain't broke...' , Guardian Society, 19.01.2005.
- Bennett, A., (2003) Writing Home. London. Faber and Faber. (3<sup>rd</sup> edn.)
- Bennett, A., (2003) 'Our Winnie' in Rolling Home. London. Faber and Faber.
- Bertaux-Wiame, I., (1979) 'The Life History Approach to the Study of Internal Migration' in Journal of Oral History. Vol. 7, No.1, 1979: 26-32
- Bleir, B., (1984) Social Science and Gender; A Critique of Biology and its Theories on Women. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Bourdieu, P., (1977) Outline of a Theory of Practice, Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P., (1999 [1992]) The Logic of Practice, Blackwell Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, P., (2005 [1986]) Distinction; A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste. London. Routledge.

Bourdieu, P. & Wacquant, L.J.D., (1996[1992]) An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology. Blackwell. Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P., Accardo, A., Balazs, G., Beaud, S., Bonvin, F., Broccolichi, S., Campagne, P., Christin, R., Euvard, F., Fagues, J-P., Garcia, S., Padalydes, D., Pailoux, M., Pinto, L., Sayad, A., Soulie, C and Wacquant, L.J.D. (1999) Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society. Cambridge. Polity Press.

Bowlby, J., (1953) Child Care and the Growth of Love. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Bowlby, J., (1973) Attachment and Loss; vol II, Separation, Anxiety and Anger. Harmondsworth. Penguin.

Bromley, R., (2000) 'The Theme that Dare Not Speak its Name; Class and Recent British Film' in S.R. Munt, (ed) Cultural studies and The Working Class; Subject To Change. London. Cassell.

Bunting, M., 'A job is not enough', Guardian comment .11.10.04.

Butler, J., (1993) Bodies that Matter; On the discursive Limits of 'Sex'. New York. Routledge.

Butler, J., (1997) 'Imitation and Gender Subordination' in L. Nicholson, (ed.), The Second Wave; A Reader in Feminist Theory. London. Routledge.

Butler, J., (1999 [1990]) Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity.. Lndon. Routledge. (10<sup>th</sup> anniversay. edn).

Carvel, J., (1998) 'Labour targets lazy parents', The Guardian, 16.01.1998

Charlesworth, S., (2000) A Phenomenology of Working- Class Experience. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Childers, M. & hooks, b. (1990) 'A Conversation about Race and Class' in M. Hirsch & E. Fox-Keller (eds) Conflicts in Feminism .London. Routledge.

Chodorow, N.J., (1978) The Reproduction of Mothering; Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender. London: University of California Press.

Clarke, J., (1979) 'Capital and Culture; The Post War Working Class Revisited' in J. Clarke, C. Critcher, R. Johnson, (eds) Working Class Culture-Studies in History and Theory, CCCS, University Birmingham. London. Hutchinson.

Cowie, H., (1995) 'Child care and attachment' in P. Barnes (ed.) Personal, social and emotional development of children. Blackwell. Open University.

Davies, N., 'Crisis, crisis, crisis, State of our Schools', The Guardian 14.09.1999.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, P. (1987), A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Vol. 2, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F., (1994) What is Philosophy? Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell. New York. Columbia University Press.

Deleuze, G., (1997 [1979]) Foreword in J. Donzelot, The Policing of Families (trans by Robert Hurley). London. John Hopkins.

Deleuze, G., (2000 [1988]) Foucault, translated by Sean Hand. University of Minnesota Press. London.

Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (2004 [1977]) Anti-Oedipus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane. London. New York. Continuum Press.

Denzin, N., (1989) Interpretative Interactionism. Newbury Park CA, Sage.

DfES (2003) 'Local communities to benefit from new joined up services- Hodge': press release 24.09.03. [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)

DfES. (2003) 'Making Best Use of Anti-Social Behaviour Powers': press release 3.10.03. [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk).

Doane, J. & Hodges, D., (1992) From Klein to Kristeva; Psychoanalytic Feminism and the Search for the 'Good Enough' Mother. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Donzelot, J., (1997[1979]) The Policing of Families (trans. by Robert Hurley). London. John Hopkins.

Du Maurier, D., (1975 [1938]) Rebecca. Pan books .London.

Ehrenreich, B. & Hochschild, A.R., (2003) Global Women; Nannies, Maids and Sex workers in the New Economy. London. Granta Books.

Etzioni, A., (2000) The Third Way to a Good Society, DEMOS, July 2000.

