Morality matters:

Class relations in the ex-mining villages of County Durham

Claire Louise Boden

School of Geography, Politics and Sociology

Newcastle University

Thesis submitted for fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

December 2023

Abstract

This research explores the classed nature of moral experience. Morality is central to the structuring and maintenance of class divisions. The symbolic economy which controls and regulates value exchange is constantly working to position and reinforce the very core of working-class people as valueless; moral distinctions which execute the boundaries of class categorisation and classification. I use a critical phenomenological lens to analyse how people who are denied value through the dominant system of capitalist exchange still understand and live their lives through a framework of value. Utilising narrative interviews combined with 'learning walks,' a walking methodology I adapted from the education sector, I explore how working-class people residing in the ex-mining villages of County Durham make sense of the way morality structures their experiences. Critically engaging with the class dynamics and classificatory processes which misrecognise their value, I show how morality operates as both a deeply orientating value structure and as a source of devaluation for the working-class participants within this research sample. I evidence how class dynamics are woven into the interdependent mechanisms through which the concept of value is lived out; embodied, contested, produced through conflict as well as cohesion, and made through dynamic, shifting and sometimes competing modes of use and exchange. This thesis contributes to knowledge about the relations of value that construct personhood. I argue that moral experience manifests through social interactions and local value practices which are not subject to the logic of capitalism, even as they are forged through the power relations that situate this experience.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the help and support of so many people. I am indebted to the people who took part in this study, and who gave up their time to share their stories and experiences with warmth and sincerity. I am very thankful to my brilliant PhD supervisors, Ruth McAreavey and Alison Stenning, who have given me so much support and feedback, and have guided me through this process with encouragement and advice. I am so very lucky to have the unwavering support of my husband, Martin, who has helped me immeasurably and who has never stopped having faith in me. I am also incredibly lucky to have two amazing children, Alex and Matthew, who always make me smile and keep me motivated. Friends old and new have given me the space to talk endlessly about class and I am especially thankful to Janet Deavin and Ali Jane. I am very grateful to you all.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Class relations are made and lived through value. The reputation of people and places are key modes of valuation. Reputations shape decisions about the people we engage with and how we interact with them. Reputations inform our choices about where we go and how we act in that space. To have a good reputation is to be perceived as trustworthy and to possess integrity, whereas to have a bad reputation signifies a lack of morality. A negative reputation manifests in place-based rhetoric as having 'a reputation', a loaded phrase that requires no additional description because the undesirable association is implicit in the expression (McDowell and Harris, 2019). Places that have a 'reputation' convey danger, risk, excess and dirt. To be from somewhere with a 'reputation' is to be associated with deviance and immorality. Post-industrial communities in the UK are stigmatised as immoral places through political rhetoric and media representations which operate as mutually reinforcing modes of devaluation, with the former coal mining and steel making settlements being particularly singled out and portrayed as places with 'reputations' (Nayak, 2019; Pattison, 2022).

For example, the reality television show, *Benefits Street*, which claims to explore life at the margins but instead perpetuates the myth of worklessness (Macdonald, Shildrick and Furlong, 2014), chose to film in Stockton-on-Tees, an area of Teesside in the North East of England. It is a region which experienced socio-economic deprivation and social exclusion in the aftermath of deindustrialisation and is already stigmatised through political and cultural representations of deficiency and decay (Bush, Moffatt and Dunn, 2001; Nayak, 2019). Similarly, the BBC television series, *Canny Cops* (2019), documents the lives of police officers working in the ex-mining communities throughout the East Durham coast, an area of County Durham in the North East of England which continues to experience the socio-economic effects of post-industrial collapse. *Canny Cops* highlights patterns of criminality in the region, with the show's synopsis emphasising the familiar relationship between the police force and repeat local offenders. However, without situating these former industrial communities in the context of the aftermath of deindustrialisation, where exclusion and marginalisation is reinforced through the lack of investment in social and economic infrastructure, *Benefits Street* and *Canny Cops* only serve to add to the existing narratives that portray the ex-mining communities in the region as lacking in morals and values.

The way people relate to being positioned as immoral is complex. Morality is one of the key tools used to demonise and devalue the working-class. It is a method of delegitimisation which is so powerful because it constructs the very core of the self as wrong. Morality is also a multi-faceted and densely layered mode of meaning because moral value also operates as an orientating structure within everyday life (Sayer, 2005). It is this complex and often contradictory relationship which is the focus of this study. This thesis explores how people who are denied value through the dominant system of capitalist value exchange still understand and live their lives through a framework of value. The way moral value manifests through social interactions and practices, circulating as an orientating structure as well as a source of devaluation, is explored through this research. I use a critical phenomenological lens to explore how working-class people living in the ex-mining villages of County Durham relate to morality as a structuring experience.

Using four key phenomenological concepts: intentionality; the nature of being; embodiment; and narrative, I critically engage with the class mechanisms and processes that devalue working-class people and places. I show how such devaluation is embedded in the symbolic pathologisation of working-class immorality where the moral authority of the middle-class works to ascribe deviance into the very core of working-class being. Utilising narrative interviews combined with 'learning walks', a walking methodology I adapted from the education sector, I analyse how such devaluation is embodied, contested, refused and lived out in complex and often contradictory ways. I foreground the subjective experience of working-class people to show how moral value is understood, practised and circulates through people and places who are excluded from value accrual and exchange within a classed social structure.

This thesis examines how local forms of moral value are produced within the classed power relations which deny value to working-class people living in the ex-mining villages of County Durham. I argue that moral experience manifests through practices that are not subject to the logic of capitalism, even as they are forged through the power relations that situate this experience. Responding to calls for class analysis to move beyond a dominant symbolic understanding of capitalist value exchange (Skeggs, 2004, 2014), this thesis contributes to knowledge about the relations of value that construct personhood, showing how moral experience manifests through class struggle as a mode of value that is not legitimised through the symbolic economy, and yet still manifests and circulates as a deeply orientating source of

meaning. It is an approach which shows how those who are excluded from the processes that situate the self as the site of value accrual, still do construct personhood through the lens of value. In doing so this thesis points to where working-class agency can be found.

In the subsequent sub-sections of this introductory chapter, I lay out the background and motivation for this study and explore the socio-spatial environment in which my research is set, focusing on the historical and contemporary socio-political context which make the ex-mining villages of County Durham a very appropriate research setting. I then move on to give a brief overview of critical phenomenology as a theoretical framework, outlining the methodological tools I use in this thesis, and explaining how critical phenomenology serves as the most appropriate lens to understand the research problem. Finally, I set out the aims and objectives of this research, and outline the structure of this thesis, briefly explaining the content of each chapter and how they contribute to the study as a whole.

1.2 Background and Context

The inspiration for this research began in early 2017 when the UK was grappling with the aftermath of the vote to leave the European Union. Having lived in Australia, I returned to an ex-mining village in County Durham where I grew up. This was during the aftermath of the EU referendum when inflamed debate was taking place across the public and private domains, fixating on the roots of the leave vote and attempting to identify who was responsible and where they were located. Post-Brexit political and media discourse reported the vote to leave the European Union in terms of a disaster (Ridge-Newman et al., 2018) fuelling narratives of blame and constructing the white working-class in England's post-industrial North as the symbolic figure driving the Brexit leave vote (Mckenzie, 2017). In reality, the leave vote revealed a much more complex socio-spatial pattern. Voting turnout amongst the lower end of the socio-economic strata was modest, at 24 percent, whereas middle-class voting participation was more than double, at 59 percent. Moreover, population density indicates that most leave voters reside in Southern England meaning middle-class leave voters in the South of England played a significant role in the outcome of the Brexit vote (Dorling, 2018).

Nevertheless, the symbolic representation of the Brexit leave voter as an angry, disillusioned and marginalised working-class mass cut adrift from the rest of the population is epitomised through the 'left-behind' rhetoric that dominates media, political and sometimes academic conversations around the motivations of the working-class leave vote (Ford and Goodwin,

2017). The 'left-behind' narrative is an insidious one. This is because political rhetoric that acknowledges economic marginalisation is shrouded in the language of moral deficiency. As explored in the literature review of this thesis, the notion that the working-class have a deficient culture, and at the same time have no culture at all, is central to the class mechanisms and structures that mobilise class divisions. The working-class are cast through political rhetoric and popular representations as lazy and stagnant, narratives of lack and decline which circulate within a symbolic economy which is constantly working to reinforce the very core of working-class people as valueless (Skeggs, 2004).

The 'left-behind' narrative that dominated mainstream media in the aftermath of the Brexit vote is embedded in this symbolic representation of a population that is retrogressive and degenerating with outdated lives and opinions. Despite a nod to political alienation and economic disadvantage, the undertones of the media messages were clear: the Brexit vote was driven by a working-class mass who could not adapt to the changing dynamics of a modern world. It is a familiar message to working-class people. Accusations of a failure to move with the times were central to the demonisation of working-class communities which suffered social and economic deprivation and marginalisation during the collapse of heavy industry throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The narrative of the working-class as immobile and incapable of change were key to the mobilisation of neoliberal socio-economic policy within County Durham during this period, and central to the symbolic positioning of the mining communities as places of stagnation in the aftermath of industrial collapse.

1.2.1 County Durham Mining Communities

Along with Teesside to the south of the region, and Tyneside to the north, shipbuilding and coal mining dominated the manufacturing industry in County Durham throughout most of the 20th century. The tight links between these industries were mediated through a model of production that engineered a localised hub of economic activity. For example, the coking coal mines in the west of the county supplied British Steel on the Tees River with the metallurgical coal needed to produce the carbon used in steel manufacturing (Hudson, Beynon and Sadler, 1991). Consequently, the simultaneous demise of both the coal mining and shipbuilding industries throughout the 1970s and 1980s, amidst national industrial collapse, led to deep and widespread social and economic deprivation. The prominence of the mining industry during the heyday of manufacturing ensured the mines were a critical source of employment for workers across the county. However, the significance of the mining industry was not

limited to labour market dynamics because the mines were also at the heart of community and family relationships.

Mining communities were widespread throughout County Durham and encompassed rural settlements, small villages and large towns across very distinct and different geographical and socio-cultural environments. The Durham coalfield dominated a diverse landscape stretching west from the large coastal mining towns of Seaham, Horden and Blackhall Colliery across to the much smaller rural mining villages of Roddymoor and Butterknowle on the edge of the Durham Dales. The coal mines within Durham were also dispersed throughout the more urban areas of the county with the northern collieries of Burnopfield and Ouston meeting the urban sprawl of Tyneside, which marks the southern edge of the Northumberland coalfield (see figure 1). The impact of the geographical distribution of the collieries meant that mining was embedded across the whole county. Colliery life was at the heart of the connections that structure social relations as housing, employment, leisure time and personal relationships were interlinked through the integrated social structures of mining settlements. Mining villages were places of pride and the local kinship ties within such communities were forged through the networks that centred around the industry (Bulmer, 2015). This meant that deindustrialisation destroyed not only the dominant mode of employment but also disrupted the networks and ties of social relationships connected through mining settlements. These long-standing socio-spatial patterns and practices, built and developed through colliery life, are deeply embedded within a shared history.

It is important not to idealise the Durham mining communities through romanticised visions of community cohesion. Housing was generally overcrowded, and the mining villages were typically isolated from one another such that life in a mining community was experienced as confinement as much as it was a source of belonging (Chaplin, 1978). Nevertheless, the closure of the mines disrupted a shared past that orientated socio-cultural relations over time and space as patterns of family, work and community were integrated and developed through colliery settlements. The rapid pace of deindustrialisation deepened the fracturing of these ties. Initially a steady decline throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the frequency of pit closures accelerated throughout the 1980s with over two thirds of the workforce being terminated nationwide across a six-year period (British Coal, 1990). During this time of intense industrial decline, County Durham saw the closure of fifteen mines, including Horden on the Durham coast, one of the largest collieries in the country (Durham Heritage Coast, 2023).

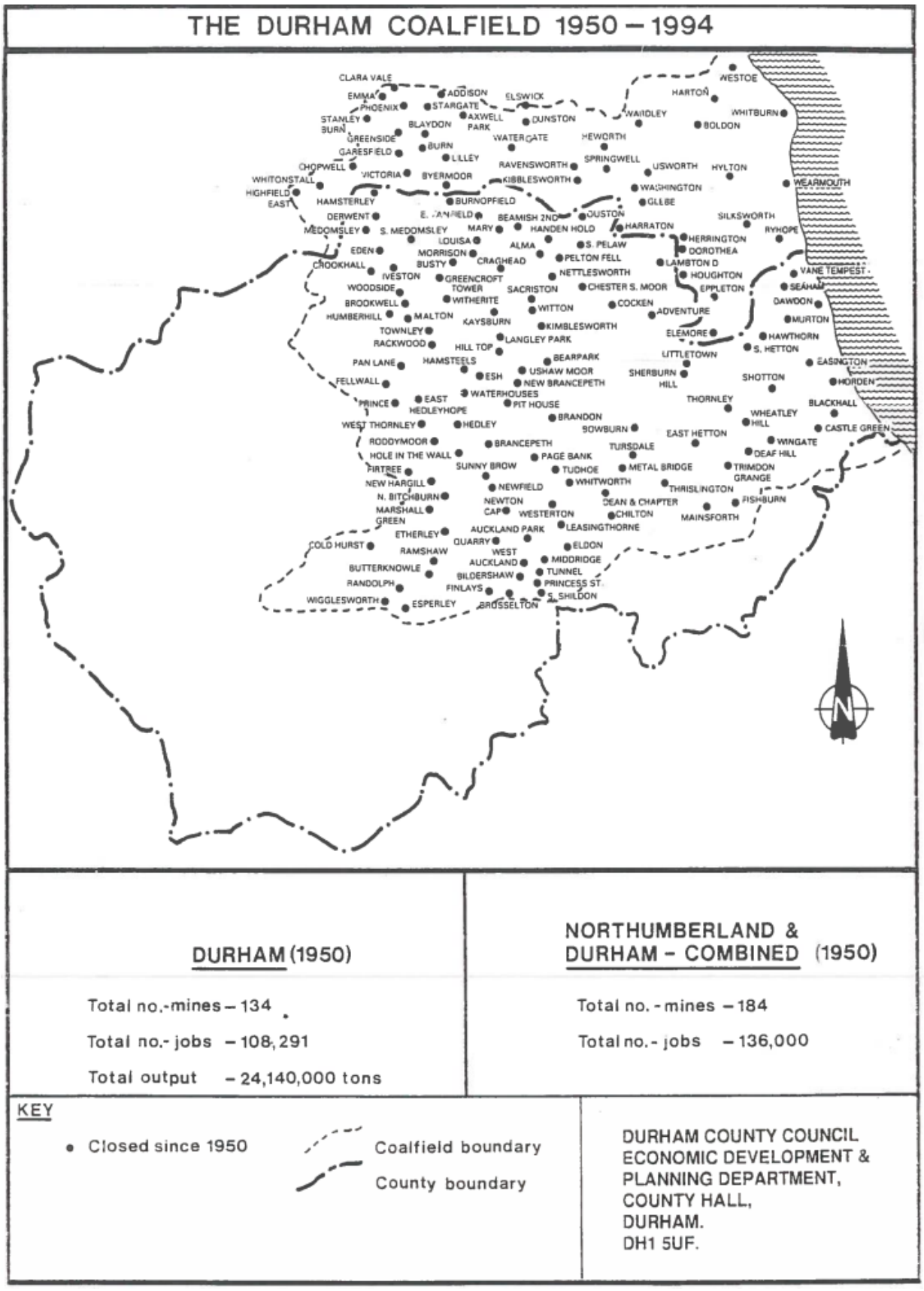

Figure 1: A map of the Durham Coalfield 1950-1994. Source: East Durham Task Force Archive

1.2.2 Case Study: Horden

The proposed and eventual closure of Horden colliery is detailed through a monograph (Hudson, Beynon and Sadler, 1991) which explores how loss manifests in a community whose lives were orientated through coal mining. What is significant about this study is how the research identified wider international patterns of economic and social reorganisation that disregarded the importance of local economies and networks. As the authors show, Horden mine was established and developed under particular political and economic conditions which were integrated within and forged through the structures of local industry and the associated social networks. Throughout the management of the colliery closure these locally produced economies were dismissed by the National Coal Board as the natural consequences of a market which was embracing transformation through privatisation and free trade. Critically, these localised networks and relationships were also used as evidence by corporate management and the Conservative government of a culture of dependency within Horden. Horden was not the only colliery to be perceived and positioned in this way. Throughout the industrial decline of the 1980s people and places associated with mining were framed in political rhetoric as symbols of working-class stagnation (Beynon, 1985). This was key in gaining public support for the Conservative government during the mining strike of 1984/85. Positioning miners as outdated and inflexible was part of a moral narrative used by the then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to intensify the restructuring of economic relations within a neoliberal framework (Milne, 2014).

1.2.3 The Moral Economy of Neoliberalism

Neoliberal political and economic policy changed the socio-spatial dynamics of working-class communities in the UK as macroeconomic strategies of privatisation, deregulation, free market trade and the desire for the continuous accumulation of capital fuelled patterns of vastly unequal socio-spatial development. This was exacerbated by government investment focused on London and the South East during the process of, and in the aftermath of deindustrialisation, leading to deeply uneven patterns of wealth and economic growth across the UK (Jessop, 2018). As Jessop stresses, neoliberalism is not just the arbitrary operation of market forces. Rather, neoliberalism as an economic model of organisation is intertwined with and dependent on political power to embed an accumulation model of competitive consumerism into the social and cultural fabric of society. Deindustrialisation during the Thatcher government of the 1980s was mobilised through a neoliberal political project which

stressed the relationship between the moral and the economic. Thatcher did not talk about labour market transformation in economic terms but instead framed deindustrialisation as a moral problem. She positioned the working-class, particularly the miners, as morally responsible for economic decline through two key methods.

Firstly, Thatcher did not situate industrial decline in the context of the outcome of economic policy, rather she held workers and particularly trade unions responsible for failing to adapt to market shifts and changes, effectively lacking the moral character required to modernise and adapt to new ways of working (Tomlinson, 2021). This was strongly supported by a political narrative which framed nationalised public services and heavy industry as archaic and unmodern, positioning the people who worked in them as being unwilling and also unable to embrace change (Beynon, 1985; Milne, 2014). Thatcher connected morality to the economy in political rhetoric by embedding efficiency and progress within self-reliance and individual responsibility, and idleness and inflexibility within the over-reliance and dependency on the state. It is a vision of a moral economy which is at odds with earlier moral economic critiques of capitalism where patterns of unequal socio-spatial development and inequality are considered from an ethical perspective (for an overview of three key thinkers see Rogan, 2018). Instead, Thatcher's moral economy is rooted in the notion that economic prosperity requires self-discipline and responsibility, and economic decline is the result of a lack of such virtues in workers.

Secondly, Thatcher attributed economic hardship to working-class cultural and personal failings. Under the Thatcher government the notion of deprivation and dispossession was re-framed as not a lack of material resources, but as a fundamental lack of moral virtue which was embedded within the culture of working-class people (Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, 2012). Consequently, the shrinkage of the welfare state was presented as a moral project designed to incentivise the working-class to be more entrepreneurial and to embed a culture of self-discipline and personal responsibility. This narrative characterised political response to the mass unemployment that occurred in the context of deindustrialisation where rising unemployment was framed as working-class failure to adapt to change and find jobs outside of their local environment.

It is a perspective best captured in Norman Tebbit's 1981 speech at the Conservative Party Conference where the then Secretary of State implored the unemployed to 'get on yer bike'. It is a simplistic directive which disregards the cost of housing and transport associated with

geographic mobility, and the importance of social networks required to facilitate movement (Chesshyre, 2012). Tebbit's comment also displaces structural failings by ignoring the need for local social infrastructure and labour market opportunities, investment that is required to support communities particularly during periods of intense economic change. It is also a discursive tool that reflects the power relationship in which such representations are situated and shows how symbolic violence is enacted. The working-class are fixed in place by the structural constraints that limit mobility, but they are also positioned as static through the political narratives and symbolic representations that invoke notions of pathological dependency and inflexibility. In demanding mobility, the rhetoric surreptitiously relies on symbolic delegitimisation to re-inscribe narratives of lack and decline, operating to further limit the legitimacy of working-class voices and experiences.

The Conservative government's response to the closure of the collieries was to position the miners in the context of a 'left-behind' narrative that was one of their own making, weakening public support during the mining strike of 1984/1985 (Williams, 2009). The narrative that the working-classes were 'left-behind' because of deficiencies within their own moral character is deeply entrenched in political and media discourse. It is a particular feature of Thatcherism but such pathologisation is also characteristic of New Labour which used the rhetoric of a weakness of self-discipline to justify social exclusion (Levitas, 1998) and to cloak welfare reform in the language of hard work, thriftiness and frugality (Haylett, 2001). The subsequent Conservative government under the leadership of David Cameron oversaw a period of sharply rising inequality, which Cameron referred to as the 'age of austerity', where punitive policies such as the bedroom tax and restrictive welfare reforms were endorsed as the morally correct path and were framed as tools that would raise the standards of the culturally deficient working-class (Marsden, 2023).

The narrative that the working-class have a pathological lack of drive, ambition and responsibility is not new. As extensively explored further on in the literature review of this thesis, the working-class have always been pathologised as lacking in morals and values. The legacy of Thatcher's moral economy throughout the industrial decline of the 1980s has cast a long-lasting shadow over the industrial communities of County Durham and Teesside. They are places which have been marginalised through neoliberal economic policy as deregulation, privatisation and the demise of the trade unions have rendered insecure and precarious employment commonplace, and where austerity measures have minimised social

infrastructure and public services (Telford and Wistow, 2022). Through symbolic representations and political rhetoric, the 'left-behind' narrative has come to be synonymous with industrial decline, and as characteristic of the ex-mining communities within County Durham. It is also the hallmark of political and media discourse around the Brexit leave vote. However, as I have evidenced throughout this introductory chapter, the 'left-behind' narrative is not mobilised through the lens of economic marginalisation. Rather, the notion of the ex-mining villages and former steelwork towns in the region as 'left-behind' is symbolically shrouded in the language of a lack of moral value; discourses which underpin the culture of blame associated with the vote to leave the European Union.

It is crucial to emphasise that such rhetoric reveals nothing of working-class experience. The 'left-behind' narrative is embedded in the classed power relationships which mobilise economic and social marginalisation, enabling processes of devaluation to be re-framed as the moral failings of people who are denied value through the dominant system of capitalist exchange. The inscription of moral devaluation is constantly working through symbolic representations and political rhetoric and policy to delegitimise working-class people and places. Such processes operate to deny the role of structural inequalities and paradoxically to deny the role of class as a structuring force in shaping socio-spatial patterns of inequality. Making sense of this contradiction and of the multi-faceted complexities that produce class divisions and distinctions are central to this research. The term 'ex-mining villages' is embedded in a symbolic economy which works to synonymise such communities with a loss of value and with narratives of lack and decline. My rationale for referring to the villages in this research as 'ex-mining villages' is embedded in the way that class is understood throughout this research as a process of categorisation and classification enacted through symbolic delegitimisation. This thesis aims to understand how those who live in the ex-mining villages of County Durham, and who live their lives in relationship with a class structure (which is constantly working to misrecognise and deny their value) subjectively experience the way in which value manifests within and structures their everyday lives. In doing so, I continue to use the term 'ex-mining villages' in order to reveal that the negative connotations of ex-mining communities as left behind morally are deeply entrenched in a classed relationship which attaches moral (de)legitimation to people and places. Refusing to use the term would be to misrecognise ex-mining villages as lacking rather than as the product of a classed power relationship determined to devalue working-class people and places.

1.3 Theoretical and Methodological Overview

This research originally began from a critical realist perspective, an approach I elaborate on in the methodological chapter of this thesis. However, during the early stages of data collection it became clear that critical realism was not the appropriate lens in which to situate this study. This was because participants discussed their lives through a framework of value. Critical phenomenology provides the most appropriate theoretical and analytical lens required to fulfil the aims of this thesis because the very nature of phenomenological thinking involves setting aside taken for granted assumptions about the nature of reality, whilst a critical lens examines the power structures that situate such experiences. The ontology of phenomenological inquiry is grounded in the notion that subjective experience is how we understand reality and that the structures of consciousness are orientated within our experiences. This is simultaneously how we know the world and the only world that we know. Phenomenological theorising understands the world through an intentional relationship where to be conscious is to be orientated towards and conscious of phenomena. Phenomenology rejects the idea that there is an objective world existing beyond subjective experience, or an external reality that we stand outside of. Rather, conscious experience manifests through the way we are embedded in a world of meaning which embodies the past, and is always in flux, and which we engage in as embodied beings. These core phenomenological ideas are formulated through theories of intentionality, the nature of being, embodiment and narrative, concepts which I explore extensively within the theoretical framework of this thesis and which I use as key analytical tools in understanding how value manifests within working-class experience.

A critical phenomenological lens also enables a unique way of perceiving and understanding value to manifest. The ontology of phenomenology provides an alternative perspective of thinking about value outside of how it operates as a resource within a system of exchange. It is phenomenology's ontological stance which provides the theoretical and methodological tools required to explore how morality manifests within working-class experience. This is crucial given that the working-class participants in this research sample are excluded from the dominant system of capitalist value exchange. To attempt to understand and analyse value through the logic of capital is to misrecognise value as the production of the power relations that create classification and categorisation. The turn to critical phenomenology as an interpretive framework was driven by the way participants discussed value in terms of use

rather than exchange. A critical phenomenological lens provides the interpretative framework to explore how the working-class participants in this research subjectively experience morality as a source of value, whilst also providing the critical tools required to analyse how this experience is situated within the classed power structures that enables the world to reveal itself in the way that it does.

Methodologically, critical phenomenology provides the analytical lens required to explore how morality manifests as a mode of meaning whilst also critically evaluating the historical and socio-cultural structures of power that shape and embed this experience. The methods I draw upon shine a light on the class mechanisms and structures that make class categorisation and classification possible, revealing how the working-class are made subjects of moral value through the power dynamics that control the modes and methods of symbolic value exchange. I use narrative interviews and learning walks, a walking methodology I adapted from the education sector, to explore the deep structures of power that constitute this experience. This involved visiting each village alone after the narrative interview had taken place and listening to participants' interview recordings using headphones as I walked through each community. The interview dialogue directed how I walked in these villages and I visited key sites of meaning which participants identified in their interviews as important to them. I also took photographs of such spaces which were not always observable buildings but also everyday sites of interactions such as street corners and fields. Employing such methods through a critical phenomenological lens also enables an exploration into how moral value itself is known, understood, disputed, and lived out, foregrounding the way morality manifests through consciousness as a source of value outside of the dominant system of value exchange, even as it is produced through the power structures that mobilise classed relationships.

1.4 Aims, Objectives and Contributions

To be clear, this research does not aim to analyse or challenge theories about the nature, application and normative function of morality, literature which is extensively explored throughout the philosophical branches of meta ethics, applied ethics, and normative ethics (for an overview see Reis Monteiro, 2014). It does not propose or engage in discussions around definitions of morality or value. That is beyond the scope of this thesis. Rather, this research engages with a critical phenomenological lens and uses four key phenomenological concepts: intentionality; the nature of being; embodiment; and narrative to explore how morality manifests as a mode of meaning through the subjective everyday experience of working-class

people, and how this is lived out as a source of value and devaluation. Essentially, this research enquires into how moral value reveals itself in the way that it does to the working-class people in this study.

This thesis explores how people in the ex-mining villages of County Durham live their lives in relationship with a classed value structure, aiming to understand how value manifests in the lives of the working-class who are excluded from the dominant system of capitalist value exchange. It asks how morality structures the experiences of people who are always subject to moral devaluation and delegitimisation. It investigates how this experience is forged through the classed power relations that are embedded in a socio-cultural and historically situated frame of meaning, and explores the role of individual and collective histories in this process. It examines how this experience is embodied and explores the significance of the body, and the role of emotion, in understanding how people are ascribed, inhabit, reproduce, refuse and sometimes disrupt the classed power structures that shape social life. Finally, this thesis investigates the role of narrative in shaping moral experience. Critically engaging with the way social stories function to legitimise and reproduce class power dynamics, it explores the significance of narratives as a mechanism to situate and make sense of everyday life.

In doing so, this thesis contributes to knowledge about the relations of value that construct personhood. I argue that moral experience manifests through social interactions and local value practices which are not subject to the logic of capitalism, even as they are forged through the power relations that situate this experience. I evidence how moral value operates as an orientating structure, and as use value, even as this experience is mediated through a class system predicated on value exchange and is constantly working to misrecognise and deny working-class value. In exploring the complex manner in which value manifests and circulates outside of the dominant symbolic, this thesis contributes to contemporary class analysis by exposing the class structures and mechanisms that produce class categorisation and classification. I reveal how the markers of class which are used to define, devalue and delegitimise the working-class are produced within class relationships where power dynamics control the legitimisation of such markers. I show how markers of class are read differently on different classed bodies and how class markers mean nothing without whom they are tied to. It is a perspective which shows how class categorisation is a product of the struggle for value and highlights why symbolic systems of exchange are so key in understanding class divisions.

Theoretically, this thesis contributes to discussions about the role of critical phenomenology in understanding the way power mediates and structures subjective experience. I show how critical phenomenology can be used as a tool to interrogate the way power flows through bodies and discuss the power dynamics that connect consciousness and action. I expose the complex and contradictory ways that class comes into being through consciousness, critically analysing how classed power structures shape this embodied experience. I examine how people come to live class through a mode of consciousness which is forged through class struggle, and which also shapes the meaning of value, and the way value is understood, lived out, challenged and contested.

Methodologically, this thesis contributes to new ways of understanding walking as method. In this thesis, I develop and utilise 'learning walks', a walking methodology I adapted from the education sector, in combination with narrative interviews, as a tool to understand the co-production of class and place through a critical phenomenological lens. In doing so, I show how learning walks deepen an understanding of the temporal and relational socio-spatial power dynamics which constitute the way place is conceptualised as a space of meaning. The method gives primacy to participants' narratives because it directs the researcher's movement through space, situating participants' stories as actively shaping the meaning of places and enabling different interpretations of value to manifest outside of the dominant symbolic. Learning walks enable a different process of perceiving meaning and value whilst also threading together participants' experiences as connected over time and through space. In this thesis, learning walks have enabled a deeper understanding of the role of class and place in co-producing social environments and how value manifests in this context.

1.5 Thesis Outline

So far, I have set out the background and context of this study, exposing the class mechanisms and structures embedded in the 'left-behind' narrative which characterises historical and contemporary socio-political discussions of working-class experience. I have shown how the 'left-behind' narrative is produced through symbolic representations which interweave the domain of the moral into socio-cultural and socio-spatial power dynamics and relationships. I have highlighted the significance of the mining communities as central to the 'left-behind' narrative, and situated the ex-mining villages of County Durham as the most appropriate research setting. I have also given an overview of critical phenomenology as a theoretical framework and positioned the perspective as the key interpretive and analytical lens required

to fulfil the aims of this research. Finally, I have identified the key research questions and specified how this thesis contributes to empirical, theoretical and methodological discussions.

In Chapter two I review the cross-disciplinary literature that I have drawn on to inform my research aims and objectives. I define how class is used in this research through a symbolic economic lens, drawing on work which evidences how class categorisation and classifications are made through processes of moral distinction and are embedded in historical and relational power dynamics which control and regulate value exchange. I discuss the multi-faceted nature of the way people are produced as moral subjects, drawing on Bourdieu's (1984) framework of capital to show how the formation of a middle-class identity is dependent on the construction of a fixed and static working-class mass. Throughout the literature review I define and interweave the concepts of place and neoliberalism, showing how the commodification of the self as the site of value accumulation shapes socio-spatial patterns of mobility.

In chapter three I set out the core ideas underpinning phenomenological tradition. I draw on three key classical phenomenological thinkers: Edmund Husserl; Martin Heidegger; and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and define how the key phenomenological concepts of intentionality, the nature of being, embodiment and narrative provide the conceptual analysis required to fulfil the aims of this research. I explain how critical phenomenology emerged as a sub-discipline within the phenomenological tradition and draw on contemporary work which critically evaluates the deep structures of power that shape subjectivity. I show how critical phenomenology is the most appropriate mode of inquiry to explore how working-class people in this research make sense of the way morality structures their experiences.

In chapter four I lay out the methodological approach for this study, showing how the phenomenological concepts defined in the theoretical framework are embedded in the research design. I explain how this project did not start from a critical phenomenological perspective and chart the way phenomenology emerged as the most appropriate lens to understand the research problem. I situate the ontology of phenomenology as critical to this process and explain how key phenomenological ontological assumptions about the nature of being shape the direction of this research. I discuss the rationale underpinning my data collection methods and explain how I developed a walking methodology to counteract the constraints of the Covid-19 lockdown which restricted in-person research. I also lay out the reflexive and ethical considerations undertaken throughout this research, explaining how the turn to phenomenology was key to this process.

Chapter five signals the beginning of my empirical analysis. The empirical section of this thesis analyses the interdependent class dynamics and processes that structure and shape social relations within the spheres of education, work and place. Although there are other aspects of social life which people do derive meaning and value from such as family, friendship, volunteering and leisure pursuits, these spaces of meaning often (although not always) sit outside of the dominant system of capital exchange. Education, work and place were chosen as key sites of meaning to analyse within this thesis because they are so deeply embedded in the logic of capital and are so crucial to maintaining class categorisation and classification. The analysis is presented as separate chapters within the thesis, and this is to enable clarity and clear articulation of the data and not because these social spheres are distinct from one another. Organising the data in this manner captures the complexity of the temporal, relational and cumulative class mechanisms that manifest within and between these key spheres of social life. I show how class disadvantage accrues across time through the experiences of education, work and place, evidencing how the processes and mechanisms that manifest within these domains of social life are not singular disjointed events but are connected by the struggle for value.

Chapter five explores how value manifests within the education environment. I situate schools as key sites of meaning phenomenologically, showing how the rituals and rules of the school day place particular emphasis on the relationship between consciousness and action, and explore the temporal nature of the multi-layered mechanisms through which schools embody the past and shape the future. I also situate secondary schools as specific sites of class struggle. I analyse the class mechanisms and relationships which facilitate inclusion and exclusion from the secondary school environment. I explore how symbolic representations and discourses of working-class immorality shape participants' experiences of value, and identify neoliberalism as key to shaping the class relations that mediate subjective experience in this space.

In chapter six I explore the working environment. I show how the legacy of the industrial economies shapes participants' understanding of morality and value, and explore the significance of this socio-cultural history in how participants embody the past. I discuss how participants forge their own understandings of the value of labour and explore how this manifests as value practices within the labour market. I examine how this experience is forged through a neoliberal political economy and mediated through a classed social structure that mobilises narratives of lack and decline to devalue working-class labour. In this chapter, I

emphasise the body as the key mode of meaning and the site of value production, examining the gendered power dynamics that are ascribed and contested through classed bodies, and discuss how moral evaluations of the self are negotiated through the class dynamics that deny personhood and value to working-class people.

Chapter seven completes my empirical analysis. This chapter discusses how participants experience and inhabit place. I engage with the class mechanisms that connect the domain of the moral to the spatial, exploring the relationship between consciousness and action to show how subjective experiences of value shape patterns of mobility. I emphasise how the struggle for value manifests through local forms of boundary making, socio-spatial actions and practices which are embedded in the historical and contemporary narratives of 'left-behind' people and places. In this chapter, I continue to foreground the significance of the body, and show how gendered class mechanisms ascribe moral failings onto working-class bodies in order to fix working-class people in place. I show that these experiences are forged through subjective moral understandings of what it means to be mobile.

In chapter eight I draw together the empirical discussion. I summarise how the critical phenomenological approach undertaken in this research provides a unique lens to engage with the complexities and contradictions that constitute how moral experience manifests in the ex-mining communities of County Durham. I reflect on the aims and objectives of this project, highlighting the limitations of this research, and outline how this influences the contribution of this thesis to theoretical, methodological and empirical conversations. Finally, I discuss how the approach I have undertaken in this research enables an exploration of how value is constructed outside of the dominant symbolic and suggest some directions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This research explores the classed nature of moral experience. In doing so, this study draws on work from multiple disciplines including Sociology, Social Geography and Politics, encompassing areas of research on class, place and neoliberalism. There is not scope here to address these vast bodies of work in great depth. Rather, this chapter provides an overview of the existing research that supports the phenomenological framework of this study. I draw on cross-disciplinary research which explores the multi-faceted nature of the way people are produced as classed moral subjects, and how this manifests in everyday lived experience. Consequently, this literature review is presented in a thematic style. Five subsections explore work which focuses on the moral dimensions of class mechanisms and structures, examining how class inequalities are produced and maintained through an interrelated and mutually reinforcing set of micro and macro processes within multiple spheres of social life. I interweave the key concepts of neoliberalism and place through these subsections, defining how they are understood and analysed in relation to this research, and situating these concepts as central to the production of classed moral subjects.

This review begins by framing how class is defined in this study through a symbolic economic lens and is analysed in terms of the relational set of complex mechanisms through which the concept of value is lived out - embodied, contested, produced through conflict as well as cohesion, and made through dynamic, shifting, and sometimes competing modes of use and exchange. This chapter moves on to examine how the working-class are made as a category through processes of moral distinction, before continuing to discuss the way middle-class identity making is dependent on the notion of a fixed and static working-class. I then use Bourdieu's framework of capital (1984) and theory of habitus (1977) to show how the concept of personhood is produced and re-made in the context of a class system where the symbolic economy controls and regulates value exchange. Finally, this chapter engages with how working-class people resist imposed classificatory processes and refuse to be devalued. It is a space where localised and contextually formed values interrupt and contest the processes of symbolic devaluation and delegitimisation. The struggle for value routinely leads to reinforcing class inequalities but it also sometimes challenges and disrupts class structures. I explore how temporal and relational patterns of inequality produce subjective experiences of value that

connect conscience itself to the structures of consciousness, which can work to refuse and reject neoliberal notions of individualism and investment in the self. However, the extent to which this manifests as resistance is complex and is also embedded in the multi-layered class mechanisms and structures which operate to keep the working-class fixed in place.

Throughout this chapter I continually situate the critical role of neoliberalism in shaping moral experience, and use existing research to demonstrate how neoliberal policy shapes the meaning of value, evidencing how market forces commodify social life by controlling the modes and methods of value exchange. I also draw on the concept of place throughout, exploring how classed moral experiences are spatialised and shape the way classed subjects move through physical and symbolic spaces. In structuring this review thematically, I bring together relevant literature to evidence that class inequalities run through the heart of moral experience. Class dynamics are written into policy, enacted and symbolically legitimised through social institutions. Classed judgements are underpinned by a moral authority which demonises working-class people and places. However, morality does not only manifest as a source of devaluation for working-class people, but morality also manifests as a source of meaning and as an orientating structure within working-class communities. This classed nature of moral experience is under explored and it is in this relationship where I situate my research.

2.2 Classifying 'Class'

The manner in which class is utilised as an analytical tool within sociological research is multi-faceted and sometimes conflicting, particularly when social stratification analysis is conflated with and measured alongside cultural and symbolic classed indicators (Skeggs, 2015). Stratification is a long-standing governance tool of classification introduced by William Petty in the mid-seventeenth century and was designed to catalogue occupations for the basis of collecting tax (for an overview see Lepenies, 2016). Such early forms of categorisation developed into an official system of classification known as the Registrar-Generals Social Classification of Occupations which was in use until the mid-1980s and listed six grades of occupation. These are not neutral categories but are hierarchical in nature with occupations typically undertaken by the elite positioned as morally and economically superior (Szreter, 1984). Goldthorpe's (1992) class schema was subsequently developed as a critique to this model and his seven-tiered strata reflects a more complex understanding of labour market

dynamics as power relations and structures were integrated into stratification analysis. Similarly, the Great British Class Survey (Savage et al., 2013) is a more recent examination and understanding of the role of elite power and wealth in class structures, given that wealth concentration has changed the nature of economic inequality as more money is now generated through ownership than income and wealth is now as much about what is owned as how much is earned.

Stratification analysis considers where people are positioned in a classed structure and how they are ranked within a hierarchical system on the basis of accumulating ever shifting and increasingly complex markers of value. However, this type of class analysis does not take into account the processes through which people come to be recognised and classified as inhabiting and holding value. The power dynamics which control how people come to be recognised as valuable are key to understanding how classification occurs and they are vital to understanding classed relationships. The symbolic economy works to legitimise, commodify, and convert culture into capital and therefore it is the process of how people become positioned in their relationship to ownership, consumerism and consumption rather than what is owned and consumed which is critical to analysing how people come to be categorised and classified (Skeggs, 2015; Tyler, 2015). Consequently, this research undertakes an analysis of class which examines how people are produced as classed moral subjects through processes of symbolic (de)legitimisation. The literatures I draw upon shine a light on the class mechanisms which shape how some people come to be fixed in place and rendered immobile - spatially, symbolically and economically - whilst others are authorised, facilitated and enabled to take up and move through layers and levels of space. It is an analysis which uncovers how people are made subjects of moral value, but which also considers how moral value itself is known, understood, disputed, and lived out through power dynamics which are contested and challenged, and which also constitute everyday experience.

2.3 Making the Working-class

Classification processes reflect how people are (de)valued (Skeggs, 2015; Tyler, 2015). Categories of class are social and cultural manifestations laden with moral value judgements and are produced through conflict. The working-class as a category is a product of a long history of class struggle, but it is also a dynamic, shifting and dialectical relationship such that the making of the working-class is one which is always in the process of being made. In this sense, the working-class as a social category is also one which is re-made through its

relationship to itself, and the processes of oppression, exploitation, as well as challenge and resistance which produce and shape it. The values that are produced through this dialectical relationship are critical to understanding how value itself is known, understood, experienced and lived out. Thompson's (1968) work is particularly relevant here as he charts the development of a working-class made over time and through conflict, as exploitative class mechanisms moulded a working-class with particular concerns and interests around the value of their bodies and their labour. Modes of collective organising which formed the beginnings of the burgeoning trade unionism movement did organise and achieve institutional and legislative change. However, Thompson's framing of working-class agency and the values of collectivism and solidarity produced through this experience is not without recognition of the constraining and multi-faceted nature of class mechanisms.

The category of class is a moral one. The way class dynamics work through economic and social policy, social institutions and everyday interactions is to continually embed class distinctions through the maintenance of moral distance. It is a category made through relational power structures of which gender is significant. There is a contentious and dialectical relationship between the British mainstream media and the political domain. Both institutions have a vested interest in, as well as a long history of legislating and authorising gendered symbolic delegitimisation to produce and maintain moral distance and hierarchical class categorisation (Hall, 1978; O'Brien, 2019). As explored in the introductory chapter of this thesis, the working-class are routinely demonised through media representations, and in government rhetoric and policy, particularly during periods of political and economic turmoil and deterioration (Haylett, 2003). It is the boundary between middle-class and working-class which is key to the construction of the meaning of the proletariat (Savage, 2015) and central to the marking and maintenance of distinction and distance between the moral and immoral citizen.

2.3.1 Working-class Men

Working-class men are symbolically represented as inhabiting moral lack, as pathological aggression is ascribed onto the bodies of working-class boys and young men, a process which denies anger resulting from oppression and exploitation (Gillies, 2016). The demonisation of the working-class through visual and written representations of political conflict is well documented. Represented as aggressive thugs during the process of and in the wake of deindustrialisation (McDowell, 2002), including the miners strikes of 1984/85 (Hart, 2017; Tranmer, 2022), working-class men are delegitimised as not only lacking in morals and values,

but also as regressive and backwards. This has a particularly pernicious effect of creating an illusionary narrative where the working-class, through their own inability to move forward, actively fix themselves in place.

Symbolic violence operates here on a dual level. Firstly, representations of decay place the responsibility for economic and labour market fragility in the hands of the working-class by symbolically shrouding neoliberal economic policy as individual lack (Strangleman, 2002; Nettleingham, 2017). Neoliberal ideology is a key tool in the maintenance of class inequalities and works to connect the negative effects of macroeconomic policy to the failure of the individual. A contested term and more frequently used to critique than describe an economic position (Jessop, 2013), neoliberal economic and social policy is characterised by free market capitalism which underpins the desire for continuous economic growth. Harvey (2005) charts the roots and growth of neoliberalism as an economic, political and social philosophy, highlighting how the notion of 'freedom' underlies the way neoliberal philosophy manifests through the rise and dominance of a global deregulated economic market, the privatisation of public sector services, and the withdrawal of state regulation and influence from economic policy.