Everingham, C., (1994) Motherhood and Modernity: an investigation into the rational dimension of mothering. Buckingham. Open University Press.

Ewick, P & Sibley, S., (1995) 'Subversive Stories and Hegemonic Tales; Toward a sociology of Narrative', in Law and Society review, Vol. 29, No 2, 1995:197-226.

Ezzy, D., (2002) Qualitative Analysis- Practice and Innovation. London. Routledge.

Finch, L., (1993) The Classing Gaze; Sexuality, Class and Surveillance. New South Wales, Australia: Allen and Urwin.

Foucault, M., (1979) Discipline and Punish; the birth of the prison (trans by A.M. Sheridan). Harmondsworth. Penguin.

Foucault, M., (1980) Power/ Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977, (ed.) C. Gordon, translated by C. Gordon, L. Marshall, J. Mepham and K.Soper). Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Foucault, M., (1988) 'Technologies of the Self' in L.H. Martin, H. Gurman and P.H. Hutton (eds.) Technologies of the Self; A Seminar with Michel Foucault. London: University of Mass.Press.

Foucault, M., (1990 [1976]) The History of Sexuality; Vol. 1, an introduction (trans by R Hurley). London. Penguin.

Foucault, M., (2000 [1976]) 'Preface to anti-oedipus' in J.D. Faubian (ed.) Michel Foucault, power; essential works of Foucault 1954-1984, Volume 3 .London. Penguin.

Fraser, M., (1997) Feminism, Foucault And Deleuze in Theory Culture and Society 1997, Vol. 14(2) Sage. London.

Fraser, N., (1989) Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Fraser, N. & Honneth, A., (2003) Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange. London. Verso.

Gamarnikow, E. & Green, A.G., (1999) 'The Third Way and Social Capital; Education Action Zones and a new agenda for education, parents and community', in International Studies in the Sociology of Education. Vol. 9, no1.1999:3-22.

Giddens, A., (1991) Modernity and Self-Identity. Cambridge. Polity.

Giddens A., (1994) 'Living in a Post-Traditional Society' in U. Beck, A.Giddens and S. Lash, Reflexive Modernization. Cambridge. Polity.

Giddens, A., (1998) TheThird Way; the renewal of social democracy (IGN European country Maps). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Giddens, A., (2000) The Third Way and its Critics. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Goldblatt, D., (ed) (2004) Knowledge and the Social Sciences: Theory Method, Practice (second edition). London. The Open University.

Goodchild, B. & Cole, I., (2001) 'Social balance and mixed neighbourhoods in Britain since 1979: a review of discourse and practice in social housing', in Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 2001, Vol. 19, 2001:103-121.

Goodchild, P., (1996) Deleuze and Guattari; an introduction to the politics of desire. London. Sage.

Gordon, C., (2000) Introduction in J.D. Faubian (ed.) Michel Foucault, power; essential works of Foucault 1954-1984, Vol. 3. London. Penguin.

Gove, J. & Watt, S., (2004) 'Identity and Gender' in K. Woodward (ed.) Questioning identity: gender, class, ethnicity, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) .Open University. Routledge.

Grosz, E., (1994) Volatile Bodies; toward a corporeal feminism. Indiana University Press.

Hall, S., (1996) 'Introduction; Who Needs Identity?' in S. Hall & P. Du Gay (eds.) Questions of Cultural Identity. London. Sage.

Hall, S., 'Argument Rages over Sarah's Law', The Guardian Society, 13.12. 2001 [www.society.guardian.co.uk](http://www.society.guardian.co.uk)

Haraway, D., (1991) Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature. London. Free Association Books.

Haylett, C., (2001) 'Illegitimate Subjects?; abject whites, neoliberal modernisation and middle class multiculturalism' in Environment and Planning D; society and space 2001, Vol. 19, pp. 351-370.

Haylett, C., (2003) 'Remaking Labour Imaginaries; social reproduction and the internationalising project of welfare reform' in Political Geography 22, 2003; 765-788.

Henriques, J., Hollway, W., Urwin, C., Venn, C., Walkerdine, V. (1998 [1984]) Changing The Subject; Psychology, Social Regulation and Subjectivity. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) London. Routledge.

Hey, V., 'The Contrasting Social Logics of Sociality and Survival; Cultures of Classed Be/longings in Late Modernity', in Sociology (special issue on class). Vol. 39, No5. Dec 2005:855-872.

Hey, V., (1999) 'Reading the Community; a Critique of Some Post –modern narratives of Citizenship and Community' in P. Bagguley and J. Hearn (eds.) Transforming Politics Power and Resistance. Basingstoke Macmillan Press in association with the British Sociological Association.

Hey, V., (2002) 'Horizontal Solidarities and Molten Capitalism: The Subject, Intersubjectivity, Self and the Other in Late Modernity', Discourse 23(2): 237-4.

hooks, b., (2000) Where We Stand: class matters. Routledge. London.

Hollway, W. & Jefferson, T., (2000) Doing Qualitative Research Differently-Free Association, Narrative and the Interview Method. London. Sage.

Hudson, M., (1994) Coming Back Brockens: a Year in a Mining Village, London: Jonathan Cape.

Hutton. P.H., (1988) 'Foucault, Freud and the technologies of the self' in L.H. Martin, H. Gurman and P.H. Hutton.(eds.) Technologies of the Self; A Seminar with Michel Foucault. University of Mass. Press.

Jackson, B. & Segal, P., (2004) 'Why Inequality Matters' ( October, 2004) Catalyst working paper. Central books.

Jackson, D., (1998) 'Breaking out of the binary trap: boys' underachievement, schooling and gender relations' in Epstein, D., Elwood, J., Hey, V. and Maw, J., (eds.) Failing Boys? Issues in Gender and Achievement, Buckingham, Open University Press.

Jackson, M., (1983) 'Knowledge and the Body', Man 18, No.2, pp327-45.

Jacobs, K., Kemeny, J., & Manzi, T., (2003) 'Power, Discursive Space and Institutional Practices in the Construction of Housing Problems', in Housing Studies, Vol.18. No 4., July 2003: 429-446.

James, A., Jenks, C. & Prout, A., (1998) 'Imagining childhood', in A. James, C. Jenks & A. Prout, Theorising Childhood. Polity press. London.

James, A., Jenks, C. & Prout, A., (1998) Theorising Childhood. Polity press. London.

James, A., & Prout, A., (1990) (eds) Constructing and Re-constructing Childhood. London: Falmer Press.

Jenks, C., (1996) Childhood. London: Routledge.

Jessop, B. (2002) The Future of the Capitalist State. Cambridge. Polity Press.

Johnson, P. & Lawler, S., (2005) 'Coming Home to Love and Class' in Sociological Research Online, Vol .10, Issue 3 [www.socresonline.org.uk/10/3/johnson](http://www.socresonline.org.uk/10/3/johnson)

Kaplan, E.A., (1984) 'Is the Gaze Male?' in A. Snitow, C. Stansell, S. Thompson, (eds.), Desire; the Politics of Sexuality. Virago.

Kuhn, T.S., (1962) The Structure of Scientific Revolution, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Laing, R.D., (1990) The Self and Others, Penguin.

Lawler, S., (1999) 'Getting out and getting away: women's narratives of class mobility' Feminist Review, 63: 3-24.

Lawler, S., (2000a) Mothering the Self; mothers, daughters, subjects. London: Routledge.

Lawler, S., (2000b) 'Escape and Escapism; Representing Working Class Women' in S.R. Munt (ed.) Cultural Studies and The Working Class; Subject To Change. Cassell. London.

Lawler, S., (2003a [2002]) 'Narrative in Social Research' in May, T(ed.) Qualitative research in Action. London. Sage.

Lawler, S., (2003b) 'Mobs and Monsters; Independent Man meets Paulsgrove Woman'. Feminist Theory, Vol. 3, no.1: 103-113.

Lawler, S., (2004) 'Rules of Engagement; Habitus Power and Resistance' in L. Adkins & B. Skeggs, (eds.) Feminism After Bourdieu. London. Blackwell.

Lawler, S., (2005a) 'Disgusted Subjects: the making of middle class identities' in Sociological Review, Vol.55, Aug. 2005: 431-446.

Lawler, S., (2005b) 'Introduction; Class, Culture and Identity' in Sociology (special issue on class). Vol. 39, no.5, Dec 2005: 797-806.

Levitas, R., (1998) The Inclusive society; Social exclusion and New Labour. London, Macmillan.

Linkton, S., (2001) Final Plenary speech. Class , Space and Community- A Workshop Conference .Department of Sociology and Social Policy. University of Durham.08.04.2001.

McEwan, I., (2002) Atonement. Vintage.

McRobbie, A., (2000) 'Feminism and the "Third Way" ', in Feminist Review. Spring 2000, Vol. 64, no.1, pp97-112.