Neoliberalism also positions people as consumers. Almost every aspect of social life is now market driven with consumerism saturating everyday life, transforming the mundane routines of rituals such as eating and exercising to practices of consumption (Brown, 2019). Brown views this marketisation of social life as essentially anti-democratic and ultimately leads to nihilism because the values underpinning neoliberalism are orientated around the continuous accumulation and consumption of capital. Consequently, how morality manifests as an experience and as a structuring force in neoliberal societies is forged through the dominance of the market. Brown (2016) articulates this experience in sacrificial terms where the harmful aspects of a world orientated around the continuous accumulation of growth, which manifests as rampant inequality, housing insecurity, and precarious and insecure employment, are reframed in terms of a sacrifice to the needs of capital. This means that the way we relate to one another, and the sense of moral experience that manifests through being in the world with others, is made through a neoliberal market order. Within a neoliberal market, the way people are inhibited and enabled by free market governance is perceived to be the result of individual success, or failure, and this is paradoxically framed through the lens of moral pathology.

Consequently, the second way that symbolic violence works to demonise working-class men during periods of political and economic conflict is to locate economic failure in the individual through the appeal to moral agency. Moral distinctions are created on the differentiation of what is respectable, appropriate and acceptable, but the domain of morality is also an active one in that the social world frequently demands action. Consequently, decisions that manifest in the actions and practices of people are also considered to be a moral issue (Sanders and Wisnewski, 2012). In this sense we can think of the moral space as inherently mobile. When the working-classes are symbolically represented as pathologically regressive, they are positioned as immoral through both their lack of knowledge in how to perform respectable practices and actions (they do not protest in the appropriate way and are not worthy of being heard), and their lack of innate knowledge to move through space in the moral way (they cannot move with the times). Even when labour market fragmentation and the associated socio-economic decline is acknowledged in media representations and political rhetoric, it is frequently within a framework of moral lack. We can see this clearly within media and political post-Brexit rhetoric where the demise of manufacturing in coastal towns and cities, and post-industrial communities, is framed through the narrative of 'left-behind' people and places. As explored in the introductory chapter of this thesis, the 'left-behind' narrative is embedded in the symbolic delegitimisation of the working-class who are portrayed as regressive and unable to embrace progression and change. It is a form of symbolic violence as social and economic marginalisation is reframed as a pathological moral deficiency (Watson, 2018).

Working-class men are able in some spaces to gain legitimacy through the privileging of masculinity in the family domain (Connell, 1995), and in the industrial economies (Willis, 1977), although deindustrialisation has limited the already restricted ability to trade on traditional masculine notions of working the body through labour (McDowell, 2003; Nayak, 2006). Where working-class men have some ability to capitalise and trade on constructions of masculinity, it is the bodies of working-class women in which class is most deeply coded, restricting the ability for working-class women to move beyond a position rooted in devaluation. Finch (1993) explores how working-class women as a category came to be known and made real through what they were not; produced as a social category to distinguish between the respectable and the immoral woman. These judgements are heavily orientated around sexual practices, family dynamics, particularly parenting styles, and embodied behaviours and actions. Finch notes how these judgements are made on the basis of a claim

to moral authority such that in their ability to judge, the middle-classes are able to differentiate themselves as moral subjects whilst also using this claim to enact the ability to determine what constitutes respectability. As Strathern (1992) explains, this results in a tautology where middle-class bodies are deemed to embody a deeper morality by virtue of their public displays of respectability and as such, this inner morality is also deemed implicit in their performance of their respectability. In other words, where working-class bodies are represented as deficient and lacking, middle-class bodies just are. They exist as the default embodiment of morality, and as a consequence of knowing and inhabiting morality, they also claim the moral authority to judge who else is respectable, moral and valuable.

2.3.2 Working-class Women

Working-class women are devalued through the symbolic processes which position them as displaying femininity incorrectly and immorally (Walkerdine, 1997), including within patterns of consumption and sexual practices (Skeggs, 1997), and parenting (Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989; Close, 2016). Symbolic representations locate a lack of morals in the perceived excess of working-class women: they drink too much; are too loud; show too much flesh; have too much sex; and too many children whom they cannot control; and who are also portrayed as excessively wild (Lawler, 2005). These portrayals take on a deeply sinister aspect through the reality television genre as objectification and humiliation of working-class women dominate the screen. Such programmes are specifically orientated around a self-help style mantra in supposedly enabling the women to see how they can improve their lives (Skeggs, 2009). Essentially, reality television programmes are another attempt to 'civilise' working-class women, long-standing class practices which have operated extensively under the guise of help and advice (Donzelot and Hurley, 1997).

However, working-class women are routinely locked out of the ability to accumulate capital that would appease middle-class viewers, and even when this process does occur, class signifiers are read differently on different classed bodies. Symbolic processes work to ensure delegitimisation for the working-classes. Even the deep sense of shame and inauthenticity felt by working-class women when they attempt to transcend class boundaries (Skeggs, 1997; Lawler, 1999) is mocked in sitcoms such as *Keeping up Appearances* where the lead character attempts to 'pass' as middle-class through her patterns of consumption, clothing and the cleanliness of her house (Gymnich, 2016). She is ridiculed as absurd for attempting to be what she is not. This is the double bind for working-class women. Even when attempts are made to

adopt middle-class conventions, symbolic representations work to create the problem, deny the solution and to fix working-class women in place. This shows how bodies are not neutral carriers of value laden capital but are actively part of the process of value production. When working-class women attempt to transcend class boundaries they find mobility is not straightforward as access to multiple forms of capital is routinely blocked. The symbolic economy which is the key tool in the legitimisation of capital is constantly working to reinforce and position the very core of working-class women as valueless (Skeggs, 1997, 2004; Lawler, 2005, 2008).

This means the perceived moral lack which justifies social policies of neglect are not only economically and socially punitive but are forms of symbolic violence. This is because such corrective methods supposedly designed to improve the lives of the working-classes actually have a different purpose which is to create moral distance and fix the working-class in place. Social policies which enact austerity and disproportionally target the most vulnerable, such as the bedroom tax (Bogue, 2019), and the sanctions embedded in the universal credit experience (Cheetham et al., 2019), operate in such an exclusionary manner that they actively work to keep the working-class in precarious and insecure positions. The maintenance of moral distance is crucial to the processes of classification which produce the middle-class as a hierarchical and valuable category, a distinction which has become increasingly heightened as the concentration of assets and power in the super rich has simultaneously led to the stagnation of middle-class wealth and power (Sayer, 2014). This intensifies the focus on the body, and the self, as a marker of moral value and explains why bodies signify class itself independent of what class markers are worn on the body, or how the body invests in consumerism and the consumption of culture. Class markers mean nothing without whom they are tied to and the process of middle-class identity making in contemporary Britain is dependent on working-class bodies being rendered immobile through the pathologisation of moral lack.

2.4 Constructing the Middle-class

Working-class identities are represented as the immoral mass in symbolic representations and act as a folly for the making of middle-class identities. They exist to make middle-class identities real such that constructions of what is supposedly moral reveals very little about working-class identities or moral experiences, but they do show how a respectable middle-class identity is forged (Lawler, 2005). This not only works to position the middle-class body

as normative, but because classed power relations work to locate innate morality within the middle-class body, then middle-class normativity comes to reflect morality itself. Lawler highlights how disgust for the bodies of working-class women is of particular significance to the making of a middle-class identity because, as Orwell (1962) notes, the very core of the middle-class as an identity is wholly dependent on being repulsed and disgusted by working-class people. To refuse to be disgusted by the working-class is to refuse middle-class value. Disgust is an emotion which marks limits and boundaries (Miller, 1998). To be disgusted by someone is to know them or their practices as abhorrent such that to be disgusted by the working-classes is to know the working-class and their practices as abhorrent.

Paradoxically, the denial of class is central to how the middle-class execute the boundaries of class categorisation. It is one of the key mechanisms in how people are produced as classed moral subjects. Working-class people are represented as pathological in their behaviours, and the symbolic narratives that accompany their lack of economic and social capital is embedded in the embodiment of a lack of morality. Moral evaluations and middle-class authorising mark out the working-class as having a self which is innately wrong. It is a pathologisation embedded in political rhetoric, a particular feature of Thatcherism (Cummins, 2021) but also of New Labour which used narratives of lack to justify social exclusion (Levitas, 1998), and to present welfare reforms as requiring personal and moral re-education (Haylett, 2001). Austerity itself is built on an appeal to the reinforcement of moral standards as the language of necessity and self-discipline masquerades as duty and sacrifice, with those who refuse to comply being marked out as moral failures (Marsden, 2023). The lack of labour market investment, as well as political fractures such as Brexit which further erodes employment opportunities, are frequently framed as a degeneration in the moral value of working-class people (Walker and Roberts, 2017). Such framing echoes Lawler's (2005) analysis which shows that narratives of working-class lack also accompany narratives of working-class decline.

In the production of such an underclass ideology there is implicit a 'fall from grace' which seemingly invites the opportunity to rectify behaviour. This is an illusion. Maintaining classificatory distinctions is critical to how the middle-class retain their advantage. As discussed, symbolic devaluation operates across the political domain within social policy and social institutions, and frequently in conjunction with the mass media, to devalue and delegitimise working-class bodies. Working-class homes and communities are also key spaces

in the struggle for value. The way neoliberal policies are enacted through urban planning is through classed power dynamics which transform or 'gentrify' urban spaces (Glass, 1964).

2.4.1 Gentrification

Gentrification fractures working-class communities as the middle-class occupy low-income towns and villages resulting in the displacement of their residents. This is routinely achieved through influential and morally based political rhetoric around 'social mixing' and 'diversity,' although processes of gentrification routinely exclude and segregate rather than improve and enhance the lives of the working-class (for an overview see Bridge, Butler and Lees, 2012). The moral dynamics underpinning processes of gentrification are particularly troubling as morality is framed as a justification for gentrification in a duplicitous manner. Gentrification is positioned as a moral project designed to mix classed communities. However, processes of gentrification also simultaneously operate to exclude the working-class from middle-class spaces, as symbolic devaluation is enacted via public policy on the basis that the working-class require moral re-education.

Smith (1996) coined the term 'revanchism' to account for the punitive policies embedded in urban planning, community policing and social welfare which operate to position the working-class as deviant, and which subsequently leads to the reactionary pursuit of enacting revenge against the most marginalised who are symbolically represented as responsible for the failure of the city. Such vengeance is legitimised under the guise of restoring moral order. The appeal to a decline in moral values not only displaces working-class people from their homes and communities but also interrupts and co-produces the meaning of value. Allen (2008) explores how social policy embedded in processes of gentrification actively draws boundaries around the meaning of the home as a form of value. Allen argues that the middle-class see the home as a form of status and as a capital resource, altering the focus from a place to embed and cultivate social ties, notions which were the hallmark of social housing. This requires cultivating the idea that working-class communities and homes are faulty and need fixing, and consequently it is the maintenance of symbolic distance which marks out communities and people in need of 'renewal.' Although there is little work exploring gentrification in the context of County Durham, some of the small industrial communities in Newcastle which formed part of the neighbouring Northumberland coalfield, have seen significant redevelopment. A particularly interesting case study is Byker, an inner-city district of Newcastle which sits downstream from Elswick Colliery on the River Tyne (see figure 1).

2.4.1.1 Case Study: Byker

The redevelopment of Byker is detailed through a monograph (Pendlebury, Townshend and Gilroy, 2009). Once a coal mining settlement, Byker provided housing for the industries operating along the River Tyne, including shipbuilding and lead making. The area is home to a Grade two listed housing development known as the Byker Wall. Originally planned in the late 1960s to rehouse local residents after much of the Victorian terraces were demolished, the Byker Wall was uniquely designed with the intention of maintaining existing patterns of social interaction and community ties. Although the development suffered from a multitude of problems leading to less than half of Byker residents returning to the area, a proposal to demolish part of the development in the late 1990s was met with controversy. This led to action in terms of a Conservation Plan for the area, a strategy which was mediated through community groups, the local housing management authority, conservationists and local residents. The authors note that Byker is deemed to be 'special' by those involved in the redevelopment of the area, and although there are mixed feelings about living in Byker, there is a consensus that those agencies involved in the Conservation Plan do highly value the importance of community, kinship ties and attachment to place.

However, the redevelopment of Byker also occurred in the context of gentrification processes as the re-drawing of administrative boundaries separated the urban suburb of Byker from a region termed the Ouseburn Valley. This reconfiguration of geographical boundaries in 2007 was accompanied by significant investment as well as local government support for the Ouseburn Valley. Rebranded as a creative hub with bars, art galleries and independent shops, the Ouseburn Valley is now marketed as a specific visitor attraction and is symbolically as well as geographically separated from its neighbour, Byker. The example of Byker demonstrates how the construction of a middle-class identity is built and maintained through distance, as gentrification manifests through the formation of boundaries to distinguish between the working-class community and the new space built on conceptions of creativity and innovation, and fashioned through art, music and café culture. The deliberate manufacturing of inner-city spaces to attract who Florida (2003) labels the 'creative classes' also generates vastly unequal patterns of socio-spatial development within these new creative spaces, increasing segregation and displacing residents, as investors render housing unaffordable and often empty (Florida, 2018).

Indeed, long-standing residents of the Ouseburn Valley's artistic community have been impacted by the sharp rise in the cost of housing as local authority governance and commercial marketing of the area has brought competition for urban space, whilst also eradicating the countercultural atmosphere that originally attracted working-class artists to the area (Whiting and Hannam, 2017). As Bourdieu noted (Dunn, 1988), the value of art is mediated through the relations of class that situate its consumption such that the value of a creative community is negotiated through the symbolic legitimacy of those who inhabit the spaces. Moreover, the middle-class are able to extract and utilise aspects of working-class culture as a resource to cultivate a self, whilst detaching from the class relations that produce such an experience (Skeggs, 2004).

In the Ouseburn Valley this manifests as both proximity and distance. The middle-class inhabit and occupy urban space originally constructed through the aftermath of deindustrialisation, where dilapidation and deprivation fuelled working-class artistic creativity (for an example see the work of Tish Murtha[1]). The new middle-class inhabitants of the Ouseburn Valley extract these aspects of working-class culture produced from the margins as a source of value to trade within the dominant system of capital exchange. This is not about mainstream and alternative forms of living. Rather, the gentrification of the Ouseburn Valley, and the separation of the area from its working-class origins, is grounded in the moral authority of the middle-class who are able to occupy space forged through marginalisation, and adopt sub-cultural authenticity as a mobile resource. From this perspective, it is unsurprising that cities which use art, music and culture originating outside of the dominant symbolic to entice the affluent middle-class have become places fuelling vastly unequal patterns of mobility and displacement.

2.4.2 People and Place

The case study of Byker demonstrates how place is not a fixed entity, rather places are dynamic, active, fluid and are always in the process of being made. Place is central to the way social life is produced and enacted but it is not a backdrop for it, rather place is part of the co-production of social life. Place and class are co-created in a relational manner through the intersecting dynamics of the multiple global and local networks and flows that create spaces. This means that space is not fixed and static, rather it is constantly changing as people move

[1] Tish Murtha captured working-class life during the Thatcher government in Elswick, Newcastle using documentary photography. http://www.tishmurtha.co.uk/

in and out of places, as macroeconomic policies mould and shape the direction of institutional structures, and as everyday relationships are forged within and between places, changing and shaping norms, values and practices, and creating continuous transformation within them (Massey, 2005). Understanding the role of place in sociological enquiry does not mean studying place as an independent variable, or analysing the impact of a place itself, because places are so deeply embedded in the construction of social life that the consequences 'of place' are almost impossible to identify (Gieryn, 2000). Place co-produces the social: embedding; reinforcing; challenging; and disrupting social inequalities through socio-spatial patterns and processes. To understand place as a process is to see the multiple ways that power flows through networks of people depending on how they are located in their relationship to institutional structures, historical and contemporary capitalist development, as well as the class-based dynamics that symbolically devalue or legitimise people and places.

Gentrification is part of a neoliberal agenda and is enacted through class-based mechanisms, but it is not a process made independent of and imposed on place, rather gentrification is embedded in the co-production of social life and the way we are all engaged in the process of continually making places. Micro and macro aspects of social life are interrelated, and the socio-spatial dynamics of towns, cities and regions reflect how global and local networks connect with and form part of capitalist development and institutional practices (Amin, 2005). The displacement of working-class people and communities under the guise of gentrification and urban renewal evidences how spatial inequalities are produced relationally by local and global changes that are interdependent. Here we see a global sense of place as local transformation is shaped by macro ideologies and processes. Places are products of social relations and at the same time they are key to the production of relations between people, and between people and their environment. Consequently, gentrification is a process of intersecting social relations such that it is a product of, and also simultaneously embedded into the very core of middle-class identity making. The neoliberal values of investment in the self which underpin processes of gentrification are also played out through patterns of consumption and consumerism within multi-layered social relationships. Individualisation structures intimate family dynamics as well as shaping the philosophies and values of social institutions from the education system to the welfare state. It is a mode of being which manifests through the cultivation of a valuable self where accrued forms of capital can be traded through the dominant symbolic system of capital exchange.

2.4.3 Concerted Cultivation

Lareau (2003) explores how valuable selves are constructed through the parental practices of the middle-class. She argues that individualisation strategies operate through modes of 'concerted cultivation' where parents control and structure family leisure activities in a manner which adds value to themselves and their children. The cultural practices of middle-class families come to be seen as the normative default. Critically, the normalisation of the processes of adding value to the self as a form of 'improvement' actively shapes the meaning of value, such that what counts as value itself is recognised through the way the middle-class construct and define personhood. These practices of 'concerted cultivation' come to be written into policy, valued and practised in the everyday social spaces of the classroom (Crozier et al., 2008), and in the wider relationship between school and community (Crozier, 2015), as well as in the workplace (Bennett et al., 2009; Friedman and Laurison, 2019), as individualism, competition and self-interest are reframed as the production of the moral self (Rose, 1996).

It is the normalisation of neoliberal middle-class cultural practices marking the boundaries of acceptable selfhood that creates symbolic distance between what is classified as value within the dominant system of capitalist exchange, as well as legitimising who is authorised to create and define the boundaries of valuable personhood. Middle-class identity making operates at multiple layers and levels of social life. It is enacted in policy and embedded in social institutions, and structures the mutually reinforcing interplay between these macro and micro elements of social life. Middle-class identities depend on the construction of a fixed immoral working-class and this categorisation is created through the maintenance of moral distance across and within micro and macro elements of social life. Such differentiation is entangled in neoliberal dynamics and mechanisms, producing people and places through a dialectical, continual and mutually reinforcing process. Middle-class identity making is deeply embedded in this process of continual production because at the root of the maintenance of distance between categories of classification and categorisation is the construction of personhood as an active moral endeavour.

2.5 Producing Personhood

Classification and categorisation are forms of valuation. Working-class and middle-class identities are produced through a dialectical relationship where power dynamics situate the

ability to judge which forms of capital are valuable and who is able to inhabit value. The moral authority of the middle-classes ensures that class boundaries remain fixed in place because middle-class identities depend on the drawing of classed boundaries and the maintenance of distance. This is why the working-classes are routinely represented in popular culture as two-dimensional caricatures; they are denied selfhood, meaning that their selves are not only positioned as wrong but are fixed such that even when they do negotiate class dynamics to accrue various forms of capital, such capital is not symbolically legitimised and cannot be converted into forms of value exchange (Skeggs, 2004).

Bourdieu's (1979, 1984) framework of capital distinguishes between economic (financial wealth and assets), social (personal relationships and connections), and cultural capital (embodied dispositions, cultural knowledge and practices, and institutional resources). He shows how different forms of capital can be used and exchanged, and offers a way of viewing how restriction or access to capital can facilitate or limit movement through space. Bourdieu also distinguishes between these forms of capital and symbolic capital. Symbolic capital is central to the legitimisation of economic, social and cultural capital in that the tradeable value of what we own, who we know, and how we embody dispositions and act out cultural practices is dependent on the symbolic value of those forms of capital. The symbolic can therefore block exchange meaning the same capital can be used and exchanged in one situation but not in another. For example, working-class men can claim limited amounts of cultural capital through the symbolic privileging and legitimisation of masculinity within particular social contexts, but this same capital is also used to deny access to a post-industrial economy (Willis, 1977; Evans and Tilley, 2017). In other words, symbolic capital can facilitate the exchange and conversion to cultural capital whilst simultaneously preventing the same capital to be exchanged for economic power.

Consequently, it is how forms of capital can be used and exchanged which is key to analysing and recognising how value is converted into capital through the symbolic economy. This is to understand capital as less about the accumulation and trade value of various forms of capital as tangible objects, but rather, how they come to be legitimised as valuable and tradable through the subjective. Bourdieu's distinction (1984) is a social commentary on French cultural practices, how practices come to be known as (dis)tasteful and how such symbolic processes convey a moral authority because 'taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier' (p.16). It is the distinction itself and not the objects that mark differentiation which is key to class

categorisation, the maintenance of distance, and the production of the self. This is why symbolic representations of class are so central to the way class divisions and inequalities manifest in everyday life. The symbolic legitimises not only the value of capital but how this is read differently on different bodies.

Much research documents the complex way that class inequalities manifest in the workplace, enabling and constraining access to multiple forms of capital, which in turn facilitates or blocks access to, and progress within, the labour market (Friedman and Laurison, 2019). However, to understand classed relationships is to understand how capital is read through personhood. Actions and practices which fix the working-class in place can be transformed into capital when used by the middle-class because these dispositions are read differently on different classed bodies. Ocejo (2018) shows how highly educated middle-class men in the US are choosing to pursue traditionally working-class employment, such as barbering and bar tending, and are able to convert their labour in exchange for significant economic capital by engineering local forms of symbolic legitimacy. In positioning these roles as 'vocations' they are able to ascribe a different meaning to the job. In their hands, the barber's blade and the bartender's kit are transformed from signifying low-skilled employment to tools representing creative endeavours, and it is the classificatory signifiers and power that enables these middle-class men to change the meaning and social significance of the work which is critical in how they convert these low-paid and low-status roles to economic capital.

For the working-class, markers of class such as education, work and housing operate to devalue and delegitimise working-class bodies and block capital exchange, whereas the middle-class can use the same class signifiers to convert into capital. Elements of working-class culture and stories of the hardship of extended family reaching back through generations are routinely used by the middle-class to position themselves as the hero of their own stories, struggling against the odds to overcome adversity (Friedman et al., 2021). These same narratives operate to restrict the ability of the working-class to move through space. Stories of hardship told by working-class voices are read in corporate workplaces as a lack of polish and as failing to 'fit in' (Friedman and Laurison, 2019). It is the moral authority already held by the middle-class which enables their ability to reframe working-class labour as virtuous hard work when it is undertaken by their bodies, and to trade this work for cultural and economic capital in the labour market.

This is why it is critical to understand class as more than access to, and restriction from, the ability to accumulate forms of capital which can facilitate or restrict movement through space. This is because class relationships are not only about accumulating and exchanging capital but rather, how these forms of capital come to be legitimised as valuable within social spaces. We can see this clearly in the way education is used and exchanged within a classed social structure. Education is routinely viewed as an escape route for working-class children. Social policies such as widening participation are part of the political rhetoric of improvement and are positioned as tools that will improve the ability of the working-class to accumulate cultural capital. Such policies rarely work but instead reinforce class inequalities (Cunningham and Samson, 2021). For example, one of Ofsted's key goals is to enable working-class children to experience what they identify as 'cultural capital.' However, they miss the point. When the working-classes are able to access forms of valued capital, this capital rapidly becomes a source of devaluation.

We can see this in patterns of consumption when consumer goods become delegitimised when inhabited by working-class bodies. A case in point is the fashion designer, Burberry, who burned one of their designer ranges when their goods became popular amongst the masses. A Burberry bag is no longer a signifier of value when carried by the wrong hand. This is why as Skeggs and Loveday (2012) highlight, people are not just bodies who transmit capital but they are active producers in the creation of capital and the value of it. Constructing the self is intertwined with the degree of agency we have to construct our own story which is embedded in the class mechanisms that operate to keep the working-class fixed in place. The working-classes are routinely in dialogue with their classed misrecognition and devaluation, and as such their subjective experiences are embedded in the way class dynamics situate personhood as a middle-class space. However, this denial of working-class selfhood is not passively accepted but is resisted through everyday interactions and struggles.

2.6 Moral Habitus

To be categorised and classified is to be ascribed value and for the working-class such modes of ascription are a misrecognition of their value. Disidentification and rejection of a classed identity manifests as a response to being denied value (Skeggs, 1997; Shildrick and Macdonald, 2013). As evidenced throughout this chapter, such valuations are almost always made on the basis that the working-class possess a pathological immorality which requires fixing through regulation and behaviour modification, notions that are built into everyday

micro interactions within social institutions as well as neoliberal macroeconomic policies. The mutually reinforcing interplay connecting micro interactions to the macro political and economic co-produce people and places in a manner which itself is relational and interdependent. Subjectivity is experienced through classed relations as middle-class identity making works to deny working-class personhood, although how the working-class respond to such processes of devaluation and delegitimisation is not straight forward. How value is realised within working-class habitus is key to understanding working-class refusal, and the multi-faceted ways that refusal is entangled with class mechanisms which can actively work to re-entrench class inequalities.

Bourdieu's (1977) influential work on habitus evidences the 'soft powers' at play within class dynamics and mechanisms, showing how various forms of embodied dispositions are a product of socio-cultural habits and practices which are ingrained over time, and which are reproduced within the family, as well as within community spaces. It is a multi-layered concept that recognises the place of the collective habitus as mutually constituting and actively shaping the individual habitus. The role of time and place is situated not only within the reproduction of cultural actions and practices but as an active, dynamic and changeable process. Although habitus has been critiqued for being too deterministic and overly reductionist (for an overview see Sayer, 1999a), it is the active nature of habitus which allows for change and agency, and which does not envisage an automatic and robotic reproduction of habits, actions and practices. Bourdieu does stress the constraining and enabling nature of the habitus in that individual choices and actions are never made freely but are limited and made in the context of external constraints, a context in which subjectivity is also produced. Bourdieu presents this dynamic as the mutually reinforcing relationship between habitus and field.

Fields are portrayed as sites of struggle (Jenkins, 1992), as spaces to negotiate and it is here that Bourdieu shows how habitus is entangled in the multiple forms of capital that he argues are produced from the mutually reinforcing relationship between field and habitus, an interplay which also operates to facilitate or restrict movement through space within a given field. As Reay (2004) argues, the concept of habitus must not be taken for granted as a determined backdrop to research, rather habitus is made and re-made over time, as well as forged through socio-spatial and temporal class patterns and processes. Habitus is a deeply embodied experience which is always in the process of being made. Consequently, we can

conceptualise the structures of consciousness in which we experience the habitus as oriented towards the future. In this sense we can think of habitus and the values produced within it as a mobile and as a moral space. Consequently, to use Bourdieu's framework is not only to analyse how various forms of capital are produced unconsciously within different spaces to enable or constrain movement through space, but to interrogate how reflexive conscious thought manifests within the mundane moments of everyday life, producing actions, practices and values that challenge, disrupt and actively co-produce the subjective experience of the habitus.

2.6.1 Class Disidentification, Refusal and Rejection

Working-class resistance to class exploitation and oppression is complex and is actively part of the co-production of the working-class as moral subjects. Disidentification with a classed identity is a form of refusing to be devalued by imposed classificatory distinctions. However, because this refusal is produced within a classed social structure, the way that working-class refusal manifests can actively work to reproduce class inequalities. For example, working-class women resist class humiliation by investing in practices of respectability through patterns of consumerism and consumption (Skeggs, 1997). This routinely leads to a subjective experience which is in negotiation with a real or imagined judging other and which operates to produce a subjective moral experience which is lived through class relations. It is also a subjective experience that leads to anger and resentment which can manifest in actions and practices that further position working-class bodies as morally and innately wrong. We can see this in the way responses to political injustice such as the 2011 London riots are framed as morally reprehensible disordered behaviour (Tyler, 2013), and in the way punitive sanctions are utilised in schools to manage classroom behaviour that manifests in response to devaluation in the education system (Reay, 2017).

The misrecognition of working-class culture across the education sector is embedded within a framework of middle-class cultural hegemony which operates through an institutional habitus that routinely reinforces class inequalities (Ingram, 2009). Class mechanisms within the education system are tightly interwoven into labour market dynamics. The complex way in which working-class refusal to be devalued manifests in a relational way through these two social spheres was analysed in Willis's (1977) *Learning to Labour,* an ethnographic account of working-class boys' experiences of the secondary school environment in 1970s Birmingham. Willis showed how 'the lads' refuse class delegitimisation in the classroom through a

countercultural rejection of middle-class norms and values. However, in rejecting and refusing the class mechanisms that misrecognise their value, 'the lads' actively fix themselves into low-paid and low-status forms of labour. Now that processes of deindustrialisation have rendered manual labour redundant as a dominant form of employment, working-class men find they come to be tarnished by their own oppression. Territorial stigmatisation (Wacquant, 1993) operates to inscribe the effects of social deprivation that has arisen in the context of economic decline onto the bodies of working-class men (Nayak, 2019). Symbolic devaluation through the lens of neoliberal ideology works to position working-class people and places as valueless.

Working-class agency can challenge class structures at the same time as being devalued by them. Nayak (2019) explores how residents in former steelwork towns across Teesside acknowledged how they were positioned through the 'left-behind' narrative of moral devaluation and delegitimisation. However, Nayak shows how the working-class community 'spoke back' to the dominant hegemonic discourse of decay through localised political movements, as well as being outspoken through real life and within online social networks, about the positive reality of living in a post-industrial northern town. This includes actively challenging falsehoods about pollution and stagnation, which is to refuse and resist the dirt discourse that characterises stereotypes about working-class people and places, and shines a light on the power dynamics embedded in classed social structures which draw boundaries through moral purity (Douglas, 1966).

Class activism is not confined to the domain of post-industrial towns, nor is it solely focused on labour market dynamics. Bailey et al. (2022) explores working-class dissent through a multi-layered lens. They situate class conflict and protest beyond the domain of labour mobilisation and instead view class struggle as embedded in and emerging from the differentiated models of neoliberal capital accumulation that characterise different European countries. Localised forms of class struggle are also embedded in global activist dynamics as large-scale social movements protest against austerity, extreme inequality, and the precariousness and uncertainty that characterises contemporary capitalist and neoliberal societies (Della Porta and Chironi, 2015). However, the classed nature of moral experience is not only understood and lived out solely through the lens of resistance and the refusal of devaluation and delegitimisation. Locally formed values and practices which are forged in the context of how working-class people are positioned as devalued and disposable talk back to the very meaning of value itself.

2.6.2 Moral Subjectivities

Walkerdine's (2010, 2015) concept of working-class affect explores how actions and practices which emerged through the response to deindustrialisation - a sudden change which she frames as trauma - are oriented around a deep desire to protect and hold onto cultural norms and values which developed through industrial communities. Such places always experienced insecurity but the rapid change that threatened long-standing support systems, and the solidarity that orientated industrial communities, produced modes of socio-spatial actions and practices which served to conserve the affective communication and relationships that held communities together during precarious times (Walkerdine and Jimenez, 2012). The complexities of these affective practices are routinely perceived and symbolically represented through the lens of resistance to outsiders, or as the inability to move forward through space and as being stuck in the past. Such tropes are reflected in the 'left-behind' narrative that characterises political and media representations of working-class people as morally backwards, stereotypes that are used to justify policies of social exclusion.

However, Walkerdine's work points to a much deeper understanding of the way temporal and socio-spatial class mechanisms mould and shape the way value itself is understood and lived out, a moral experience which is produced through a deep sense of connection to the value of people and places. Lamont's (2000) work on the role of dignity within working-class communities reflects this complexity. The way morality manifests for working-class men as dignity is through the subjective perception and understanding of value. Self-discipline, and caring for families and community, is framed in terms of a moral value structure which is decoupled from socio-economic status, in spite of recognising that such values can and do bring economic reward. It is a relationship with value that operates outside of the capital accumulation value system that dominates neoliberal societies and is not one that is produced in reaction or resistance to devaluation, even as this relationship to value is constructed in an environment where the working-class are subject to devaluation and delegitimisation. Rather, such conceptualisations of moral worth reflect the phenomenological manner in which people and places are produced through embodied dynamic experiences, and not within or in response to static environments, a position which is extensively explored in the theoretical framework of this thesis.

This understanding of how dignity as a form of value is understood through the subjective is not without recognition of the deep sense of alienation and frustration that constitutes the

experience of some working-class communities, particularly vivid in Charlesworth's (2000) account of post-industrial Rotherham. Charlesworth presents working-class bodies as lived through the way they are subjected to stigmatisation, devaluation, and oppression, and where subjective experience manifests as a disorientating sense of estrangement that constrains the ability for working-class people to find value within themselves and others. It is a pessimistic account that avoids the temptation to overly romanticise the working-class as hard-working and hard done by, but it also overlooks the way working-class communities develop not only through a locally shaped habitus, but in relation to deep rooted and long-standing value structures that orient and unify people across time and space. The way morality manifests as a source of value within working-class communities is forged through a habitus where delegitimisation and exploitation is ubiquitous, but that does not mean that moral values are only produced in response to such processes of devaluation. Working-class ethnographies show how locally shaped values are not solely produced through subjective and localised working-class experiences, but are also made in connection with the way people relate to lay normative constructions of morality in terms of concerns about how they should treat each other, even as such understandings are often inconsistent and contradictory.

Lay normative understandings of morality are important because they point to the way morality manifests as a deeply orientating source of meaning that cannot be explained through adherence to external regulatory norms and rules governing behaviour. As Sayer (2005) explains, lay normative understandings of morality are forged through the way people relate to one another and develop ways of being together over time. Our lay normative understandings of moral concerns and how we relate to morality as a mode of meaning are developed in relation to the actions and practices of people, and how these actions and practices enable humans to flourish or suffer over time, however inconsistent and contradictory these understandings may be. It is this relational element of the nature of being that is important to a phenomenological conceptualisation of moral value. I explore the concept in the theoretical framework of this thesis, but to note here that from a phenomenological perspective, lay normative value structures are understood through phenomenological ontology, as ways of being that are forged through the way humans relate to one another and are embedded in a world shared with others. This means that moral values are not preconceived external rules or static objective facts, rather morality manifests through

the subjective, is experienced as an embodied mode of being, and is made through relations of reciprocity that constitutes being in the world with others.

To be clear, lay normative understandings of morality are not about abstract universal moral principles. Rather, from a phenomenological perspective, lay normative understandings of moral value are modes of being which are made through being in the world with others, and manifest through this relational process. Moral experience both arises from, and reveals itself through, the way we live in the world because, ontologically, subjective experience is both how we know the world and the only world that we know. This means that lay normative understandings of morality are embedded in how moral experience reveals itself in the way that it does, with all of its variations and inconsistencies. I elaborate on this further in the theoretical framework of this thesis, but to clarify here that phenomenologically speaking, there is no overarching moral directive or singular value system that governs social life. Rather, there is a moral dimension to social life that manifests through the nature of being and is a fundamental part of being human (Hatab, 2000). The moral space is deeply significant despite being disordered and unclear. If morality was not so deeply significant to us, it would not be as effective as it is as a tool of demonisation. Consequently, moral evaluative judgements are integral to human relationships, including the relationship with the self.

The way morality manifests through the subjective as a source of value is entangled in the multiple class mechanisms and processes which position the working-class as valueless (Sayer, 2000), an experience which also shapes what it means to live a valuable life. This is evident throughout McKenzie's (2015) ethnographic account of life in St Anne's, an exploration of social relationships within an inner-city Nottingham council estate. McKenzie shows how a sense of value, belonging and stability is produced paradoxically through a chronically-insecure and precarious existence. There is a danger in conflating 'working-class' with the conditions experienced in poverty, especially as the residents of St Anne's constitute some of the poorest ten percent of the population. Nevertheless, this ethnographic account highlights how local value systems under the middle-class gaze are misrecognised as lacking in value, despite affective actions and practices being deeply rooted in cohesion and co-operation, values which are forged through relations of being in the world with others.

The notion that the working-class have a culture that operates outside of the mainstream is a pattern running through as an undercurrent to the working-class ethnographies discussed in this chapter. This theme is most explicit in Metzgar's (2021) *Bridging the Divide*, a narrative

account that argues for the existence of two class cultures, where working-class culture is framed as evolving in the shadows of the symbolic and economic domination of the middle-class, but as developing a different set of norms and values. Metzgar asks who is 'really' dominated? He alludes to the point that those who are excluded through class mechanisms and structures are able to retain a self which operates outside of the neoliberal values of commercialism and consumerism, meaning the working-class 'avoid the selling of one's soul' (p.81) and therefore develop a value system which has more integrity and authenticity. The idea that the moral habitus of the working-class is differentiated from middle-class culture and reflects a more meaningful sense of morality appears to be in direct contrast with the argument that the working-class as a category are made through symbolic representations and processes which position the working-class as morally deviant.

It is also an argument that can be used to fix the working-class in place, insinuating that as a substitute for economic security the working-class retain a purer sense of moral value whilst paradoxically using a lack of morals as justification for economic and social marginalisation. However, Metzgar's work points not only to different and competing value systems, where relations of class exclusion generate different ways of living and relating to value, but it also shows how the moral is used as a tool to enact and reinforce complex boundaries and divisions within a classed social structure. As a mechanism to mobilise class categorisation and classification, morality is interwoven through the symbolic economy which controls and regulates value exchange meaning morality, as with other markers of class, is read differently on different classed bodies.

Ethnographic research demonstrates the complexity of the classed nature of moral experience. Subjective experiences can be as contradictory as they can be complex. The way working-class people are symbolically represented as lacking in morals when their subjective experiences actually reflect values of care and reciprocity is a contradiction that is firmly embedded in the class dynamics and mechanisms which operate to keep the working-classes fixed in place. The existing research that I have drawn upon in this sub-section evidences that morality matters to people in a manner which is of the utmost importance. It is a deeply orienting experience where lay normative understandings of morality do shape social life, but they also interact with and are shaped by the class mechanisms and dynamics that work to categorise and classify the working-classes as immoral. This experience produces local forms

of moral value which are made in the context of, but not always through a disidentification with, class mechanisms and structures.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has drawn on multi-disciplinary research which explores the multi-faceted nature of the way people are produced as classed moral subjects and how this manifests in everyday lived experience. This literature review has evidenced that morality is central to the way working-class lives are experienced. I have shown how morality is a key tool in the demonisation of working-class people and places, as the category 'working-class' is made through processes of moral distinction, a differentiation which is at the very core of middle-class identity making. This chapter has engaged with Bourdieu's framework of capital to show how symbolic capital is fundamental to the legitimisation of middle-class personhood and is the key mechanism through which selfhood is denied to the working-classes. I have also drawn on Bourdieu's concept of habitus, in connection with ethnographic research, to demonstrate the multi-faceted nature and relational manner in which working-class people engage with the class dynamics and classificatory processes which misrecognise their value.

Throughout this review I have emphasised the critical role of neoliberalism in shaping moral experience. I have shown how the accumulation and consumption of capital shapes the way we relate to value, but also structures class relations in a manner that prioritises a commercialised investment with the self, processes through which the working-class are routinely excluded. This chapter has also situated the concept of place as central to the way classed moral experiences are dialectically formed in relationship with the neoliberal macro-economic policies that structure socio-spatial patterns of mobility and shape the way classed subjects move through physical and symbolic spaces.

Written through a thematic lens, this literature review has evidenced that class inequalities are woven into the interdependent mechanisms through which the concept of value is understood, lived out, challenged and contested through classed power relations which shape and mould the very nature of moral experience. Moral experiences are integral to human relationships. The everyday judgements we use to guide our own behaviours and interpret the actions of others are embedded within our normative concerns and understandings about the way we should live together and treat each other. At the same time, the moral evaluations that are produced within social life are entangled in the multiple class mechanisms and

processes which produce local modes of value practices, whilst also operating to situate the working-class as valueless. It is this complex and often contradictory relationship which is the focus of this study. In the next chapter of this thesis, I position critical phenomenology as the most appropriate theoretical framework to make sense of the complexity of this experience. Critical phenomenology provides the analytical tools required to understand how moral value reveals itself in the way that it does to the working-class people in this study.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

This theoretical framing provides a brief overview of the development of phenomenology as a philosophical tradition. From early beginnings rooted in transcendental investigation, through to existentialist and embodied perspectives, and most recently taking into account a critical analysis of social structures, phenomenological enquiry has developed to consider the depth and complexity required to explain the nature and realm of human subjective experience. Critical phenomenology provides the most appropriate theoretical and analytical lens required to fulfil the aims of this thesis because the ontological nature of phenomenological inquiry foregrounds subjective experience, whilst a critical analysis explores how power relationships structures this experience. The term phenomenology is a compound of 'phenomenon' and 'logos' where phenomenon is that which appears, and the logos refers to how phenomena appears, or is made visible (Heidegger, 1962). Consequently, phenomenological inquiry understands the nature of reality as manifesting through subjective experience. This means that conscious experience is both the means through which we know the world and the only world that we know.

A critical phenomenological analysis provides the lens required to understand the power dynamics that tie phenomena to the logos. That is, a critical phenomenological perspective reveals the classed power structures that enables the world to manifest itself in the way that it does. Phenomenological theorising involves setting aside judgements about the nature of reality and rejects the notion that an external world can be separated from conscious experience, understanding subjectivity as an embodied experience. To be conscious is to be embedded in a world of meaning which is shaped by the past and is always in flux. These phenomenological principles are theorised through the core concepts of intentionality, the nature of being, embodiment and narrative. In this chapter, I explore these key phenomenological ideas, explaining how they operate as key analytical tools in understanding how moral experience manifests within working-class experience.

There is not scope here to do justice to the vast literature that contributes to the progression of phenomenology as a school of thought, rather this chapter sets out the fundamental concepts which underpin phenomenological tradition, and provides the conceptual analysis required to fulfil the aims of this research. I foreground the key thinkers who established core

phenomenological theorising; Edmund Husserl; Martin Heidegger; and Maurice Merleau-Ponty and explore how such ideas have developed through a phenomenological lens over time. I utilise four key phenomenological concepts: intentionality; the nature of being; embodiment; and narrative to explore the complex manner in which morality operates as both an orientating value structure and a source of devaluation for the working-class participants within this research sample, positioning phenomenology as both the ontological and epistemological means through which participants understand and live out moral experience within a classed social structure.

This chapter begins by examining the concept of intentionality which positions consciousness and action as integral to moral experience, before moving on to explore the notion of human existence understood through a phenomenological perspective, conceptualised as the 'lifeworld' by Husserl (1970), as 'Dasein' by Heidegger (1962), and as 'situated freedom' by Merleau-Ponty (2012). I situate these ontological developments as key to the emergence of critical phenomenology as a phenomenological sub-discipline. Foregrounding critical phenomenology's focus on power structures, I then examine the meaning of embodiment through the phenomenological perspective, situating emotion and affect as central to subjective experience and critical to how we perceive and engage with the classed power structures that shape social life. Finally, this chapter engages with the concept of narrative, exploring the multiple ways in which social stories function as a mechanism to understand moral phenomenological experience. I explore how moral narratives are told and retold over time through micro level relationships and within macro institutions and processes. Social stories function both as a value structure informing habits and practices and as a key mode through which classed power relationships are executed. The phenomenological concepts that I draw upon facilitate an in-depth exploration into the under-explored classed nature of moral experience, enabling an analysis of how the working-class participants in this study understand themselves in relation to a moral value structure. I explore how this is lived out through classed power dynamics which are contested and challenged, and which also constitute everyday experience.

3.2 Conscious Intentionality

At the root of phenomenological philosophy is the way we are always intentionally engaged in the world because the structures of consciousness are orientated within our experiences. Husserl is a key figure in the establishment of phenomenology as a philosophical approach,

and one of the first philosophers to develop an extensive body of literature which theorises the role of consciousness in relation to intent, a concept which builds on the work of the psychologist, Franz Brentano. Coining the term 'aboutness' within his writing throughout the six volume *Logical Investigations* (2001), Husserl saw consciousness as always being experienced in relation to another phenomena; arguing 'all consciousness is consciousness of something' (De Warren, 2020, p.88). Conceptualised as intentionality, this ontological understanding of how we are directed towards phenomena through consciousness is a core principle of phenomenological thinking. Although intentionality is foundational to phenomenology's ontology, the way Husserl theorised intentionality through a transcendental lens differs to how Heidegger and Merlau-Ponty went on to develop the concept.