McRobbie, A., (2004) 'Notes on "What Not To Wear" and Post-Feminist Symbolic Violence' in L. Adkins & B. Skeggs, (eds.) Feminism After Bourdieu. London. Blackwell.

McRobbie, A., (2004) 'Free to vomit in the gutter', The Guardian, 07.06.2004.

McRobbie, A., (2006) 'Yummy mummies leave a bad taste for young women', Guardian 2.3.06.

McNay, L., (1992) Foucault and Feminism; Power, Gender and the Self Cambridge: Polity Press.

McNay, L., (2000) Gender and Agency; reconfiguring the subject in feminist and social theory. London: Polity Press.

Marshall, H., (1991) 'The Social Construction of Motherhood: An Analysis of Childcare and Parenting Manuals' in A. Phoenix, A. Woollett and E. Lloyd, (eds.) Motherhood; Meanings, Practices, Ideologies. London. Sage.

Mason, J., (1997 [1996]) Qualitative Researching. London. Sage.

Mason, J., (2003 [2002]) 'Qualitative Interviewing; Asking, Listening and Interpreting' in T. May, (ed.) Qualitative research in Action. London. Sage.

Medhurst, A., (2000) 'If Anywhere: Class Identifications and Cultural Studies Academics', in S. Munt (ed.) Cultural Studies and the Working Class; Subject to Change. London. Cassell.

Mitchell, J., (1982) 'Introduction-I' in J. Mitchell & J. Rose (eds.) Feminine Sexuality; Jacques Lacan and the Ecole Freudienne. (trans by J. Rose). Palgrave. Macmillan.

Mitchell, J. (ed.) (1986) The Selected Melanie Klein. New York. Free Press.

Mitchell, J. and Rose, J., (eds.) (1982) Feminine Sexuality; Jacques Lacan and the Ecole Freudienne (trans by J. Rose). Palgrave. Macmillan. London

Moi T., (1986) The Kristeva Reader/ Julia Kristeva. New York. Columbia University Press.

Morrison, B., (1997) As If. London. Granta.

Murray, C., (1994) 'The New Victorians and the New Rabble' The Sunday Times, 29.05.94.

Murray, C., (1994) Underclass; the crisis deepens. Institute of Economic affairs. London.

Munt, S.R., (2000) (ed.) Cultural studies and The Working Class; Subject To Change. London. Cassell.

Nicholson, L., (1997) (ed.) The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory. Routledge. London.

Oakley, A., (1986) 'Feminism and Motherhood' in M. Richards & P. Light (eds.) Children of Social Worlds; Development in a Social Context. Cambridge. Polity Press.

Orr, D., (1999) 'This is pure voyeurism', The Independent on Sunday, 05.09.1999

Pakulski, J. & Waters M., (1996) The Death of Class. London: Sage.

Parker, I., (1997) Psychoanalytic Culture; Psychoanalytic Discourse in Western Society, London Sage.

Parry, O. & Mauthner N.S., (2004) 'Whose Data is it Anyway) Practical, Legal and Ethical Issues in Archiving Qualitative Research Data'. Sociology Vol. 38 (1) pp139-152.Sage.

Patton, P., (2000) Deleuze and the Political. London. Routledge.

Phoenix,A. & Woollett A., (1991) 'Motherhood; Social Construction, Politics and Psychology', in A. Phoenix, A. Woollett and E. Lloyd, (eds.) Motherhood; Meanings, Practices and Ideologies. London: Sage.

Phoenix, A., Woollett, A., & Lloyd, E. (1991) (eds.) Motherhood; Meanings, Practices and Ideologies. London; Sage.

Phoenix, A., (1996) 'Social constructions of lone motherhood: a case of competing discourses' in E.B. Silva (ed.) Good Enough Mothering?; A Feminist Perspective on Lone Motherhood. London: Routledge.

Pilkington, E., (1993) 'Boys guilty of Bulger murder-Detention without limit for "unparalleled evil"', The Guardian, 25.11.1993.

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (2000) (QCA) Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage. Dfes.

Rabinow, P., (1996) 'Artificiality and Enlightenment: from Sociobiology to Biosociality' in Essays on the Anthropology of Reason .Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Reay, D., (1996a) 'Insider perspectives or stealing the words out of women's mouths; interpretation in the research process', Feminist Review, 53:pp57-73.

Reay, D., (1996b) 'Dealing with Difficult Differences', in. Feminism and Psychology (special edition on class), Vol. 6, no 3, Aug 1996.pp-443-456

Reay,D., (1998a) Class Work. London .UCL Press.

- Reay, D., (1998b) 'Rethinking Social Class; Qualitative Perspectives on Class and Gender'. in Sociology, Vol..32, no.2, May 1998:259-275.
- Reay, D., (2000) 'Children's Urban Landscapes; Configurations of Class and Place' in S.R. Munt (ed.) Cultural studies and the Working Class; Subject to Change, London, Cassell.
- Reay, D., (2004) 'Gendering Bourdieu's concept of capital; emotional capital, women and social class' in L. Adkins & B., Skeggs (eds.) Feminism after Bourdieu. Blackwell.
- Reay, D., (2005) 'Beyond consciousness; the psychic landscape of social class' in Sociology (special issue on class, culture and identity). Vol 39, no 5, Dec 2005.pp-911-928.
- Ricoeur, P., (1980) 'Narrative time', Critical Inquiry, 7(1):169-90.
- Riley, D., (1983) War in the Nursery: theories of the Child and Mother. London: Virago.
- Roberts, E., (1995) Women and Families; an oral history 1940-1970. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Roberts, I., (1999) 'A Historical Construction of the Working Class' in H. Beynon & P. Glavanis (eds.) Patterns of Social Inequality; essays for Richard Brown. Harlow: Longman.
- Rose, N., (1996) 'Identity, Genealogy, History' in P. Du Gay, (ed.) Questions of Cultural Identity. Sage. London.
- Rose, N., (1998) Inventing Our Selves; Psychology, Power and Personhood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rose, N., (1999a [1989]) Governing the Soul; The Shaping of the Private Self (second edition). London: Free Association Books.
- Rose, N., (1999b) Powers of Freedom: reframing political thought. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Rose, J. (1987) 'Femininity and its Discontents' in Sexuality: A Reader, Feminist Review (ed). London. Virago.

Rose, J., (1993). Why War?. Psychoanalysis and the Return to Melanie Klein (Bucknell Lectures in Literary theory series). London. Blackwell.

Savage, M., (2000) Class Analysis and Social Transformation. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Savage, M., (2005) 'Working Class Identities in the 60's; revisiting the Affluent worker studies' in Sociology (special issue on class, culture and identity) Vol .39. no.5. Dec 2005. pp-929-946.

Sennett, R. & Cobb J., (1977) The Hidden Injuries of Class, Cambridge university Press.

Sereny, G., (1995) The Case of Mary Bell; a Portrait of a Child Who Murdered. London. Pimlico.

Sherratt, N. & Hughes, G., (2004) 'Family: from tradition to diversity?' in G. Hughes and R. Fergusson (eds.) Ordering lives; family, work and welfare. (2<sup>nd</sup> edn) Open University. Routledge.

Shields, C., (2003) Unless. Fourth Estate. London.

Silva, E.B (1996) (ed.) Good Enough Mothering?; A Feminist Perspective on Lone Motherhood. London: Routledge.

Silva, E.B., (1996) 'The transformation of mothering' in E.B. Silva (ed.) Good Enough Mothering?; A Feminist Perspective on Lone Motherhood. London: Routledge.

Silverman, D., (1993) Interpreting Qualitative Data; Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction. London. Sage.

Singer, E., (1992) Child Care and the Psychology of Development (translated by A. Porcelijn). London: Routledge.

Skeggs, B., (1997a) Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable. London: Sage.

Skeggs, B., (1997b) 'Classifying Practices; Representations, Capitals and Recognitions' in P. Mahony & C. Zmroczek (eds.) Class Matters: 'Working Class' Women's Perspectives on Social Class. London: TaylorFrancis.

Skeggs, B., (2003 [2002]) 'Techniques for Telling the Reflexive Self' in T. May, (ed.) Qualitative Research in Action. London. Sage.

Skeggs, B., (2004) Class, Self, Culture. London: Routledge.

Skeggs, B., (2005) 'The Making of Class and Gender through Visualising Moral Subject Formation' in Sociology (special issue on class, culture and identity) Vol .39, no 5, December 2005.pp.965-982.

Smart, C., (1996) 'Deconstructing Motherhood' in E.B. Silva (ed.) Good Enough Mothering?; A Feminist Perspective on Lone Motherhood. London: Routledge.

Smelser, N.J., (1991) Social Paralysis and Social change; British Working Class Education in the Nineteenth Century, Berkley and Los Angeles. University of California Press.

Smith, D.E, (2003 [2002]) 'Institutional Ethnography' in T. May (ed.) Qualitative Research in Action. London: Sage.