Husserl embraced transcendental thinking throughout the development of his work. Transcendentalism for Husserl was an approach to phenomena that aimed to uncover what was common about phenomena across time and space, or in other words, to uncover what was transcendent about a phenomena that would enable its core essence to be revealed. Consequently, Husserl attempted to develop a science of consciousness, applying what he deemed to be a phenomenological reduction to the study of human experience, which aimed to uncover and identify the very core of consciousness. Husserl termed this process the 'eidetic reduction' which involves trying to 'bracket' or isolate the essence of conscious experience, believing that what was common across conscious acts such as perceiving or remembering contains an 'eidetic core' embedded within all such intentional acts across time and place (Moran, 2000a). Husserl's attempt to isolate the essence of consciousness was rejected by his student, Martin Heidegger, on the basis of ontological inadequacy (Moran, 2000b), a critique also shared by Merleau-Ponty and explored in the next subsection of this chapter. However, the concept of intentionality remains fundamental to phenomenological inquiry and key to understanding the subjective nature of moral experience.

Debates as to the nature, application and normative function of moral experience are not the scope of this thesis and are extensively explored throughout the philosophical branches of meta ethics, applied ethics and normative ethics (for an overview see Reis Monteiro, 2014). Rather, what is of critical importance to the study of moral experience as understood through a phenomenological lens is exploring how morality manifests through the subjective everyday experience. Phenomenology does not aim to rationalise phenomena or impose an explanation

before experience has been understood from a first-person perspective because the goal of phenomenological inquiry is orientated towards 'attaining an understanding a proper description of the experiential structures of our mental/embodied life' (Gallagher and Zahavi, 2008, p.9). Essentially, phenomenology aims to describe human experience exactly how it arises, with all of its contradictions and inconsistencies, and as experienced through consciousness itself. Consequently, to understand how people live out moral experience is to recognise that the structures of consciousness are orientated within moral experience itself.

This is because phenomenological enquiry embraces a recognition of consciousness as a temporal and relational experience where the manner in which phenomena appears to us is not an isolated object or event, rather experiences are embodied and embedded in a field of consciousness which is socio-spatially and historically situated. Ultimately, experience is how we know reality. Phenomenology rejects the idea that there is an objective reality behind a subjective interpretation, or an external world that we perceive from an internal position, rather it is conscious experience manifesting in a world of multi-layered differentiations and distinctions that constitutes reality. This may seem initially counterintuitive to the phenomenological reduction advocated by Husserl and many interpretations of his work have rejected the desire to locate an eidetic reduction of consciousness (Dreyfus, 1991). However, as Zahavi (2008) explains, Husserl's focus on the epoche (that is the practice of suspending judgement about the nature of reality and its manifestation) can also be interpreted as a deep commitment to the existential approach of phenomenology. From Zahavi's perspective, Husserl's insistence that phenomenology suspend all judgements about the nature of reality, particularly the view that the world is made up of an external objective reality, evidences that his approach to transcendental reductionism is not in opposition to Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty's existentialist phenomenological inquiry, and to see Husserl's contribution as such is to simplify his work.

Rather, the analysis of subjective experience through a transcendental lens enables a focus on 'the world itself, with all its true being' (Husserl et al., 2019) meaning it is through consciousness that we understand the world. This is why the concept of intentionality is so key to phenomenological enquiry; it is both the ontological and epistemological grounding through which we experience the world (Guenther, 2019). Subjective experience is not a simplistic analysis of description but instead is critical to the manner in which the world is understood and appears to us through conscious intent. Moral experience understood

through an intentional perspective is to see morality as both subjectively experienced and as 'world disclosing' (Heidegger, 1962), because it is only through intentional consciousness that morality is experienced and has meaning.

It is important not to mistake intentionality for actionable intent in terms of acting with intent but at the same time intentionality cannot be separated from the way we act in the world. Experience as understood phenomenologically is perceived through an intentional relationship to the world. Moral subjective experience is oriented within a conscious intentionality which emphasises the relationship between consciousness and action. Consciousness is intentional, embodied and perceived through experience and it is also the human conscience that makes sense of the value structure which governs human behaviour. In this sense, social life is itself a moral entity because it involves intent, engagement and action. In his later work, Husserl conceptualised this nature of being as the 'lifeworld' (1970), namely the shared world in which we inhabit and which we rarely question but rather take for granted as a self-evident structure. Husserl saw the lifeworld as a moral space because it is not experienced in isolation, rather the nature of the lifeworld is forged through relations with others. Consequently, Husserl saw the meanings that are produced through this space as not rigid and static but developed through intersubjectivity (Donohoe, 2016). How people engage in and inhabit this lifeworld is at the heart of the development of existentialist phenomenological enquiry, as Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty began to build extensively on and in dialogue with Husserl's work, developing the notion of consciousness as being a deeply embedded and embodied subjective experience in a historically and culturally situated social world.

3.3 The Nature of Being

Where Husserl saw the lifeworld as the structures we take as given, as our immediate field of existence and experience, Heidegger (1962) invoked the temporal and relational everyday nature of being which he conceptualised as 'Dasein' to explain the way we engage with and relate to the world. As a student of Husserl, Heidegger broke from Husserl's transcendental approach to phenomenological inquiry and instead took an existentialist view of the nature of being, attempting to answer existentialist concerns about the nature of human existence.

3.3.1 Heidegger

Heidegger's work developed in response to his sense that Husserl had reduced or bracketed the social world to such a theoretical degree that he had omitted the existential nature of being (Flynn, 2006). In *Being and Time* (1962), Heidegger coined the term 'throwness' to conceptualise the temporal element of human experience in that we exist in continuous formations of time and space where past, present and future are not separate entities but merge to create conscious experience. These social spaces and our existence within them are how we find ourselves in a world already formed and also in the constant process of being reformed. 'Throwness' highlights the way we are actively thrust into a world already infused with meaning. It is a temporal and relational experience that we share with others, a point which Heidegger stresses is critical to the nature of Dasein; being cannot be separated from its social context which is to say that being is an embedded, meaningful experience and not an isolated, abstracted process.

We can see this clearly through the work of Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012) who show how the past is constituted in the present through the way social history manifests in a former steelwork town through the actions and practices of residents, experiences which also shape the future. They explore how communities react to insecurity and instability, showing how the strategies and emotional responses that manifest through trauma shape the everyday relationships of future generations. It is a way of understanding how people are embedded in a world of meaning and engage in this world in an embodied manner, such that the past and the future are conceptualised in the present in a mutually reinforcing way. This means that the affective histories of post-industrial communities live on through Dasein, where to be conscious is also to be conscious of the meaningful histories that shape experience.

A key point throughout Heidegger's writing is that we find ourselves thrown into a world which is full of meaning and which we find meaningful. What is important to note is that Heidegger does not attempt to lay out a moral value system or an ethical structure, rather his analysis of human existence conceptualised as Dasein is to show how we act within a moral value structure that we perceive through being in the world with others. That is to say that we do not invent morals and act upon them, rather we live within a value structure that we engage in through Dasein itself, a concept best articulated through Heidegger's explanation of Dasein as one of caring (Sanders and Wisnewski, 2012). For Heidegger, to care is not necessarily the notion of caring for other people but rather a mode of intentional consciousness which we

engage with and recognise our place in the world as interrelated with others. To live in the world is to be oriented in, and towards, existing norms and values that constitute the interdependent nature of Dasein (Stevens, 2022). We are ultimately not only conscious of ourselves but of others. Heidegger stresses that our sense of Dasein, or being in the world, is one where consciousness is inextricably bound up in relation to what is already in existence.

Heidegger's notion of caring is central to understanding the phenomenological interpretation of morality and value that I use in this thesis to make sense of the way moral experience manifests in the ex-mining communities of County Durham. As stated in the introductory chapter of this thesis, this study does not aim to engage in or contribute to discussions about morality through the lens of meta-ethics, normative ethics or applied ethics. I do not make any claims about what constitutes morality or draw conclusions about what defines morality. Instead, this research enquires into how moral value reveals itself in the way that it does to the working-class people in this research. The nature of how this experience can be analysed phenomenologically is best understood through Heidegger's concept of primordial guilt. Heidegger posited that responsibility is an existential nature of being, a part of Dasein which he conceptualised as primordial guilt. To be guilty in this sense is not an emotional feeling of guilt, rather Heidegger argues that guilt is a manifestation of the temporal nature of being (Critchley et al., 2008). Heidegger stresses that we are anxious in facing the finitude of human existence, an awareness which he terms 'being towards death', and that this awareness manifests in the form of authenticity, where to live an authentic life is to be aware of the possibility of death and how we confront possible ways to be. He explains:

> Once one has grasped the finitude of one's existence, it snatches one back from the endless multiplicity of possibilities which offer themselves as closest to one – those of comfortableness, shirking, and taking things lightly – and brings Dasein into the simplicity of its fate. (Heidegger, 1962, p. 435).

Primordial guilt then is an ontological guilt. It is key to understanding Heidegger's notion of being as time, which manifests through thrownness, where the past, present and the future are encapsulated in the nature of being. Heidegger conceptualises conscience as a call to this ontological guilt, and as a means of reminding us that we are answerable for the actions that shape possibilities and ways of being (Hughes, 1993). This is why ontological guilt is not about a feeling of guilt, rather it is understood in terms of different possibilities and ways of being as

we move towards death. To clarify, primordial guilt is about lack. We are guilty because we are lacking, and we are lacking because we are orientated towards the future. Consequently, we are always in the process of confronting possibilities or potential ways of being and acting. Acting authentically in this sense is less about being genuine, rather Heidegger argues that an authentic person recognises themselves as always 'being towards death.'

To be clear, Heidegger does not lay out a value structure as a means of acting authentically. There are no determined ethical or moral rules that constitute such potential ways of being in the world, although Heidegger does emphasise the importance of care in acting authentically because the possibilities of Dasein are forged through being in the world with others (Hughes, 1993). To care is to co-exist with others and to forge a world through the temporal intersubjectivity implicit in Dasein, where the world is not estranged from us as an external reality, rather we only know the world through the way we are embedded within it. This means that acting authentically can only be understood through the way people have developed ways of being together with others over time. It is through this lens that we can conceptualise a phenomenological view of how people relate to and understand morality through a lay normative perspective. A normative relationship to morality is grounded in Heidegger's notion of the apriori as Dasein, where subjective moral experiences are understood through how we are thrown into Dasein. Apriori in this sense is not static but is both an ontological and a temporal feature of Dasein (Fehér, 2010). It is Dasein itself which is an apriori structure. In other words, we know nothing outside of our being in the world.

A person's relationship to moral value is subjective but only in the sense that this experience is forged and realised through subjectivity itself. Intersubjectivity is key to an existentialist understanding of authenticity in that we develop ways of being in the world with others, fostering deeply held meanings and values. This means that values, including what people might consider to be moral values, develop through human relationships and are not independent primordial understandings (Cooper, 2012). Cooper argues that the task of an existentialist is to identify and understand the relationships which constitute intersubjectivity, and from which develop ways of understanding and practicing morality and value. However, this does not mean that there exists normative ways of being. Rather, the way humans are able to live together to flourish is developed through ways of being in the world with others where lay normative concerns, in terms of how we treat each other, form part of the development of social relations, even if such relations are forged through power mechanisms

and structures. For example, the notion of fairness runs through the heart of social justice politics as if fairness itself signifies a commonly held or normative value. However, how fairness is understood and manifests is not clearcut as people have very different ideas of what fairness looks like in social and institutional relationships.

We can see this complexity in the case study of Horden, referred to in the introductory chapter of this thesis, where a consultation between the National Coal Board and the Miner's Union led to the closure of the colliery. The concept of fairness flows throughout the proposed and eventual closure of this colliery in complex and contradictory ways. The closure of Horden colliery was felt to be deeply unethical by the miners who advocated for the pit to remain open. However, there was not homogenous support across the mining communities, rather, reactions to colliery closures were interpreted in different ways and through different understandings of value (Hudson, Beynon and Sadler, 1991). Margaret Thatcher had considerable public support during the mining strikes of 1984/85 and her vision of the moral economy was expressed in terms of fairness and justice. I have discussed the injustice of Thatcher's moral economy as well as the class structures and mechanisms that both underpin and enact her policies in the introductory chapter of this thesis. Nevertheless, we can see how conceptualisations of the moral runs throughout the closure of Horden colliery. Fairness is represented in the case study through a lay normative perspective, as the miners and their supporters drew on arguments about how they should be treated, and yet such notions of fairness are also deeply embedded in the classed power structures that shape this experience, a process which in turn shapes lay normative concerns and discourses about what constitutes fairness.

What this illustrates from a phenomenological perspective is how morality can be considered as the social space in which we inhabit, where ways of being are developed through the socio-spatial relationships that embed us in the world. Power weaves through these interconnecting threads of social life. How people are positioned in their relationship to power is key to making sense of how they exist in a world with others, and in understanding how moral value manifests as a source of meaning in a classed social structure where intersubjectivity situates us through relations of care with others. Where Heidegger foregrounds the structures of Dasein's temporal and relational nature in understanding this embedded process, Merleau-Ponty builds on this contribution to the nature of being through his work which explores the

embodied nature of human existence. Merleau-Ponty (2012) argues that embodied action is central to the way we interpret and act in the world.

3.3.2 Merleau-Ponty

Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (2012) emphasises the significance of the physical body in how we engage with and live in the world. This means that consciousness is an embodied experience that we cannot separate from the mind. He locates essence back within existence itself and because of this he has been considered a bridge between Husserl's transcendental reduction and Heidegger's existential phenomenology, although his insistence on the centrality of the body reflects a much deeper understanding of the framework in which we encounter the world (Macann, 1993). Merleau-Ponty did not view conscious experience as social beings existing within a natural world, rather he understood being in the world to be the way humans belong to the natural world as integrated within it, formed through the natural environment and not as social objects imposing culture on nature. Moran (2000a) characterises this approach as a 'dialectical naturalism' (p. 403) in how Merleau-Ponty understands the relationship between nature and culture as an interdependent process which is also unclear and disordered. His interest in this relationship is reflected in his expansion of intentionality as a means of engaging with the world. Merleau-Ponty not only emphasises how the body is inseparable from consciousness but distinguishes between act intentionality, conceptualised as deliberate and thought-out decisions, and operative intentionality conceived as our automatic and naturally occurring desires. He situates embodied consciousness as the ultimate grounding through which we intentionally experience and perceive the world.

Merleau-Ponty's distinction between operative and act intentionality is important because it emphasises that we do not come into the world structureless, in that we bring with us inbuilt desires that cannot be rationally explained, and yet we also have the ability to make choices within this structure. His conceptualisation of intentionality also invokes a temporal element which expands on Heidegger's understanding of being as time itself. In this sense, the past and the future are part of being. Current choices are informed by the past, both through act and operative intentions, but at the same time they shape the future. Merleau-Ponty considers being in the world as the way we live time and space, arguing:

> Freedom must have a field to work with, if it must be able to assert itself as freedom, then something must separate freedom from its ends, freedom must have a field; that is, it must have some privileged possibilities or realities that tend to be preserved in being. (Merleau-Ponty, 2012. p. 462).

This means that consciousness and action exist in a space that is both temporally and relationally situated. Intentional consciousness is contextualised and framed by a past which is also orientated towards a future as choices and actions enable pathways more likely, or 'privileged.' This state of being in the world is made and remade through an interdependent relationship between the individual and the collective where consciousness means to be both free and constrained. Merleau-Ponty conceptualises this as 'situated freedom' in that our intentions, both act and operative, are grounded in a structure which is historically and socio-culturally situated. We are always living history both in the way we are immersed in a world of meaning and in the way we are actively engaged in this field of meaning as embodied subjects. In this sense we are living time through being itself as consciousness is the medium through which meaning is made real.

In the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty (2012) reflects on class consciousness as an example of situated freedom. He understands class as a background or a structure in which we are immersed and situates embodied action as manifesting through such a framework. He explains:

> Class is neither simply recorded, nor established by decree. Class is prior to being conceived – lived as an obsessive presence, as a possibility, as an enigma and as a myth. (Merleau-Ponty, 2012. p. 472).

For Merleau-Ponty, class is situational; embedded in the past and conceptualised in the future and we engage in this classed world intentionally in that we are immediately immersed in a field of meaning which is entangled with others through a shared history. This history is also embedded; made real through socio-spatial patterns and processes manifesting through conscious experience towards which we are always intentionally directed, meaning the world is already made and is also always in the process of being made. This is why we cannot conceptualise class in terms of stratification, or accept class hierarchies as a natural order. Rather, the class dynamics and mechanisms that produce class categorisation are forged

through the intersubjective nature of Dasein. Merleau-Ponty emphasises how this idea is much deeper than a mere agency/structure debate, clarifying:

> I am a psychological and historical structure. Along with existence, I received a way of existing, or a style. All of my actions and thoughts are related to this structure, and even a philosopher's thought is merely a way of making explicit his hold upon the world, which is all he is. And yet, I am free, not in spite of or beneath these motivations, but rather by their means. For that meaningful life, that particular signification of nature and history that I am, does not restrict my access to the world, it is rather my means of communication with it. (Merleau-Ponty, 2012. p. 482).

This means the structure in which we inhabit is not a framework in the sense of a background to which our lived experience is overlayed on to, rather consciousness is lived through and not alongside this field of existence. This is what it means to live embodied time. Although Merleau-Ponty does not explicitly invoke power in his writing as an orientating and operating structure within the world, his conceptualisation of situated freedom and the way we are 'thrown' into fields of experience does speak to how we are located in our relationship to power, an engagement with the world which is the cornerstone of the development of critical phenomenology as a phenomenological sub-discipline.

3.4 Critical Phenomenology

Understanding how we live structural inequalities through conscious experience is at the heart of critical phenomenology's approach to phenomenological analysis. This involves moving beyond a descriptive understanding of a phenomena, or an experience, in order to identify the structural and contextual conditions - including power relationships - in which the experience manifests (Guenther, 2019). It is an analysis which emerged as an extension and ontological development of the existential phenomenological approach, particularly Merleau-Ponty's work which recognises the dialectical and interdependent relationship between the social structures that shape consciousness, and the ability of the embedded conscious subject to shape social life. As Guenther explains, critical phenomenology shines a light on the socio-spatial relationships through which we engage with the world. Critical phenomenology identifies how such relationships come to have particular types of meaning, as well as become meaningful to us, and how historical and social structures not only shape the framework that we live in but also reflect the power structures that embed our experience. She refers to this

analysis as a 'quasi-transcendental' (p.12) approach, distinguishing between the structures of consciousness that constitute experience, and our relationship to power that shapes this experience. In other words, if being in the world has a sense of meaning which manifests through experience, then we need to actively question and critically evaluate how such meaning is lived through bodies which are intertwined with the power structures that enable and authorise some subjects, whilst delegitimising others.

The relations of intersubjectivity are crucial to how critical phenomenology uncovers the deep structures of power that enable experience to reveal itself in the way that it does. Before writing *The Second Sex* in 1948*,* Beauvoir (2011) engaged with Heidegger's concepts of Dasein to explore how possible ways of being in the world are constrained through the relations that constitute intersubjectivity. In *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, Beauvoir (2015) developed Heidegger's concept of being in the world with others and argued that possible ways of being are limited by the circumstances that we are thrown into, that which is already in existence. Rejecting Sartre's (2018) version of freedom as unlimited possibility, Beauvoir showed how the relations that constitute being with others are also the relationships that situate women as the 'other' in relation to men. This means that living authentically is not only living in a manner which accepts the finitude of human existence, but for women, it is to be subject to the gendered power dynamics that shape the meaning of woman. For Beauvoir, it is this conflict and oppression manifesting through the social relations that constitute Dasein which are key to understanding the subjective nature of gendered experience (Gothlin, 2003).

Beauvoir's exploration of how the concept of women comes into being through consciousness is a critical examination of the way power flows through multi-layered and mutually reinforcing social and institutional relationships. She highlights the role of the body in this process, showing how overlapping power structures shape meaning and perception, normalising gendered power relationships. The significance of the body cannot be overstated. It is the medium through which all human consciousness is experienced and is also actively embedded in the power structures that shape human experience. Contemporary work from a critical phenomenological perspective situates the body as deeply significant in embedding and reinforcing structural inequalities, showing how classed, gendered and racialised bodies are not passively ascribed markers of inequality but are actively part of the reproduction of power structures. For example, Ahmed (2007) explores how the modes of power embedded in whiteness actually reveal itself through the delegitimisation of racialised bodies, shaping

patterns of mobility and movement through space. Similarly, Willen (2017) examines how narratives of illegality, dishonesty and criminality are ascribed onto the bodies of undocumented migrant workers in Israel as state control operates to shift the meaning of these workers from exclusion to deviance. Willen shows how meanings operate at multi-dimensional levels as government regulation works in conjunction with the judicial system to reshape the subjective experience of these workers.

Uncovering the complex processes which shape how value is ascribed, mediated and lived through the subjective means not only understanding the role of the body as an embedded subject, as Merleau-Ponty argues, but moving beyond description to recognise how emotions themselves are not neutral. Emotions instead manifest through a body situated within a classed social structure as both a reflection of and a response to how people are positioned in their relationship to power. Emotions manifest through the way we are situated in the world as embedded and embodied beings, as people thrown into a socio-cultural frame of meaning shaped by individual and collective histories. We are immersed in an existing world of meaning and are also actively engaged in this field of meaning as conscious subjects. Experience is made within this interdependent dialectical relationship. Thinking through emotions from a critical phenomenological perspective involves understanding how emotions manifest in a multi-variate manner; they arise within a field of meaning into which we are thrown, and they are also forged through the class structures that shape everyday relationships and continually embed us in the world. Crucially, emotions are also the mechanism through which we understand the world because subjective experience, as the means through which conscious intentionality manifests, is also a deeply embodied and embedded process.

3.5 Emotional Experience

Emotions are part of the relationship between people, and between people and their environments. Emotions are not phenomena to be analysed through an isolated neuroscientific lens, rather emotions manifest within patterns of social relations. Ian Burkitt's (1999, 2008, 2014) extensive writings which conceptualise the nature of human emotional experience situate emotions as formed through ever shifting patterns of social relationships where our personal biographies are interwoven and immersed within cultural and historical structures and frameworks. Burkitt (2014) conceptualises emotion as a 'complex.' He situates the notion of 'complex' in a twofold manner. Firstly, Burkitt argues that emotions are difficult to comprehend and secondly, he highlights the way they are produced within patterns of

relationships that are infused with our personal biographies, cultural and social meanings, and are felt and expressed through the body as well as within language, and can be both unconscious and conscious. Emotions are 'complexes' because they cannot be defined within or reduced to a single part of the multiple and interconnected elements that constitute emotional experience.

To conceptualise emotion in this way is entirely phenomenological in nature; embedded in socio-spatial patterns and processes that are temporal and relational, emotions are part of the way time is lived as being itself through an embodied consciousness that gives meaning to the world. It is this relational element to emotional experience that is of particular interest from a critical phenomenological perspective. Emotions connect people together and enable commitment to social structures and norms, yet they are also the mechanism through which division and conflict manifests (Turner and Stets, 2006). Phenomenologically speaking, we are always intentionally engaged in the world as embedded and embodied subjects, meaning we are always emotionally connected to the world around us. We experience emotions as a ubiquitous framework in that emotions arise in the most intense of situations as well as in the mundane rituals of the everyday. Present within every single interaction (Collins, 2004), and in every imagined encounter (Holmes, 2010), as well as remembered through the personal narratives of our biographies (Steedman, 1996), emotions are inextricably bound up with intentionality and the way time is lived as a temporal and relational form of consciousness. As embodied subjects, emotions are fundamental to how we experience and engage with the world and with the structures of power that shape social life.

Hochschild (1983a) was one of the first theorists to explore the role of emotion as a form of labour and as embedded within labour market power relationships. Her influential theory of 'emotional labour' explores how power structures are evident within the way women undertake employment which requires significant 'emotion work', a process which serves to subordinate women in multiple and overlapping ways. From her analysis of women employed in the US aviation industry, Hochschild concluded that employment requiring emotional labour typically requires face to face contact with the public and a requirement for the worker to induce emotion in the customer, characteristics which she argues are largely the domain of female employees. That is not to suggest that men do not undertake emotional labour; Hochschild maintains that they do but argues that when men utilise emotions for their job roles, this process largely occurs in industries where evoking fear is the primary aim, such as

debt collection. In contrast, women undertake emotional labour in jobs where they are 'in the service of being nice' (p. 163), a deference that Hochschild argues has consistently been misinterpreted as a natural part of being a woman and which also exposes the 'doctrine of feelings' (p. 172), a hierarchical scale where women's feelings are devalued precisely because women spend so much time paying attention to the needs of others.

Hochschild's research is important because it clearly demonstrates how emotions are a mechanism through which power manifests within the labour market as gendered social divisions. From a critical phenomenological perspective, her work shows how power moves through bodies in the way we are intentionally engaged in the world as embedded and embodied subjects. However, within her writings on emotions and power, Hochschild (1979) also evokes a dualistic nature between mind and body as she distinguishes between 'surface acting' and 'deep acting' within emotion work. In 'surface acting' she argues that individuals display through facial expressions and body language, the appropriate emotion - the 'feeling rule' - that is expected in the social situation. Whereas Hochschild argues that in 'deep acting' individuals use various strategies such as reliving past experiences to make themselves feel the emotion that they understand they ought to feel in a particular circumstance, or suppress an unwanted emotion. Hochschild argues that it is through this process of 'deep acting' and imagining feelings to such an extent, that we are then unable to recognise the distinction between the generated emotion and our true feelings; we are able to convince ourselves that our deep acting is real.

Consequently, Hochschild's work can be interpreted as constructing notions of a real and a false self. Hochschild maintains that as individuals become so engrossed in acting and performing, they find themselves questioning their authenticity wondering what it is that they actually feel. This results in confusion and the construction of two selves, as Hochschild explains, *'*in the end, it seems, we make up an idea of our "real self", an inner jewel that remains our unique possession' (p.34). It is difficult to derive a clear view then of Hochschild's approach regarding a 'real' and a 'false' self although her work does separate emotions into the domain of the public and the private which creates a dualism between an inner sense of self and an external projection of the self, a notion which is at odds with a phenomenological interpretation of the role of emotions.

As Burkitt (2014) argues, we can reframe this dichotomy of 'mismatched' feeling rules as not an example of a 'real' and a 'false' self, or a subjective and an objective reality, but rather as

forged in the context of a social situation where the emotional response reflects the power dynamics embedded in the social relationship. Burkitt uses Hochschild's (1979) example of an adult daughter feeling relief rather than sorrow when her father dies to show how this is not an example of a woman failing to feel the correct emotion of deep sadness but rather the appropriate emotional response to a specific situation. Burkitt argues that this reaction reflects a personal relationship immersed within and constructed in the context of socio-cultural dynamics where women are expected to provide elderly care. Here we can see Hochschild's work within a critical phenomenological framing; emotions manifest within social relationships and power structures which are also developing through changing cultural conditions.

Temporality is key here. Emotions arise in the context of past events and relationships, and they also shape the future as embodied subjects remake the social world through cultural shifts and changes. In the forty years since Hochschild's work was published, relief within the grieving process is recognised as a much less taboo response to death in the context of the care giver relationship (Allen et al., 2021) and today may not be considered a mismatched emotional response. Hochschild's work emphasises the gendered power dynamics evident in how emotions manifest within labour market dynamics. But only when we understand emotions as relational - and that feeling unwanted emotional responses such as guilt, anger and shame are part of social relationships embedded in power structures, and are not evidence of a dualistic private and public self - can we begin to understand how emotions simultaneously make and are re-made in the context of structural class inequalities (Holmes and McKenzie, 2018). What this shows is that emotions are not apriori modes of being, rather from a critical phenomenological perspective, emotions manifest through the experiences, processes and patterns of social life that constitute subjectivity. We can see how emotion is embedded in the class structures and mechanisms that shape subjective experience through understanding how negative emotions, particularly shame, manifest through a classed social structure.

As explored throughout the literature review of this thesis, shame is an emotion that frequently arises in the context of class inequalities (Skeggs, 1997; Lawler, 1999). Scheff (2003) positions shame as the most critical of human emotions. He argues that shame is a 'master emotion' (p.261) because of the way it functions within society as a tool of social control, invoking a deeply moral element; the transgression of shared moral boundaries. Shame

frequently arises when individuals recognise they have not met an expected standard. It is an emotion which threatens social relationships because personal standards can also be commonly shared values. Scheff argues that shame can regulate the extent to which we express our emotions and can actively work to repress them, indeed shame itself can be repressed because as a 'taboo' individuals actively seek to hide shame from themselves and from others, conversely because people 'feel ashamed about shame' (p. 240). A powerful negative emotion, shame regulates self-control and consequently social control, as individuals evaluate themselves in accordance with the symbolic and cultural mediators that regulate social norms (Turner and Stets, 2005). However, negative emotions such as shame, fear and guilt are also evoked in the context of power relationships embedded within social structures that are inherently ideological (Turner, 2010). Consequently, cultural and social norms manifesting within micro interactions also reflect the socio-political dynamics of macro level institutions.

Conceptualising power and status within emotions was initially theorised by the positivist Kemper (1981) who rejected social constructivists, and particularly Hochschild's concept of 'feeling rules', because of the lack of account for social structure. Kemper argues that the working-class act not out of socialised norms but in the context of their low-status in the class system, arguing that emotions manifest through interactions within these social structures. He declares:

> It is what our fellow participants do to us and what we do to them – the social relations that constitute the existing social structure – that evoke our emotions. (Kemper, 1981. p. 344).

Kemper acknowledges that socialised norms do exist but believes they are secondary to an economic model of social structure which he views as shaping behaviours and the emotions produced within them. For Kemper, 'feeling rules' come 'after the fact' (p. 355) and are produced within the establishment of the social structure. Agreeing with Hochschild, he argues that an individual who does not experience a socially expected emotion will simultaneously experience that this lack of emotion is something that they should feel. However, Kemper argues that this is not an example of an individual mediating between private thought and public convention, rather it is representative of the power structures that are at play, and which dictate the rules and interactions of social relationships. Hochschild's (1983b) rebuttal to Kemper's criticism of social constructionism emphasises that emotions are

not arbitrary but are an essential aspect of the social structure that Kemper attempts to theorise. Critically, Hochschild insists that emotions are part of the mechanisms through which structural inequalities are reinforced and perpetuated.

Kemper's work does speak to the way power manifests through classed relationships that operate through dynamic and interrelated macro and micro processes. However, his theorising of power is one which invokes an oppressor/oppressed relationship and does not capture the complexities within such interactions. For example, the way symbolic power works as a subtle means of domination through shaping socio-cultural relations, how agency within classed power structures arises, or the range of conflicting emotions that manifest throughout such relationships, such as the shame and guilt working-class women often feel about class mobility, despite achieving positions of power and social status (Lawler, 1999).

Burkitt (2014) draws on Foucault's (1995) conceptualisation of power as a 'structure of actions that aims to affect a possible field of actions' (p. 158), rather than an action in itself, to theorise the way power works much more subtly, and critically, in a dialectical manner as a means to affect, shape and mould possible action. We can see the phenomenological nature of this conceptualisation of power in that there is not a one-way flow of control, rather there exists structures of power which are forged through interconnected webs of personal and social biographies. People engage with structures of power in an intentional way and as embodied and embedded subjects within a field of meaning where particular interactions enable actions to become not determined but affected, or rather as Merleau-Ponty (2012) establishes, more 'privileged' and expected. Expectations are key to the temporal nature of classed power dynamics where social relationships are embedded in the past and shape the future. When individuals are expected - by themselves and by others - to be superior in any given situation then it works to create a power imbalance which influences interactions and actions (Berger, 1992).

Power imbalances are not always interwoven with oppression and many social relationships within environments such as the labour market and the education sector do contain power dynamics which reflect the nature of the relationship, for example student/teacher and employer/employee. However, as explored within the literature review of this thesis, such relationships are also negotiated in the context of a classed social structure where embodied expectations of authority within the habitus are intertwined with the socio-spatial patterns and processes that have enabled the middle-class to hold and retain symbolic and institutional

power (Reay, 1995; Skeggs, 2004). Hochschild (1983a) believes expectations to be critical in that 'what we see is known to be mediated through our notions of what we expect to see' (p. 221). Ultimately our individual and collective prior social knowledge and embodied experience of history influences what we expect to see and to feel. Emotions manifesting through these interactions within classed power relationships are central to the way inequalities are reproduced as embodied behaviours through the habitus.

Collins (2004) shows how emotion manifests within social interactions which individuals then carry forth into future interactions in a chain of encounters. Collins views the individual as being wholly created and shaped by these series of situations arguing, 'incidents shape their incumbents, however momentary they might be; encounters make encountees' (p. 5). He argues that the mechanisms which holds society together and which mobilise conflict are emotional encounters that are threaded together over time and through different and multiple social spaces, building a chain of interactions that are interconnected, meaning situations can never be free standing or analysed as a singular event in time. Similarly, individuals cannot be independent of their personal histories, experiences which are also embedded in socio-cultural conflict and cohesion. These personal biographies are inherently social and because our interactions with others are constrained by power imbalances in which inequalities manifest, emotions become part of the process through which social divisions are maintained and re-produced.

Barbalet (2001) extends Collin's work to consider the notion of emotional attribution, arguing that feelings of confidence are strongly tied to social control because when those who have material resources and cultural capital can see a predictable safe future, then this emotion is circulated amongst those social groups who have power and resources. Similarly, he argues that fear and insecurity is disproportionately attributed to those marginalised through the class system. Barbalet argues that when individuals understand negative emotions as products of the self then it can result in withdrawal from society, whereas when feelings of fear, instability and insecurity are viewed as resulting from an unequal access to cultural, social and economic capital, then further feelings of anger and aggression are produced which create conflict and division. These emotions are evident in Paul Willis's (1977) *Learning to Labour* where working-class boys actively develop a counter school culture as a form of resistance to an education system that they recognise as a mode of delegitimisation and as a mechanism to maintain their low economic and social status.

Barbalet is not arguing for a direct causal relationship between feeling positive and negative emotions, and an individual's position in the class system. It would be absurd to suggest that the rich cannot feel anger or fear. However, what Barbalet does is emphasise that when negative emotions arise within classed interactions they manifest in a phenomenological manner. Such feelings manifest through embodied subjects who are embedded in a socio-cultural framework, structures which are forged through past conflict and cohesion, and in an affective way in terms of shaping future actions and decisions. This is clear in the work of Skeggs and Loveday (2012) who find that those who experience class judgement and marginalisation recognise their devaluation and respond with anger and anxiety. Their emotional response to such delegitimisation elicits particular responses and actions in terms of rejecting investing within a class system through which they are already refused. Here we can see how the emotional response to class inequalities on a micro level is both forged through and reshaped by macroeconomic structural inequalities, just as class structures are also reformed and re-made through this embedded and interdependent relationship. When emotions are conceptualised in this comprehensive manner it enables us to see the way in which emotions, as situated in micro level interactions, can be understood in a macro level context and shines a light on how and why certain emotions are distributed disproportionately within classed interactions and how emotions themselves are embedded in the process of remaking class distinctions.

Barbalet (2001) draws on Merleau-Ponty's and Heidegger's writings to emphasise that it is through emotion as manifesting through embedded and embodied subjects that brings forth the past and the future into being. He explains:

> This is emotion's unique contribution to action and agency: without it, persons would be lost in time, the past would remain remote, and the future inaccessible. (Barbalet, 2001, p. 185).

Here we can see why intentionality is so significant to a critical phenomenological analysis. Intentionality is the means through which reality manifests. Intentional consciousness is the means through which we engage with and understand the world and our place within it. Consciousness is our relationship to the past, it is how we make sense of the present and create the future. It is consciousness understood as an intentional relationship with the world which gives meaning to experience, and why the phrase 'lived experience' is frequently attributed to a phenomenological world view. As embodied subjects, emotions are

fundamental to how we experience and engage with the world. Emotions are not only a mode of meaning but they are also key to how we inhabit the classed power structures that shape social life, including our role in shaping and moulding these classed relationships. The world operates as both a meaningful orientating value structure into which we are thrown and immersed, but also as a place where the struggle for value is experienced as it is lived through structural inequalities, and where meaning is constantly in flux and always in the process of being remade. This temporal and relational experience inhabits social stories in terms of how narratives function both as a value structure informing habits and practices, and as a key mode through which classed power relationships are executed, meaning social stories are key to understanding moral experience.

3.6 Moral Narratives

The relations that constitute Dasein, that is the modes of intersubjectivity and ways of being that are forged through being in the world with others, have been developed and communicated in narrative form since society became literate, but are also evident in cross cultural pre-literate mythology dating back thousands of years (Nussbaum, 1986). Narratives reflect the modes of being that network us together in a reciprocal way with others, lay normative structures of care that pre-date capitalist societies and in some way unify people across time and space. From a phenomenological perspective, narratives are the framework in which we are immersed and into which we are thrown as a field of meaning. We understand values as revealed through stories, and other art forms, because they communicate to us recognisable patterns and reflect what we already find meaningful. Reinforcing the phenomenological position, Macintyre (2007) explains,

> It is because we all live out narratives in our lives, and because we understand our lives in terms of the narratives that we live out, that the form of the narrative is appropriate for understanding the actions of others. Stories are lived before they are told. (Macintyre, 2007, p. 212).

That is not to say there are such things as homogenous stories, rather narratives reflect, as well as shape and mould what Lawler (2014) describes as ‘intelligibility rules’ (p. 41). They are the fields of meaning which phenomenologically speaking we find ourselves thrown into. Mediated over time and space through conscious intentionality, intelligibility rules speak to the interdependent nature of Dasein, where being in the world cannot be separated from its

social context and through embodied and embedded subjects, they interact with and reflect back to us symbolic meanings as well as cultural shifts and changes.

If narrative did not make sense to us on a meaningful level in terms of reflecting familiar social patterns and relationships, then stories would not speak to mass populations across time and space as they do. As Carr (2014) explains, the past is a collective history and is part of who we are. The past is embedded in consciousness through the way we intentionally engage with a world which is already made and in the way our personal identities are forged through this space of meaning. Phenomenologically speaking, values are lived through the social space that we inhabit; they are the fields of experience which we are thrown into and which we also engage with through a temporal and relational manner. Narrative literature makes sense to us because we live such stories through our everyday experience. Barthes (1977) explains:

> Narrative occurs in all periods, all places, all societies; narrative begins with the very history of humanity; there is not, there has never been, any people, anywhere, without narrative. Narrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural; it is there, like life. (Barthes, 1977, p.79).

That is to say we live in the world as it is, and with all of the historical and cultural experiences that have moulded our frame of existence and our place within it. Narratives can often engage us at an embodied level in that they evoke emotional responses because they speak to what we know to be meaningful, experiences that we have sometimes been unwilling or unable to think through and elucidate (Brewer, 1988).

Stories then are not only a literary art form, but narrative inquiry is also the manner through which we engage in and experience the world, as a means of communicating with ourselves and with others. Hardy (1975) clarifies:

> It is hard to take more than a step without narrating. …The stories of our days and the stories in our days are joined in that autobiography we are all engaged in making and remaking, as long as we live, which we never complete, though we all know how it is going to end. (Hardy, 1975, p. 4).

Hardy emphasises how, even in our everyday moments, we are forging our ongoing story because narrative is the mechanism through which we organise our thoughts, understand the past, conceptualise the future and it is also the mode through which we understand ourselves as networked with other people. Ricoeur (1990) explains that through narrative form our life

and the lives of others acquire meaning. He argues that a narrative must have characters, action and plot, and it is in the plot where the meaning of the story, through the relating of certain events that we understand as significant are linked together in the process of 'emplotment.' Emplotment is important because it invokes a shared understanding of the world, working as an interpretive mechanism that synthesises and connects our stories with the stories of others such that we can situate our experience within a patterned structure of meaning which we recognise as meaningful.

As Zahavi (2007) argues, there are limitations to the extent to which the world, and our self within it, can be understood through a narrative framework. Zahavi points out that whilst narrative has a central role in the way people understand themselves and others, there always lies an element of inaccessibility to the way we are able to understand other people, such is the essence of phenomenological subjective experience. Nevertheless, Zahavi also recognises that narratives are fundamental to how we interpret and make sense of the world around us and our place within it. Values are embedded within our collective stories, shaping how we understand ourselves. Narratives also generate a framework through which we see and contextualise the lives of others. This is why understanding how power operates within narrative construction is so significant.

Plummer (1995) maintains that stories exist in a 'stream of power' (p.26) which is not held by a single person but flows through the relations between the self and the collective other as embedded in the political and socio-cultural power structures and mechanisms that enable stories to be written and heard. Our narratives are formed in the context of the collective social memory where values are coded in texts and social stories and are retold over time such that stories become moral interpretative structures on how to live in the world. However, the social world is also immersed in powerful narratives that stigmatise and marginalise the powerless, such as those stories mediated through symbolic representations of lack and decline which are re-told about working-class people and places. One such example is the 'left-behind' narrative which I have explored extensively throughout the literature review of this thesis. Operating through the symbolic economy and working as a mechanism to maintain class inequalities, narratives of working-class devaluation and delegitimisation function to maintain classed relationships and power structures.

Narratives of class are everywhere. They arise in literary form through historical and contemporary portrayals of working-class people and places. As well as complex and nuanced

stories written through the first-person perspective, there also exists a deeply powerful symbolic economy working to re-produce and entrench narratives of working-class devaluation and delegitimisation. The working-class are frequently written about from afar and represented through stereotypes of disdain, disgust and contempt (for an overview see Goodridge, 2017). As explored extensively within the literature review of this thesis, symbolic devaluation is key to class categorisation and differentiation, and the maintenance of symbolic distance between the working and middle-class. The mainstream media are a key institution through which class narratives are kept alive (Morley, 2009). Narratives of lack and decline are mediated through new developments such as the reality television genre where working-class people are positioned as tellers of their own story (Skeggs and Wood, 2012). Classed narratives are also embedded within social institutions. The education system (Reay, 2017), housing sector (Dorling, 2015) and the welfare state (Shildrick, 2018) reflect and embed the myth of the working-class as lazy, workshy, morally flawed and unable to choose appropriate actions and pathways. Such institutions reproduce class inequalities through the way their social policies, rooted in the narrative of working-class moral failure, work to stigmatise and marginalise working-class people and places.

Social stories reflect both the lay normative elements to social life that we develop through our shared field of experience, and they are also the key mode through which classed power relationships are executed. Our relationship with narrative is complex. Narratives are both the means through which people understand themselves and the world around them, and they are also a key symbolic structure mediating and legitimising unequal classed relationships. Narrative is the mechanism through which we situate and make sense of our lives. Consequently, we need a narrative to orient our experience within. However, classed power relationships work to deny a narrative to the working-class, restricting the way working-class people can author their own stories and limiting how they can make sense of their own experience. Critical phenomenology provides the key lens to analyse this complex relationship and to understand the way personal narratives, as situated within subjective experience, are lived through these complex class dynamics. Critical phenomenology provides a language to talk about the relationships that make us who we are and through which we engage with the world. Critical phenomenology enables an understanding of the way narratives of working-class people and places are told and heard through a relationship with morality that works both as an orientating value structure and as a source of devaluation and deligitimisation.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a brief overview of the development of phenomenology as a discipline. I have positioned four key phenomenological concepts: intentionality; the nature of being; embodiment; and narrative as fundamental to exploring the classed nature of moral experience and fulfilling the aims and objectives of this study. Moral evaluations matter to people because they are fundamental to human relationships including the relationship with the self; it is impossible to escape from our own conscience. Evaluative judgements occur within all social relationships and occur independent of social divisions. Our conscience is not separate from consciousness but evaluates and regulates our own behaviour and the behaviours of others, and is grounded in the lay normative concerns that structure social life and unify people across time and place. However, the domain of morality is complex and multifaceted. Moral evaluative judgements are integral to human relationships and are produced within a value structure that shapes what it means to live a valuable life, just as this meaning is entangled in the multiple class mechanisms and processes which position the working-class as valueless.

The struggle for value is central to the class dynamics that shape moral experience. Values matter to people because the moral space that we are immersed into as a field of meaning is also the social space that we inhabit and share as networked with others. We are intentionally orientated towards and embedded within a social world which we engage in as embodied subjects. We understand and perceive the world through a narrative framework that embeds both meaning and devaluation, an interdependent relationship that we are all in the process of remaking. The struggle for value exists in this space. This is why a critical perspective is so important in phenomenological thinking. Critical phenomenology as a mode of analysis describes lived experience but also critically evaluates the power relationships in which this experience is situated. It is a mode of inquiry which is central to understanding how the working-class people in this research make sense of the way morality structures their experiences. In the next chapter of this thesis, I lay out the methodological approach for this study, situating the phenomenological concepts explored in this theoretical framework as central to the methodological design of this research.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter has two main sections. The first section sets out the methodological approach for this research. I begin this section by mapping the decision-making process through which phenomenology emerged as the most appropriate methodology, situating critical phenomenology as the key interpretive and analytical lens required to fulfil the aims of this research. I then move on to discuss the research design of this thesis, explaining how narrative interviews were chosen as the most appropriate data collection method, and explore the role of storytelling in class divisions. Finally, I discuss walking as method and explore how I adapted 'learning walks', an observation technique utilised in the education sector as a tool of critical reflection, to immerse narrative interviews into a phenomenological methodology in the context of the Covid-19 lockdown, which restricted in-person research.

The second section of this chapter discusses the empirical element of this study. Firstly, I explain my decisions underpinning the recruitment and sampling strategy, before moving on to discuss the data collection process. I then explain the analytical approach I undertook to make sense of the wealth of data collected throughout this empirical exploration, foregrounding the point that data analysis was not a process undertaken after data collection but was an integral part of the emergence of phenomenology as a theoretical and methodological approach. This chapter ends with a discussion of the ethical and reflexive considerations I engaged in throughout this research, explaining the steps I undertook to embed reflexivity as an ethical research practice. I explore the difference between centering the authorising self and taking a reflexive research position, explaining why phenomenology as a methodology was central to this process. The methodological process within this research was not straightforward and the structuring of this chapter reflects the need to present the methodological journey in a manner which can be consolidated into an organised section of this thesis. Consequently, there is not a chronological element to this chapter, rather throughout each subsection I highlight the iterative process that synthesises the methodological approach and theoretical underpinnings of this thesis.

4.2 Phenomenology as Methodology

Phenomenology as a framework incorporates an incredibly wide and varied set of philosophical positions, although as discussed throughout the theoretical framework of this thesis, the central tenet running through the heart of phenomenological inquiry is the foregrounding of subjective meaning within the research process. This does not mean that all qualitative research centering first-person experience is phenomenological in nature. Moreover, debates as to the extent to which research can be considered applied phenomenology is also dependent on the philosophical position of the researcher. Some phenomenologists do consider Husserl's transcendental approach to be the original and only authentic and appropriate lens (Van Manen, 2017a). Indeed, Van Manen (2017b) strongly rejects what he deems to be a superficial or a shallow reading of phenomenology. He argues that methodology inspired by phenomenological thinking does not always correlate with what he deems to be a 'genuine' phenomenological approach which he views as embedded in Husserl's transcendental method. As discussed in the theoretical framework of this chapter, Husserl's approach to phenomenological research is to attempt to locate the very core of a phenomena by uncovering its's essence, a process which reveals the elements of phenomena which are common across time and space. For example, in examining the phenomena of fear, a transcendental approach would attempt to uncover what is common within fear across different times and contexts so as to reveal an aspect of fear that is foundational, or at the core of fear itself.

However, as Zahavi (2019) explains, whilst it is important to recognise that some research claiming to be phenomenological does have weak ties to the nature of this philosophy as a school of thought, and is often described as phenomenological because it centres lived experience, the focus on Husserl's transcendental phenomenology as the only pure phenomenological approach is misguided. Zahavi (2015, 2017, 2019, 2020) has written extensively about the way Husserlian transcendental thinking is not at odds with the existentialist approach undertaken by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, amongst other philosophers. As explored in the theoretical framework of this thesis, Zahavi stresses that Husserl's approach was largely undertaken to reject the dogmatic ideology that the natural world existed separately to conscious experience which was prevalent at the time of his writing. Husserl wanted to challenge the view that there exists an external world that we perceive from an internal perspective, whilst also challenging traditional concepts of reality.

For example, Husserl's approach would argue that a phenomenon such as fear is real no matter if it manifests through lived experience or in a dream. He would not dismiss fear arising from a dream as an illusion because he saw all experience as real. So, although Husserlian phenomenology is concerned with practising the eidetic reduction, it also advocates for suspending judgements about the nature of reality. This is why Zahavi (2019) emphasises that the Husserlian approach cannot be narrowly defined as a particular way of doing phenomenological inquiry, and argues that it is best to consider phenomenology as a guiding framework within a methodological worldview rather than a precise focus on narrowly defined methods.

This study took a phenomenological turn during the early stages of data collection as the iterative approach I undertook throughout the project led me to explore phenomenology as a theoretical and methodological framing. Consequently, it is important to lay out my initial position before my turn to phenomenology as an interpretative mechanism. In aiming to understand the role of morality in how class is lived through contemporary relationships within the former coalfields of County Durham, I initially designed this research through a critical realist lens, aiming to explore how participants lived class through the punitive and exploitative social policies embedded within key spheres of social life, specifically, education, work and housing. I felt that critical realism, with its focus on the nature of being as independent from human subjective experience (Bhaskar, 2016), was the correct lens required to understand the structural nature of class inequalities, an aspect of class struggle absent from the political and public dialogue around inequality (Price, 2017). Critical realism distinguishes between the domain of the actual and the domain of experience, situating the structures of inequality as independent of human experience or knowledge in the sense that they are 'real' because they have causal mechanisms or effects, even if such events are not understood or experienced by the individual (Sayer, 1999b). Consequently, critical realism also separates ways of being and knowing as distinct epistemological and ontological positions (Scott, 2010).

In this early design phase, a critical realist perspective made sense to me in terms of thinking about the way the global political economy works to (re)structure capitalist relations in a way that may not be experienced through the subjective. For example, neoliberalism structures global deregulated markets, privileging privatisation and the withdrawal of state influence, and has distinct political and economic effects even if such a political philosophy is not

understood or observed within the immediate domain of subjective experience. However, I realised very early on in my data collection process, after having analysed two interviews with participants (a process which I explore further on in this chapter) that critical realism was not the appropriate framework in which to situate my research. This was because participants understood themselves and the world around them through the lens of value. As extensively discussed in the empirical section of this thesis, participants spoke about their subjective lives as embedded within a network of social relationships through a moral lens, both in terms of how morality operates as a deeply significant and influential orientating structure, and as a source of devaluation for working-class people. It was the focus of the participants on the meaning of lay morality as an interpretative structure that led to my exploration of the phenomenological literature.

My intention at this point was not to explore the domain of ethics as a field itself or attempt to engage with the meta philosophy literature in order to critique the nature and meaning of morality. Instead, I engaged with the way participants spoke about their lives in the context of inhabiting a value system in which they routinely felt devalued, and yet also drew upon as a source of lay normativity to guide decisions and actions, and to evaluate their own behaviour as well as the behaviour of others. Phenomenology speaks to this intricate relationship where participants live within a moral framework that is not straightforward but is fraught with complex contradictions. Participants live within a value structure just by being in the world which is why intentionality as a concept is so significant in analysing how classed relationships are lived out. This is Heidegger's (1962) assertion that there is no ontology without phenomenology.

As explored throughout the theoretical framework of this thesis, such classed relationships are immersed within and are mediated through existing spaces of meaning, conceptualised within phenomenology as the lifeworld (Husserl, 1970), Dasein (Heidegger, 1962), and situated freedom (Merleau-Ponty, 2012). Participants live these social spaces as embodied beings where the past and the future are encapsulated in being itself, and are also embedded in the narrative frameworks that participants use to make sense of their lives. These key phenomenological concepts reflect the ontological and epistemological means through which participants understand and live out moral experience within a classed social structure. Phenomenological theorising situates class as an embodied mode of being in the world, and provides the insight into how meaning and moral experience is lived out through intentional

consciousness, where the working-class also find themselves constituted as bodies of meaning (Charlesworth, 2000) and positioned as the limit of public morality (Skeggs, 2005). Phenomenology serves as the analytical lens required to critically evaluate how such experience is embedded within classed power relationships that shape and remould class mechanisms and dynamics.

4.3 A Critical Phenomenological Analysis

Intentionality means to be in the world as caring individuals, not because we necessarily care about people (although we almost always do), but because we interact in a world of meaning where we are networked with people and places (Heidegger, 1962). Caring is to be immersed in a world of interdependent social relations. The subjective is the place where meaning is made and where the struggle for value is lived out. However, lived experience with all of its messy contradictions is notoriously difficult to utilise as a way of understanding the world, even as the embodied subjective perspective is the means through which perceiving and understanding manifests as reality (Davis, 2019). Critical phenomenology provides the analytical tools to embed a method for critically evaluating the lived experience of class relationships and the historical and sociocultural structures of power that shape and embed this experience. If Dasein captures the complexity of being in the world, then critical phenomenology enables a way of viewing and situating being in a manner that encapsulates the class relationships that shape experience whilst also analysing the way class mechanisms and structures function to normalise and legitimise unequal power relationships (Guenter, 2019).

One of the most valuable elements of critical phenomenological inquiry is the way the approach illuminates time and space as of the utmost significance in laying bare the complex mechanisms and structures that mobilise classed relationships. As explored within the theoretical framework of this thesis, consciousness always embodies the past through socio-spatial patterns and processes. Historical and cultural changes situate the past as a space of being which is not static as current experiences alter the lens of reflection, meaning the way the past generates value and meaning is always in a state of flux. The way we view and remember our own past is a process embedded in the class structures that are always working to shape the future, a critical point given that narrative is the primary method that we utilise to construct the world and understand ourselves within it (Ricoeur, 1990). This is why judgements about the nature of reality in terms of what constitutes ‘real’ must be set aside

and is one of the key tenets of phenomenological inquiry (Finlay, 2009). Meaning must be understood as a phenomena without judgement as to the trueness of this meaning. Everything we experience is real because we embody meaning as a source of action. However, suspending judgement about the reality of meaning does not entail taking meaning at face value, rather it is the manner in which meaning manifests to us, and how it changes across time in association with the deep power structures that shape patterns of social relationships, which is of interest from a critical phenomenological perspective.

As Gallagher and Zahavi (2008) point out, the Husserlian phenomenological motto 'to the things themselves' means we need to pay heed to the way we experience reality. To understand the classed nature of moral experience from a critical phenomenological perspective involves an analysis of what it means to be an embedded and embodied subject immersed in a field of meaning, where being in the world pre-supposes an intentional relationship with a world built on a value structure that is always in flux, and is mediated through a moral framework shaped by class structures. The methods I employ to fulfil the aims of this research reveals the classed nature of moral experience where being working-class is to be immersed in a world where class inequalities are deeply interwoven into a moral value structure, and which structures experience in a complex and often contradictory way. It is a nuanced exploration of the way class comes into being through consciousness, taking a critical analysis of how classed power relationships shape this embodied experience, and examining how people come to live class through the interdependent mechanisms which shape the concept of value, and the way value is understood, lived out, challenged and contested.

4.4 Methodological Rationale

The methodological approach of this study is directed by the research aims (which did shift as phenomenology was integrated into the methodological approach) and the way class is conceptualised in this research through the lens of symbolic value, a position which directed the methodological approach in two significant ways. Firstly, phenomenology as an analytical lens shines a light on how value manifests, but also enables a different way of perceiving and understanding value itself. This is crucial because as explored in the literature review of this thesis, the working-class are excluded from the dominant system of value exchange and to try to understand and analyse value through this lens is to misrecognise value as the production of the power relations that create classification and categorisation. Phenomenology enables a way of understanding value beyond the lens of value exchange because it presupposes an

ethic through its ontological nature. This is Husserl's lifeworld, Heidegger's notion of caring, and Merleau-Ponty's situated freedom. These are concepts which move us beyond embodied capital to understand how value manifests through practices that are not subject to the logic of capitalism, even as they are produced through it. Moral value is only one of these expressions of value, but it is the concern of this thesis because moral experiences are integral to human relationships and are central to the way the working-class participants in this study understand themselves and their relationship with others.

Secondly, understanding class as a power relationship that makes classification possible, rather than understanding class as stratification itself, shapes the analytical tools required to make sense of the class structures and mechanisms that shape social relations. Class analysis attempts to explore, and often explain, the relationship between class and a wide range of social phenomena (Wright, 1997). How this is undertaken as a methodological approach is connected to the way class is understood as an analytical concept. For example, an analysis of the relationship between social class and educational outcomes can be undertaken using quantitative data if class is understood through a stratification analysis (Hartas, 2015). This methodological approach illuminates disparity but rarely explains the complex class relationships that entrench disadvantage.

Qualitative methods are often incorporated alongside quantitative methods as a means of situating the subjective into stratification analysis and to provide some explanatory depth. For example, Crompton (2006) utilised semi-structured interviews alongside ISSP survey data to understand the relationship between class and gender within labour market changes over time. However, class is still understood here in terms of a stratification mode of conceptualisation which does not always get to the heart of how class categorisation manifests. This research does not conceptualise class in terms of stratification. Rather, I undertake an analysis of class which examines how people are produced as classed moral subjects through processes of symbolic (de)legitimisation, focusing on the power relationships that shape how people come to be classified and categorised, as well as how they live and make sense of this experience. In the next subsection of this thesis, I lay out the research design that embeds this critical phenomenological approach. I show how this approach provides the perspective to understand how moral experience manifests as subjective experience, and define the analytical concepts that I utilise to uncover and critique the classed power relations that situate how moral experience as a source of value is known and lived out.

4.5 Research Design

Selecting an appropriate qualitative method to undertake data collection was not an easy task. I planned and carried out my data collection during the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020 which posed significant restrictions for carrying out in-person research, such as ethnographic methods. Ethnographic methods would have enabled the opportunity to observe the everyday interactions which embed class divisions through the mundane rituals and routines that structure our days, and the social relations fostered within these seemingly ordinary encounters (Back, 2015). The challenge during this early research design process was to establish a methodological tool kit which could explore the class relationships that shape the way moral experience is lived out, and which I could also undertake without engaging in in-person research. In the next subsection of this chapter, I explain that in the context of lockdown restrictions, narrative interviews were chosen as the most appropriate method of data collection and discuss how I developed 'learning walks' as a method to immerse narrative interviews into a critical phenomenological methodology.

4.5.1 Narrative Inquiry

Narrative interviews were chosen as a means to understand the complexities of lived realities, exploring how people understand themselves through the stories they tell because, as discussed in the theoretical framework of this thesis, narrative construction is the key mechanism through which we make sense of the world and our place within it (Barthes, 1977). Narrative inquiry has a wide and varied methodological application arising through multiple and often conflicting theoretical differences where there is no consensus on what makes a narrative or how to understand and interpret narrative data (Squire et al., 2013). There is not a uniform method to conduct narrative research, nor is narrative inquiry bounded in particular paradigms or theoretical positions. However, narrative inquiry does have some central features. Narrative inquiry is concerned with stories; how participants assemble disjointed past events to construct a coherent narrative and how experience is lived as well as framed within this process. Essentially, narrative inquiry asks why the story was told in that particular way (Riessman, 1993).

Cronon (1992) argues that personal narratives are about value and how we create meaning, a process which is also deeply entwined with the meanings that exist in our social world as our stories are always co-authored through the way we are networked with others. The way

individuals tell their life story in terms of how they draw on events to organise their experiences into a coherent narrative, including how cultural and symbolic classed indicators manifest during this process, enables an analysis of the way participants understand themselves in relationship to a moral value structure, and how this experience re-makes class inequalities. Phenomenologically speaking, subjectivity makes reality through intentional consciousness. This means that our understanding of value manifests through our experience with the way we encounter value in our everyday lives. Narrative interviews applied through a critical phenomenological lens are key to understanding the multi-factorial nature of this experience.

This is because our personal narratives are integral to making sense of conscious experience where the wider social stories that we are immersed into as modes of meaning are also the narrative framework in which we situate our stories, as interrelated with the stories of others (Squire et al., 2013). Narrative interviews shine a light on this experience, exploring how value manifests through conscious intentionality as sources of meaning, and revealing the multiple ways through which values become meaningful to us (Riessman, 1993). As explored through the literature review of this thesis, people do understand their lives through value even as this valuation is also lived through classed power structures which control the modes and method of value exchange. Narratives are told within the constraints of the storied social world where class is so deeply entrenched in the symbolic economy it can be difficult to clearly identify where and how relations of class manifest as a tool to maintain class inequalities. A narrative lens is key to revealing such complexities, operating to make sense of the way class inequalities manifest through subjective experience because narrative inquiry simultaneously enables an analysis of how such power relations constrain the stories that are told.

I am conscious that stories are also the key method through which class distinctions circulate as social truths and that the properties of personhood are orientated within the symbolic economy where working-class selves are fixed in place and are denied a self, and the ability to tell their own story (Skeggs, 2004). Stories are frequently the domain of the middle-class who control the symbolic economy, the key mode through which stories are told, and where knowledge production through representations manifests. Narrating the self is not open to those who are excluded from the conditions that enable stories to be told and heard, especially if the dominant cultural narratives force autobiographical telling through the lens of individualism, such as the familiar tale of working-class transformation through

redemption, as is common within the reality television genre (Skeggs and Wood, 2012). Moreover, some people do not want to disclose their stories, especially if their experiences are painful (Rubin, 1992; Hilario et al., 2019) and sometimes telling personal stories can be sources of regret (Maynes, Laslett and Pierce, 2011). This means that telling stories can reproduce the conditions that maintain the power relationships in which stories occur (Haliloglu, 2011), even when such narrations are an attempt to redress these power dynamics by enabling marginalised voices to be heard. This can be especially pertinent when power relations within the research experience manifests through the researcher who mediates and tells this experience, assuming the authority as speaking subject (Hooks, 1989). The question of how to do empirical research without reproducing symbolic violence and categories of power is not an easy one but the alternative of never hearing from working-class people is not acceptable.

This is where phenomenological inquiry, both as an ontology and epistemology, is so key to the practice of reflexive research which I embed in the narrative approach used in this study. A critical phenomenological approach to narrative inquiry enables an analysis of the subjective experience of class which foregrounds the power structures in which stories manifest. It provides the lens to explore how class is lived through the power structures that mobilise categorisation and classification, but also reveals how different understandings of value, specifically the value of moral experience, manifests through class relationships and mechanisms. Narrative interviews applied in this research through a critical phenomenological lens enables a different way of understanding and thinking about value, foregrounding moral experience understood beyond the logic of capital. The method enables a way of thinking about how morality manifests through consciousness as a source of value outside of the dominant system of value exchange, enabling a space of meaning that is not entrenched in the power dynamics that reproduce symbolic violence.

The classed nature of moral experience is produced within a complex subjectivity where understandings of moral value are forged through a symbolic economy that is constantly operating to position the working-class as immoral. Narrative interviews reveal the deep structures of power that constitute and embed this experience and manifest through the temporal nature of storytelling. However, subjectivity is also a deeply embodied experience. The bodies of working-class women are the site where immorality is most deeply coded through the symbolic representations that operate to keep working-class women fixed in

place. Such fixings are symbolic, but these moral distinctions operate to maintain material advantage, working to connect the domain of the moral to the spatial, shaping the way participants embody consciousness, limiting and facilitating the way classed bodies move through space. The Covid-19 restrictions meant I was unable to interview participants in their villages, but I still wanted to explore these relational and temporal elements of class mobilities through a socio-spatial lens. This is why I decided to situate narrative interviews with participants into a data collection method that could capture the connections between bodies situated within and connected through place.

4.5.2 Walking as Method

Walking as a means to understand the co-productive relationship between people and places has a lengthy history in literature, long before Walter Benjamin (1997) theorised the *flaneur* as the urban walker who observed the changing dynamics of nineteenth century Paris. The *flaneur* for Benjamin originates in the work of Charles Baudelaire whose poetry captures the anonymous figure that observes the intricate nature of the crowds in city spaces. However, the *flaneur* is not only the domain of artists and poets who observe people and places through craft, rather Gleber (2020) charts the figure back to the onset of industrialisation in Europe as urbanisation enabled a new way of taking up space in cities of urban transformation. Technological advances reconfigured city spaces such that boundaries between work and home were blurred and where walking became more than a practical activity, as people began to utilise walking as both a means of living in, as well as understanding the city and their place within it (Shortell, 2015). What this means is that people are always reading, interpreting and making sense of the places they live in through the way they are consciously oriented towards place. Moreover, the way people take up and move through space both reflects and moulds the classed dynamics that mobilise classed relationships, shaping patterns of mobility which are both socio-spatially situated and forged through symbolic struggles of value. It is this way of understanding people and places that I engaged in, in order to utilise walking as a method to understand the classed nature of moral experience.

How people occupy and take up space is intertwined with the classed power dynamics that enable and legitimise certain bodies to become mobile whilst others are fixed in place. As explored through the literature review of this thesis, middle-class mobility is deeply tied to the ability to accrue value through personhood, a process that is only achieved through the denial of selfhood to the working-classes, where the maintenance of symbolic distance is vital

to categorisation and classification, and is also central to the way markers of class are read differently on different classed bodies. The control of socio-spatial dynamics through processes such as gentrification is key to the symbolic economy that legitimises the movement of middle-class bodies within places. Critical phenomenology attempts to understand the way power structures manifest through embodied and embedded subjects. The focus on embedding through embodiment leads Zurn (2021) to argue that critical phenomenology 'theorises by walking with' (p. 4) meaning that a critical phenomenological perspective involves analysing how the body moves through space as an active process in a field of meaning which is not a backdrop to experience but rather is constitutive of it.

The symbolic positioning of the ex-mining villages as embodying a lack of moral value is key to the maintenance of distance which maintains class differentiation. As Merleau-Ponty (2012) explains, our sense of situated freedom is formed through our relationship with the social and natural world as we are integrated within it; our perceptual frame is also our means of communicating with the world. This means that personal stories are not constructed within indeterminate places on a map but are co-authored with and constructed through place. This is why walking methods as intertwined with narrative methodology are so powerful from a critical phenomenological perspective; they not only flesh out the complex and interdependent relationship between people and place, but uncover how such experiences are temporally and relationally anchored to place, as historically situated and socio-spatial patterns manifest through conscious intentionality. Places are active spaces of meaning where the future is always being reimagined. Our personal memories which are situated in the context of past social stories shape movement through space (O'Neill, 2020). Our stories are always in the process of being made and as such they are stories of movement, not only symbolically but they are also embodied in action as our stories are forged through the socio-spatial dynamics that co-produce people and places.

Walking as method captures this phenomenological spirit because our moving stories are told through movement itself, reflecting how we are consciously oriented towards place as an embedded and embodied subject. I wanted to understand how stories of action are spoken through the way participants relate to place and how they move through that space as classed subjects. To fulfil this aim, I engaged with a method known as 'walk throughs' or 'learning walks', which is a familiar critical tool of reflection within the education environment. Adapting learning walks to my phenomenological methodological perspective enabled me to

explore how narratives are co-produced through the way place is conceptualised as a space of meaning, and central to the way class manifests through the stories that structure and produce subjective experiences of value. Before I move on to discuss my data collection practices, which explains the step-by-step processes I undertook to adapt and carry out learning walks, as well as conduct narrative interviews, I review the recruitment and sampling process for this study.

4.6 Recruitment and Sampling

Prior to recruiting a sample for this qualitative research, I interviewed four community employment advisors working within County Durham. I wanted to gain an expert perspective on the economic and political context of the region as it had changed over time. I chose to speak to these community advisors in particular because they had worked across different regions of the county. They had worked across rural and urban environments and within varying settings, including the housing and employment sectors, two key areas of focus within my research. Three of the employment advisors had worked in County Durham for over twenty years, both as access to work mentors and also within a wide range of community support roles. These interviews provided depth to my engagement with the work that explores the socio-spatial dynamics of County Durham ex-mining villages, literature that I have outlined in the introductory chapter of this thesis. The discussions revolved around the economic and political changes of the region, particularly with regards to austerity and labour market shifts which have affected the employment and education sectors, and the availability, delivery and changing dynamics of key services over time. My aim was not to draw conclusions from these particular interviews. Rather, these conversations gave context to my research project and provided a comprehensive overview of how wider political and economic changes have affected County Durham in ways which are unique to the area, enabling me to situate individual interviews with research participants into this context.

Following my conversations with the four employment advisors, I then recruited 24 research participants who have engaged in approximately one-hour conversations within a narrative interview framework. The research participants were mostly aged between 35 and 55 with one younger man and two older women and all are of working age. There was an almost even gender split of 11 men and 13 women and most of my participants resided in the former mining villages around North and North West Durham, with two participants located on the Sunderland and Gateshead border respectively, and two participants located within market

towns south of the City of Durham. Age, gender and location were critical to the recruitment of participants for this study. The nature of this research required substantial first-person experience of what it is like to live in County Durham and negotiate the key life phases of education and work. For this reason, I focused on recruiting within the 25-60 age group, recognising that experiences would differ across such an age range, enabling me to consider how class is lived out over different temporal phases, situating such experiences in socio-political shifts and changes. It is important to point out that I placed no restrictions on what it meant to be educated in County Durham or to work in the area, recognising that people would have a varied understanding of and engagement with both institutions.

Gender was a crucial component of the research design. As explored throughout the literature review of this thesis, class is always read through gender with working-class women represented as the symbolic limit of moral value (Skeggs, 2005). Therefore, it was important that the sample included the experiences of both men and women in order to enable a gendered analysis of the data. Race does not figure as a category of analysis within this research sample, despite race, class and gender being interwoven, not just as categories of intersection, but instead entangled in complex and deeply embedded historical patterns and processes that constitute the development of racialised capitalism (Virdee, 2019). The local matters enormously in understanding the nature of classed relationships and the racial dynamics of County Durham factor in the decision not to include race in the class analysis I have undertaken. County Durham has a very low black and ethnic minority population with almost 97 percent of the population identifying as white British. As Nayak (2017) explains, race is lived through socio-spatial relationships which also make and re-make socio-spatial boundaries, experiences which differ enormously across and within places as he demonstrates through his work exploring the experiences of British Bangladeshi youth in Sunderland, a town where 95 percent of the population identify as white British. Although race, class and gender are deeply entangled as power structures, this does not mean that research into classed relationships can easily intertwine and analyse the role of gender and race within this complex process. An understanding of the localised patterns and processes shaping racialised class relationships in County Durham would require a much deeper mode of analysis, a project which was beyond the scope of this study.

The location of my research participants was important given that County Durham is not monolithic with wealth and deprivation existing very closely together. I did not attempt to

elicit a recruitment sample through attempting to draw boundaries around 'working-class' or 'middle-class' communities because firstly, this is very difficult to put into practice, and secondly, this study does not conceptualise class in terms of stratification, rather it seeks to understand how the classed nature of moral experience manifests through processes of categorisation and classification. However, even when class is taken at its most basic level and reduced to economic indicators where deprivation indexes are used to identify hierarchies of stratification, there are no clear-cut boundaries within the region. County Durham is actually incredibly diverse in terms of deprivation levels, with areas of wealth and poverty existing not only as towns alongside each other but also within places themselves. As a local authority district, the City of Durham has a range of scores on the multiple area of deprivation index[2] (from five to 53) and is also home to a large estate which has the third highest rate of child poverty (out of a possible 324) in the county. Meanwhile, within the wider county there are large regions of deprivation, such as the market town of Bishop Auckland, which has a score of 52 and is closely located next to much more affluent areas on the edge of the Durham Dales, such as Wolsingham which scores 11, and Lanchester which is ranked at seven. Aside from the complexity around disidentification with classed identities, these contradictions also show how places are not fixed through socio-economic distinctions, and they do not have easily recognisable boundaries so as to describe a 'working-class community.'

Some parts of County Durham are also over researched, particularly the East Durham coastal towns of Easington, Horden, and Peterlee, which as explored in the introductory chapter of this thesis, suffered substantial socio-economic deprivation following the collapse of heavy industry throughout the 1980s and 1990s. This region has been subject to scrutiny, both from the academic community (Beynon, 1985; Roberts, 2009; Brock et al., 2023) and the public health sector (Lynch, 2006), as well as used in literary accounts to represent post-industrial decay and decline (Hudson, 1995; Chesshyre, 2012). Places which are over researched can suffer from what Button and Taylor-Aiken (2022) deem 'research fatigue' where the density of research being undertaken leads to a weariness from within the community, and where residents in marginalised places can sometimes feel exploited and misrepresented (Neufeld et al., 2019). Consequently, I chose to draw my research sample from the ex-mining villages

[2] The local government uses seven indicators to calculate an index of multiple deprivation. They are income, employment, health, education, crime, barriers to housing, and the living environment. InstantAtlas Durham – Deprivation and Poverty – Index of Deprivation (durhaminsight.info)

within a few miles of Durham city centre, in the former mining villages around North and North West Durham.

The map below (figure 2) shows the parliamentary boundaries that cut through this small area from where I draw my research sample. These lines of separation divide the City of Durham from the constituency of North Durham, meaning the villages of Sacriston and Witton Gilbert which almost merge geographically and are served by the same secondary school, are separated by parliamentary boundaries. Similarly, the village of East Hedleyhope falls within the City of Durham constituency, whereas the neighbouring village of Waterhouses is only one mile away and forms part of the constituency of North West Durham. These lines of separation are important because the County's Area Action Partnerships, which are formed to give residents a voice on community issues and developments, and are comprised of local people and community groups, are organised around such boundaries. This means that former mining settlements which were once orientated around a village pit, such as Sacriston colliery which employed men from the surrounding villages of Witton Gilbert and Langley Park (Tomaney, Natarajan and Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, 2021), are now divided along two formal community boundaries.

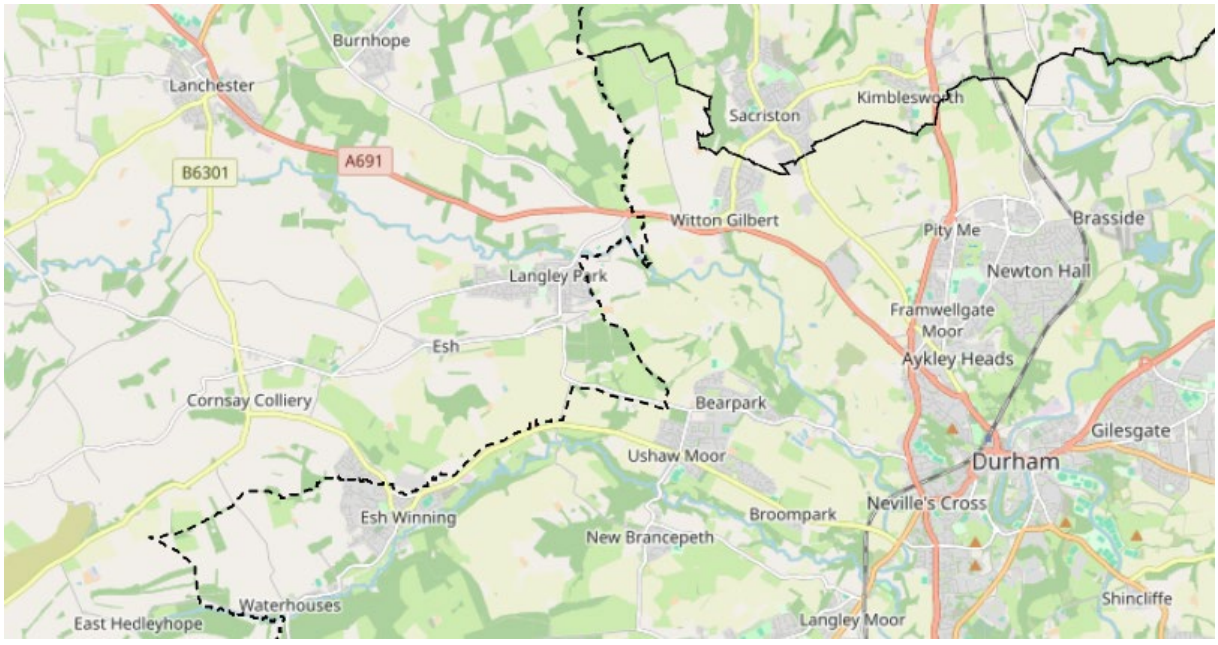

Figure 2: Durham Electoral Boundary Map. Source: Durham County Council

This area of County Durham is particularly interesting. Firstly, there is very little research undertaken here. Secondly, as discussed earlier in this chapter, some of the mining villages in this part of County Durham are within the top 10 percent of the most deprived wards in the

county, whilst other neighbouring villages are not considered to be deprived at all. The villages are also located within a few miles of the affluent City of Durham. As discussed earlier, this thesis does not understand class in terms of stratification. Nevertheless, there is a relationship to the multiple ways in which categorisation and classification via the symbolic economy affects the accumulation and maintenance of socio-economic capital. Finally, these ex-mining communities are also undergoing significant social change in relation to the housing sector and some of villages in the area are key sites of interest for housing developers. The rate of housing development across County Durham is expected to exceed over 24,000 new build dwellings over the period 2016-2035, with many of the villages in this particular region having already experienced substantial housing development (Durham County Council, 2019). These high-density new build housing estates change the social fabric of small villages, particularly if the pace of change is rapid, making this area of County Durham a particularly interesting site to undertake class analysis around the meaning of value.

My aim of recruiting an even gender sample of working aged people from the ex-mining villages within a few miles of Durham city centre was constrained by access restrictions imposed during the Covid-19 lockdown of 2020. I was not able to engage with community groups, or advertise in other community spaces such as public libraries and voluntary organisations. Having to act quickly due to time constraints, I decided to advertise on social media for research participants. Given the stringent lockdown measures it was expected that this process would be the main source of participant recruitment, meaning the poster advertising my research project needed to be pitched correctly. As explored in the literature review of this thesis, class is not identified with in the public domain (Savage et al., 2001), particularly in working-class communities where to disidentify with class is also to refuse the power dynamics that misrecognise working-class value (Skeggs, 1997, 2009). This does not mean that people do not live class in their everyday lives, or that they do not understand class relationships (Payne and Crew, 2005). I found myself in the dilemma of trying to advertise a recruitment poster to encourage people to take part in research about class, without referring to class itself.

My approach was to utilise proxies for class, thinking about the key areas of social life that most of us engage in, and which reflect the complexities of class mechanisms, dynamics and relationships. I advertised my project through the name *Life in Durham Study* and orientated my research poster around education, work and community, asking people to share their

experiences of living in County Durham with a focus on these particular spheres of social life. I was careful not to assume that potential research participants would have engaged in education, or that their experience of work would have been within the labour market. I phrased the literature in the poster in a manner that allowed for a wide interpretation of experiences. I utilised blue and yellow, the colours of the County Durham flag as the backdrop for the poster, and I also included two defining images of the region, Durham cathedral and a commemorative sculpture of a mining wheel and ships anchor. These sculptures are situated in multiple ex-mining communities across County Durham, serving to recognise and celebrate the role of mining and shipbuilding as the industrial heartlands which drove the economy for much of the twentieth century. My rationale for including these images was related to my desire to recruit participants from the ex-mining villages just outside the city centre. Given that my research poster was likely to be my main source of recruiting participants, it would have been too restrictive to limit responses by advertising for participants from particular villages. Instead, I created a Facebook page named *Life in Durham study* and used a form of targeted recruitment, asking friends and acquaintances with links to the area to share the post on their own social media pages.

This proved fruitful and early replies to my call for participants did yield responses from people living in the ex-mining villages in and around the city centre. However, by the time I had engaged in 12 interviews, I found there was a very significant gender imbalance in my recruitment process with only two men amongst these research participants. At this point I decided to target my recruitment strategy and utilised snowball sampling to engage men to participate in the research. This was very successful. I was able to recruit a further nine men through this method, meaning the gender balance within my research sample was almost even, with 11 men and 13 women taking part in my study. Recruiting participants who lived within the ex-mining villages surrounding the city was a little harder as this area is geographically quite small and I was also constrained by the Covid-19 lockdown and relying solely on online recruitment. Flexibility was key here and I did not turn down anyone who reached out to be interviewed.

Despite four participants living outside of my targeted area, they all contributed to my understanding of classed relationships within the area. This was because three of the participants had worked, or were working in my targeted recruitment area, and spoke about their experiences of the class dynamics operating within their hometowns and villages,

contrasting this with the class dynamics they experienced through working and socialising in the ex-mining villages close to the City of Durham. Moreover, the four participants who did not live in these ex-mining villages all had a relationship to the industrial heritage of the North East region. They discussed the importance of the region's mining and shipbuilding legacies, sometimes in interchangeable terms, reinforcing how these two dominant industries weaved communities together across counties, forming tight links and bonds that I refer to in the introductory chapter of this thesis. Although these four participants made distinctions about the class mechanisms operating in the places they lived, they do speak to the way socio-spatial boundaries are blurred and not neatly divided by geographical lines. Overall, my recruitment sample consists of an even gender split of working aged people who live predominantly within the ex-mining villages to the north and north west of the City of Durham. As is consistent with qualitative research, this sample is not representative of the population, or the people in this area, rather my aim is to contribute to a body of knowledge that understands the way class divisions manifest and reproduce through subjective moral experience.

4.7 Data Collection

In this subsection I explain how I engaged in narrative interviews through a critical phenomenological perspective, and explore how I developed 'learning walks' as a method to immerse narrative interviews into a critical phenomenological methodology. I also explain the methodological and analytical steps I undertook to make sense of the data collected.

4.7.1 Narrative Interviews

Narrative interviews provide the lens to explore the way class manifests through cultural and symbolic representations, as well as hidden through power structures, foregrounding not only personal subjective experience but also shining a light on why experience is interpreted by participants in a particular way, and why their stories are told in that way, and through that lens (Bruner, 1990). Just as there is a wide interpretation of narrative inquiry, there is also little consensus regarding what constitutes narrative. Narrative interviews can be biographical in nature where the interviewee tells their life story, although this is never a chronological account, rather a selection of events that the participant considers meaningful to their overall story (Ricoeur, 1990). This means that in order to understand the significance of the story, it is important to set aside preoccupations with methodological technicality and instead focus on how to connect life stories to the wider social and cultural meaning systems in which such

stories are told (Denzin, 1989, 2001). Conceptualising narrative interviews in this way involves rejecting the interpretation of a narrow view of narrative as arising only in the context of a biographical life history or insisting on a completely unstructured interview (Rosenthal, 1993). Such rigidity fails to see that life narratives do not need to be biographical in order to understand how individuals make sense of and construct their lives, and that the interviewer can still guide and shape the discourse without fracturing narrative accounts (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000).

With this conceptualising of narrative interviews in mind, I designed an open-ended interview framework that was loosely guided by key stages in the lives of participants, specifically education and work, as well as focusing on housing and community. I asked participants an open-ended question about their experience of the education system in Durham, being careful not to make assumptions that school was somewhere they attended or engaged with. Similarly, I asked participants an open-ended question about their experiences of the labour market or looking for employment. Finally, I asked participants about their experience of the housing sector in Durham, being careful not to make assumptions around living situations or housing. As discussed earlier on in this chapter, the initial focus of this research was not phenomenological, nor was it orientated towards exploring the classed nature of moral experience. My initial investigation was interested in narrative and morality in the sense that my focus was around the way morality had been used as a tool to maintain punitive social policies which impacted experiences of education, work and housing through a critical realist perspective. However, the first two interviews with participants led me to re-evaluate not only the focus of my research but the theoretical and methodological underpinnings. This was because the first two participants discussed their experiences of education, work and housing through the lens of value and meaning rather than as a tradable resource. Both participants engaged in conversations that operated outside of how capital could manifest through exchange value within these key spheres of social life. Instead, they spoke about the value of living a good life and conceptualised this in terms of fairness, not in terms of the fairness of access to multiple forms of capital, but rather through a moral lens in terms of the values and meanings that structure social life.

What was very striking during these early interviews was the manner in which morality clearly operated through the lives of participants in a dualistic manner. Morality was embedded in classed relationships as a source of judgement where participants' narratives identified the

multiple ways that they were subject to devaluation and deligitimisation within the spheres of education, work and housing. Critically, moral experience was also absolutely central to how participants lived their lives and guided their social relationships within these spheres. I realised that morality operates both as a deeply significant and influential orientating structure, and as a source of devaluation for working-class people. It was the focus of the participants on the meaning of lay morality as an interpretative structure that led to my exploration of the phenomenological literature, an engagement which redirected the focus of my interviews. In light of the changing nature of the research, I also adapted my narrative interview framework to incorporate the significance of value through use rather than exchange terms, asking probing questions around the social interactions and relationships that manifest within education, work and community, rather than only focusing on how such institutions can be used as sources of tradable capital. It was this changing focus on how value is conceptualised that enabled this thesis to analyse and understand how people are produced as classed moral subjects beyond the dominant system of capital exchange, even as this sense of moral experience is produced through it.

The early interviews also enabled me to see that I needed to adapt the language I had used around work and housing. For example, my open-ended question which asked how people experienced work, or looked for employment, did not capture the multiple ways that work can be understood outside of the labour market, not only in terms of unpaid labour in and outside of the home, but also in the way some people may engage in the illicit economies or work outside of the PAYE system. Similarly, where I had designed an open-ended question about how people experienced the housing sector in County Durham, I had not considered the extent to which mobility was prevalent within the ex-mining villages or that people were heavily invested in the reputations and representations of the places they lived in. I realised that paradoxically my open-ended questions were too confusing. For example, when I asked a participant in an early interview how they would describe their village, their response was *'to who?'*. Moreover, the lives of participants were not neatly bound into experiences of education, work and community because the social relationships which manifested through these spheres were entangled together in a wider story which situated these spaces as interdependent structures shaping and moulding each other.

Consequently, I adapted my interview framework into a guide with various lines of enquiry that were centred around education, work and community but were not necessarily direct

questions about such experiences. This meant that instead of having a minimal number of open-ended questions which can be typical of a narrative interview design (Riessman, 1993), I developed a series of potentially relevant points, both prior to the interview and during the interview process, which I drew on depending on the direction of the interview and the experiences of the participants. For example, during one interview, instead of asking a participant to describe their village, I drew on an earlier comment where the participant discussed buying a new build property to forge a conversation about their experience of that process. This led on to an in-depth discussion about the reputation of council estates within ex-mining villages and the way new housing developments could be symbolically absent from being defined by the village's reputation.

Narrative interviews also engage with time as understood phenomenologically through being in the world. Power structures are lived temporally, as stories embody time through the way emotion manifests within imagined stories that are untold as the future comes into being through the narrative construction of the past (Young, 2000). The deep structures of power that constitute and embed our experience also manifests through the temporal nature of storytelling, where the self and the identity produced within it is constantly in the process of being formed. The memories of past experience, as well as the stories yet to be told, are intertwined and are continuously re-made through the interdependent mechanisms of power and desire that constitute and remake our stories, meaning the past and the future are always in the process of being re-imagined (Tamboukou, 2010). I undertook this approach of experience centred narrative research to explore the stories of participants as orientated through aspects of life that we all commonly engage in, and are fundamental to the vast majority of our lives and the way we co-exist with others (Wengraf, 2001). This change in technique was a process which I found improved over the course of the interviews as I became more skilled at adapting and developing the conversation in response to the dialogue of the participants, a reflexive engagement that developed through the analysis process which I discuss further in the ethical subsection of this chapter.

Narrative interviews are not only concerned with the spoken word. I analysed participants' interviews throughout the course of the data collection process, rather than waiting until interviews were completed. The way stories are told through the body manifest not only through communicative expression but are embedded, phenomenologically speaking, in the way we use our bodies as the means to explain and interpret our own stories. This is

particularly important from a critical phenomenological perspective when those bodies are such an integral part of the story (Hydén, 2013), as is the case with the way classed bodies are actively part of the process of value production and the reproduction of classed power relationships. This is because narrative reveals the nature of experience through what is unspoken, as well as what is explicitly expressed through discourse, discursive framings which also embed and reflect the power mechanisms that structure social relations (Parker, 2003). I took note of changes in tone, pitch and body language as well as the fluency of dialogue to consider the significance of these expressive changes from an empirical perspective, but also as a means to constantly reassess my line of questioning, a point I elaborate on further in the ethical subsection of this chapter.

Narrative inquiry utilised as an analytical tool of critical phenomenology provides the lens in this research to understand the social relationships in which our stories are produced and the power relationships which facilitate class categorisation and classification. It is because we understand our lives in terms of narrative, and draw upon stories as sources of meaning, which makes narrative inquiry key to understanding the relationship between class and value. Within the interviews, participants drew not only on the stories of others to situate their experiences, but many also drew on fiction narratives or movies to explain and orientate their own narratives. Four participants encouraged me to read books that they had enjoyed despite this not being a line of questioning during the interviews. Two participants referenced an author from the local area whose books are situated in County Durham but are also written in a local dialect. One participant talked about the significance of reading about his village in a nuanced manner, and from the perspective of an author who both lived and understood the dynamics of the region. I read all of the books recommended to me. One book, *Pig Iron,* by local author Ben Myers, reinforced the way fiction narratives can capture what non-fiction texts can struggle to explain (Brewer, 1988). This is why the book was recommended to me. When explaining the intricate divisions between places, a participant told me, '*There's a book about it,'* and after reading his book recommendation I understood exactly what the participant meant. *Pig Iron* represents the complexities of class in County Durham. The book does not attempt to define class, but it does succeed in expertly capturing the class dynamics within the ex-mining villages of County Durham that I am trying to make clear in this thesis.