Somers, M.R. and Gibson, G.D., (1994) 'Reclaiming the epistemological 'Other': narrative and the social construction of identity', in C. Calhoun (ed.) Social Theory and the Politics of Identity. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Steedman, C., (1986) Landscape for a Good Woman:A Story of Two Lives. London: Virago.

Steedman, C., (1994) 'Muddling Through' in Journal of British Studies Apr. 1994, vol. 33, issue 2, pp 215-221.

Steedman, C. (1995) Strange Dislocations: Childhood and the Idea of Human Interiority 1780-1930. Harvard University Press.

Taylor, P. and Bain, P., (1999) ‘ “An Assembly Line in the Head”; Work and Employee Relations in the Call Centre’ Industrial Relations Journal, Vol. 30 (2):101-117.

Thomas, K., (1996) ‘The defensive self: a psychodynamic perspective’ in R. Stevens, (ed.) Understanding the self, Sage Open University Press.

Urwin, C., (1985) ‘Constructing motherhood: the persuasion of normal development’ in C. Steedman, C. Urwin and V. Walkerdine (eds.) Language, Gender and Childhood. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Urwin, C., (1998 [1984]) ‘Power Relations and the Emergence of Language’ in Henriques et al, Changing the Subject; Psychology, Social Regulation and Subjectivity (2<sup>nd</sup> edn). London. Routledge.

Wacquant, L.J.D., (1996 [1992]) ‘Toward a Social Praxeology: The Structure and Logic of Bourdieu’s Sociology’ in P. Bourdieu & L.J.D Wacquant, An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology. Blackwell. Polity Press.

Walkerdine, V., Steedman, C., & Urwin, C., (1985) (eds.) Language, Gender and Childhood History workshop series, London. Routledge.

Walkerdine, V. & Lucey, H., (1989) Democracy in the Kitchen; Regulating Mothers and Socialising Daughters. London. Virago.

Walkerdine, V., (1990) Schoolgirl Fictions. London. Verso.

Walkerdine, V., (1996) ‘Subjectivity and Social Class: New Directions for Feminist Psychology’, in Feminism and Psychology (special edition on social class), Vol. 6, No. 3, Aug 1996. pp.355-360.

Walkerdine, V., (1997) Daddy’s Girl; Young Girls and Popular Culture. London: Macmillan.

Walkerdine, V., (1999) ‘Violent Boys and Precious Girls: regulating childhood at the end of the millennium’ in Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood. Vol. no.1, 1999. pp.3-23.

- Walkerdine, V., Lucey, H. & Melody, J., (2001) Growing up Girl; Psychosocial Explorations of Gender and Class. London. Palgrave.
- Walkerdine, V., Lucey, H. & Melody, J. (2003 [2002]) Subjectivity and Qualitative Method in T. May (ed.) Qualitative Research in Action. London. Sage.
- Wallbank, J.A., (2001) Challenging Motherhood(s). Prentice Hall. Pearson Education
- Ward, L., (2005) 'Doubts over value of £3bn Sure Start', The Guardian Education, 13.09.2005
- Ward, L., (2005) 'Sure Start sets back the worst placed youngsters', The Guardian, 1.12.2003.
- White, M., (1999) 'Blair hails middle class revolution', Guardian, 15.01.99.
- Wilce, H., 'Mums Make A Difference', Education Independent, 03.04.2003.
- Willis, P., (1979) 'Shop Floor Culture, Masculinity and the Wage Form' in Clarke J. Critcher, C. Johnson, R. Brown, (eds.) Working Class Culture: Studies in History and Theory. Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham. Hutchinson. London.
- Winnicott, D.W., (1958) Collected Papers; Through Paediatrics to Psycho-Analysis. London. Tavistock.
- Winnicott, D., (1964) The Child, The Family and the Outside World . Penguin.
- Winnicott, D., (1965) The Family and Individual Development. London: Tavistock.
- Winnicott, D.W., (1986) 'The Mothers Contribution to Society' in Home is Where We Start From: Essays by a Psychoanalyst, New York and London: Norton.
- Wintour, P., 'Force workers to boost skills, urges Milburn aide', Guardian, 15.10.04.
- Woodhead, M., (1990) 'Psychology and the Cultural Construction of Children's Needs' in A. James & A. Prout (eds.) Constructing and Re-constructing Childhood. London: Falmer Press.

Young, P., (206) 'Is this racist?' Evening Chronicle, 09.03.2006.