Narrative interviews do have limitations, particularly with regards to exploring the embodied nature of place, and how historically situated class mechanisms and structures manifest

through the way people are physically oriented towards and situated within the socio-spatial dynamics that make places what they are. Moreover, due to the restrictions imposed on face-to-face research during the Covid19 lockdown, these interviews were conducted online which brought additional complexity to the process of data collection. The interviews were conducted via Zoom which enabled me to access participants that otherwise would not have had the time to spare. For example, a number of participants commented that working from home, or being on furlough, had given them greater flexibility in how they could manage their time. They explained that if they had been at work and only had evenings or weekends available, it would have been much more difficult to arrange an in-person interview. Similarly, the shift to online that occurred during the pandemic was very useful in terms of participant recruitment, as some participants reflected on how they were using social media more actively than usual and perhaps would not have come across my study outside of the pandemic.

I was conscious that online interviewing does change the social space that the interview occurs in because the body language and facial cues that are co-produced through face-to-face research are different online, particularly as only the headshot of the person can be seen (Oliffe et al., 2021). This frame was often even smaller when participants were using their mobile phone, rather than a laptop or desktop computer, and I was concerned that this could impact building rapport with participants, especially on occasions when interviews were interrupted by network connections. It is important to build rapport throughout the interview process, but it is particularly important to establish this at the very start of the interview process because subsequent interactions develop from this initial encounter (Riessman, 1993). With this in mind, I paid careful attention to my environment, choosing a Zoom background that was neutral so that my image was forefront, and reassuring participants regarding unforeseen technological glitches. Additionally, two participants opted to speak via audio, rather than via camera, which added another layer of complexity as, on occasion, I had to ask participants for clarification on what they had said because the visual cues were absent in supporting the discourse. Interestingly, this clarified that although body language is limited during Zoom interviews in comparison to how they manifest in face-to-face research, the visual cues visible through Zoom do work as an effective tool of communication.

On occasions where participants did discuss difficult situations, a process I elaborate on in the reflexivity and ethics subsection of this chapter, I felt that Zoom actually enabled this

discussion to be mediated in a sensitive way. On reflection, I considered if this was due to the way technology generated a natural physical barrier which translated into a mode of facilitation when discussing sensitive topics because participants had a greater sense of control compared to in-person interviews. There is a sense with online conversations that it is easier to bring discussions to a close because it involves ending a call rather than leaving a physical space. It was this reflection of the way space manifests as a mode of meaning that influenced my decision to develop 'learning walks' as a method. I adapted the method known as 'walk throughs' or 'learning walks' from the education sector as a tool of analysis to further embed narrative interviews within a critical phenomenological methodological perspective. As discussed, I collected my data during the Covid-19 restrictions when face-to-face research was prohibited. Learning walks enabled me to explore how personal narratives are co-produced through the way people actively move through familiar spaces. The method provides a lens to understand the way place is conceptualised as a space of meaning, and how this meaning is central to the way class manifests through the stories that structure and produce subjective experiences of value.

4.7.2 Learning Walks

Learning walks are a process I adapted from my role as a school governor. Schools utilise what is known as walk throughs or learning walks, as a means of professional development, and to understand if the school or classroom is understood by an external observer in the same way as it is perceived by those who routinely inhabit the social spaces of the school environment. It is also used as a tool to identify areas of strengths and potential improvements (Allen and Topolka-Jorissen, 2014; Feeney, 2014). I was asked to undertake a walk through within my son's primary school to see if my perception of the school was one of inclusion as they perceived it to be. This involved walking the full school grounds from the front door to the yard, passing through the more structured learning environments of the classrooms, observing interactions within them, as well as walking through the less formal elements of the play and eating spaces. I was asked to observe the size, shape and function of the rooms, the variant of colours, the placement and arrangement of furniture as well as the format of displays, considering how such objects constitute or pose limits on the school environment as an inclusive place of learning.

However, during my walk through I did not easily observe any of these things. I was not able to recall how many classrooms existed or if accessing these rooms was difficult or easy. I was

not able to comment on whether the position of the tables and chairs felt hostile or welcoming. This was because during the walk through I did not perceive the school environment in such a rational manner. Rather, what was constituted in the process of the walk through was meaning. Primarily, I was able to talk about the feel of the school and how the school environment felt warm and welcoming, and that I was able to perceive this feeling through the experience of walking the corridors. It was much harder to connect observable phenomena to perception and meaning and to explain in a short walk through why the school revealed itself in the way that it did. The walk through did not seem to be a way of observing and collecting evidence but rather a way of perceiving meaning. It was this process of perceiving meaning which I embedded in my methodological approach as a means to adapt to the lockdown restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic. As explored earlier, I was unable to interview participants in their own environment. However, I still wanted to analyse phenomenologically and to understand how narratives are not only co-produced through place, but to understand how participants' stories of action are embodied and embedded through movement within ex-mining villages, where the symbolic meaning of such places is one of devaluation.

After each interview was completed and data analysis had commenced, I began a process of visiting each participant's town or village using their audio narratives as a guide, focusing on key sites of meaning that arose in the context of the narrative interview. I walked around housing estates, schools, workplaces, as well as many mundane spaces which participants described through their interviews as everyday sites of social interaction. Many of these buildings, particularly schools and workplaces, have been demolished. However, I was able to follow the narratives of the participants to envisage where such spaces previously existed. During these walk throughs I was able to document the spatial dynamics of the villages including the infrastructure, employment and education opportunities, and leisure and community facilities, particularly noting the changing and often declining availability of public and leisure services that participants discussed in their narratives. However, the walk throughs also enabled the perceptions and meanings that participants attached to place to manifest in a way that was different to interpreting this meaning through interviews alone. Listening to the interview recordings while walking through the villages gave a sense of meaning which would not have revealed itself in the way that it did if I had not walked through the ex-mining villages with participants' narrative accounts.

It was participants' stories which gave meaning to buildings, streets and everyday sites of social interaction. For example, I could visualise the significance of subjectivity through how participants described exactly the same pubs as completely different sites of meaning. This meaning manifested through their relationship to a multitude of socio-economic and socio-spatial factors. Participants' audio guides also marked out forgotten spaces kept alive by memory which I would not have been able to locate without the interview recordings. These spaces were not only demolished workplaces, shops, schools and community facilities, but they are also spaces that have no structural markers. For example, a participant discussed a local field from his childhood, which was a common play space with a local identifiable nickname, and is now the site of a new build housing development. He spoke in such detail about the field, explaining the location and describing the geographical conditions such as the depth and exposure to the elements, that I was able to locate the area where the play space was. I could understand the anger felt at the loss of such meaningful spaces because of his story which emphasised his frustration with the way places such as this are so quickly erased in his village. Although I listened to his feelings towards the loss of meaningful spaces during his interview, it was the process of situating his narrative in the physical space that he had discussed which brought alive the sense of loss that he was describing.

In carrying out learning walks, I was able to engage and reflect on participants' narratives while in their physical environment. Learning walks enabled me to situate their stories in the context of the places that were meaningful to them. This was important because although participants described their villages and towns to me, and some did give very vivid accounts of the places they inhabited, there are limits to how much can be conveyed via description. For example, when participants discussed the loss of important spaces such as community centres, libraries and leisure facilities, I wanted to visualise the loss that the participants talked about. As well as situating the narratives of participants in a meaningful context, learning walks also enabled me to visualise some of the class mechanisms and structures that participants discussed in their stories. For example, when observing some of the school settings, I was able to see the hostility that participants discussed in their narratives. I observed physical markers such as the tall chain locked gates and the signage instructing not to enter without an appointment. I could contrast this with the entrances of other schools, which did not have padlocked gates, but instead had open inviting entrances with greenery, sometimes with community gardens or allotments.

During their interviews, participants discussed their experience of place and gave rich and detailed descriptions. Many participants did extensively discuss the hostility they experienced within schools or workplaces. However, they rarely described the physical markers of such places. In situating their narratives in the context of the classed markers that I could observe as I walked, I was able to analyse their experience in a more meaningful way. This is why I found learning walks so useful. Participants' narratives directed me towards key sites of meaning. I was then able to situate their narratives in the context of the physical environment and observe how the emotional landscapes of class were reflected through their stories. Their audio narratives did situate them as embodied subjects embedded in place, reinforcing the phenomenological position that it is through the subjective that meaning manifests. The way we are intentionally oriented towards phenomena, conceptualised as Husserl's (2001) 'aboutness,' constitutes the way the world manifests itself through experience as meaningful.

There are limits to learning walks. I was very conscious of my role in making sense of participants' narratives whilst physically occupying their spaces. I wanted to situate their stories in the context of the places that were meaningful to them but I did not want to talk over their experiences. This is why I walked through participants' villages with their audio narratives and did not just visit the places they lived in to observe the area. In being directed by the stories of participants, and walking through areas that were meaningful to them, I was able to foreground their narratives as the overarching interpretative structure, visualising places as spaces of meaning, and of value, through the lens of participants. The way participants framed their ex-mining villages as spaces of meaning reflects a phenomenological conceptualisation of value.

Participants did not speak about their villages as places with resources or as the substance of capital to be exchanged within the dominant system of value consumption. Places are co-produced through the value structures that hold participants together as networked and embedded with others over time, which is how Heidegger (1962) frames caring, and why Merleau-Ponty (2012) situates perception itself within the body as the mechanism through which conscious experience is made real and the medium through which we access the world. Learning walks in this research helped to emphasise the significance of subjectivity in how moral experience manifests as a source of value which does not easily translate into exchangeable capital through the symbolic economy. Learning walks are a way of perceiving meaning through value. In this study, learning walks have brought alive the experiences of

participants as threaded together over time and through space. The method has enabled a deeper understanding of the role of class and place in co-producing social environments and how value is produced in this context.

4.7.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis was embedded throughout the data collection process rather than a task undertaken after the interviews and learning walks were carried out. I analysed each transcript after an interview and then engaged in learning walks shortly after each interview was transcribed. This is because a primary strength of narrative inquiry is the way the method enables an engagement with the interdependent nature of social stories and the socio-cultural framework in which stories are lived and told (Chandler, 2014). Analysing narrative interviews and learning walks as an ongoing process was key to making sense of participants' experiences as embedded in the wider socio-political and cultural context, which is of primary concern from a critical phenomenological perspective. Moreover, participants' stories do not stand alone, they are stories of their interpersonal relationships with others and as such their narratives are also intertwined with the narratives of other participants. On completion of an interview, I frequently referred to earlier analysis in order to understand not only how participants' experiences differed, but how their narration of their stories was presented through different lenses. Analysing the data in this fluid manner enabled a sense of how participants were positioned in relationship to power and helped to make sense of their interpretation of their lives, a practice which also involved constant engagement with the relevant literature.

Data analysis was not a separate event within research design but was an ongoing process of engagement and development with the class literature, as well as with theoretical and methodological discussions. As discussed earlier in this chapter, it was this exploratory approach which enabled a focus on moral experience to manifest and which led to the turn to phenomenology as a theoretical underpinning for this research. The practicalities of data analysis were initially frustrating. I began early analysis using a thematic approach to identify commonly occurring themes and to code participants' narratives into the emergence of significant topics (Terry and Hayfield, 2021). However, this proved to be unsatisfactory because participants' stories were becoming fragmented through this process. I found this style of analysis was not suited to the overall aim of the research. Narrative interviews must be interpreted through the lens of the overall story, focusing on the events that participants

tell in order to construct their own narrative, and to develop an understanding of why the story is told in a particular way (Riessman 1993). I wanted to understand participants' narratives through this lens and not as sets of disjointed experiences. Consequently, I adapted my analysis approach to a critical phenomenological perspective, a development which occurred in association with my turn to phenomenology as a theoretical framework.

Undertaking critical phenomenological analysis through a narrative framework enables an interpretivist perspective that explores how experience is understood through the embedded and embodied subject. It is an analysis which can uncover the subjective experience as well as understand the social and political context in which such experience occurs (Langdridge, 2008). This does not mean ignoring themes that manifest through engaging with the data. Rather, it involves thinking through how themes emerge and manifest through social relationships, and as symbolic meanings (Langdridge, 2007), rather than as explicit topics that can be identified, coded and categorised through qualitative software such as Nvivo. This involved working in-depth with narrative transcripts, identifying tone, rhetorical changes and emotional shifts in the discourse, as well as trying to make sense of the identity that is produced in the re-telling of significant events. I immersed this process within a constant engagement with the classed literature in order to make sense of how participants' stories are presented in the way that they are. Interviewing via Zoom also meant that I paid more and not less attention to what was communicated verbally and expressively during the interview. I had engaged in the literature around online interviews and was aware that they can limit visual cues and modes of non-verbal communication (Thunberg and Arnell, 2022). To counteract this, I made notes throughout the interview on body language, expressiveness and paid attention to tone and pitch in order to reflect on how the story was told as well as what was narrated.

It is an interpretative developmental mode of analysis which was not straightforward but was embedded in an interdependent process of reflection and constant re-engagement with both the transcripts, phenomenological theory, as well as the class literature which enabled critical synthesis. This meant that there were occasions when carrying out a learning walk immediately after a narrative interview was not possible, particularly when taking into account the reality of time constraints, and the availability of participants. Although this initially felt somewhat disordered, it proved to be beneficial from a critical phenomenological perspective. I was able to visit villages where multiple participants situated their story, and

subsequently listen to both audio recordings, attempting to make sense not only of the way participants related to place but how their accounts of the same place and sometimes the same building (for example, local pubs) considerably differed, and manifested to them as different sources of meaning. I made notes during these learning walks and took some photographs of places that were meaningful to participants. This was very useful from a phenomenological perspective because these photographs could be interpreted in a number of different ways, particularly if they were viewed as stand-alone representations. However, these photographs were situated in the context of learning walks where the narratives of participants guided the process. This means that I was able to foreground the subjectivity of the participants, considering the way people are oriented towards place and how place is conceptualised as spaces of meaning. Although these photographs were not elicited through participant observation, I was still able to ensure some sense of power and control remained with the participant, a process which is key to knowledge production within the context of photo elicitation (Bennett, 2014). This was because the subjective experience of participants manifested through their narrative and provided context and meaning to the images.

4.8 Reflexivity and Ethics

Reflexivity in this study was undertaken as an ethical research practice. Ethical decisions are not one-off considerations thought about prior to research, rather ethical deliberations are inherent in the reflexive decisions and developments that are forged through the research process. In this chapter, I have explored the theoretical and methodological developments that have steered this research towards a focus on the classed nature of moral experience as understood through a phenomenological lens. Phenomenology as a tool of critical analysis foregrounds the way value manifests, but it also enables a way of understanding value beyond the lens of value exchange because it presupposes an ethic through its ontological nature. The turn to phenomenology from a critical realist perspective forced me to account for the way I had understood class as a moral relationship, which prior to undertaking this research was embedded in an exchange of capital as value, and how class mechanisms established barriers to capital accumulation. Engaging in reflexive research was inherent in the investigative process and was a practice I continued to embed throughout the study.

4.8.1 Practicing Reflexive Research

Phenomenological analysing requires the researcher to set aside judgements and pre-conceived ideas about the nature of reality, but I found that this was only achieved during the research process because it was through engaging in the interdependent practices of data collection and analysis, with immersion in the class literature, which revealed the assumptions I was unaware I was holding. This is where Husserl's desire to bracket or set aside what he deems to be the 'natural attitude' is very difficult because our own life stories, like the participants' narratives, are nested inside the socio-cultural framework that this research attempts to critique. The turn to phenomenology that emerged during the research was part of a reflexive process which was never completed but where I thought critically about my own position in relation to the development of the research, an ongoing process which shaped data collection and analytical practices.

Reflexivity is not about centering the authorising self. It can be tempting to insert the researcher into the story by considering how the researcher is positioned in relationship to power dynamics of race, gender and class, and how this may differ to the research participants. It is important to consider positionality but it must not be at the expense of the research participants. It must be instead a critical reflection that shapes the direction of the research (Skeggs, 2004). I reflected on my role as a researcher throughout the research process and tried to critically consider the way my research design was developing. My position as a working-class woman from an ex-mining community and as a PhD researcher from an elite university was also embedded in this process. I negotiated the tensions and challenges that arose throughout the research process in the context of the complexities of inhabiting these two lived identities, and how this influenced the development of the research. As discussed earlier in the chapter, this led to a change in the focus of the research, and to adaptations of interview questions and techniques, as well as changes to my initial analysis approach. I took note of the participants' responses, both verbally and in non-verbal communicative expressions, to the way questions were phrased and considered my role and the power dynamics embedded in asking such questions. The way that critical phenomenology exposes the structural inequalities that shape subjective experience is key here. My engagement with the framework enabled me to explore the complexity of classed power relationships and to consider the relations of intersubjectivity that constitute and shape the

research experience, relations which I do not stand outside of but which instead are always in-flux and continually mould the research process.

I am also still thinking about how I could have adapted walking methods differently in the context of the Covid-19 restrictions. For example, as discussed, I took some photographs for analysis purposes during the learning walks. These images in the context of participants' audio narratives, took on a sense of meaning which was difficult to recapture when looking at the images during data analysis. On reflection, I would consider asking if participants would be willing to engage in taking their own photographs to talk about during the interview. This reflection influenced my decision not to publish these photographs in this thesis. Protecting anonymity was a factor, but it is also difficult to foreground the meaning and perception of the images that arise in the context of participants' narratives, particularly when the photographs are of routine and mundane spaces.

4.8.2 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this research project was granted by the University Ethics Committee prior to the commencement of data collection. All of the participants in this study received project information forms prior to engaging in the research process. I ensured I explained the consent process both prior to the interview and at the start of the process, making sure participants were aware they could withdraw from the project at any time, including after the interview was completed. I also ensured I explained the practices related to confidentiality and anonymity, highlighting to participants prior to the start of the interview that should their data be used in this thesis, pseudonyms would be used to protect the identity of people and places. All of the ex-mining villages are anonymised in this thesis with the City of Durham being the only identifiable reference. I explained in the project information form how I would manage participants' data in accordance with Newcastle University guidelines which meant all research data was stored in a password protected folder on the University's secure network. Interviewing via Zoom also introduced a different dynamic in terms of ethical considerations around confidentiality and consent. I ensured I carried out the interviews in a quiet, private room in my house where I could speak without disruption, a point which I always reiterated to participants. Additionally, all of the participants consented to their interviews being recorded via Zoom, however, I did not begin recording until introductions had occurred and verbal consent was also sought prior to the recording starting.

As stated, reflexivity is an ethical research practice. As well as the considerations discussed, ethics are also embedded in the production of narratives. One of the key ethical considerations which I reflected on throughout the research process was the power relationship embedded within story telling. As discussed extensively in the literature review, constructing the self as a subject of value exchange is not open to those who are excluded from the conditions that enable stories to be told and heard. Many of the research participants in this study do not have access to dominant modes of symbolic exchange and many have also been subject to the forced telling of their situations and personal circumstances, particularly in relationship to social institutions and agencies. I was concerned with how to elicit subjective narratives in this context whilst not objectifying or reducing the participants in this study to the production of classed relationships (Reay et al., 2009). I made ethical decisions during the course of the interview about when to probe further and when to retreat with lines of questioning, making sure I was open to changes in body language, tone and pitch that might suggest a participant was uncomfortable. When a participant did share sensitive information I considered how ethical it would be to include such information in this thesis.

There are some details which I have excluded to protect anonymity, but I also made the decision to avoid writing about certain discussions with participants due to the sensitive nature of the topic. What is considered sensitive information is dependent on the context the discussion occurs in (Hydén, 2008) and during the interviews a small number of participants did talk about some difficult situations that arise in the context of class exclusion and marginalisation. These occasions were infrequent, and I ensured these conversations were participant-led by not probing or questioning, but instead paying attention to my own body language and trying not to give responses that could be perceived as shock, judgement or insincerity. I decided to omit certain stories because I did not want to present the working-class people in this research through the lens of tragedy.

Stories of trauma have seen a renewed interest within the social sciences, and within contemporary literature, as the popularity of 'trauma texts' associated with survivor accounts have increased (Modlinger and Sonntag, 2011). People identify with stories of the pain and suffering of others (Steedman, 1996) and there is a sense of authority and truth associated with the narration of stories of pain (Berlant, 2000). However, as Lawler (2008) points out, those who are positioned as unworthy in public life are also less likely to be viewed as victims

of trauma, but rather inviting pain due to their lifestyle choices. Working-class pain is frequently presented within reality television for shock value and to elicit forms of behaviour modification. Working-class pain does not equate to truth within the symbolic economy, but the association can be used to objectify working-class people as tragic. Moreover, it is not my intention to shock in this thesis but rather to understand and present how people who are denied value still understand and live their lives through a framework of value.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has explained how critical phenomenology emerged as the most appropriate theoretical and methodological framework to make sense of the class structures and mechanisms through which people come to be recognised and classified as inhabiting and holding value, and to understand how value manifests in the lives of people who are excluded from the dominant system of value exchange. I have charted the reflexive and ethical research practices that I engaged in throughout this research process which led both to the turn to critical phenomenology as the key interpretive and analytical lens required to fulfil the aims of this research, and which shaped the decisions that led to the adaptation of data collection and analysis. In the subsequent three chapters I set out the empirical section of this thesis. I present my analysis of how people make sense of and understand themselves in relation to a moral value structure within three key spheres of social life: education, work and community.

Chapter 5: Education

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the way participants understand and experience the school environment as a space of possibility, and as a relational and temporal mode of being. The school environment reflects Heidegger's (1962) notion of authenticity through the way school's open up the future as a space of possibility. To act authentically from a phenomenological perspective is less about honesty. Rather, authenticity is concerned with the way we are orientated towards the future and how we confront possibilities and potential ways of being. Participants easily recalled their school days. They are described as defining and transformative years. The school environment symbolically represents possibility and potential. Schools are a mode of being through which participants confront and reflect on their own potential and value, and that of their children.

There is an intensity about the school day that also manifests in the wider meaning and value of education. School years are formative because they shape the future and can change the past. School can be a space of hope. Academic achievement unlocks potential pathways to further education and job opportunities, whilst to fail by examination standards can close down such possibilities, altering the lens of reflection from school as a space of hope to one of exclusion. Participants' views of the future, and the way their potential and possible ways of being manifest in this space, are shaped by their experiences of the past. The social meaning and value of working-class people and places, and the narratives that mobilise classed relationships, are part of this reality. Who is valued within a classed social structure, who is able to add value to themselves and the social world, and how this enables and constrains the ability to act out a value system that is important to participants are explored in this chapter.

This chapter has two main sections. The first is concerned with reputations and judgements. It begins by exploring the role of morality in how people make judgements about schools, finding that the reputation of secondary schools operates as shorthand for differentiating between and marking out categories of 'good' and 'bad' children and families. Participants' judgements of secondary schools are focused on the perceived moral character of the children and families inhabiting the schools, rather than the provision of education within the school itself. Religious schools, and the perception that they embed good morals and values, are significant in shaping and reinforcing these reputations and judgements. This chapter then

moves on to explore how the reputation of working-class people and places as 'left-behind' is central to the way morality as a form of value is understood and forged through class mechanisms and structures. The relationships and networks that participants and their children forge in school are not only sources of social capital in the sense that Bourdieu (1984) theorised, where valuable social networks are used as tradeable resources in the dominant system of capitalist exchange, but these social relations form part of the way people relate to morality as a form of value that works to shape structures of personhood. The way working-class people respond to the class mechanisms and processes that shape their lives is significant in understanding how moral value is understood and lived out through relations of intersubjectivity in this space.

The second half of this chapter then moves on to explore how symbolic representations of working-class deviance, together with political narratives of lack and decline, shape macro and micro elements of school life. They govern the everyday rituals and routines of the school day, particularly mundane interactions within the classroom, shaping relationships in this space. The 'left-behind' narrative, and implicit discourses of immorality, are entangled with how participants relate to lay normative constructions of morality, and their relationship and understanding of lay morality as a structuring force. These complex relations of value are forged through the everyday evaluations and judgements that people use to make sense of social life, processes which shape how these understandings of moral value are put into effect throughout the school day. Finally, this chapter ends by exploring how individual and collective perceptions and understandings of both class and morality have a mutually reinforcing relationship. Confusion about what class is obscures the symbolic power and structural nature of class inequalities, whilst at the same time the value system that structures neoliberal actions and practices within schools deepens these class fractures, operating to shape the way participants understand and relate to lay normative concerns.

5.2 Reputations and Judgements

The reputation of schools and the people within them emerged as key factors in the way participants discussed making decisions about school choices. Participants overwhelmingly described primary schools as positive places within the community, as spaces of socialisation for their children and as places where friendships are built with other families. However, it is at the transition to secondary school where parents discussed feeling particularly anxious about school choices, a point best encapsulated by James:

At primary I think County Durham is pretty good actually. Although in general it is quite hard to find a really bad primary school, secondary is more challenging. It seems to be in County Durham especially there seems to be a higher than usual proportion of religious secondary schools. My personal view is that in 2020 it is absolutely shocking for any school to select their intake based on religion. I think that is absolutely terrible. And the school options in County Durham are, if you can get into a state religious school they are pretty good, but a lot of the state non-religious schools, with one or two exceptions, have a pretty poor reputation…Or you pay. And if that system is not entrenching class divisions, then I don't know what is!

Many secondary schools in County Durham, particularly those located in the ex-mining villages, do have poor academic results. Five schools in the county which have the lowest GCSE attainment in Maths and English at Grade five[3] or above are located in the ex-mining villages around North West Durham (where this research sample is largely drawn from) and the East Durham coast. Whereas the county's religious schools, and the three state schools located in the city centre, have the highest attainment. Significantly, 64 percent of students at one comprehensive in the city achieved Grade five in GCSE Maths and English in 2019. However, two miles away in an ex-mining village, only two percent of children achieved this. It is also largely the same schools who recorded GCSE results lower than the national average who also have the lowest 'progress eight score,' a measure which tracks the attainment made between the end of primary school and the end of secondary school. In 2019, one third of secondary schools in County Durham recorded a progress eight score below, or well below average (Ofsted, 2022), which means that many pupils are failing to maintain the academic standards they attained at primary school.

However, choosing a school is rarely about teaching and learning, rather it is the location of the school and the perception of the families that live in the ex-mining villages which inform participants' decisions. Moral judgements are made by participants who conceptualise reputable schools as places where children and their parents have good morals and values. Faith schools in particular are considered to embed such virtues and it is the rituals and

[3] In 2017, Ofqual changed GCSE attainment grades from A-E to 1-9 with the guidance for parents explaining that grade 5 is considered to be a 'strong pass' https://ofqual.blog.gov.uk/2018/03/02/gcse-9-to-1-grades-a-brief-guide-for-parents/

routines associated with religious practices which participants highlighted as important in this context. Ken explained:

> *I'm not Catholic, I'm not really a person of faith in any real sense, but I did like the whole faith element of it. I liked, I liked going to Mass, you know? I like the fact that everyone got together and sang hymns, you know? It just, it just added to like the community feel at the school. And I think the people that wanted to send their children there understand that which is why they send them there.*

The way Ken spoke about faith schools as embedding morality through religious practice conveys how the rituals associated with religion such as prayer and attending mass holds meaning within the action, just as that action holds meaning in the social world, and goes some way to explaining why faith schools are popular with non-religious families. Moreover, the ex-mining communities across County Durham have deep-rooted socio-cultural and historical ties to religion through the relationship that intertwined mining villages with the Methodist church.

Methodism was embedded in local mining culture, particularly within the Deerness Valley, a collection of villages surrounding the River Browney which runs north west of the City of Durham (see figure 2), where many of the participants in this study are drawn from. The Methodist tradition in this region was much more than a theology, but manifested as a mode of being in the world with others, where a value code did not reveal itself as a set of rules to follow but rather emerged through the actions and practices of people as they developed ways of being to co-exist with others (Moore, 2009). This is Heidegger's (1962) notion of caring. As a fundamental structure of human existence, caring is concerned with being in the world with others, a process we engage in as embedded and embodied beings. It is a relational and temporal experience forged through relations of intersubjectivity where historical and socio-cultural patterns and processes shape subjective experience.

Thompson (1968) is particularly critical of the Methodist church, viewing their politics of frugality, individualism, and compliance as crucial to the acceptance of factory labour, and the maintenance of working-class oppression. However, the relationship between the working-class and the Methodist church during the dominance of mining in the County Durham coalfields is not straightforward. Boer (2012) documents the way political radicals within the Methodist tradition drew on the skills they acquired through attending chapel, such as public

speaking and group organisation, to form a political movement orientated around working-class activism. Boer argues that the egalitarian element of Methodism, combined with a sense of belonging provided by the chapels, brought the working-class together as a radical force. Rather than producing obedience, the actions and practices within the Methodist tradition instead gave rise to working-class solidarity and early modes of unionisation. This is how Husserl (1970) conceptualised the lifeworld, as spaces of meaning which are not rigid and static but shift and change through the way relationships with others manifest and develop (Donohue, 2016).

Meanings do change but they do not become insignificant, even as modes of being with others shift and change. Just because the dominance of Methodism within the ex-mining villages has faded does not mean that the meanings, actions, and practices which developed through these relations of intersubjectivity are lost. We can see this in the way Steve explained his choice of a religious school for his children:

> *You know I am going to sound like such a hypocrite when I say this. Sorry, but, you know it is a religious school that they go to. We picked three schools and this one I think had the best feel for us, you know? Kind of when we were going around it…it has got a lot of ethos in it around behaviours. So, politeness, you know? Working together, working problems out yourself. That kind of independence, sorting things out you know? If there is an issue between two children, you know, trying to sort it out yourselves that type thing, all that kind of stuff. Rather than…well rather than different approaches. I think all of those approaches are very good and will help set them up.*

Neither Ken nor Steve described themselves as religious, in fact, Steve was apologetic when he explained how he chose a faith school for his children. However, they both discussed how the meaning and values of religion were a key factor in shaping school choice. Critically, they did not discuss this in abstract terms but instead grounded their understanding in action by explaining how the ethos they believed to be implicit in the church manifested through intersubjectivity within religious schools. Heidegger's (1962) conceptualisation of Dasein as a temporal and relational space in which we are thrown into is salient here. Ken and Steve are embedded in a socio-cultural and historical frame of meaning where the significance of religion has shaped the Durham mining villages, and the social and institutional relationships that developed in this context. Their discussion also shows how the meaning and values that develop through being in the world with others are not abstract ways of thinking but are

embodied in action and interaction, as embodied consciousness is the way in which we intentionally experience and perceive the world (Merleau-Ponty, 2012). This manifests in Ken's reference to practices such as singing hymns and attending mass, and in the way Steve positioned religious values as helping his children solve problems and learn to actively share space with others.

The way religion manifests as a mode of meaning is different for James who considered religious schools to be immoral. This points to the complexity of Dasein. Being in the world, and the meanings that manifest through modes of being, do shift and change, moulding and shaping how value is understood and practiced. The reputation and meanings of place are not always straightforward and nor are they always physically situated, evidencing that the realm of the symbolic is key in how we conceptualise reality. Many participants described faith schools as existing outside of the narrative of lack and decline which positions neighbouring schools in ex-mining villages as morally deficient. Consequently, participants consider a 'good' school to be less about teaching and learning but rather reflecting the perceived legitimacy and value of the people inside.

Religion is not the only source of meaning that works to mediate reputations and judgements of people and places. Participants were hesitant about their children attending schools they described as 'rough' because the academic success of the school is deemed to be determined not by the teaching ability of the staff but by the social position of the children. Such meanings manifest through the complex interplay between religion and class as the moral values associated with religious actions and practices are read through classed bodies. James's comment highlights how the working-class are symbolically excluded from religious morals and values:

> *If there was a way of getting a much healthier social mix at each of the schools, that would drag the standards up, I think. But the way it is, anyone who, through whatever means can send their children to one of the better schools, does. And that leaves everyone who hasn't got those means at their disposal, ends up stuck with what is left. I think probably rightly or wrongly there probably is a correlation between parents who are religious and parents who possibly care more about their children's education. We are torn at the moment in all honesty between whether we can afford to pay, whether we move house, whether we do something devious to kind of bend the rules to get the children into a better school…I don't know.*

The words James used to express his opinion represents the covert nature of how class disadvantage operates in the UK. It is a system which is spoken of indirectly but never acknowledged or made explicit. '*Healthier social mix*' is reminiscent of the way governments use loaded language to avoid naming class inequality, where *'drag the standards up'* reveals the way working-class people are positioned as in need of re-educating to adhere to middle-class standards of acceptability. Class inequality is re-framed as a problem deep within people and a moral failure to act appropriately. James drew on religion to make a distinction between who can occupy the ethos of religious values and practices. His earlier veiled references to class show how it is the working-class who he situates as unable to occupy such moral positions.

James described a comfortable upbringing with degree educated professional parents and considered himself to be middle-class. His narrative evidences an accrual of social, economic and cultural capital over time. However, the vast majority of participants in this sample occupy very different positions in the class system and they also framed schools within the ex-mining villages as lacking in moral value. Throughout the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, working-class communities were routinely perceived as intrinsically deviant and in need of religious direction, moral guidance which was undertaken by middle-class philanthropists, a process which was particularly focused on the conduct of working-class women in public space (Caslin, 2018). Religion may not be as socially significant to the Durham ex-mining communities as it was in the past. However, just as the moral meanings of religious actions and practices continues to hold meaning for participants such as Ken and Steve, the classed nature of religious judgements live on through the reputations of people and places, as faith schools are overwhelmingly viewed by participants as spaces of meaning which are physically situated within, but are symbolically absent from the ex-mining communities. Moreover, the way participants are able to negotiate this space is entangled in the class dynamics that shape the meaning of religious schools as morally superior, situating non-faith schools in the ex-mining villages as containing people to avoid. Participants often refer to these schools as places where the 'wrong crowd' attend.

5.3 Avoiding the 'wrong crowd'

At secondary school, 'getting in with the wrong crowd' is a frequent phrase used by participants to describe their own educational experience or to explain what is happening to, or that they fear may happen to their child. The idea that poor behaviours are inherent and

also contagious is embedded in the dirt discourse and the way working-class people, especially young men, are constructed as dangerous (McDowell and Harris, 2019). Parents become increasingly concerned about the transformative effect that schooling has during the teenage years. Popular representations of children, particularly teenagers, are constructed within binary terms of angels and devils (Valentine, 1996) and anxieties around maintaining morality during these years are rooted in the assumed naivety of children and a fear of the unknown world. As previous research finds, this manifests in parents fear of 'their children's ability to stay clear of the wrong sorts of people' (Wyness, 1994, p.208).

In County Durham, the wrong sort of families are perceived by participants as living in the ex-mining villages within the wider county. Consequently, secondary schools within the region are routinely problematised in terms of the people that inhabit them. Mike criticises the ex-mining village he is from and equates the behaviours and attitudes of people within it as the reason for their class position:

> *I mean when I hear some of the stories coming out of Hatchley and Petworth about what has happened you know…not just about crime and violence and drugs and…it is…people will have a view of like what…I don't know like what peoples' priorities are?…Like someone like me, like I admire someone who kind of wants to get ahead in life, who is a good person, who…is kind of has integrity and who has a career and things like that. Who has travelled and broadened their horizons, but I don't…I don't think that is true of that area. It is just about kind of…almost like fighting to survive and you know…I don't know. I don't know. There is obviously like drink and drugs and crime and things like that. So, it is just…it is just very different. I couldn't imagine meself living there again.*

The pathology of place and how people are seen to inherit a lack of aspiration and ambition is one of the mechanisms through which discourses of morality work to conceal and maintain class inequalities. Aiden has worked in community services in County Durham for over twenty years and speaks about the hundreds of clients he has worked with whose life has been impacted by the cumulative effects of class inequalities, which he terms 'class trauma'. They are the experiences of insecure housing, poverty, precarious work and unemployment which arose in pit villages predominantly during the 1970s and 1980s in the context of deindustrialisation and the mass closure of mines and heavy industry which previously drove the region's economy. Aiden discussed the way family and community relationships are

impacted by these factors and the way other traumas which can arise within the family manifest in this context:

> *If you're in an area where everyone around you isn't going to school and your friends are taking drugs and alcohol you're gonna fit into that. You're not gonna say "I'm different and I want better for me self" because you've been beaten up and made to be part of it, you won't have the confidence, and you might have parents that are doing drugs and alcohol who are like "get out cos we cannot cope with what we should be dealing with". School will go because teachers only have time to concentrate on those that are sitting and listening and behaving because the people who are unruly affect lessons and they have to go down a different path. So that's a trauma because you feel you're not fitting in and then all the usual stuff of sexual abuse, physical abuse at home that you don't have anyone to talk to about because you're told not to tell anyone about it. I mean don't get us wrong you can get in the argument about middle-class, lower class and things happening, but you don't hear about it because you don't get spat out on the streets. It gets covered up with money or this has happened to your brother so we'll set you up in a house somewhere whereas here, you're virtually living on the streets anyway with the poverty, so if you can't look after yourself and you burn your bridges because you haven't behaved the way society expects you to then you're on the streets anyway.*

Aiden's narrative evidences how 'getting in with the wrong crowd' is not an inability to resist the lure of temptation or a lack of character, rather it reveals the way people within places at particular times, usually at secondary school, are shaped by class forces in a collective manner and the way they respond to this. Aiden traces a steady path between the effects of poverty, alcohol and drug abuse, crime, precarious housing, unemployment and sometimes homelessness, highlighting how negative emotions such as anger and shame manifest in this environment, accumulate over time, and accelerate movement into situations which compound and exacerbate class trauma. He believes the traumas that occur within many families, such as abuse which he discussed, as well as death and divorce push families who are already affected by austerity to breaking point. He discussed the anger he feels towards those who judge people who live such traumatic lives:

> *And when people say to me about druggies and alkies, I think if you only knew the stories that I've heard.*

However, within the context of the Durham coalfields these experiences are not unfamiliar. Some of the participants in this sample have lived such experiences, they are familiar with the stories that Aiden speaks of, and yet they can also pass judgement on people and places within ex-mining communities.

Mike grew up in East Durham in one of the villages most affected by the closure of the mines but no longer lives in the area. He described his childhood as *'chaotic'* and reflected on his relationship with family and friends who still live in the area. Mike left school with few academic qualifications, and after many years of minimum wage work, and precarious employment, he was able to re-train and build a career with a local employer. Mike elaborated on his educational experience:

> **Mike:** *When I was at school, the only expectation for me was to…was just to get a job. You know it was just to get a job in a factory, get a job in a shop. I mean like going to university or anything like that, I may as well have been like going to the moon or something. It is just - there wasn't a concept of that being understood. I left school like I say quite young, and I totally bombed. I mean I have got a couple of D's in my GCSEs and all of the rest were E's and F's. I mean I had other difficulties, I mean later in life I got diagnosed with ADHD…and probably on the Autism scale as well, so I had never had much support growing up. And having quite a difficult background as well with me parents splitting up and…so yeah it kind of felt like I got a bit 'left-behind' at school. But then later on I got the opportunity to get sponsored to go to college, and university. So, I studied part-time, two years of college and five years of university.*
>
> **Interviewer:** *How do your family feel about you studying and then leaving Petworth?*
>
> **Mike:** *I don't think they really understand. I don't really think they understand what I do for a living, which might be my feeling. Or what it has kind of took for me to kind of get out of that situation. You know like the hard work I have had to put in and…like the different person I am now to what I was 20 years ago, 15 years ago. Umm…I don't think they understand that journey. But I think they are kind of proud of me you know in a way. But they just don't really get it.*

Mike articulates having no positive feelings towards his hometown or the people within it and his narrative shows how he struggles with ambivalent feelings of pride and shame. Many participants who grew up in mining villages have similar feelings towards 'home.' This cannot

be interpreted as simply othering or reproducing stereotypes, rather Mike's narrative shows how such rejection and detachment is rooted in the very painful lived experience of class disadvantage and exclusion. Mike's story contains many of the interrelated and cumulative elements of class inequalities that Aiden speaks of in his account of class trauma within the ex-mining villages of County Durham, explaining how deindustrialisation impacted his community in terms of job losses, increased crime, fractured family relationships and poverty. He situated his educational experience in this context where expectations of him were very low, his additional needs were not recognised and support within school was very limited. His story is a familiar one in the context of working-class experience of schooling (Reay, 2017).

Mike framed this experience in school as being 'left-behind', a phrase which speaks to the temporal nature of Dasein. There is a sense of transformation about the school years that manifests in the wider meaning and value of education. School years are formative because they shape the future and can change the past. To achieve academically can create a pathway to future material success whilst to fail to do so can limit that option, altering the lens of reflection. From a phenomenological perspective, this is the temporal and relational nature of Dasein. Participants are always contending with the past and the future and consequently, they are interacting with their own possibility and value, and the potential value they can contribute to society. This means that hopes and desires for the future always impact present experiences and this relationship is mutually reinforcing. This nature of experience takes place within a class system which demonises working-class people at the symbolic level conferring little social value or legitimacy.

Class mechanisms shape access to different forms of capital but they also structure the responses to class divisions. Mike's response is rooted in the complexity of the way moral evaluative judgements are forged through an environment that is fractured at multiple levels as deindustrialisation and its aftermath shaped socio-spatial relations across villages and towns in post-mining Durham. They are interdependent and mutually reinforcing spaces of meaning and it is important to see Mike's story as situated in this context where social relationships are negotiated through tension and discord as well as cohesion. Mike contextualised the behaviours of the people in his home town through a lay moral lens. He referenced crime, violence, and drug abuse as common in the village he is from and positioned these behaviours as immoral despite his own story of educational exclusion and alienation manifesting within this context. This is the complexity of Dasein. The way moral evaluations

manifests through class dynamics and structures are not straightforward but is entangled in the complex manner in which moral value reveals itself through subjective experience, a process which is also forged through disassociation and rejection of class.

Although most participants reject class as an identity, they are aware of the negative value of being positioned as working-class, meaning many participants who deny the existence of class still recognise themselves through it. They described their attempts to reject and disidentify with class. Rejecting the local school catchment in favour of a more reputable school is a route to leaving place and class both geographically and symbolically. Catherine secured a place at a school outside of her local area for her son and explained why she made this decision:

> *The majority of people who live in Colton you know, do struggle financially, you know, they're on benefits, they work whatever work that they can get just to keep themselves going. A lot of the houses are council houses and I just thought, I personally took that belief of, "well they can't be very nice people because they are of a lower-class" so I didn't want Archie in that school. You do for your kids; you want them to have a better opportunity. I didn't really know anybody or know the area very well; I had only just started working and then got the house, so I didn't really know people then. So, I used my judgements, thinking well, it's a bit of a rough area, these people haven't got a lot of money, Colton's got a bad reputation, these are the kids that are going to that school, and I don't really want him mingling with them. You know, the school can't really be very good, you know because it's got the lower-class kids in there.*

Catherine is very explicit in her views, but her attitude does not come from the same place as James, whose perspective about school choices I explored earlier on in this chapter, and her experience cannot be read in the same way. Catherine hopes her son will escape the family's class position through education and she described school as an investment in that process. However, her position in the class structure evidences how class is a system designed to lock working-class people in place:

> **Catherine:** *That school was awful. Their whole attitude in that school was because we came from Colton, we were lower-class, so we were looked down on and Archie was looked down on. So, he was ignored and the education experience that he got in that school was extremely poor because they thought they were better than everybody else. And if your face didn't fit you just got overlooked.*

Interviewer: *In what way did your face not fit?*

Catherine*: It made me quite angry. They might have lived in better areas, they might have had bigger houses, better cars, but that didn't make them any better than me. I was just a single mam trying to do the best that I could. And we're all in that same boat, we're all trying to get the best for our kids. We are all trying to do the best that we can. They just had a better opportunity of doing it than what I did, and I was looked down on because I was on me own, because of where I came from and because of where I lived.*

Interviewer: *How did that come across?*

Catherine: *The way that they spoke to you, or actually, the way that they didn't speak to you was more the point. Cos they would just ignore you. And in some ways that was karma because I took that attitude and put him in that school in the first place.*

This exchange demonstrates the ubiquitous nature of class. Class structures how Catherine makes school choices for her son, but it also structures the nature of the school experience and significantly, how she responds to this situation. She blames herself for the subjectivity imposed on her and feels she has enticed '*karma*' by judging others. This response can be analysed two-fold; it evidences the symbolic violence that manifests within classed relationships and echoes the wealth of research which shows how those who benefit least from structural inequalities internalise class oppression and blame themselves for their social position (Bourdieu, 1984; McKenzie, 2015). At the same time, the participants in this research hold themselves responsible for the direction of their own lives and for their mistakes. None of the participants blame external sources for the outcome of their life as is commonly represented in the mainstream media. Rather, the vast majority of participants judge themselves in a manner that is more punitive than their life circumstances would expect them to. Crucially, they expect other people to do the same.

Choice is fundamental to relationships and understandings of value. Husserl (1970) conceptualised choice as 'vocations' which is part of the essence of being human. It is to be able to live within a value structure and to be able to exercise choices and decisions on how to live out these values. This is Merleau-Ponty's (2012) situated freedom where to exercise individual agency, and to live out inbuilt desires that cannot be rationally explained, is also the process which situates subjectivity as both a moral and an active space. We are embedded in

a world of meaning which we share with others through relations of intersubjectivity. This is an embodied process where our actions and practices are forged through consciousness which as Heidegger (1962) explains is 'world disclosing' because it is both the way we experience and perceive the world around us. Catherine's relationship and understanding of value, and how morality manifests in this space, reveal themselves through her subjective experience, a mode of being which is also embedded in class mechanisms and structures. Moral evaluations matter to people because they are fundamental to human relationships including the relationship with the self; it is impossible to escape from our own conscience. Evaluative judgements occur within all social relationships and occur independent of social divisions. At the same time, lay normative constructions of morality and the moral evaluations that are produced within social life, reveal the structural and symbolic processes which maintain class inequalities.

Although Catherine reproduces class distinctions and judgements in her commentary about the reputation of people and places, her structural position means she does not have the moral authority for her judgement to hold meaning. This is not only because she lacks the multiple forms of capital to transcend class barriers, but because access to capital is blocked through class mechanisms which differentiate and make distinctions between those with and without value. The working-classes who are routinely positioned as vulgar and without taste are 'classified by their classifications' (Bourdieu, 1984) meaning they are already judged as lacking and as valueless. Catherine does not have the power required for her judgement to count. Attempting to transcend class through cultural consumption and everyday practices reproduces the class mechanisms which position the working-classes as without value (Skeggs, 1997). It is also rarely achievable for the working-classes because markers of taste which are used to differentiate class positions are expressions of power. Being able to name and label the right way to act shows where cultural and economic power is located; it is held in the ability to make distinctions and judgements. This is why markers of class such as housing, employment, and other consumer goods mean nothing without whom they are tied to. Catherine tries to transcend her class position by choosing a faith school for her son, but it does not work because she is operating within a system which is predicated on exclusion through class mechanisms.

Catherine's comments about single parenting highlights the way class divisions are still made through gender and how working-class women and their bodies, homes and parenting styles

are the sites where class is most deeply coded and pathologised (Finch, 1993; Skeggs, 1997). Throughout the interview, Catherine continued to draw on gendered markers of class and situated her family dynamics in the context of respectability. She explained how she is perceived as irresponsible because of her family structure:

> *You always get stigmatised for being a single parent. Unfortunately you do get stigmatised for being a single parent and now I'm a single parent with two children and with two different dads as well, you know it makes you sound like your irresponsible and you know, you are restricted to what you can do workwise with the hours that you've got because of having children so you know, you do end up taking the lower paid jobs because you do have to just take something to get by. So, you are seen as lower class. And although I am guilty of doing that to other people, I think because of the experiences I've had, of the way people treat me because of being from Colton and being a single parent, you know people do judge me.*

Catherine recognises the judgement of others and she is aware that she is perceived as immoral. Catherine's subjectivity is made in the context of the way respectability is denied to her through the symbolic representations that position working-class women as over-sexed and out of control (Lawler, 2005). These evaluations, reputations and judgements are always written through class. Regulations of womanhood do not exist independently; they are relational modes of categorisation. In positioning working-class women as dirty, the category of purity and cleanliness is occupied by middle-class women, class categorisations which operate to maintain division through distance (Langland, 1995). This is why such markers of class only hold value with whom they are attached to. For example, middle-class women who undertake sex work are not positioned as polluted and disgusting. They are distanced from working-class women who are ascribed the identity of prostitute rather than sex-worker or escort (Abel 2023). Such discursive tools work to connect the symbolic to the material. The representations of working-class people, particularly women, as immoral and disgusting are not only depictions of what constitutes being working-class in popular culture, but they also embody what the middle-classes are not, which is fundamental to how middle-class identities, cultural consumptions, tastes and practices become normalised and legitimised (Lawler, 2005).

Catherine is aware of the social meanings attached to her children having different fathers. Her judgements of others are made through her attempts to disidentify with how she is

positioned. This is how the everyday judgements of class are made real. Working-class people and places are positioned as dangerous and threatening. Catherine's attempts to move away from how she is pathologised as immoral is entangled in a refusal of the class mechanisms that deny working-class value. It is a complex picture, but working-class judgements of others are deeply intertwined with how class is lived as an emotional experience, as shameful, and as always being aware of the constant presence and negative recognition of others. Catherine's narrative does show how she lacks the structural power to transcend class boundaries but that does not mean that she passively accepts this. Rather, Catherine's response to devaluation is to remove her son from the school and she explains how she subsequently enrolled him in the local secondary:

> *The kids from Colton School have had a better opportunity because they are all seen as equals. Every child has the opportunity to learn whereas in Steeple School it was pick and choose you know? The best thing I ever did was move Archie out of Steeple School.*

It is important not to understand this solely as refusal or resistance within the constraints of the dominant symbolic. Rather, Catherine's response is critical to understanding how value manifests in subjective experience. Throughout the interview Catherine insisted that it was this experience of being judged at school that changed her perception of other people's situations:

> *Because of the experiences I've had - having money, not having money, the way that I've judged people and the way that I've been treated because of people judging me, I've now got the attitude of no matter where you come from, whether you've got money, whether you've not got money, your all gonna get treated the same. You're gonna get treated how you treat me and my children.*

Catherine's conceptualisation of education changes in her narrative from one of exchange to use, as her discussion of school moves from one where school is conceived as an opportunity to gain capital, to one where school is thought of as an opportunity to learn with others as an equal. Whilst her reaction is shaped by the class structures that misrecognise her value and the value of her son, and she is still constrained by her structural position, it is through these relations that she goes on to explain how she understands and practices value differently by engaging with her local community and the people within it. Catherine's story shows how capital does structure social relations through the dominant symbolic, but it is through these

modes of being that Catherine and her son have found modes of flourishing that are not subject to the logic of capital. It is a complex structure of feeling which is forged through the way lay normative constructions of care are entangled in the class mechanisms which misrecognise working-class value. It is a process which also shapes intersubjectivity within the school environment itself, an experience I explore through participants' discussions of micro relationships within the classroom.

5.4 Class behaviours

At the root of phenomenological philosophy is the way we are always intentionally engaged in the world because the structures of consciousness are orientated within our experiences. In this sense, social life is itself a moral entity because Dasein (being in the world) is intent, engagement and hence requires action. Schools are places that embody the domain of the moral with a heightened intensification because they are institutions which demand action in a manner that is more pronounced than in other areas of social life. The everyday rituals and routines of the school day revolve around constant participation from adhering to timetables and schedules, engaging with academic subjects, and interacting with peers and teachers. Secondary schools are particularly important spaces in the creation of boundaries between morality and immorality. As discussed, some participants choose to avoid secondary schools in the ex-mining villages within County Durham and many participants do believe that families in ex-mining villages lack values and are the source of poor classroom behaviours in schools. Ken is a secondary school teacher and commented:

> *I worked at Springbrook high school for a year on a maternity cover contract in English and there's a lot of students there who come from quite poor backgrounds alright? And you do see it reflected in their attitude towards school. And you do see it reflected in their grades. A lot of students that I taught at that school had parents who didn't work. Or were on very low income. And their parent's attitude towards school had always been quite negative which I think...they let that impression fall onto their children. I know for a fact that, you know, there is certain parents in some areas, who, you know, the 13-year-old will come home from school and moan about this teacher and that teacher, and the parent will sit there and moan with the child. Rather than, rather than thinking well wait a minute, is there an issue with something else here? They'll automatically always take their child's view and just agree with them or gossip on with*

a child about what's going on, which you shouldn't really be doing because that child's 13.

Ken's recollection of a parent complaining about a teacher with their child is deemed inappropriate and morally wrong by him, positioned as '*gossip*', and he directly equates this with being unemployed or on a low income. Ken locates poor behaviour in schools within the culture of working-class ex-mining communities which he argues is reflected in their attitude towards school. Research does evidence how working-class families are more likely to disengage with school (Willis, 1977; Gillies, 2016; Wilson and McGuire, 2022) but this does not mean working-class families are not invested in their children's education.

School as an institution and education as an experience and as a resource are not the same, as evidenced by Grant's interview. Grant is a private English tutor in an ex-mining village and explained how surprised he was at the demographic of his tutees:

I thought when I first started doing it, I will only ever come across the ones that are doing the higher paper, that are trying to get the best grades to get into college. And it is actually the opposite, it is like parents whose kids are struggling to pass, and they are the ones that seem more keen to help the kids get a pass than the parents who want to get their kids to get the highest possible grade. And that has sort of cheered me up to think that there is like, because I started tutoring once when Brexit was happening, so I am feeling that I am living in a place that I don't recognise. And then I am getting like heart-warming, it feels like heart-warming people are coming again, saying "my kid is not going to pass his English, he doesn't want to do like English at college or whatever, but he wants an apprenticeship, and he needs his English. So can you help them?" And it was like, and the majority of people who were coming were from not very well-paid backgrounds, who just want their kid to get the grade. It just like sort of, just restored me faith in some of the local people.

It is not only the middle-classes who utilise extra tuition. Grant works predominantly with local working-class children who require a pass at GCSE to access an apprenticeship. Grant's story disrupts the common narrative that working-class families do not care about their children's education. They are students who are struggling in local schools to succeed academically yet it is clear that this is not because they do not want to achieve academically. Grant spoke very enthusiastically about his tutoring role and his comment also disrupts the notion that private

tutoring is a resource drawn on by the middle-class to advance their chances of success within the dominant system of capital exchange. Grant's students are working-class children who are struggling in mainstream education and have sometimes disengaged with the school system.

Grant has a strong success rate of helping students pass their English GCSE, but he also talks about building rapport, getting to know and respecting his students. These are Heidegger's (1962) relations of care. They are forged through the dominant symbolic system of capitalist exchange as students approach Grant when they are unable to succeed within an educational environment designed to lock them out (Reay, 2017). However, tutoring here is not used as a source of additional capital, rather it is a mode of intersubjectivity which is not subject to the logic of capital, even as it is produced through the power relations that situate this experience. It is these relationships of care, support and respect which enable students in alternative provision to flourish (McGregor and Mills, 2012). It is the students whose lives are lived as exclusion through relations of race and class who predominantly populate these alternative education sites. Notably, Grant comments how parental interest in their children's education has rebuilt his confidence in the village he lives in which he feels was undermined by the association of immorality with majority Brexit-voting communities. The way relationships within the social spaces of communities are mediated through the 'left-behind' narrative which positions working-class people and places as immoral is lived out in the micro-interactions of intersubjectivity within the classroom.

Much research focuses on the reasons why working-class children perform poorly in school but how and why middle-class children succeed in education is directly relevant here. Ken references the attitudes of working-class families which he believes produces poor attitudes towards schooling. However, participants' interviews evidence that the poor behaviours of middle-class families are perceived as much less problematic in schools. Julie is a secondary school teacher and makes distinctions between the behaviours of children from '*bad homes*' in ex-mining villages and the more affluent pupils in one of the city centre schools:

> *At Dray Manor you have got kids from Beechwood and so on. Then you've got quite a large proportion of kids from very well-off homes, with very sort of high-flying parents, doctors and lawyers and barristers and the parents' expectations there and the kids have a sense of entitlement, and that can be just as much of a problem. You know it is ''you can't make me do that, my daddy says it is pointless and my daddy is a barrister!" And then you will also get parents who sort of constantly, I had one child who had to*

keep a diary throughout every lesson so that the parent could look at it and see what the behaviour was like in the class, and if it was likely to spoil their chances. Or you would get letters coming in and saying, "my child put in work for you on Tuesday, it is now Wednesday, and it hasn't been marked!" And you think, have you got any idea how many hundred books I have got to mark and can't do them all in 24 hours! So yeah, there is a difference, but it is not always necessarily the way you expect it to be with difficulties.

Julie's comment evidences how middle-class families do criticise and complain about school processes, challenging Ken's view that this behaviour is limited to poorer families. Although Julie differentiates between the behaviours of middle-class and working-class children which she describes as equally problematic, within school these behaviours are not regarded in the same way. Julie does not discipline children who exhibit entitled and arrogant attitudes, but she does follow the school behaviour codes which targets behaviour deemed to be disruptive. This shows that the way behaviours are conceptualised as disruptive and as breaching codes of conduct are not standard but are embedded in class dynamics. Behaviour codes here operate as classed moral projects. Low level disruption is punished with detentions and other punitive measures whereas entitlement and arrogance are not disciplined, rather these behaviours are framed as a desire to succeed and achieve. Rather, such behaviour is clouded in the discourse of aspiration. Furthermore, the authorising narrative that characterises and frames the school experience is produced within a neoliberal individualised ideology of what is acceptable, hence the disrespectful and aggressive behaviours that Julie described do not disrupt the school environment because this is what the neoliberal education environment actively fosters (Willis, 1977; Gerwitz, 2001; Reay, 2017). Consequently, all negative behaviours are not challenged in the same way within the micro-level of classroom interactions

Ken and Julia respond to classroom conduct in a manner which marginalises behaviours such as entitlement and snobbery and reinforces the way individualism has become normalised as an ideal (Savage, 2000). It is portrayed as a cultural standard for everyone to attain but research shows that it is predominantly middle-class parents who are able to draw on multiple forms of capital to cultivate and facilitate an educational experience that elevates and prioritises their child within the classroom (Gillies, 2005a). Sarah is a senior leader within a

school and explained how such individualistic approaches to the education of children also manifest in relationships with families:

> *Those who are a little bit more middle-class, I think it definitely does take you a little bit more time to get them on your side and see what you are doing is for everyone. It is for the benefit of everyone and not just them. I think they sometimes come in and think "I am this one family and" but they forget you have got your other 112 families and it does, it gets a bit frustrating at times.*

Sarah discussed how middle-class parents are quick to complain and explained how their behaviour manifests in the attitude that the school is there to address and educate their child's needs only. Her reaction to these families is to try and persuade them to be more community-minded and co-operative, reinforcing how the rhetoric of individualism that dominates educational institutions (Reay, 2017) is grounded in the ability of the middle-classes to differentiate themselves against a working-class mass, ensuring that personhood and the ability to create a subjective self is only available to them (Skeggs, 1997).

Sarah's remark regarding families who are '*a bit more middle-class*' shows how she does view families in class terms and that her understanding of class is as a trajectory or a scale. Like Ken and Julie, her responses to the behaviour of families are also grounded in classed processes. However, Sarah's response to individually motivated middle-class families is to recognise that their attitudes are at odds with the ethos of community and care that she is trying to establish in the school. She does not allow such behaviours to go unchallenged and discussed at length how she implemented various processes in her school to establish a space where everyone is valued. She explained how welcoming the children into the school in person each morning helps to establish this ethos:

> *That is why I stand at the gate. Because previously I would have come in to school in the morning and the secretary would have just said, Lisa would have said, 'oh you have got five parents that need you to give them a call back today. And usually it was something and nothing, whereas standing at the gate. They know I am there if they need to catch me. And even I find it easier doing things that, there are times where they will say "oh can I make an appointment?" and I will say "oh, can I ask what is in relation to?" And if it is something or nothing, I can very quickly deal with it. If it is something they do need to make an appointment, I still will give them that time to make the*

appointment. But I find when you are outside, and people are passing, it is easier to deal with.

Sarah explained how her management of interactions with families in this way embeds the ethos of value and care within the school. In being available at the school gate, Sarah is able to quickly deal with the queries from middle-class families who can dominate her time, whilst being visibly available to other families who may not feel comfortable to formally make an appointment, or whose working patterns and demands on their time restrict their ability to do this. However, Sarah's practices in her own school are also made in the context of a classed social structure where working-class people and places are pathologised through representations of lack and decline. The symbolic devaluation embedded in social policy does manifest in schools through processes designed to change the behaviours of working-class families because it is their parenting styles that are positioned as in need of modification.

5.5 Policy and Parenting

The reputations of schools in the ex-mining villages are directly located in the perceived poor behaviours of the families who live there, and who are constructed as threatening and risky, leading to a process of differentiation where schools are separated by participants into places of idealisation and demonisation meaning school choice ultimately reflects the social and geographical segregation operating between and within places (Reay and Lucey, 2003). Such reputations can be grounded in direct experience rather than hearsay. Some secondary schools in County Durham are described by participants as places which are unsafe, hostile and frightening. Veronica previously worked in two secondary schools north west of the City of Durham in a classroom support role. She described it as a dangerous place to work:

Veronica: *Slayton School, ugh and it was the area, was rough. Beaumont Hill…rough. I know people, who have been to them as a supply, and said "I am never going there again! I would rather not work. I would rather not work!"*

Interviewer: *When you say rougher…?*

Veronica*: Kids just effing, blinding, threatening, walking out, running off…daring to do anything! Throwing things, throwing things at you. At anybody. Mad.*

Interviewer*: Why do you think they do that?*

> **Veronica***: I think it is because well I think it is not all of them but most of them, the parents send them away for a bit of peace, do what you want for peace. I have known them…like young uns, say "oh me mam's getting us a bottle of vodka at the weekend!", "You are 14!", "Doesn't matter, me mam's getting us a bottle of vodka at the weekend, and I am going out drinking." So, they just go out and get absolutely drunk as, drunk as can be on the weekend. Just out on the streets, it's out of the parent's way you see?*

The most recent Ofsted inspections report these schools as having issues with behaviour which they describe as 'requiring improvement,' citing abusive language, disruption in class, and negative attitudes to learning as evidence of poor behaviour. These experiences are also described by some participants who attended or whose children attend these schools. James also pointed out that a recent Ofsted report regarding his local secondary school suggests that the safety of staff and children was at risk. Veronica, like James, and many other participants in this research situate the behaviour in schools as a product of parenting. The idea that morals and values are learned through the family and that poor behaviour in schools is a manifestation of a failure of the family to embed such morals is common. Children and teenagers who 'hang about the streets' are frequently used as evidence of parental failure.

The view that poor parenting drives the behaviours of children in school was a defining feature of the New Labour government who implemented initiatives located in socially deprived areas aimed at improving parenting skills (Gewirtz, 2001). In the last forty years, policy response aimed at addressing inequality, across both Conservative and Labour governments, has been focused on changing the behaviours of the working-classes; to educate families in parenting styles, to instil discipline into communities perceived as chaotic, and to restrict welfare via a punitive austerity programme as a way to incentivise workers to find employment. This is because class inequalities are presented by central government as not an economic crisis or a structural issue, but as a moral crisis in which the problem is social and the proposed solution is for citizens to take more responsibility for themselves and their families, as David Cameron advocated in his speech on Big Society in 2011. This ideology is replicated in local policy.

The education strategy in County Durham aims to give children the 'best start' in life in terms of promoting good health and emotional wellbeing. It highlights parental addiction and poverty as barriers to children's welfare, but it ignores the lack of affordable housing and the scarcity of secure employment. Rather, the delivery of the objective is grounded in offering therapeutic services such as mental health and emotional support to families who are in need.

This 'help when needed' model (Durham County Council, 2023) may be beneficial to people who are struggling to cope with a lack of economic capital, but it fails to target the roots of such distress. The participants in this research who reported feeling stressed and emotionally-drained spoke about the problems of insecure housing, unemployment and precarious employment, as well as poor schooling, declining community facilities, and fears for their children's future. Such policy approaches also locate the worst effects of free-market capitalism within the moral domain as working-class people are offered help to overcome what are seen to be problems of their own making. It is an approach which removes parenting from its socio-economic context and subsequently uses 'poor parenting' as rationale to justify the material inequalities which frame family life, displacing class as the structuring force and re-framing class inequalities as a lack of moral aptitude (Gillies, 2005b). Interpreting parenting as though it is disconnected to other parts of social life is to ignore how inequalities are interrelated and are accumulated over a lifetime, where the localised socio-economic context is significant, and where class exploitation and exclusion manifests as intergenerational trauma (Walkerdine, 2015).

The ethos underpinning national and local education policy is clearly evident in the school environment in County Durham. For example, Sarah describes extensive and multi-layered policies that she has implemented in her school to improve educational outcomes for working-class children. Her narrative demonstrates a genuine desire to help marginalised children succeed within school, yet she finds it very difficult to understand why cyclical patterns occur:

> *I don't know if parents know how to help themselves. Umm…so…coming up to Christmas time they really, really struggle as well and it is Brighthouse and trying to get, trying to educate them and trying to get them out of that system, is…it is just like history. You almost don't want history to repeat itself, but it is the same families that come every year. And you know we work with Salvation Army, so trying to find toys and you know the foodbank for food parcels and things like that. Food bank vouchers. But it is, you don't know whether it is they don't know how to help themselves; they are given that help but then next year, it is just them again. And it is, it is just it is really hard.*

Sarah reproduces the idea that being poor is due to an inability to organise finances or to take responsibility for actions, and there is little recognition that economic capital is significant. She does not recognise that families who do not have enough money for Christmas gifts this year

will be in the same position next year unless their economic circumstances change. Her narrative also evidences a belief that worklessness is inherited:

> *I think it is again sometimes parents just think that this is how they have been brought up and there is no way for them to get out of the way that they have been brought up. And that they are entitled to benefits and they are entitled to free school meals. And this is just what is going to be; this is my mam, and this is the way I am, and this is the way they are going to be. It is trying to break that cycle…it is just sad sometimes I think, and I think we do feel that as a school, what more can we do? What more can we do to try and show these families that they can be something. They can break that cycle. But I suppose this is where they have grown up and this is what they have known. And for some of them it is very difficult.*

Sarah's frustrations arise in what she sees as the repetitive negative behaviours of parents which damage their lives and the lives of their children. Other participants also highlight the family as the vehicle through which morals and good behaviours are learned, for example, *'we were taught to stick in at school'* (Tracey) as though some children are actively taught not to. Sarah also invokes place as a mechanism for entrenching poor behaviours. Behaviours are seen to be learned through place; ex-mining villages are viewed as not only embodying but actively producing laziness, ineptitude and worthlessness. It is a view embedded in the 'left-behind' narrative which dislocates economic change from its structural roots whilst simultaneously locating moral disorder as a pathological manifestation of the individual. This is why to be from somewhere with a 'reputation' is so powerful and can evoke such visceral responses.

The reality of how behaviours manifest in school is much more complex. As established earlier, the behaviours of middle-class children and families are commented on but often go unchallenged, whereas it is the behaviours of working-class families in ex-mining villages who are problematised and actively punished. Catherine discussed her son being labelled a *'troublemaker'* at school because of his disruptive behaviour in class, and spoke about how teaching staff perceived the family to be lacking in morals and values. She explained how his behaviour was actually rooted in personal turmoil:

> *Archie had been through an awful lot with personal circumstances. He'd gone through a lot and the school didn't care. They didn't care about what was going on in his head*

and how it was affecting him and his education. The kind of way he was in school they didn't take that on board. At all. It was more a case of you're here, here's our rules and because he had rebelled a little bit with no guidance, you know not even time to find out what was wrong with him or if there was a way they could help him through it. They just straight away said you're not conforming to what we expect of you, you're gonna get a punishment. And I had no say in the matter and that was their attitude. Their time, their rules and nobody else mattered…he wasn't learning anything. He was just constantly being punished; he wasn't actually paying any attention. Because he was more concentrating on what punishment he was going to get at the end of class, you know so in turn he just didn't bother so he was seen as one of the troublemakers. You know, because they didn't give him the respect or the time of day that he deserved as a student, so he acted up more which kind of spiralled out of control.

Archie's behaviour in class was related to a multitude of factors, some of which are rooted in class structures themselves, and it is quite clear that Catherine and her son were struggling with a variety of personal, financial and housing issues. Crucially, the relationship with school deteriorated when teaching staff did not explore the cause of this behaviour and immediately initiated the school behaviour code with strict punishments which ultimately escalated very quickly to multiple exclusions. The relationship became defined by a constant cycle of disruptive behaviours and punishments. I was able to meet with Archie and in casual conversation he spoke about his classroom interactions with teachers in a battleground terminology:

I had to get in there first because I know they're trying to humiliate me.

His comment is reminiscent of research showing how working-class students, boys in particular, strive to dominate interactions in order to symbolically reclaim the status and respect they do not have (Willis, 1977; Stahl, 2017) and in response to overly strict behaviour codes which they believe are implemented to control their perceived unruliness (Reay, 2017). This counter cultural response that Willis evidenced in *How working-class kids get working-class jobs* was rooted in the symbolism of manual labour as epitomising 'real work.' However, deindustrialisation and neoliberal economic policies have eroded not only the labour market in County Durham but also the symbolic pride associated with manual work. There is no longer an alternative counter cultural domain of employment to enter into if the school experience does not result in academic qualifications.

Despite moving schools, Catherine discussed feeling very concerned that her son would not pass any of his GCSE's and would then be unable to progress onto an apprenticeship. Due to his experience with school, Archie insisted he did not want to re-sit exams at any educational institution should the need arise. Archie's interactions with school are shaped by a multitude of macro and micro class mechanisms which in turn strengthens punitive institutional processes and policies which have shaped his educational experience. School life is characterised by a neo-liberal ideology which depoliticises political and economic issues and posits tolerance and behaviour modification as a solution to deep economic and social fractures (Brown, 2006). It is too deterministic to argue that class inequalities manifest in negative classroom behaviours because many working-class children do have positive experiences at school. However, Archie clearly felt he was not valued by his teachers. This may not be the case, but as Husserl (1970) theorised, reality is as real within the subjective experience as it is in the objective world. Recognition of intrinsic worth is central to class relationships at every layer of social life from the macro-economic to the psychological. Multiple class mechanisms constrain Archie's ability to add value to himself in a manner that will bring educational achievement and potential economic reward, and his feelings around being de-valued are part of this process.

Class clearly plays a significant role in the interactions between families and schools yet the vast majority of participants in this research, including the eight who work or have worked in education, reject the concept of class. Tracey is in a leadership role at a secondary school in an ex-mining village. She explained the way she relates to different families:

> *It is funny because sometimes the upper-class parents will just trust you and get on, but sometimes they are very "do not teach my child this, I think my child is more able" type thing. And the really down to earth parents are the ones that just trust you, are thankful, get on. But then you have some really deprived parents with mental health issues that just need you so much. And it is for them that the children, you are like a counsellor, social worker, they just need to talk to you for help. So, I would say the class it doesn't matter sometimes, it is about the family and their needs.*

Interestingly, Tracey asserts that social class is not relevant in how she interacts with parents, arguing that it is their needs which direct the type of relationship she fosters with families. However, it is very clear that the class position of parents does shape interactions with staff. She described upper class families as being assertive and somewhat aggressive whereas down

to earth is coded as working-class, and deprived families are noted to have emotional and mental health problems. There is a very clear class trajectory in her narrative that is not recognised because of her view that all parents from different social backgrounds are *'needy'* in some way. Tracey does not explicitly acknowledge that the needs of families are often directly related to class exclusion, yet the way she indirectly references class does evidence that her understanding of class is grounded in working within it. Tracey is not unusual in her efforts to downplay or reject the relevance of class and class is frequently denied by participants as existing at all. Its multiple contradictions are used as evidence of its irrelevance. Social class is described by participants in this study as fluid and with boundaries that cannot be defined. The majority of participants reject a class identity although they are conscious of the way class markers signify and operate as value. Modes of valuation are constantly in operation within the school environment. The symbolic power inherent within class inequalities, including how class is denied and rejected, is a key part of how such valuations are made and put into effect within the social spaces of the classroom, shaping families' interactions and relationships with school.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has evidenced how the struggle for value is central to the creation and maintenance of class divisions in the education system in County Durham. This chapter has explored how multi-dimensional and interdependent macro and micro class mechanisms result in different outcomes and experiences for students and their families within secondary school. Participants' narratives show that they locate, relate to and understand class exclusion and marginalisation through a moral lens. This is a complex experience which underpins a significant element of the conflict within schools. Participants make evaluative judgements around how people (and themselves) should act, and this is not limited to the behaviours of the working-class, although the social position of the middle-classes enables a moral authority that is withheld from those excluded through processes of class categorisation and classification. Lay normative constructions of morality is central to how people live and interpret their lives, but it is also fundamental to the maintenance of class inequalities, even as moral evaluative judgements are made independently of classed relationships. What it means to belong is shaped by class mechanisms, but it is also a desire to live life through value.

Participants want to be valued and they want to be able to live a valuable life. However, the way value reveals itself in the way that it does to the working-class people in this study is

intertwined with how school is conceived as a mode of authenticity, as a space of possibility, and how different ways of being in this space manifest as potential. These different possibilities are negotiated and lived out through a classed social structure where class mechanisms are entangled within the complex meaning and perception of the desire to live a valuable and moral life. The 'left behind' narrative is inscribed in social policy within the education system and manifests in the micro elements of the classroom, mediating the relationship between schools and home and shaping educational outcomes and potential employment opportunities for working-class children. The way class devaluation and delegitimisation manifests within the work environment and how working-class people respond to such devaluation is explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: Work

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the way participants relate to work as a mode of meaning and value, and how this experience is lived out within a classed social structure where working-class labour is routinely devalued and delegitimised. This chapter has two main sections. The first is concerned with the heritage of the industrial economies that have shaped and continue to influence social life within County Durham. The social and economic effects of deindustrialisation as well as the traditions, work ethics and practices rooted in the mining and steel industries inform participants' understandings and experiences of the value in their own and others work, and subsequently the value they add to society. These understandings are not uniform but are intertwined with gendered class dynamics and mechanisms which shape the wider social context and changing nature of what it means to be engaged in meaningful or valuable work. The second half of this chapter then moves on to consider the complex relationship between the meaning and value found within the practice of work and the exchange value of work within a neoliberal economy. The ability to exchange educational success for well-paid employment is evident but the value of labour is not straightforward as participants grapple with the moral significance of work, and the role of the body in this process, as well as the class mechanisms which give monetary value and moral legitimacy to middle-class employment.

Finally, this chapter ends with an exploration into neoliberal practices within the labour market and how they govern the macro and micro elements of working life. Class mechanisms constrain the ability to succeed within this economic model, deepening the class inequalities and fractures that are produced within it, but that is not the only moral concern. Neoliberal modes of working such as outsourcing, frequent reorganisation, recurrent job restructuring, precarious and zero-hour contracts, and technological surveillance are experienced by almost every participant in this sample. Neoliberal work practices shape relationships within this space. They structure the day to day working experience of participants as modes of working designed to increase profit and productivity increasingly undermine stability, security, job quality and working relationships (Crowley and Hodson, 2014). Participants are routinely unable to find meaning and value in their work, and at the same time their working environment restricts their ability to act in a manner that they understand as moral in their

work practices. What it means to live a moral life is important to participants and how this manifests in their relationship with work is explored throughout this chapter.

6.2 Work Ethics

The legacy of the industrial economies within County Durham, particularly coal mining and steel manufacturing, shape participants' attitudes, experiences and understandings of work. The relationship that participants have to working-class labour and to the effects of deindustrialisation are significant in how they understand the value of the work they do as well as the meaning they find within it, and how they make sense of a classed identity. How participants relate to this dominant social and economic heritage is dependent on their own subjective experience and their ties to the networks of the industrial economies past and present, as well as how they are positioned and constrained by class mechanisms and structures. Many participants discussed holding a work ethic and a value system that they believe to be the direct result of growing up in a working-class environment or having connections to deindustrialisation and experiencing uncertainty and precarity in the labour market. Catherine explained:

> *I think it's a mentality. It's what you get used to and I think having that kind of mentality – I can't put it into words – I think if you've come from a working-class kind of situation you don't take for granted what you've got. Even when you do have money – yeah, nobody's saying that you don't splash out every now and again, but you make it last. Because you've not had it in the past you do realise that you've got it now, but it could quite easily be taken away from you. You know, whereas I think people who have been used to having money from the start do take things for granted. They do take their lifestyle for granted; they do. Because they've never known any different. They've never had to work hard for anything, they've never had to make do with what they've got, and I think they do take it for granted. Whether it's where they live, what kind of car they drive, what kind of food they buy, I think they do take for granted what they've got, and they don't realise how quickly it could be gone.*

Catherine's description of holding a 'mentality' embedded in working-class experience stems from the deep sense of uncertainty that arises in the precariousness of working-class labour and also in the painful reality of financial hardship. Catherine's comment reflects the feelings of many other participants in this study who have experienced economic disadvantage and

insecure employment, and who express attitudes towards work which are grounded in the insecurity and uncertainty that characterises their experiences. This reflects the ontology of phenomenology and emphasises the way subjectivity manifests through being in the world (Heidegger, 1962) which is to say that Catherine and many other participants in this study understand uncertainty and scarcity through actively living this experience.

Catherine described the imprint of scarcity and precarity as a 'mentality,' but class experiences are also embedded in the cultural and symbolic representations that position the working-class as valueless. These are the classed power dynamics which tie phenomena to the logos and reveal how the phenomenon of scarcity appears in the way that it does. Multiple forms of class marginalisation produce practices and habits which are born out of necessity but through symbolic representations are also coded as inferior. Gail explained how this manifested in the designer clothes shop she worked in:

> *His lordship [*the owner*] would be like, oh you know, we shop in Waitrose and I'm thinking, oh, right OK. And we would be like, we might go to Tesco this week, do you know what I mean though? Nah, I didn't like it. And I feel like since I've broke away from there, I can actually breathe a little bit and I can be me again. Because I'm not a snob. Never, ever had money. I haven't come from money, and I just think, we are grateful for what we have got to be honest.*

Gail's consumer habits are embedded in financial constraints, but she is keenly aware of the class mechanisms that give social significance and hierarchy to her shopping practices within the workplace. Gail connects these distinctions to the way she feels about *'having money'* and in doing so highlights the power relationship that underpins the symbolic economy. Classed constructions of value produce a sense of being in the world eliciting a form of symbolic violence that runs deeper than feeling personally responsible for structural inequalities. This is evident in how Gail described feeling *'grateful'* for the material possessions she has. Gail discussed her experience of intense periods of economic hardship which have previously resulted in bankruptcy and concerns around homelessness, yet she also described knowing she is in a more fortunate position than others. Gail is one of many working-class participants to express such sentiments. Her comment reflects the way class is lived as exclusion. Ways of living which are available to the middle-class are not only unavailable to working-class people, but working-class subjectivity is also produced through these class relations of exclusion (Charlesworth, 2000).

Recognition of intrinsic worth is fundamental to class relationships. For Gail, to be grateful for what she has is to reject and disidentify with the relations of class that judge and shame her ways of being and living. However, Gail's rejection is also an acknowledgement and a recognition of the rejection of others. Her response reflects the way working-class tastes, bodies, accents and practices are symbolically delegitimised and pathologised as lacking in morals and values. When the very core of working-class being is positioned as deficient, it is the self that is felt to be innately wrong. The way the body is situated in space is not straightforward but experienced through layers of perception in that we understand ourselves as we actively live it, but this lived experience is also embodied and relational such that the classed structures which form subjectivity are ones of deep affect (Merleau-Ponty, 2012). When working-class people attempt to change their class position by inhabiting middle-class expressions of taste, they are often ridiculed or feel deeply inauthentic (Lawler, 1999) as Gail articulates as she recounted her experiences at work:

> *I'll tell you what I did go through, and I had to give myself a really good talking to over it. Because before I started working in the shop, we would shop at Aldi, every now and then I would buy a perfume, nothing major, just normal. Then I started working in the shop and all of a sudden, I started buying Jo Malone. I would have Chanel, one of me customers actually bought us a bottle of Chanel for Christmas and that was the first bottle I ever got. And I was like, "oh my god this is what am supposed to be using!" And I felt like working in there I had to buy, like I had to have a proper handbag, I had to have the proper stuff then when I like come away, I thought "oh my god, that wasn't me. That's NOT me!" Like, I've got Zara perfume now.*

It does not matter how many classed signifiers Gail buys because she is unable to escape her own feelings of living out a pretence. She has a sense of authenticity, even as this perception of personhood, insisted and articulated as '*that's not me*,' is embedded within structures of consciousness where class dynamics situate and produce this perception. Gail cannot escape her conscience which elicits a subjective understanding of what is right even as this moral evaluation of the self is embedded in class processes.

Our conscience evaluates and regulates our own behaviour and the behaviours of others and is grounded in the values that structure social life and unify people across time and place. However, the domain of morality is complex and multifaceted. Moral evaluative judgements are integral to human relationships and are produced within a value structure that shape what

it means to live a valuable life just as this meaning is entangled in the multiple class mechanisms and processes which position the working-class as valueless. Paradoxically, these distinctions can, and do produce a sense of meaning and value to people even as that value does not hold the same meaning in the social world and cannot be exchanged within the dominant system of capitalist exchange. Gail understands the value of wearing Chanel perfume and having a designer bag in her workplace, described as *'proper'*, and yet still her conscience reminds her that these consumer goods do not hold the same meaning to her. Gail's experience demonstrates that perception is an embodied process and in doing so also highlights why the lived body is so significant in marking out class distinctions. Perception is our frame of reference, but this is not limited to the immediate physical or social space, rather perception also manifests as an existential mode of being (Merleau-Ponty, 2012) in the way we are individually and collectively networked over time, embodying traditions, norms and values just as perception itself is also informed and shaped by the complex class mechanisms that structure and centre the body in physical and social space.

Symbolic representations of class have a complicated relationship to value which is reflected in Gail's experience. Gail understands the social meaning of classed signifiers and the exchange value that they hold, yet she is unable to feel comfortable in a work environment where such signifiers are important. This cannot be read solely as Gail feeling out of place in a middle-class habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) where cultural behaviours and practices engrained from birth would most likely render wearing Chanel perfume second nature, although this feeling of discomfort is also evident in her story. Gail does not feel comfortable because her relationship with herself is more than one of exchange, it is a deep-rooted understanding of what feels morally right, articulated through a sense of authenticity and the disdain for middle-class pretensions, despite this sense of value manifesting within a class system designed to ensure modes of cultural distinction operate to exclude the working-class. Gail's narrative highlights the intricate and contradictory nature of how class dynamics operate within personal and social understandings of value. However, what is also evident in Gail's story is how she is unable to utilise her connections to working-class culture as a mode of exchange within the labour market as some other participants are able to do.

Class is not a set of practices or actions, rather these practices and actions only hold meaning when they are lived out through working-class bodies and lives. When the same class markers are assumed by the middle-class, the value manifests in a different way, highlighting why

markers of class do not hold meaning independently of the person inhabiting them. Class is not a persona that can be created through clothes, accents and consumer goods even as these elements of social life are themselves markers of class, because it is who they are said to represent that holds the true meaning. When class signifiers are inhabited by middle-class bodies and framed through a middle-class lens, the meaning, value and exchange value of those classed signifiers change. This power relationship is evident through the way Lorna recalled her childhood:

> *I had a very privileged upbringing. My dad grew up in a very, very working-class environment…but obviously he put himself, he actually joined the army, learned his trade and moved into middle-class. He was a homeowner from when he was in his early 20s. You know, had a very sort of senior responsible job.* So*, I never really, never wanted for anything.*

Elements of working-class culture and stories of the hardship of extended family reaching back through generations are routinely used by the middle-class to position themselves as the hero of their own stories, struggling against the odds to overcome adversity (Friedman et al., 2021). Lorna holds multiple forms of capital and her story references intergenerational economic prosperity and stability. At the same time, she recalled a seamless transition from a working-class to a middle-class position, presenting this mobility as a natural and desirable movement as well as an upwards trajectory. She is able to cultivate a narrative that emphasises her family's working-class roots and material wealth, simultaneously minimising and celebrating the role of working-class labour. The exchange value of working-class signifiers differs when used by Lorna because she is not symbolically represented as pathologically immoral. She can claim value through an affinity with working-class labour because she is already positioned as having value and consequently the meaning manifests in a different way, as a proxy for a virtuous work ethic. It enables a claim of moral authority just as that moral authority is used to enact this classed dynamic and power relationship.

Lorna's relationship to her family's legacy of working-class labour is not one of precarity and uncertainty as Catherine's and Gail's stories reference, rather Lorna is able to exchange the cultural value of working-class hardship for moral capital, displacing morality from a value structure that guides social life to a tradeable resource and a mode of value to be exchanged. In doing so she reinforces the myth of meritocracy which is key to the maintenance of class inequalities and demonstrates that the amount of agency we have to control our own life

story is not only shaped by access and restrictions to multiple forms of capital but is actively embedded in the class dynamics that control the narrative and meaning around value. To cultivate a self that has value involves access to the accrual of different forms of capital, but this is also predicated on the extent to which the self is considered a moral person in public life (Skeggs, 2004). The working-class are symbolically represented as a fixed mass in civic discourse, positioned as without value and requiring regulation. This is one of the mechanisms through which the working-class become subjects of value to be judged rather than creators of their own value, although this denial of reflexivity is not passively accepted but is resisted by many participants in this research who actively struggle to control their own story and relationship to value.

6.3 Vocations and Valuable work

Stories are a way in which societies embed a value structure; they reflect back to us the moral codes of conduct that help us make sense of ourselves. We construct our life narratives not in a linear fashion but in the manner that explains how we have come to be where we are, and the pivotal moments and decisions that fostered that journey (Ricoeur, 1990). Stories illustrate the nature of the social world; they provide a framework for morality in action and the way we understand ourselves as networked with others. They are the background which inform our decision-making processes as well as the lens through which we recount our experiences, and we recognise our moral role through the way we are connected to the wider social story (MacIntyre, 2007). Work has enormous economic and social significance. What we do as a job and if we can consider ourselves to have a job or a career elicits meaning about who we are within the dominant system of capitalist exchange. However, work also holds meaning beyond exchange value. Choosing employment is a key part of our own story and it can be a meaningful endeavour as much as it is an economic choice (Sayer, 2000).

Husserl (1970) argues that to live a moral life is to aim for the utmost fulfilment, or the 'Telos,' and positions 'vocation' as the greatest form of labour where vocation is understood as being orientated towards the pursuit of the highest moral aim within work. To choose our vocation for Husserl is not only limited to employment but is to embody moral values in action and to bring forward into being the value practices of the past, and ways of being in the world with others, that have sustained communities and are embedded in shared spaces and relationships (Donohoe, 2016). However, to be able to live out a 'Telos' that we see reflected in archetypical stories is constrained by the complex class mechanisms that shape the meaning

of value in work and the value attached to various forms of labour. The ability of participants to engage in what they consider to be valuable work is shaped by their experiences of the class system as well as their relationship to the traditions and legacy of the industrial economies, and the social value and role of working-class labour.

Jill discussed the periods of unemployment and hardship which characterised her childhood as her parents moved in and out of the labour market employed in minimum wage work. She explained how she made sense of the value in pursuing a job which she considered to be her vocation in the context of this experience:

> *I was thinking about this recently when I, when I quit my job which felt, it really chewed me up inside, the idea that I dared given the upbringing that I had, that I dared have even considered quitting a paid job to not work and do more education. That seemed like a real, I shouldn't be allowed that luxury; that was just almost quite a selfish act to do. Like it just went against everything, my upbringing and my family sort of background of just you know you don't, you just work to put the food on the table… and I felt a little bit ashamed. But I guess that is my…my…I guess my core of working-class, fighting against this new living in a lower middle-class world perhaps*?

Jill recently gave up permanent employment to pursue what she perceives as her vocation, a job which involves undertaking a degree. She discussed how the memories of the precarity of manual labour in addition to the idea that the role of work is to provide materially for a family, rather than to facilitate personal ambition, produced strong feelings of guilt and shame in her decision to study full-time. Jill's story shows how our ability to make decisions regarding employment is rooted in conceptualisations of what work is, and what work is for, including who is able to engage in fulfilling work. Her understanding of this is embedded in class dynamics and her decision to give up paid employment is made in the context of a connection to the deep sense of uncertainty that characterises working-class experience in the labour market. Significantly, Jill's moral dilemma is also rooted in the class mechanisms which structure and shape the labour market in a manner that privileges the value of middle-class bodies and their labour, and consequently locates personhood and reflexivity in this space.

Much research documents the complex way that class inequalities manifest in the workplace and enable and constrain access to multiple forms of capital, facilitating access to and progress within the labour market (Friedman and Laurison, 2019). However, accruing capital also

requires the ability to be reflexive and to conceptualise work through an individualising lens. Constructing the self is intertwined with the degree of agency we have to construct our own story which is embedded in the class mechanisms that operate to keep the working-class fixed in place. Jill explains how her class background shapes the way she views work; it is an act to be exchanged for livelihood and not for personal gain or fulfilment, an act which she considers to be 'selfish'. Her perception of the meaning and value of work demonstrates why the differences in the social value of classed groups is key in maintaining class inequalities in the labour market but also evidences how this is not always straightforward. Working-class labour has routinely been denigrated symbolically and economically as a means to delegitimise not only the value of work, but also the value of the people undertaking this work, even as people can and do find meaning and a sense of moral worth within it (Lamont, 2000). Jill's conscience, rooted in her subjective experience, regulates her decisions around work and how she interacts with her own possibility and value. She questions if giving up work is morally wrong and in doing so questions if it is morally right to pursue her vocation, which is to Husserl the upmost ethical aim and the means through which a moral value structure is lived out. Who is able to engage in valuable work is a classed process beyond the manner in which multiple forms of capital facilitate and constrain this process. Jill conceptualises work here primarily as a use value rather than in exchange value terms, although this itself is produced in the context of the class inequalities that attempt to deny reflexivity to the working-class.

Stigma and shame are fundamental to the legitimacy of power relationships which facilitate social control (Tyler, 2013, 2020). The conflation of an underclass as synonymous with the working-class in labour market representations shapes how work is perceived both as a class signifier and as a class mechanism. To choose not to work is read differently on classed bodies and for the working-class there is an overlay of underclass ideology associated with laziness and welfare dependency that characterises public conversations around employment. It is a stereotype which mobilises the 'left-behind' narrative that the working-class lack the entrepreneurial personality to adapt to modern ways of working. Indeed, Jill is keen to explain how despite the limited availability of employment, her mother always strived to be working and she situates her own moral dilemma not to work in this context:

> *So, life was a struggle. My mum just always got whatever jobs she could, whether it was cooking in the local pub, or doing various Body Shop parties or this that and the other….but having that conversation with my mum, who worked all hours, every little*

part time job she could get to keep us going, and also did access, online learning courses to try and better herself, better to you know…for me to say "I am going to quit my job and I am going to study full time, and I am not going to look for any part time job, I am just going to, just…" that was a really difficult conversation to have. And I still don't know how she felt.

Shame does manifest in response to the class dynamics that inscribe working-class bodies as idle (Dorling, 2010; Shildrick, 2018) but Jill's ethical dilemma and feelings of shame are not only produced in this context. Her moral framework guides her reflexive decision making. Jill's understanding of the value of work, and her feelings of shame that arise in not working, are forged through the meaning that work had for her family in the context of deindustrialisation, even as this meaning is shaped and regulated through classed discourses and representations. Jill's experience of Dasein is shaped by her past, and the manner in which she understood the value of work at that time and place. She is always contending with her past as she makes decisions around work in the present and consequently, she is also interacting with her future and her possibility and value. In this sense, we can conceptualise the future as here now, and the past as still present. Heidegger (1962) considers this to be a primary feature of Dasein; an 'ecstatic temporality' that incorporates the unity of these three features of time. Dasein is not a reflective position, rather it is active engagement in the social world. This is why the historical social meaning and value of working-class people and places is so significant in understanding class mechanisms and relationships.

Jill is attempting to make decisions around work within a class system which devalues working-class bodies and labour, and which paradoxically also elicits a sense of positive value around what it means to actively be engaged in work. Moral evaluations are complex. Jill's story shows how her decision making is shaped by class mechanisms that are also entwined with normative judgements, producing a subjective experience and relationship to moral value that is not straightforward and nor is it a solely intellectual endeavour. The way that shame manifests for Jill in the context of not working is one of deep affect. It is a mode of being which highlights the critical role of the body in shaping subjective experience, where emotions manifest through relational and temporal patterns, as past socio-cultural and historical frames of meaning are embedded in Dasein, and manifest through individual and collective histories as modes of meaning and value. Subjectivity is framed as lived experience in the sense that we interact with the social world as we understand it through action and not as an abstract

mode of being. In this sense, decision making is understood as an active part of the way we are situated in the social world. The emotion that Jill feels is produced within a classed relationship, but her feelings of shame do not only manifest in the context of the delegitimisation of working-class people and places. Rather, her feelings towards giving up work are produced within a subjective experience where working is a source of value in itself, even as this experience is forged through the class structures that are always working to position working-class bodies as idle. The way that participants understand value in work is within the context of a classed relationship, although how this manifests and structures moral decision making is a complicated process which shapes the way participants relate to the concept of a vocation and what it means to find value in work.

6.4 Proper Work

The way in which participants find value in work is also further complicated by their understanding of what it means to be engaged in legitimate employment. The value that participants find in work is entangled in neoliberal economic policies that embrace deregulation and privatisation whilst eroding the role of trade unions and collective bargaining, regulation and legislation which characterised the industrial economies during the height of trade union power in the 1970's (McIvor, 2020). A meaningful job is understood as a role which is distinct from these neoliberal processes, conceptualised as a '*proper*' job. Steve explained:

> *I started temping and then you know I got a proper job as I call it, ones with terms and conditions rather than just work all of the hours you can to get your minimum wage. And paid holiday and other such luxuries.*

Steve makes a distinction between 'proper' work such as those positions with employment benefits and permanent contracts, and jobs which are insecure, low-paid and precarious. However, the way participants conceptualise 'proper' work is less about precariousness and insecurity, rather it reflects the perceived value and legitimacy of the people expected to carry out such work. Many participants distinguish between forms of work which are valuable and legitimate and those which they consider to be suitable as a last resort or as a temporary job until a more appropriate role is available. Work in industries such as manufacturing and the retail sector is coded as inferior by many participants and unsuitable for a career, as evidenced in Theo's reflection on his work history:

I had like paper rounds and stuff as a youngster and before, when I was at sixth form, I used to work in the hospital canteen, like a pot wash boy or whatever you want to call it. Which was, I mean it was quite a good job. I worked there sort of Saturdays or Sundays or one or the other, I think probably through sixth form. Which was good, it was good pocket money at that age. So, it was nice. And then because I went away to university, I ended up getting about four or five like summer, it must have been four summer jobs where I worked for sort of quite a short period, just sort of temping or something like that, eight to ten weeks each time, whenever the summer sort of break was. And I always managed to find something, I just used to go to the job centre or in the paper or online, I think. And I would just apply for pretty much anything, usually it wasn't anything specific. I had two sort of factory jobs, one was at a warehouse in Mereton, loading lorries full of things which was fine. I actually quite liked that job; it was a night shift type of job. I think I did three 12 hour shifts or something like that, and then you had the rest of the week off. So, I quite liked that, that is what I wanted. Made some money and had as much time off as possible. So, I didn't mind that actually. I mean I wouldn't want to do it for a career. But at the time it was ideal!

Theo described his periods of employment in manual labour as enjoyable but not to be taken seriously as a long term and legitimate form of work. Like Steve, Theo posits that it is the security, scope for financial progression and employment terms and conditions that mark out the distinction between career defining work and a job that was suitable for a particular period in his life. Theo is referring to employment in a particular stage of his life, but his perception of the jobs he undertook during this period as not being suitable for the long term (articulated as *'I wouldn't do it for a career'*) reflects the way participants conceptualise employment through class relations. A 'good' job has very little to do with precarity and insecurity, and everything to do with whose classed body is undertaking manual work.

Niall is employed as a senior consultant within the arts industry and explained how he relates to precarity and insecurity:

Niall: *Work wise, I've always worked in like the arts or heritage sort of broad SEC, like the cultural sector or cultural industries. You know, a bit of a mixture of I mean very, very much still a portfolio career, blend of employed and self-employed fixed term contracts. I've had in my life two permanent contracts. It's basically the nature of that sector, being sort of you know precariously sort of funded.*

Interviewer: *Right. Well, that must make it really hard?*

Niall: *Well, that's what security looks like. You know that's what security looks like in the arts. Yeah, the Sage Gateshead, The Baltic, they never know that they've got money coming in in five years' time.*

Niall considered himself to have a career despite his work history being characterised by regular periods of insecurity and instability. Other participants also have low-paid, insecure and precarious work in industries such as events and marketing or arts and culture where a permanent well-paid position is rare. However, they are also aware that their employment has social status and dismissed the precarity as '*the nature of the sector*', whilst framing the insecurity as a form of value, highlighting the ability to accrue different skills in various contract roles, and framing this insecure experience as a signifier of their commitment to their vocation. As Standing (2011) found, the precariat encompasses a wide variety of people employed in insecure work, but this does not mean that class dynamics do not operate within this category. The working-class are still devalued through this economic model and modes of distinction are evident in the differentiated terminology that operates as code for middle-class labour. Terms such as the 'gig economy' and 'freelancers' are used to describe workers who operate within creative industries where precarity and insecurity are mediated through a neoliberal economic model that promises liberation from mundane forms of labour. In other words, precarity is viewed as a temporary mode of being to endure before the entrepreneurial creative career yields economic reward (Morgan and Nelligan, 2018).

It is a language which functions to distinguish between valued and valueless people, distancing the middle-class from the working-class mass, a mechanism which is key to middle-class identity making. As other markers of classed value such as income and property have become harder to acquire, the significance of the symbolic in carving out class distinctions is heightened, which is why when participants conceptualise 'proper work' it is who undertakes the work that matters and whose bodies are inscribed with meaning which is key. The meaning of the job changes in the context of whose body is inhabiting manual work (Ocejo, 2018). Moral worth and meaning are inscribed on bodies and are not directly attached to forms of work, although the manner in which modes of value are given classed significance is through symbolic representations which do tie classed bodies to modes of employment.

The precariousness and insecurity of jobs which are expected to be undertaken by middle-class educated graduates are not considered to be outside of the realm of 'proper work' as insecure forms of low-status manual labour are positioned. Consequently, 'proper work' is less about precarity and insecurity, but rather it reflects the perceived value and legitimacy of the people undertaking these roles. The social value of working-class occupations is interdependent on the social value of working-class people. Gender is highly significant in how 'proper work' is conceptualised here and it is noteworthy that when Theo discussed his history of non-career defining work, the roles he described were all forms of manual labour. Consequently, although 'proper work' is conceptualised by participants in terms of middle-class notions of acceptable work, this understanding is also forged through the history and significance of mining and heavy industry within County Durham. Despite the class dynamics that position working-class employment as illegitimate, many male participants relate to the legacy and history of manual labour and find it a structuring force in their working lives.

6.5 Ethical Bodies

The legacy of deindustrialisation and the traditions and values that manifest through coal mining is significant in how participants relate to not only being employed but actively working the body through labour. Niall explained how he has accrued multiple forms of capital throughout his life and is considerably more economically comfortable than his extended family. He is employed in a senior role now, but his story shows how his attitude towards work, and the need to be always employed, has shaped his experience and relationship to the labour market. Niall described his work history in this context:

> *I mean I've, always, always worked. I worked, you know through GCSEs, A-levels, degree, MA. So, I've never not sort of been in work from the age of about 15. I know I carry a sort of like working-class work ethic with me, which is that I always have to have a job. I've always had a job, since I was 15 you know? Like I've always, if I didn't have - if you know, if something went wrong and I didn't have work lined up I wouldn't hesitate, you know I have, I've worked, I've done bar work, I've done stacking shelves and supermarkets. You know I've, I've done, I've worked in the factory, you know, like whenever there's been a gap in my life, I have immediately defaulted to you know what ever job is available because at no point has it been conceivable that I wouldn't have a job. And I think that's like a really important thing, but also about class and coming*

from a particularly sort of you know, like precariously sort of you know precarious economic background.

Niall frames work as a mode of survival but also as a practice that must always be undertaken and his narrative evidences the way he has prioritised the immediacy of available work rather than being in a position to choose between forms of employment. Financial hardship is a significant driver in how Niall frames work, evidencing how the psychological implications of a lack of security are long lasting and rarely fade as financial circumstances improve. However, economic insecurity is not the only factor that frames Niall's conceptualisation of work. He discussed the moral value rooted in the practice of mining that shapes how he views the meaning of work:

I think the idea that you work yourself to the level that you know, like you sort of almost like I feel like I haven't done a day's work or a week's work if I don't work meself to a level of sort of intellectual or emotional exhaustion the way that you know, that I would have worked me body to exhaustion in a in a manual trade and I think there's a lot of sort of guilt or displaced sort of like displaced sort of meaning that comes from working, from coming from a background where that's important.

Niall frames work almost as an act of compulsion and reveals the complex nature of how value in work is understood and realised. The meaning Niall finds in work is embedded in his connection to the mining industry both in terms of deep-seated memories of precarity and insecurity, and significantly in the sense of meaning and value that is symbolically represented in the actions and practices of physical labour. Much research in the context of deindustrialisation explores the deep loss of status, community, and identity as well as economic stability (Roberts, 1993; High, 2013; Linkon, 2018) but from a phenomenological perspective it is also the physical action implicit in manual labour that holds meaning and value and shapes Niall's views of work. It is this loss that is significant. Dasein is to be conscious and actively engaged in social life because it is consciousness that gives our experiences and interactions a sense of meaning. The ethical and moral values that are implicit in the rituals and routines of mining manifest through the body, in the practice of physical labour which is why the embodied action of manual work is so significant to Niall and holds such meaning. It is a sense of meaning which also brings the past into being through consciousness, as Niall's conceptualisation of a work ethic manifests through a deep connection to the legacy of mining which shaped his family and community.

Niall attempts to replicate this meaning through his own office-based work, but he understands that this meaning is displaced. The sense of loss experienced through deindustrialisation and the declining relevance of working-class norms and traditions cannot be dismissed as nostalgia or a yearning for the past. They must be understood as a deep concern that such values which embed a moral order will be absent from future generations working identities (Strangleman, 2012). The values that structured mining communities do still hold meaning even as that meaning is dislodged from its original orientation. However, Niall's narrative also shows that acting out the values that are forged through and rooted in industrial traditions within post-industrial economies is not straightforward, and points to why the rejection of jobs such as service and office work are rooted in the fear of losing a sense of heterosexual masculinity that manifests through the practice of manual labour (Jimenez and Walkerdine, 2011). This is because the meaning found within layers and levels of cultural norms and values are not imposed and cannot be arbitrarily created. Rather, as Wright (1994) explains, workplace culture is not something that an organisation has, rather workplace culture must be understood as something that an organisation does as a practice. This is Merleau-Ponty's (2012) situated freedom in action where morality is conceptualised as an embodied, active and temporal field of meaning which we are thrown into, and which is forged through the practices of being in the world with others.

As Niall's narrative demonstrates, the values implicit in work-place cultures do manifest in networked communities, even if these values are not actively embraced. Aiden explained how he struggles to reject a masculine identity he feels is associated with coal mining, and which he articulates as imposed on him:

> *I'm still expected to feel like a pit man although the pits are gone. You know like if you're a traveler you don't get told you're a traveler you just are one? Well, you don't get told you're a pit man. You just are one.*

Aiden was not a miner, and his family were not employed in the industry. And yet the residual structure of feeling (Williams, 1977) that Aiden considers fundamental to his life emphasises the deep embodied and emotional connection he has to the industrial economy that structured his community and which contextualises his personal identity and social relationships. In Aiden's case, his feelings towards the pit village he grew up in are ambivalent and he explains how he feels simultaneously bitter and protective of the village where he is now employed as a community advisor. Aiden situates his sense of identity and responsibility

towards Sadmere in the context of deindustrialisation and the coal miners' strike of 1984-1985:

> *The biggest turning point in my life was the miners' strike. Because I was just a kid who kicked a ball around and I didn't care about anything other than when me tea was ready and where me ball was. But then it made us think about the influences, that there's powers in the world what have influences that can make my mate at school cry because his mam and dad are fighting cos there's no money. And it made us question the world that I lived in and that's probably when I thought no, no I'm getting out to find out more questions here. Because if I was a miner and going to work and somebody above changed everything, my life stopped. And I wasn't willing to be in a position where somebody stopped my world. I wanted to be an influencer rather than waiting to be influenced so now I have positive power over people, and I do whatever I can to bring positive things to their life, whereas the negative power was the Thatcher years for me because of the negative impact that it had. I have me Durham tattoo which has Sadmere colliery on just because of like when people say to you "where were you when Diana died?" or whatever these key things in your life, the thing that I always go to is the miners' strike.*

Aiden's colliery tattoo is a symbolic representation of the meaning of the miners' strike. Tattooing is used as a form of memorial and as a way of preserving the bonds and connections that arise in human relationships at a particular time and place (Buckle and Corbin-Dwyer, 2021). Thinking through this representation phenomenologically is to understand Aiden's tattoo as a way of personifying Dasein, and the body as the format through which meaning and consciousness manifests (Merlau Ponty, 2012). From Aiden's perspective, the miners' strike forced him to contend with his own future as he considered the precarious nature of the labour market and was pivotal in choosing employment which he believed would be least susceptible to economic and political control, and which enabled him to act in the labour market in a positive and ethical manner. Aiden's colliery tattoo embodies both the past and the future within the present moment of the living body. It represents the emotions that arose in the context of deep social, political and economic change and keeps alive those embodied connections to the past whilst also symbolising his future aims made in the context of the mining strike. His tattoo signifies his feelings about the value of his work which he believes

brings positive meaning to ex-mining communities and at the same time symbolises his ability to add value to himself in the form of professional employment.

Aiden's location in the class system as part of a working-class family that was not directly economically impacted by the mining strike is significant in his ability to live out a value structure and find meaning within his work. His feelings towards what he understands to be the legacy of the mining culture manifests in a different manner to Niall's in that his affinity is much less positive. However, his story emphasises the complex manner in which structures of feelings live on through people and places and how the meaning of acting morally is embedded in consciousness which is itself an interpretive or hermeneutic process. This is an important point phenomenologically because although values are embodied in action, these actions are not independent of the social world but are shaped and influenced by a person's 'lifeworld' (Husserl, 1970). Consciousness is embedded within this interpretative process where subjectivity is 'world disclosing' (Heidegger, 1962). Experience is the way we know the world and it also reveals the world that we know meaning the choices we make are forged through particular social, political, cultural and historical contexts, fields of meaning which both situate and shape embodied action (Merleau-Ponty, 2012).

Culture operates at various layers and levels of social life and embeds and embodies shared values even as these can and do differ between physical and symbolic spheres of social life. Traditions, customs and practices associated with local and national history are part of our lifeworld, and we exist within it, unable to disassociate from the structures and modes of culture that shape our experiences. Consequently, when economic re-organisation is accompanied by swift cultural change and where traditional norms and values are abruptly disrupted and replaced by a rational imposition of a value structure, the subjective nature of working-class experience and the values that underpin workplaces and communities are not only devalued, but the moral ordering that manifests in that experience is also threatened (Strangleman and Roberts, 1999). This produces a sense of alienation and isolation that is reflected in the way participants discussed the culture of their workplaces.

6.6 Neoliberal Values

As discussed in the introductory chapter of this thesis, deindustrialisation in County Durham was forged through wider patterns of neoliberal socio-economic and cultural change. The principles that define neoliberalism are now regarded as the only valid economic strategy in

capitalist economies (Navarro, 2007). The minimisation of state support, deregulation and privatisation, and free market trade policies shape the working lives of participants from labour market terms and conditions to everyday interactions within the workplace. Participants share similar stories of funding cuts and 'profit over people' philosophies that characterise their work environments, particularly in the public sector where many participants are employed, and which reflect the labour market dynamics of County Durham (Ekosgen, 2021). Charlie discussed how austerity measures impacted his experience as a prison officer:

> **Charlie:** *It is challenging, I don't do it anymore. But it is challenging. It used to be a good job, but there was a lot of cuts happened around 2017, 2016 and it kind of changed over the years. But it was a good job, I loved it. I thought it was brilliant. It had its moments, don't get me wrong, but it was a good job.*
>
> **Interviewer:** *And did the cuts mean there was less people on shift?*
>
> **Charlie:** *Oh, a lot less, yeah it halved the workforce which obviously has the inevitable effect, you lose all of that other stuff. And everything just becomes a lot harder. I mean it was always hard, but you had a laugh when you were doing it. It was a good group of people…it is not so fun when you are on your own. No. Not good. I mean there was a lot of like alcoholics as well, especially ones… a lot of stuff with alcoholics, there were a few staff who died in service, like heart attacks. It was quite a tough job yeah.*

Charlie discussed the impact of funding cuts to the Prison Service which not only affected front line services to prisoners and their families but also had a significant detrimental effect on the wellbeing of prison officers. The '*other stuff*' that Charlie refers to is the workplace camaraderie that facilitated the psychological and emotional support that he feels was necessary in a dangerous environment but where funding cuts had eliminated this form of care. Charlie subsequently transferred to an office-based role and his comments on the psychological impact of 'profit over people' philosophies echo the experiences of many other participants in this study who discuss debilitating workplace stress, anxiety and depression.

Unrealistic targets, pressure to work longer hours without pay, consistently having to do more with less and constant change are frequently cited by participants as causing anxiety in the workplace. Steve discussed how his role has changed over twenty-five years as his employer has increasingly embraced neoliberal philosophies:

I think just sharper, more commercial, more performance orientated. So less interested in the individual, more interested in what the individual does for them. So that caring about you as a person and as an individual is kind of reducing, and it is the commerciality or the caring about what you can do for the business, to help the business meet its profit obligations and its performance obligations is kind of coming up…And yeah, and that dynamic is changing. So, in some ways I have come from like let's say a career person who knew my job, very much into like I am just a skilled resource who does stuff. And that lack of purpose is kind of having a bit of a pull on my confidence and my outlook.

Steve's feelings around being 'just a number' are not uncommon amongst the participants in this study and his sense of purposelessness reflects the disorientation and lack of meaning that characterises modern bureaucratic workforces (Graeber, 2018) particularly as frequent change creates uncertainty and insecurity. Because intentionality is conscious engagement (Husserl, 2001) this means that we cannot disconnect ourselves from the reality of work. Rather our consciousness is found within our experience of it. Consequently, participants are unable to disassociate with the manner in which experiences of work manifest and it is almost impossible to disconnect from the ruthless environment that many participants feel characterises their workplaces.

This is exacerbated in situations such as Catherine's where as a carer for a private organisation she is given an allocated amount of time to carry out her care duties. Catherine explained how the allocated time is rarely enough and she regularly makes moral decisions as to whether she remains and gives the person being cared for the time they require or leaves on time knowing she has not given sufficient care. Our conscience is not separate from consciousness and Catherine regularly stays to care for her clients, working many hours of unpaid labour in order to achieve this. There is a disconnect between the deep-rooted lay normative values of care that shape social interactions and the profit driven practices of neoliberal work environments (Crowley and Hodson, 2014). This is of particular concern given that public services are now driven by market led philosophies. Shared moral values are repeatedly challenged in the workplace and participants wrestle with the desire to do what they feel is right, a sense of moral obligation which do not align with the nature of their employment.

Husserl viewed habits as synonymous with meaning in that it is the everyday routines and rituals that embed meaning and value structures into consciousness (Moran, 2011). When

workplace routines do not embed the lay normative value structures of care which underpin relations of intersubjectivity then this can cause stress, disorientation and isolation. If people live as though morality is an abstraction tool and do not live it as a conscious experience, then the interpretation and meaning of morality becomes distorted. Our value structures influence our everyday and longer-term actions. Participants' relationship to a lay normative sense of morality is also made through a neoliberal value system where the marketisation of public services, consumerism and bureaucratisation does shape the way we live together and relate to the world. Brown (2015) highlights how neoliberalism is not just an economic system but a system of governance in which all aspects of social life, particularly areas of life which do not generate profit, are economised. Morality itself has become tradeable as a form of capital in the workplace as multi-national corporations with exploitative employment conditions are able to demonstrate their commitment to a range of causes from climate change to diversity, equality and inclusion, as Catherine's employer does, and yet still employs people on precarious and insecure contracts. Just as the middle-class appropriate aspects of working-class culture to trade as capital within the dominant symbolic system of capitalist exchange, employers such as Catherine's draw on morality as a resource to exchange and as a tool to deflect from their immoral work practices. It is a mode of being which both reflects and conceals the power mechanisms which entrench class inequalities through the facade of preserving morality.

Attempting to live within a neoliberal value system which privileges individualism and consumerism and has commercialised, commodified and changed the meaning of morality from a way of living in the world with others into a form of capital is damaging for participants. However, these experiences do manifest differently amongst participants as class mechanisms shape the dynamics of a neoliberal work environment and often cushion against the worst effects of free market capitalism. Ken is a teacher and discussed his employer's cost-cutting strategies as they attempted to deny numerous pay rises, resulting in him leaving his job to work in a different sector. He explained:

> *The last three years I was there it was denied. To which my response was, okay, well, I'm going to go speak to the Union because I was part of, part of the Union, and every time we went to go speak to the Union, the Union said "no, they can't, they shouldn't be doing this, it's, it's not on" and with backing they always gave it to me, they changed their mind. The head would always say, "oh, well, actually, upon further consideration*

we decided you have met all the criteria and we're going to move you up to the next pay scale." Well, what he really meant was well because they tried it on with me, I went and got the Union backing then we've given it to you, but that was one of the reasons why… I got tired of having to fight with the leadership about giving me something that I worked hard for all year, and I didn't think it was fair.

Ken's situation was not fair; however, the Teacher's Union did step in to advocate on behalf of Ken whereas Veronica's story evidences how all unions do not treat members in an equal manner. Veronica works in a support role in a school. In 2015, Durham County Council cut the pay of some support staff by up to 23% as part of a reform to support staff terms and conditions. She explained how her union did not support her and contrasted her experience to the steel industry strikes that her family supported in 1980:

Veronica: *You know when the steel works was going, and they were like going on strike? Even the kids were involved! The kids were going up marching! But now, no chance! You are on your own.*

Interviewer: *Why do you think that is?*

Veronica: *I don't know, I think it is because…they* [the Union] *have just become weak, I don't know if it is because the bosses have become stronger, but you are just downtrodden. Totally downtrodden. Umm and because I think people took it personally. "You are fighting against us? No, we are not, we are fighting against the big people!" So, if you went on strike oh my goodness! "You mustn't like working here", so you didn't go on strike. There was a lot of people felt like that, "I can't go on strike" because you know they hold it against you…. many a meeting I would voice me opinion, what others are saying as well, and I would say "I don't know whether anybody else would like to say you know do you agree with me?" So, then you lose it. Like I have lost it now, I have lost me voice.*

Veronica and Ken's situations are different in that Ken was able to use his multiple forms of accrued capital and social status to acquire representation from the Teacher's Union to secure his financial reward. Whereas, after Unison negotiated a final pay offer for teaching assistants, Veronica has come to an agreement with her school, and is now working five extra hours a week to retain the cut from her salary which was removed by Durham County Council. Both refer to the competitive and ruthless environment which characterises the education sector,

but gendered class dynamics operate to mark distinctions between how participants experience the neoliberal labour market. Catherine and Veronica are marginalised through the gendered power dynamics that situate their work as care, as feminine, and as low-value whilst the history of the unions and industrial politics as both male dominated and as serving the needs of male dominated industries (Walkerdine and Jimenez, 2012) further embeds this experience of exclusion. The unforgiving nature of the neoliberal work environment is something commented on by many participants across multiple industries and at varying levels of hierarchy. However, gendered class mechanisms shape how value manifests within the labour market, constructions of value which interact with, and shape lay normative relations of intersubjectivity in a complex and mutually reinforcing way.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has evidenced how the domain of work is an embodied moral process where values are of paramount importance. The choices participants make in relation to employment are made in the context of class dynamics and mechanisms which situate and shape the domain of the moral, and also inform the way value is understood and lived out through work. This chapter has explored how class mechanisms operate to ascribe value onto gendered classed bodies such that the moral authority held by the middle-class is manifest in the symbolic representations that give moral legitimacy and value to middle-class bodies and associated modes of labour. This is a complex and contradictory picture. The class dynamics and mechanisms which shape the wider social context of what it means to be engaged in meaningful or valuable work does not translate neatly onto working-class participants whose structures of consciousness are mediated by forms of conscience where a sense of what is morally right is embedded in living a working-class life.

To act morally in work matters to participants, but how this manifests is not straightforward. The work environment is a space of meaning shaped by historical and localised class mechanisms and structures, processes which also work to situate and shape the moral significance of work. These socio-cultural meanings are mediated through lay normative value structures which are also forged through the class processes that continually shape and mould this space of meaning. Heidegger's (1962) concept of Dasein captures these knotty intersections, showing how the temporal and relational nature of being manifests through participants' complex experiences of work and class, relations of subjectivity which manifest through the way participants are thrown into a world of meaning which is always in flux and

is always in the process of being made. In the next chapter of this thesis, I explore how these complex relations of value manifest through the class structures that connect the domain of the moral to the spatial, shaping socio-spatial actions and practices as well as patterns of mobility.

Chapter 7: Moral Spaces

7.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the way participants experience and inhabit place. The policing of boundaries is central to the way class divisions manifest within and between places. This chapter begins by exploring how practices of affective gatekeeping operate across physical and symbolic spaces within the former coalfields of County Durham, maintaining old and creating new class divisions and boundaries. Multi-layered, temporal and relational class processes connect the domain of the moral to the spatial which creates, maintains and sometimes disrupts class mechanisms and structures. This chapter then moves on to consider the complex relationship between morality and consciousness, and how this shapes patterns of mobility. The way participants embody consciousness and construct personhood is not straightforward and is situated in subjective understandings of moral agency and development, a process which shapes action and movement through space, and is also constrained by the class mechanisms that operate to keep the working-class fixed in place.

Finally, this chapter ends with an exploration into the negative reputation of ex-mining villages. Participants are aware of and are in constant dialogue with the way ex-mining villages within the region are symbolically pathologised as lacking in morals and values. How they relate to this positioning is complex and is situated in subjective understandings of value, which are also embedded in the macro-economic and political structures that work to deny class as a structuring force, a process which in turn shapes and moulds places. How participants are located in this space is intertwined with their relationship to power and reflects the agency and established moral authority of the middle-classes. The body is central to how moral authority operates. Working-class bodies are key sites in the struggle for value and are central to the mutually constitutive relationship that co-constructs class and place. Gendered class mechanisms ascribe moral failings onto working-class bodies and the way this limits and shapes movement through space is explored through this chapter.

7.2 Affective Gatekeeping

Participants discussed the multiple processes through which gatekeeping mechanisms operate within ex-mining communities and work to separate villages that are only a few miles apart. The policing of village boundaries manifests in various layers and levels of social life and participants explain how this often begins in childhood. Steve discussed his first experience of

gatekeeping processes which occurred when he moved from Cumbria to an ex-mining village in County Durham as a child:

> *We moved to an area…I don't know how appropriate the word is, but I am going to call it deprivation. You know, so the Clayton place had closed. I can't remember but it employed something ridiculous like 10,000 people or maybe more. You know all of those people without work, massive social crisis in Derwentside, and lots and lots of other issues as knock on from that, you know so very, very much... also I think schools were merged, so lots of people were thrown together, there was a definite rivalry with the school in Slayton kind of one up the hill and the Crofton school down the hill. And you would hope not to go places otherwise you would get beaten up and all that kind of stuff.*

The policing of boundaries through physical violence is commented on by participants who grew up in ex-mining communities across Durham and attended secondary school in the area. Such forms of gatekeeping are evident across the gender binary within this research sample, although how this manifests in participants' narratives is gendered and reflects the complex class mechanisms which situate the body as the fundamental moral signifier in public representations. Working-class female bodies are represented in terms of both excess and lack as moral deficiency is written into patterns of consumerism and consumption (Skeggs, 2005). Male bodies are characterised in similarly disordered terms, but their out-of-control dysfunction is represented through aggression and a lack of personal responsibility, pathologies which are ascribed onto the bodies of working-class boys and young men (Gillies, 2016). It is a symbolic representation which denies and ignores class exclusion and marginalisation, class structures which are highly significant and is evident in how Steve connects physical gatekeeping to the closure of heavy industry in County Durham. His comment reflects the interplay between macro structural forces and everyday micro encounters which is key in understanding and visualising ex-mining communities as spaces of co-construction in the relationship between class and place.

Place is central to the way social life is produced and enacted but it is not a backdrop for it, rather place is part of the co-production of social life (Massey, 2005). To think relationally about how place is made is to understand how the particular specificities which are unique to certain places are actually produced from multiple sites of connections and disconnections - globally and locally - and how relationships between people who are not connected physically

can make places what they are. The specificities of ex-mining communities are embedded in local and global changes that are interdependent such that places are produced and shaped by the relationship between micro and macro ideologies and processes. We can see this clearly in the political and economic history of County Durham where the effects of a deregulated global market and the associated nationwide processes of deindustrialisation manifested in national industrial action throughout the 1980s, with the miners' strike of 1984/85 a defining moment. However, collective resistance was not consistent across place and the strikes actively fostered division and tensions as well as unity. Niall recalls his experience of boundary making and gatekeeping processes within the context of the miners' strike:

> *The fact is that the strike politicised my family in ways that would never, would never have happened before. And so that was the point which, I mean, I was born during the strikes, obviously no direct memory, but I remember growing up thinking that, like me mam and dad's and me family were part of like the underground like you know? Like the resistance almost. That you were careful who you, who you said, you were careful who you said what to out of the estate. Because we lived in Durham, we didn't live in a pit village and the support for the strike wasn't necessarily a foregone conclusion in areas where, that weren't pit villages you know? I don't know what Challam was like but in North West Durham, the pits had closed in the 70s and so people who used to go out and campaign and fundraise during the strike in Colden and Shepley would be met with hostility. "It's just your turn, our pits are closed, it's your turn now". So that's like, so it wasn't necessarily like a straightforward proposition of yes, if you were from Durham and from a mining community that you would have sympathy for the strike and striking miners. So, in Durham growing up as I say we felt very much like you know that we were part of the sort of margins and sort of almost like growing up in the resistance. So, I think that shapes you. I think, you know, distrust of the state will shape you.*

Niall's comment evidences the relational nature of place as local forms of resistance and division formed in the context of global macro-economic change. The socio-spatial dynamics of the ex-mining villages in County Durham reflect how global and local networks are entangled with capitalist development in complex and contradictory ways as the relations of social life mould and shape the direction of macro-economic policy through micro interactions

and relationships (Amin, 2005). Spaces are sites of co-construction where place is a process which is constantly moving and changing, not static but always being made and reshaped, often in the context of global power relations as local futures are shaped by political thinking, but never in a one directional manner as people within places contest and challenge capitalist forces and neoliberal ideology. However, lines of separation are not clear and Niall's story evidences how divisions within and between mining communities are complex and contradictory but are also temporal in nature as class processes are not lost to history but manifest across time and space, creating new forms of class division.

Being is our field of perception. Subjectivity is how we know the world and we engage in the world through intentional consciousness which is both a relational and temporal experience (Heidegger, 1962). We are thrown into a world of meaning and we are actively engaged in this world intentionally (Merleau-Ponty, 2012), which means that Dasein manifests for Niall in the way that he embodies historical macro structural change within his present experience. Niall emphasises distrust as a key mechanism defining his field of perception. He references '*the state*' as the driving force behind processes of deindustrialisation but also highlights how this manifests as intricate divisions between places. His frame of reference is embedded in the structure of feeling (Williams, 1977) that connects the past to the present and we can think of space and time as not confined to history but as lived out through consciousness. The significance of these divisions and how they structure local relationships past, and present, are evident throughout many other participants' discussions of the formation and maintenance of boundaries. Aiden is a community worker and discusses his understanding of the way current gatekeeping processes within ex-mining communities are embedded in historical divisions:

> *Say if you're from Parkway and you got involved in something and you had to leave the area, you can't go back. You're not accepted back. So, say somebody was from say Parkway and they come here, they can't go back to Parkway for whatever reasons - whether it's the nature of the crime, or shame, or family won't accept it. You can't go back to where you're from, but you won't be accepted in another village because you're from another area in Durham. I can remember when growing up, this like - there's so many villages close together that the lads older than me so like Sadmere, Parkway, Manly - if anybody stepped into any of those villages they just got beaten up. It was ridiculous. It was like this whole, I don't know what you call it cave man thing, and I can*

remember being in Durham City centre with friends like at 15 and these gangs coming up to us and they were from Parkway, and we nearly got beaten up and then as I grew, I heard like, Parkway, Manly, they all do it, and you just think wow. Say there's like 20 villages in Durham and it's the sole mentality of like you're not from here. So now it's like you're not from here so you're not moving in whereas then it was like we'll beat you up to let you know you're not coming in. And you know like you hear about it at football matches but in villages we will go as far as to beat you up to let you know that this is our village.

This cannot be read solely as working-class hostility to 'outsiders' which characterises the 'left-behind' narrative embedded in media discourse around Brexit and supports the myth of working-class communities as regressive and outdated. Aiden's observations must be understood as grounded in the affective histories (Walkerdine, 2016) that co-produce place.

Emotions which are produced in relationship to mass scale rapid deindustrialisation and the loss of material security and modes of culture which have sustained communities over time and across place are embodied as fear and anxiety that manifests temporally and spatially in new generations. Interpreting Aiden's narrative in this way is to challenge governance and policy responses to structural inequalities which reframes emotions produced in the context of alienation and disadvantage as vulnerabilities that must be overcome in order to engage in a market driven economy. Such therapeutic approaches do very little to address issues of social injustice, but instead dislocate the problem of inequality from neoliberal classed structures, reframing class divisions as individual weakness, a method which further ingrains class inequalities (Ecclestone and Brunila, 2015). To see Aiden's narrative of gatekeeping through the lens of stigma and exclusion is to understand loss as not lost and confined to the past but as the affective dimensions of history lived out in present consciousness and through everyday actions and interactions, shaping gatekeeping processes and patterns of mobility.

Understanding affective histories phenomenologically is to view social histories through a multi-layered lens, recognising how the past and present are intertwined temporally and relationally, as long-standing macro global neoliberal processes continue to shape micro interactions within ex-mining communities. Aiden also discussed how current gatekeeping actions and practices are rooted in the distrust that manifested in the context of large-scale deindustrialisation almost forty years ago:

Aiden: *Let's be honest they're not really facing their own issues because they're keeping them all hidden and they're not accepting of anybody who... it's almost like there's some sort of unwritten rule of management going round that all these eyes are watching who's allowed in the village or not.*

Interviewer*: Why do you think that is?*

Aiden*: I think it's fear of new people, I think it's a fear of change, I think it's a fear of people finding out whats really going on in these communities. So, like say if somebody from here who lived in a different part of Durham moved there and they became friends with somebody who lived there and they were both drug users, it's like "Oh, no no no", do you know what I mean? It's like, "we don't have drug users here and we didn't have drugs here until that person came here." When you have, it's just they've found somebody to use with. So yeah, I think it's a complete denial. And I've got to be honest because I was brought up in a mining village, Sadmere? The next one up from Parkway? I think people are holding…. like I grew up in Sadmere and I lived through the miners' strike, and I got what community means. Positively, because people had to come together, obviously it was a negative experience but positive because I had to take food and shoes and things to the school and it made us think about community and how good it is and everybody looks after each other and I think that there's some sort of romance that by keeping, by not letting anybody in, you're holding onto that pit mentality and that community spirit but it's not there. Well, I don't mean that in like a negative way, but it isn't, it's like a new world for these villages but they are holding onto that romance for a long time for…well, I don't know when the last pit closed round here but they've held onto it for about 20 years haven't they? Even the new wave of families coming in are carrying on that, you know they are still talking about the time we could leave our doors open and that sort of stuff, but it's gone. It's really gone.*

Aiden situates fear resulting from a loss of stability and security as the primary motivation in the production of actions and practices that build symbolic walls around communities. Walkerdine (2015) argues that the effects of intergenerational class trauma elicits an embodied fear of destruction and loss, which is transmitted across generations and can manifest as resistance to change. It is a way of engaging with cumulative intergenerational class trauma beyond the pathologically deterministic 'cycle of poverty' discourse that underpins UK social exclusion strategy (Kennedy, 2005; Spicer, 2021), policies which erase

class mechanisms whilst simultaneously pathologising the working-class as immoral. Aiden's comments reflect the anxiety around risk and threat which manifests as affective gatekeeping and persists through the practices of people who have no direct connection to the strike. To think through this phenomenologically is to recognise historical trauma as an intergenerational active and conscious experience lived out through the body and personified in Dasein.

Aiden's narrative evidences how macro political structures are embodied in current experiences and manifest not only within social relationships, but at the most intimate level of analysis with the active body as the site through which class dynamics are lived out. Aiden's experience reflects Merleau-Ponty's (2012) understanding of Husserl's (1970) concept of the 'lifeworld' where social relationships are forged through and not produced within our environment. They are embodied in Dasein as active and continuous formations of time and space where past, present and future are not separate entities but merge to create conscious experience. These social spaces and our existence in them are how we find ourselves in a world already formed and also in the constant process of being reformed. Heidegger (1962) utilises the term 'throwness' to demonstrate the way we are actively thrust into this world already infused with meaning. However, meaning is multi-layered and while the subjectivities of participants are embedded in affective histories, they are also formed in dialogue with the wider lay normative values that unify people across time and space and are acted out through patterns of consciousness which are orientated towards the future. In this sense, we can think of consciousness as inherently mobile.

7.3 Moral Movement

What it means to view the body as the site of moral experience is entangled in the actions and practices that are lived out in the context of 'situated freedom' and are embedded in the struggle for value, which is fundamental to patterns of mobility and the co-construction of class and place. Merleau-Ponty (2012) considers 'situated freedom' to be the way we relate consciously to the world as a place already constituted and also as a place in the process of being made. Consciousness is embedded in this experience of time as an affective relationship where patterns of mobility are interwoven into local forms of boundary making. Grant explained how this manifested in his family relationships when he considered leaving his village to attend university:

I was thinking of going to university, we had relatives saying, "oh you don't want to be mixing with those kind of folks?" I was like "why? What are you talking about?" I just find I was always in this "why? What is going on?" And it is like, "you need to get yourself a trade!" And I was like, "yeah, but I want to do this." It was like, "no, you need to know how to wire a plug." I was like "I know how to wire a plug." It was like "you need to be able to plumb somebody's house for them"…And it was like…it was like…if you were working-class, you would have to stay working-class, you couldn't be a traitor to your class by wanting to improve or change or do anything that wasn't what they do or their parents did or something. And it was like this unwritten kind of rule like "what do you mean you are thinking of leaving Clayton to go to university?" Or if you wanted to go to college, if you wanted to go to the college in Durham, it was like "why do you want to go to the college there? There is one here!" It is very sort of insular kind of guarded, don't trust the world outside kind of thing.

Grant's narrative reflects the 'getting out' philosophy that underpins much political discourse around social mobility, and the rejection and animosity circulating within his relationship with is family demonstrates the multi-faceted and contradictory ways in which class dynamics are lived out within working-class communities. Grant understands 'improvement' in terms of leaving the physical and symbolic spaces in which he situates his working-class upbringing. He invokes notions of regression to signify that his family's relationship to working-class culture is one of stagnation, and he understands their attempt to draw boundaries as a reflection of their intolerance. Like Aiden, Grant situates distrust as a central mechanism in the formation of boundaries, but his relationship to place is one of hostility towards his family and community. This is not unusual and disidentification with a classed identity frequently involves the creation of distance between the respectable and the immoral working-class, boundaries which are also drawn within working-class communities (Skeggs, 1997; Shildrick and MacDonald, 2013).

Class inequalities are written into subjectivity because class mechanisms work at the level of the symbolic and ascribe pathology onto working-class bodies, shaping understandings and experiences of how a working-class body occupies and moves through space (Lawler, 1999). As Kuhn (1995) explains, to know that you are positioned as working-class, is to also recognise your social position as a person with little value. Class distinctions are both constructed through and deeply felt at the level of the self which can go some way to explaining why Grant

frames narratives of lack and decline as an intrinsic element of his family's personalities. Grant reproduces forms of middle-class identity making in how he keeps his family fixed in place as he constructs distance from them, physically but also culturally and symbolically as he accesses higher education. However, the way in which political and economic insecurity manifests within intimate family relationships is not straightforward. To understand Grant's hostility towards his family through a phenomenological lens involves recognising the dynamic relationship between morality and temporality in the formation of socio-spatial boundary making.

From a phenomenological position, consciousness is always intentional, and we are always orientated towards or actively engaged in the world, and directed towards objects and experiences, meaning the future is always embedded in present action and intent. This is Heidegger's (1962) notion of primordial guilt where to be guilty is to be lacking and to lack is to recognise death, or a future that is not endless. Authenticity manifests here as a mode of being which recognises 'being towards death' where to be authentic is less about sincerity but rather, an awareness of how the future manifests as different possibilities where our desires can manifest. Merleau-Ponty (2012) carves a distinction between 'act intents' and 'operative intents' with operative intents being those intentions which are automatic, and which require less reflexivity than intentions which we actively think about. Automatic tendencies can be understood in terms of desires, or objects and activities that we are drawn to, and which we are attracted to involuntarily. However, what we desire is also inextricably bound up with relations of macro inequalities because the structures that have shaped society are written into subjectivity as it is lived through an active embodied process. The way patterns of inequality are mapped onto the body and are acted out with intent is evident in the work of critical scholars across multiple disciplines who utilise operative intentionality as a way to understand embodied intentional experience through the constraints of exploitative social structures, (see McWeeney, 2019 for an overview). At the same time, our desires are also informed by deep rooted ethical and moral structures which are also intertwined with intent and the way consciousness is orientated towards the future.

While Grant's desire to 'get out' can be understood in terms of the class mechanisms which ascribe pathology onto working-class communities, how he makes sense of his desires and future intent in the context of lay normative constructions of morality is significant here. Grant's desires for the future are embedded in his understanding of what it means to live a

fulfilling life. He speaks of wanting to become independent, to meet new people and to develop skills in his particular area of interest. We can interpret this through a classic 'coming of age' tale; a moral narrative which is reflected in stories from classic fairy tales to modern dramas. Grant's comment can be viewed in terms of the way he hopes to forge his own story and reflects the narrative unities that connect our personal desires to the moral development that we recognise through the social stories of others (Macintyre, 2016). The resources that we draw upon to guide our actions and decisions are varied but they are co-authored through the way we embed relations of intersubjectivity into individual practices. Grant's desires can be viewed in terms of the phenomenological perspective of authenticity (Heidegger, 1962) where an understanding of self-development is orientated towards the future, a space of meaning which is cross cultural and intergenerational, transcending time and space. Future hopes and desires are also reflected in the narratives of other participants, although if and how desires are realised during this life stage varies enormously, and is entangled in the class dynamics and mechanisms which routinely keep the working-classes fixed in place.

Grant views his family as attempting to restrict his mobility during what he perceived to be the time to escape from home and develop his independent self. For other participants, to escape from place is also to escape from the classed structures that constrain future desires and goals, particularly during significant life stages. Niall explained how his brother felt the need to move away from his hometown to regain control over his future at a time of movement into adulthood:

> *I feel like you know, for me brother he wanted to escape and get away, for me it was always the idea that you know, having that choice of almost like being able to sort of dip your toe and make a choice between like being away and being and you know sort of following in errr…You know? Yeah, I guess it's that thing - that feeling of a bit more agency around like the choices you make in your life, whereas I think with, with me eldest brother... I think he just, his choice was you either get out or you, you sort of fall back into the traps that you're errr… you know, you fall into the same patterns as before.*

Place is perceived as risky and dangerous here, but it is also constructed as a danger to the self and as a source of deviance that can pull Niall's brother into immoral behaviours. Place is conceptualised as somewhere which can trap. The boundaries that are built in the context of socioeconomic deprivation and exclusion are situated in the deeply complex psychosocial

classed mechanisms that constitute 'trap life', where socio-economically marginalised men can become trapped in patterns of criminal behaviour (Reid, 2023). There is not scope here to map out the vast theorising of the causes of criminality, but to acknowledge how crime in working-class communities is not a simple process of cause and effect but is bound up in the everyday relations of work, family and community which are also situated in the macro political and economic structures that shape lives (Currie, 1985) is to understand how Niall's brother connects the creation of physical and symbolic boundaries to the protection of the self. This protection manifests in local forms of boundary making and evidences the complexities involved in how participants relate to the constraints of their lives. Niall's narrative evidences how escape from place is rooted in immediate concerns for the future and is situated in the everyday practical processes of negotiating a life in the context of class constraints (Bottero, 2019) where consciousness is always directed towards the future, even as this temporal orientation is simultaneously embedded in constraints of the past.

Notions of escape are complex. They are intertwined with the desire for agency and are also deeply embedded in the way socio-spatial patterns of class inequality are mapped onto the relationship between bodies and place. Traditional labour market 'escape routes' for working-class young men are limited by the dominance of service sector employment and impact the way boys and young men negotiate classed constructions of masculinity (McDowell, 2002, 2008), a process which is also entangled in the coming-of-age moral development that many participants discuss in their narratives. Agency is also refused to the working-classes through symbolic spaces as institutions who have political authority control the discourse around moral deviance and play a key role in shaping public perceptions of what it means to be immoral (Hall, 1978). Education is still perceived as a key escape route for many participants, although movement through this route is also constrained by gendered class mechanisms. Tracey reflected on her experience of interviewing for a place at Durham University:

> **Tracey:** *When I was interviewed, they challenged us - why on earth I had gone to Slayton School?*
>
> **Interviewer:** *Did they?*
>
> **Tracey:** *Uh huh and I got quite upset at that, and I said I was brought up there, that was my local school. And I am who I am. You know?*
>
> **Interviewer:** *What kinds of things were they challenging you about?*

> **Tracey:** *Just because…if I wanted sort of a career and that, there were better schools, probably what me mam thought. So, why did I stay there? You know, but I just said it was me local school, what they were offering I felt comfortable with the teachers, because they were very nurturing.*

Tracey's personal relationships keep her embedded in her community. This is not unusual and the emotional connections constructed through place are significant in shaping the decisions of working-class people to remain in their local communities (Friedman, 2016). However, the negative reputation of Tracey's secondary school invokes questions around value as the interviewers at the University implied that she should have actively sought out a different school in another location. Her interaction with the interviewer can be analysed two-fold. Firstly, it evidences how the working-classes are caught in a double bind. Working-class women are routinely subjected to the moral authority of the middle-classes who control the narrative around who and where has value, and yet when attempts are made to 'improve', this same authorising narrative is used as evidence that Tracey is exactly who they position her to be, and to fix her in place.

Secondly, it reveals how subjectivity itself is classed (Skeggs, 1997). Tracey is aware she is being misrecognised and has to prove her value in this encounter. She knows that she must justify and defend herself to the interviewers. Her understanding and explanation of herself is not an individualised story and her coming of age narrative is firmly in dialogue with the social value attached to what it means to have attended Slayton school. She cannot help but act out her lack of value in this interaction as she responds to both the judgement and her social positioning. This means Tracey's subjectivity is a defensive one which is not individualised but is in dialogue with public constructions of value where in this space what she values (being 'comfortable') does not convert into capital; it is not recognised as a legitimate form of value. Crucially, it is the middle-class who control the discourse around which forms of value can be converted into capital and which facilitates movement through space.

Working-class women are represented as embodying a pathological lack of morals and values, a judgement which connects consciousness to the way working-class women occupy space. The working-class women in this sample are aware of how they are positioned and consequently their experience of Dasein is entangled in the complex relationship between consciousness and shame. Scheff (2003) views shame as a 'master emotion' because of the

way it signifies moral failure. He argues that shame operates as a tool to repress feelings of shame as people seek to hide shame from themselves and from others. To think of shame phenomenologically is to recognise Tracey's consciousness through self-consciousness in this encounter. Her construction of the self is deeply embedded in how working-class women are represented as embodying pathological immorality. Her narrative demonstrates how she is continuously in dialogue with the judging other, in real or imagined encounters, and this self-consciousness is deeply tied to how she occupies and takes up space.

Class mechanisms are interwoven into structures of consciousness, they are integral to constructions of the self and the process through which subjectivity is known, and as such they shape socio-spatial dynamics. These patterns of mobility are entangled in the complex manner in which morality is understood as a space of meaning. The moral space is the relations of care that manifest through practices of intersubjectivity which develop over time as a temporal and relational mode of being, a space of meaning which participants understand through their affective histories. The domain of the moral also manifests in the future, as participants consider modes of possibility and potential ways of being in the world. These socio-spatial processes are forged through the symbolic representations and negative reputations of the ex-mining villages as 'left behind', as well as the class mechanisms and dynamics which shape how participants are situated in this moral space.

7.4 Pathology of Place

The intricate and mutually constitutive relationship that class has to place is lived out through consciousness, in everyday interactions and practices within the multi-layered spaces that constitute working-class communities. These spaces are infused with the dynamic interplay between the symbolic and the material, as well as the spatial and the social, as complex class mechanisms shape the lives of participants and connects the co-construction of class and place to the domain of the moral. Time is lived spatially as participants' patterns of mobility are lived out in the context of class narratives where past social stories shape present actions and futures. Participants are keenly aware of the social status of ex-mining villages and how these places are seen to reflect a lack of morals and values in the people who reside there. Such villages are considered to have 'a reputation'. Multiple participants use this phrase to describe many ex-mining villages and is used without qualification. It is implicit that the reputation is a negative one, although it is often less clear to participants how this manifests, as the social stories shared locally about such places often betray the reality. Rachel explained

how she was reluctant to move into an ex-mining village because of its local status as having 'a reputation':

> **Rachel:** *I suppose the experience of when we lived in Lordon – me husband's sort of from Leicester area and I'm obviously from just down the road, but a few of our friends who lived locally did warn us not to go into the local pubs at Lordon. I think Lordon's a bit like Parkway where it is sort of cut off from everywhere else. So, I mean, I have had friends who are not from Durham* [city] *who have gone into the local pubs and said, they're very nice and very friendly. And so, it was never a thing we were put off doing whereas when we lived at Lordon I was a little bit put off from calling into the local pubs, just worried how they would be.*
>
> **Interviewer**: *What was Lordon like as a place to live?*
>
> **Rachel:** *I think, yeah, me husband rented there first - when he first moved in Durham, he rented a house there. And so, we lived together in a rented place there and I think because the houses were so reasonably priced that's where we bought our first house, and I was pleasantly surprised. So, if me husband hadn't of rented there first, I don't think I would have bought there just based on sort of things I'd heard about it growing up. But I really liked Lordon. I can't even think what it would have like been - just the idea of it! I know when Tom said, when we first lived in Lordon I was like, I don't know, just - I can't think of what exactly I heard about it. I just thought, I think I had a bit of a negative view about it. But then since I lived there meself. Yeah, we probably - if the schools had of been better in the area we probably would have stuck there.*

Rachel could not specify why she had such a negative view of Lordon, nor could she clarify what elements of the village she associated with such negativity. Rachel, like some other participants, found life in an ex-mining community to have many positive features and discussed how she did not find Lordon to be deserving of its reputation. Her positive experience of living in Lordon was not enough to keep her rooted in the village as her desire to find a 'good' school was a driving force in her decision to move away. Rachel did not use her own experience of the local schools in Lordon to make this choice. Rather, as discussed in chapter four, the reputation of local schools featured heavily in her narrative. The positive

local reputation of the schools closer to the City of Durham was sufficient to drive her move away from Lordon, despite not visiting such schools herself.

Stories that are told about places speak from history and from a place of power such that they also define the narrative of the present in the way they shape social interactions and in Rachel's case, patterns of mobility. Rachel was reluctant to move to Lordon, and was deterred from entering some social spaces in the village, particularly local pubs. Such is the dominance of stories that are told within a framework of power that some narratives can become so intrinsic to a place and can be told, and retold, by those who did not directly experience it (Bruner and Gorfain, 1984). Narratives are told about ex-mining villages which are simultaneously embedded and detached from the social and economic effects of deindustrialisation. Processes of symbolic violence work to recast structural change as personal failings and this leaves ex-mining villages eclipsed by the immense shadow of unresolved effects of deindustrialisation, but strangely also disconnected from such processes so that people like Rachel cannot fully comprehend what makes a place so tarnished but yet equally knows it to be the case.

Gordon (2008) frames these lingering and unresolved structural power relationships as 'hauntings' which cast historical ghosts over present places and in interactions that occur within affected spaces. They are ghostly because they cannot be firmly grasped. Class is a process of haunting because it is rendered obsolete and yet still class dynamics structure everyday interactions and socio spatial patterns. Class haunts the ex-mining villages in County Durham in the way that residents deny the concept of class whilst simultaneously negotiating a classed life. Almost all of the participants reject the relevance of class, and class is frequently denied by participants as existing at all. Its multiple contradictions are used as evidence of its irrelevance. Ken explained:

> *I mean we live in an old miner's terrace, you know, in a pit village in County Durham, which you would perceive everybody to be working-class. But I'd probably say most people on the street are middle-class just by, you know, just by the cars they drive, the kind of jobs that they do. I mean, there's an awful lot of people on the street here, they actually work for Durham University, or they work in education, and you know there's another teacher on the street so there is, there's quite a lot of people who are middle-class, but they're living in, you know all the type of houses that you normally would say*

"Oh everybody living on that streets working-class cos they're in old miners terraces" but that doesn't seem to work anymore.

Ken refers to professional occupations as middle-class but points to what he views as contradictory in that middle-class people are inhabiting what is perceived to be working-class housing: terraced cottages built for miners within a former mining community. The idea that it is difficult to conceptualise what social class is because of the way markers of class such as housing, employment and consumer goods collide in different spaces is a prominent theme throughout the interviews. However, ambivalence about what class is does not mean that people's lives are not lived through class relations, nor does it mean that participants do not understand class in their own way.

Despite the ambiguity surrounding class, as earlier research has found (Payne and Grew, 2005), participants do engage with class through what they understand class to mean, and this is often found in indirect discourse rather than in overt discussions of what conceptualises class. Participants overwhelmingly rejected class as an explicit identity or way of understanding their lives, yet they were keenly aware of class markers, the different values afforded to these class signifiers, and how this positioned them within a social structure. There is a wealth of examples which demonstrate how class is recognised through the relationship between the symbolic, the material and the spatial within this research. However, what is significant in the context of classed socio-spatial dynamics is the way participants understand class though the reputation of place. Harvey situated his hometown in the context of the local status of other mining villages:

I think it gets a bad rep by the people in it. Because maybe they haven't been to the likes of Sage Hill or Roddam, so I think if you were to compare it without sounding elitist about it, Litton is a bit of a better place. But I would say it has got its rough areas, Litton. And I think coming from me personally, I think where me mam and dad's house is or where I grew up, it was a quite nice area. So, again I was a bit blindsided by all the other areas of it. So, I think, I think it is a nice area, it is a nice place. But it purely depends on whereabouts you lived because if you go to the likes of Hermont or Stoneville which is like the richer areas, it's absolutely gorgeous, I have got to admit that now. And if you go to the likes of Marlton or something like that, which is just round the corner from here, you wouldn't want to be caught there at night, which is what I am trying to say, because it is quite rough. So, I think it is a bit mixed.

Class is symbolised through place in Harvey's narrative because what it means to be from Marlton is to be 'rough'. The value attached to various places is intertwined with the value of the people who reside there, and this occurs at the most specific level of analysis as Harvey demonstrates when he creates lines of separation between the houses on his street:

> *So, we were at the top of East Street, which is again, the top of East Street is very separate from East Street itself which is very rough. There is actually like a few drug busts going on down there like quite often. But at the top of East Street, it is actually quite nice and that is where we were. And we were away from all that, and we didn't really hear anything round the house or stuff.*

The significance of these intricate lines of separation is in the way they operate as local socio-spatial classed divisions. Class is not explicitly acknowledged but it is implicit in the way Harvey draws boundaries of inclusion and exclusion to signify that he lives in a 'better' part of his street and in a reputable part of the village. What it means to live in the wrong part of the village is not only to inhabit this space, but it is also to have a self that is marked out as wrong. Place is a marker of who you are, and place-based judgements are deeply entangled with judgements around moral behaviours, as Steve explained:

> *You know there are parts of the town… like I say, like every part of most towns there are areas which are less…what am I trying to say? Let's just say struggle, struggle more. I am not trying to be positionist with any of this. So, I guess the estates have a bad reputation in terms of an area of deprivation…and yeah people associate kind of that and the Friday night and Saturday night drunken fighting and police flipping things up in the marketplace, that gives it a reputation of being…being a little bit rough. Interesting that was a remark that someone threw at me probably five years ago now.*

Steve can recall a barbed comment from five years ago because to be judged as being from somewhere associated with moral deficiency is to be judged as inhabiting that symbolic space. The label 'rough' induces shame and inadequacy but the erasing of the political significance of class means there is no language in which to situate this label. There is only pathology. To be judged as being from somewhere with a 'reputation' is to inhabit the ascription of pathological immorality.

Negative reputations are entangled in the 'territorial stigmatisation' (Wacquant, 1993) of economically and socially marginalised places and are mediated through the narratives of lack

and decline that shape both national and local public policy and the way these social stories are retold within local spaces (Wacquant, 2008). Territorial stigmatisation is concerned with how place-based stigma is attached to people who are tainted by their association with marginalised places. However, the relationship between people and place is not clear cut and class mechanisms play a crucial role in the way place-based stigma is associated with people who live in ex-mining communities. Who is defined by these labels is embedded in the gendered class dynamics which shape the ability of participants to negotiate and take up space. Ken moved to County Durham from the Midlands fifteen years ago and lives in Sadmere, an ex-mining village which has a historical local reputation associated with the illicit drugs market. He discussed how he is not defined by its reputation:

> **Ken:** *The village used to have a bit of a reputation as there being a lot of heroin, heroin users in the village. But I don't think, I don't think that that's really justified anymore. I mean, obviously, there probably will be a few and just like it will be in any village, but generally I think the community spirit is, you know, pretty good, people will help each other out.*
>
> **Interviewer:** *It's interesting what you said there about reputation. How did you find out about the reputation of the villages?*
>
> **Ken:** *Yeah, sometimes people would say, you know, don't go into this pub in Durham, or you don't want to hang around in this place too much, but in my own personal opinion from some of the places that I've seen and the places I've been around the world, I don't have any worries or fears about walking into any establishment anywhere. I'll just walk in and be civil to people and if they are not civil back to me, then they're the ones that've got an issue and, you know, I'll quietly leave but I won't not go in somewhere just because someone heard a rumour or someone's just spreading their opinion and trying to force their opinion on me. I'll make up my own decisions. I don't like to run off you know, other people's decisions.*

Ken's educational qualifications, professional work history, and middle-class connections affords him the status and power to control his economic outcome and he also has the economic, cultural and social capital to control his own narrative such that he can live in the village and still circumvent the associations of what it means to be from Sadmere. In contrast, other participants who carry what it means to be working-class on their bodies are unable to

move through space in the same way. Tracey explained how her accent marked her out as not belonging in city centre spaces when she attended Durham University:

> **Tracey:** *The people at Durham Uni, a lot of them were from other areas, who were very stuck up and not nice. And what I found not nice was that I was from that area, and I got challenged as if I shouldn't be there, the university in my area, because of me accent. Because of…you know…there wasn't many people at university, at Durham University from our area, there were only a couple of us. Yeah, and they…I felt they looked down on you a bit. Not the staff, the other people at the university.*
>
> **Interviewer:** *In what way did that come across?*
>
> **Tracey:** *Well, I remember one time waiting to go in to like a club and…I was waiting, and it was student night. And there was me and me couple of friends, and one was like from Leeds. But I think that northern thing we related. And there were these lads in at student night, "what are yous doing here?" I says, "I'm a student." He says, "I don't think so". I says, "yes, I am!". And because I had an accent, they would challenge you, it could get quite hostile actually. You know and they would keep themselves in their clique, they wouldn't talk to you.*

Class dynamics situate Durham University outside of the narrative of lack and decline which characterises the ex-mining villages that are located only a few miles away. However, the meaning and significance of social spaces are not always tied to place in a straightforward manner and Tracey cannot avoid her ascribed reputation when she moves into city spaces, despite acquiring various forms of capital. Tracey's accent marks her out as local and signifies that she is out of place in an environment which she classes as 'home', but which operates symbolically as a place of exclusion for the working-classes. Class is worn on the body and how deficiency is ascribed onto bodies is reflected in Tracey's memory of the fleeting interaction where her body gives her away as being out of place, a process cemented by an accent which operates as a cultural signifier of working-class pathology.

The bodies of working-class women are the sites where moral authority is most deeply coded, and the ascription of disgust and worthlessness reflects the power of the middle-classes in their ability to judge and symbolically devalue working-class personhood (Skeggs, 2005). Tracey is judged and challenged on sight as not belonging. Her accent works as secondary confirmation that she is out of place, and she is unable to negotiate belonging in the same

way as Ken. However, both Ken and Tracey explicitly reject class as a relevant concept. This leaves Tracey without the context in which to situate such interactions and experiences and lacking a language in which to make sense of the power dynamics which operate to fix her in place, although she is painfully aware of what it means to be marked out as not belonging. Twenty years on from this experience and having progressed to a senior role within the education sector, Tracey is still aware of the significance of her accent. She discussed the way she uses vocabulary and accent to negotiate space:

Tracey: *It depends where you are you know? how you speak. But if I have to speak at conferences or meetings, you become a bit more…you use the standard, you know the official English words. I try and lose me dialect a bit, which I shouldn't…to cater for wherever you are.*

Interviewer: *Why do you try and do that do you think?*

Tracey: *I think what happened was when I first came here the manager at the time said to watch me dialect because sometimes in public speaking and things you have got to lose that. And I always remember that. And also going to Durham University, how people challenge you because of your dialect as if you shouldn't be there. And really, I should be proud of it, because me mam and dad wouldn't want me to change who I was. But a part of you feels you do sometimes because of experiences.*

For the vast majority of participants, the notion that you could be a highly paid manual labourer or professionally employed but living in an ex-mining community is evidence that there is no clear set of characteristics which imply belonging to a particular social class. However, Tracey's situation is obscured by what is unspoken; the class dynamics that simultaneously erase and entrench class divisions. Many participants strongly indicate that because it is impossible to define a working-class or a middle-class person then consequently there is no such concept of class. However, Ken's story and the narratives of other participants demonstrates that people are not working-class because of class markers such as poor schooling, housing status and precarious employment. Rather they live those experiences because of their relationship to processes of class categorisation and classification. They are located in and positioned by their relationship to power.

Ken living in an ex-mining village does not render the category of 'working-class' useless as most participants articulated, rather his housing status is evidence of the agency of the middle-classes. His multiple forms of capital enable him to choose to live in a terraced house

in a village with a reputation as 'rough' and to also avoid the association of what it means to live there. He is physically present in the village yet is symbolically absent and this enables him to talk about the poor behaviours of people from these villages without shame because he knows paradoxically that despite living in Sadmere he is not associated with it. Ken's ability to control the narrative allows him to declare that there is no such concept as class. However, his experience as a professional living in a terraced house does not render class invisible as he believes it does. It instead supports the mechanisms that maintain class divisions, deepening the symbolic divide across and within the ex-mining communities. This is why markers of class such as housing and consumer goods are not adequate in defining class or understanding how class operates, although almost all of the participants in this research perceive class in this way. It also evidences why the seemingly subtle difference between living in an ex-mining village and being from one is so important, a process of moral distinction which is critical in the formation and maintenance of socio-spatial classed boundaries. It is a pattern of class categorisation and classificatory processes that is played out in the way responses to the Brexit referendum mediates social relationships within community spaces.

7.5 Belonging after Brexit

Participants were very conscious of the immoral connotations associated with the Brexit leave vote. They were aware of how the North East of England, and the ex-mining villages in particular, are symbolically represented in degenerative terms and are positioned within media and political discourse as lacking in the morals and values required to be a progressive and modern citizen. How participants respond to this devaluation is a complex picture and deeply embedded in the class mechanisms which mobilise the narrative of 'left-behind' people and places. The vast majority of participants were aware of the positive moral capital associated with voting remain in the Brexit referendum. The reason Brexit is significant to participants is not only because discourses around the vote are deeply entangled with lay normative concerns about how we treat other people (Sayer, 2005), but because the threat of ostracisation from peer groups is very powerful. Harvey discussed how he censored his opinions about Brexit due to the connotations of voting leave with being racist and regressive. He explained:

> *I would go out on a night on a Friday…my friends were quite political and it was "how could anyone vote leave?" and I am pretty sure that a lot of other people voted leave as well, and they kept quiet for the sake of being ashamed. Which is exactly the wrong*

thing to do when I look back at it now. Because if you are hostile towards someone who has got a different view to you - that just pushes them to a more hostile place. So…whenever someone has confided to me, saying "oh I voted leave, I am a bit ashamed". It is like "oh I did as well mate, I was lied to. Let's have a chat about it". Looking back now I disagree with a lot of things that leave stood for…and I would probably consider meself a remainer, even though we have left the EU, but I can have quite a good conversation with someone who is a hardcore Brexiteer because I am not hostile towards them, and they kind of trust us with it. And a lot of people have been quite shocked in…how I am able to…be quite…what is the word? Respectful of their political belief. Whereas a lot of people my age aren't like that, they are just quite anyone who is not like you is an enemy. And…yeah when it came up in my friendship groups, anyone who voted Brexit? They were dead to them.

Harvey explained how in his peer group those who voted leave in the Brexit referendum were ostracised as they were considered not to have the correct views and opinions. He is very aware that his opinion marked him out as 'wrong' and there is an undertone of redemption in his narrative as his discourse moves from one of shame to candidness. There is almost a source of pride in Harvey's discussion of how he engages in conversations with *"hardcore Brexiteers."* However, Harvey acknowledged that this openness to engage with those symbolically positioned as immoral occurred in accordance with his shift in identity from a Brexit leave voter to a remainer. There is a consensus among many participants that friendship groups are formed around an agreement on political issues, particularly Brexit, because Brexit represents more than a political view. Jill explained how Brexit manifests as an implicit signifier of moral worth within her friendship group:

We talk about Brexit; we talk about how we're all anti-Brexit and we're all socialist and all feminists and all…so that is generally the people that have the sort of like-minded views and passionate about sort of just core values. Similar core values and also interested in culture.

Jill discussed how she and her family and friends felt devastated at the outcome of the Brexit vote. She insisted on its importance in her social networks and discussed the way she considered the Brexit vote to represent a person's character and value system, which she described as having *'like-minded views.'* The consequences of people not holding what was considered by many participants to be the correct and moral attitude to the vote to leave the

European Union is that they may be removed from social networks. Lucy discussed the way responses to Brexit mediated relations within her friendship group:

On the whole it shouldn't matter, you should just still be kind and get on, but there has got to come a point hasn't there? That if you just really disagree with somebody, that actually you might not be able to be friends.

On the surface it appears typical that people construct friendship groups around similar interests and values. However, it is clear that what is valued, particularly in discussions around Brexit, is not only to vote remain but to embrace the moral significance of the position. Participants strongly indicated that to vote remain was much more than supporting a political view. Voting remain was positioned as embodying morality, with the act of voting remain demonstrating good character and personal virtue.

For many participants, the idea that they could be in contact with a Brexit leave voter and be unaware of this fact, and that this implied something immoral about family members, friends and colleagues was described by some participants as being a deeply emotive experience and one which changed social interactions within social spaces. Suspicion and distrust around Brexit mediated relationships in social spaces within the communities of participants. Harvey's comments about the fear of being ostracised from social networks if he disclosed his voting status is not baseless. As Grant explained in chapter five, he became wary and dislocated from his local community as concerns around who voted leave manifested within his everyday social interactions. He described worrying how they could be a neighbour or friend, a feeling which altered how he engaged in routine interactions, such as participating in casual conversations with neighbours or with retail staff when shopping. Grant lives alone and his narrative evidenced how this change in what could be considered routine encounters is important and must not be rendered insignificant just because such interactions are mundane. Rather, it is these ordinary and mundane encounters which are a key part of the everyday relations of social life which cultivate feelings of belonging (Back, 2015).

However, it is critical to understand that being a Brexit leave voter is not a position of deviance inhabited by everyone. Rather, it is a classed position which the middle-class can inhabit whilst avoiding the immoral negative connotations that the vast majority of participants in this study identify with. James explained:

> *Two of my directors at work had a massive argument about Brexit, because one of them voted leave and one voted remain. And the one who voted leave, to his credit he thought about it extremely carefully, and he thought that was the right thing for the long term. I was kind of fine with that because he is a clever chap and he had thoroughly assessed the situation and that was his view. So fair enough.*

James did not associate his boss with any of the signifiers of moral deviance connected with the 'left-behind' narrative that other participants in this study are so keenly aware of, a position which they are also extremely keen to maintain distance from. This is because the Brexit leave vote is a classed signifier deeply entangled in the 'left-behind' narrative that dominates media and political discourse around the Brexit vote. As outlined in the introductory chapter of this thesis, the 'left-behind' narrative mobilises and reproduces the class dynamics which structure and shape working-class exclusion and marginalisation. James described how his director is acutely intelligent and the insinuation is that he cannot be deemed to occupy the same position as working-class Brexit leave voters. He inhabits a different mode of evaluation because he does not live the relations of delegitimisation and exclusion that shapes working-class experience.

Here we can see how the 'left-behind' narrative works as a form of symbolic violence and as a mechanism to reproduce class divisions. The idea that a Brexit leave voter was someone to be avoided was a common theme throughout the interviews. However, the category of Brexit leave voter is constructed through class relations. This means that, as a marker of class, being a Brexit leave voter means nothing without who this vote is tied to. Kane (2001) explains how moral reputations operate as a form of capital to be traded on within the dominant system of capitalist exchange. It is also a relational mode of meaning because moral capital can be enhanced or reduced depending on a person's network and public perception of those relationships. Moral capital is a resource which is valuable and can be used in various spheres to add value and legitimacy to a person or institution. Maintaining moral capital requires continued association with people or ideas and values that possess moral capital (Brown, 2006). However, the perceptions and positions of immorality associated with the Brexit leave vote do not stand alone. The moral capital gained or lost through voting to remain or leave the European Union is wholly dependent on which body actively votes and whose voice is speaking the language that mobilises class relationships. The working-class must inhabit the role of Brexit remain voter to distance themselves from the 'left-behind' narrative that

dominates post-Brexit discourse, whereas the middle-class are able to use Brexit as a form of moral capital regardless of how they voted, because their selves are not positioned as innately wrong, and their political decisions are not subject to such scrutiny.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the class dynamics which shape how participants embody consciousness, limiting and facilitating the way classed bodies move through space. The desire for agency and control is deeply embedded in the formation of gatekeeping practices which are entangled in the complex struggle for value that manifests within social relations. Boundary making manifests within working-class communities in the context of affective histories. The socio-spatial characteristics of mining villages are produced through the dynamic relationships connecting micro interactions to the macro political and economic structures that have denied agency and control to working-class people and places. The slippage from class to underclass in political discourse both erases class as a structuring force whilst associating the working-class with a pathological deficiency, contributing to the judgement and blaming that operates within the poorest communities (Shildrick and MacDonald, 2013). Consequently, how class mechanisms shape consciousness and intent, as well as patterns of mobility, is complex and ambiguous.

Class exploitation and oppression manifests through the layers and levels of gatekeeping that operate across and within working-class communities, yet class mechanisms also render class invisible within this space, a dynamic which disrupts the meaning of the past and alters the lens of reflection. This does not mean that class mechanisms are not recognised by participants, rather class manifests as both an affective embodied loss and as lost to the past. This creates an absence that reframes class trauma as pathology as ex-mining communities come to be defined by their local reputations, a process which is mediated by how participants are situated in their relationship to power. Understanding class as a process of haunting encapsulates the complex manner in which social histories shape the present and tie it to the past, particularly in such cases where exploitation and oppression are denied and consequently manifest in actions and interactions in which there is no language to situate class inequalities. The response to Brexit, which is mobilised through the 'left-behind' narrative that mediates social relationships within working-class communities, is deeply entangled in this process of haunting. These temporal, relational and contradictory processes connect the domain of the moral to the spatial as participants negotiate movement through space, shaping

patterns of mobility and actively co-constructing the meaning of class and place within the ex-mining communities of County Durham.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

I began this thesis by situating the 'left-behind' narrative as central to the power dynamics that structure class relations in County Durham. I explained how symbolic representations of working-class people and places as lazy, outdated, stagnant and incapable of change are mediated through political and media rhetoric. These narratives of lack and decline were key to the mobilisation of neoliberal socio-economic policy within County Durham during the collapse of the mining and steel industries throughout the 1970s and 1980s, and they also mediate and structure post-Brexit discourse as working-class communities in Britain's post-industrial North are epitomised as the angry, disillusioned mass driving the vote to leave the European Union (McKenzie, 2017). The purpose of this thesis was to explore how working-class people living in the ex-mining communities of County Durham live their lives in relationship to a class structure, and to understand how morality shapes the experiences of people who are always subject to moral devaluation and delegitimisation. Undertaking a critical phenomenological perspective, I have engaged in narrative interviews and learning walks to critically analyse how phenomena appears through the logos, and to explore how moral value reveals itself in the way that it does to the working-class people in this study.

My central argument is that morality structures the experiences of working-class people outside of the logic of capital, even as this subjectivity is forged through the classed power relations that situate this experience. Morality is absolutely central to the way working-class people living in the ex-mining communities of North and North West Durham live their lives through a framework of value. Class dynamics and mechanisms operate to ascribe moral pathology onto the bodies of working-class people, shaping social relationships within key spheres of social life – education, work, and place – constraining and limiting mobility in these spaces. However, moral experience still manifests as a source of value through social interactions and local value practices that are not tradable within the dominant symbolic system of capitalist exchange, even as this subjective experience is made in the context of the processes of class categorisation and classification that are constantly working to misrecognise and deny working-class value.

In this concluding chapter, I bring together my empirical analysis and summarise my key findings. I begin with a discussion of moral subjectivities. I summarise how the key

phenomenological concepts that I have drawn on in this thesis show how morality manifests as an orientating structure, whilst simultaneously exposing the classed power dynamics that underpin the mobilisation of morality as a form of symbolic capital. I revisit these key concepts to draw together my empirical discussion and reinforce why critical phenomenology was the most appropriate analytical lens to understand how participants relate to and live out moral experience within a classed social structure. I then specify the contribution that this thesis makes to contemporary class analysis, as well as outlining how this study adds to critical phenomenological theoretical and methodological discussions. I end this chapter by reflecting on the aims and objectives of this study, outlining the limitations of this project and suggesting areas of future research. Finally, I conclude this thesis with a summary of the key findings of this research.

8.2 Moral Subjectivities

In this thesis, I have drawn on four key phenomenological concepts: intentionality; the nature of being; embodiment; and narrative to explore the complex and contradictory manner in which morality manifests as both a source of value and as a mode of devaluation and delegitimisation for the working-class participants within this research.

8.2.1 Conscious Intentionality

I have shown in this thesis how morality is fundamental to shaping the relations of value that construct personhood. I have also shown how it is through the subjective that moral value is understood, lived out, challenged and contested. Phenomenological inquiry was absolutely key to revealing the significance of subjectivity in understanding this relationship. Ontologically, phenomenology insists on the centrality of subjective experience in that it is the mechanism through which we understand reality. There is no objective reality that we stand outside of. This means that the way we know our reality is through an intentional relationship with the world, and it is also the only world that we know. Consequently, the structures of consciousness are orientated within participants' subjectivity, and their understanding and relationship to moral values are grounded in their experience of the way morality and value manifests in their lives.

In this thesis, I have evidenced how Husserl's (2001) concept of intentionality, which requires a suspension of judgement about the nature of reality, is key to understanding how value manifests outside of the dominant symbolic for the working-class participants in this study. As

conscious beings, participants interact with their own potential and value through the way they conceptualise the future as a space of possibility and as a mode of authenticity (Heidegger, 1962). These hopes and desires for the future are shaped by class mechanisms of exclusion and neoliberal value structures of individualism and capital value accrual, which operate to keep working-class people fixed in place. However, different possibilities and ways of being in the world do manifest outside of the dominant symbolic, even as they are forged through the neoliberal classed structures that shape this experience. This is a complex and contradictory picture. The relationship and understanding that participants have with morality as a source of value is deeply entangled in the socio-cultural values and traditions embedded in the mining and steel industries, as well as the lay normative constructions of care that are made through relations of intersubjectivity. The way class mechanisms mediate relations in education, work and community are significant here as disidentification and disassociation with a classed identity is also negotiated through this interdependent and mutually reinforcing space of meaning.

Intentionality as an ontology has shown how morality is not just a mode of devaluation operating within the dominant system of capitalist exchange for the working-class participants in this study. Rather, morality is used by participants as an orientating structure and as a source of value that cannot be traded. Working-class agency can manifest within the capitalist system of value exchange (Della Porta and Chironi, 2015; Nayak, 2019). However, I have evidenced in this thesis that agency manifests within working-class communities through the relations of care that capitalism cannot control, including the relationship with the self, even as this experience is forged through classed power dynamics. The working-class participants in this study who are excluded from the class mechanisms that control the modes and methods of value exchange, still do construct personhood through the lens of value. This conceptualisation of value is not one of exchange but is made through the relational and temporal structures of Dasein (Heidegger, 1962).

8.2.2 The Nature of Being

Participants live time as a conscious experience where the past, present and future are encapsulated in being, a mode of intentionality which is a relational and a temporal experience (Heidegger, 1962). The past is deeply significant to participants. Individual and collective histories form part of consciousness which is why situated freedom (Merleau-Ponty, 2012) is much more than an agency/structure debate. The way participants are thrown into

fields of experience speaks to the embedded nature of Dasein (Heidegger, 1962) where affective histories (Walkerdine and Jimenez, 2012) are lived out in actions and practices within the spheres of education, work and place. I have shown how the meanings, values and traditions that manifested in the industrial heritage of County Durham, and the way precarity and uncertainty shaped this experience, are not lost to the past but manifest through the actions and practices of future generations. This field of meaning is grounded in relations of intersubjectivity and is forged through being in the world with others, where lay normative concerns about how we treat other people are significant in understanding the nature of moral experience. School choices, work options and socio-spatial gatekeeping processes are negotiated through this space of meaning. It is a moral space which is not straightforward and is deeply intertwined with the subjective experience of living class as a mode of exclusion, a process which is also embedded in the power mechanisms which work to deny the role of class inequality as a structuring experience.

I have shown that the way participants relate to the domain of the moral is not a uniform experience, nor is it an imposition of a value structure, or a universal set of principles or rules. It is a mode of being in the world with others which is forged through individual and collective histories where the value of morality manifests through the value in how morality appears as an orientating structure. This is why the moral value that manifests through affective histories is so important to participants and why the symbolic is so significant in understanding how class mechanisms shape relations in this space. It is also why the power mechanisms that draw on morality as a tool of class categorisation and classification are so alarming. Class dynamics mobilise the falsehood that middle-class bodies are the moral, normative default (Strathern, 1992; Skeggs, 2004), dislocating morality as a practice of being in the world with others and as made through relations of intersubjectivity, to a middle-class mode of intrinsic being.

Moreover, I have shown in this thesis how morality as a source of capital is embedded in neoliberal practices of value accrual where the middle-class cultivate a mode of selfhood that can be exchanged within a classed social structure. This is significant because morality is dislocated from a mode of use which is forged through the relations of care that develop through being in the world with others, to a mode of individualism which can be exchanged within the dominant symbolic, a process from which the working-class are excluded. As I have evidenced throughout this thesis, the symbolic representations of working-class people as pathologically immoral, and of middle-class bodies as intrinsically moral, are fundamental to

the class mechanisms that mobilise the 'left-behind' narrative and shape social relations and interactions within key spheres of social life. The way responses to Brexit manifest within working-class communities reflects how morality is commodified as a source of capital to be traded within the dominant symbolic (Kane, 2001). Working-class bodies are excluded from this process of exchange because, as I have consistently evidenced throughout this thesis, class markers do not exist independently, rather they only hold meaning through the way they are tied to classed bodies.

8.2.3 Embodiment

The way class is marked on the body is a gendered process which means the way working-class people in this study embody consciousness is in dialogue with the gendered class mechanisms that operate as modes of exclusion. I have shown throughout this thesis that the role of the body cannot be overstated. It is the site where modes of gendered class devaluation and delegitimisation is most deeply coded (Beauvoir, 2015; Skeggs, 1997, 2004) and it is also the ontological mode of being through which consciousness is experienced (Merleau-Ponty, 2012). Emotions manifest within these structures of power as the means through which subjectivity is realised. Emotions are complex (Burkitt, 2014). They cannot be reduced to a singular element of the multi-dimensional connections that constitute emotional experience. However, emotions are embedded in the classed power structures that shape class exclusion and marginalisation. Shame manifests as one of the ubiquitous emotional experiences arising within a classed social structure. It is an affective mode of subjectivity as action and agency are negotiated through this experience, shaping patterns of mobility and movement through space.

Shame manifests in the way that participants recognise the everyday judgement of others, as working-class women in particular negotiate the stigma of the way immorality is ascribed onto their sexual behaviour, parenting skills, modes of consumption and bodily dispositions such as accent and dialect (Skeggs, 1997; Lawler, 2005). However, shame also manifests outside of the dominant symbolic as the affective histories of working-class experience challenge middle-class pretensions and excess. Participants relationship to precarity and uncertainty, particularly those experiences forged through deindustrialisation and its aftermath, shapes how moral value manifests through embodied consciousness as a deeply orientating source of meaning. This is a complex picture.

The way in which participants relate to morality in this space can limit movement within the dominant system of capitalist exchange but it is important to emphasise that this relationship to morality is not only a rejection of a classed identity, or a rejection of what the working-class are already refused within the dominant symbolic. Disidentification with a classed identity is evident, however, the way that the subjective experience of moral value manifests for participants is also made through the relations of care and ways of being in the world which develop through processes of exclusion and alienation as family, friendship, and community relationships develop in this space of meaning. It is an embodied mode of consciousness that shows how the relations of capital do not control all modes of human experience, even as neoliberal processes of competitive consumerism have saturated the most mundane aspects of everyday life (Brown, 2019).

8.2.4 Narrative

It is the stories of individual and collective histories that participants draw on to situate and make sense of their subjective experiences (Barthes, 1977). Their personal identities are forged through the local historical and socio-cultural narratives that structure and shape ex-mining communities. The language of hard-work, hard-labour and solidarity talk back to the 'left-behind' narrative, a class mechanism which has a long history of drawing on symbolic representations of working-class pathology to mobilise patterns of class exclusion and oppression. These competing modes of narrative structure and shape the way moral value manifests as a source of meaning for participants in complex and often contradictory ways. I have shown how the 'left-behind' narrative functions as a social story which reproduces and legitimises class inequalities. The reputations of working-class people and places as morally regressive and incapable of movement shape socio-spatial patterns and practices within ex-mining communities. Class haunts (Gordon, 2008) these communities through the way structural inequalities are minimised and reframed through place-based stigma, a classificatory tool which works in dialogue with classed bodies. The middle-class are not tainted by their association with ex-mining communities which is why to be from somewhere with a 'reputation' is such a powerful tool of class exclusion and so difficult to create and maintain symbolic distance from, even as participants physically move away from 'home'.

However, narratives are not solely tools of demonisation and devaluation. The way participants make sense of their own subjectivity is a relational and temporal experience as they situate their own story in the context of the stories of others. The way that participants

organise their narratives into a chronological order is an explanation of how they have come to be where they are (Ricoeur, 1990) and how they bring forth these experiences into a mode of consciousness which is orientated towards the future. Movement is key here. Participants draw on wider social stories to connect their personal hopes and desires for the future to the moral development that we recognise through the patterns embedded in the narratives of others (Macintyre, 2016). The stories of participants are told within this temporal and relational mode of being and it is the intersubjective nature of Dasein (Heidegger, 1962) which poses a challenge to the structures of individualism that attempt to deny value to working-class people and places. This is because moral meaning is made through how participants encounter value in their own lives. Participants' stories are not only narratives of devaluation, rather their narratives are forged through lay normative constructions of care that develop through social life, value practices which are made independently of social divisions, even as they are made in the context of a classed social structure.

It is because participants draw on narrative as a mode of meaning to make decisions and choices about potential possibilities and ways of being that the realm of the symbolic is so significant in shaping the future. It is vital that participants have a language to situate their experience in, and a narrative framework to make sense of the socio-cultural and political frames of meaning that structures their experiences. This is why the symbolic is so central in understanding how moral value reveals itself in the way that it does to the working-class people in this study. What I have shown in this thesis is that the symbolic is not only drawn on as a tool to exchange within the dominant system of capitalist exchange. It is also a deeply significant mode of meaning which participants use as a moral orientating structure and as a source of value. The symbolic cannot only be created and traded through the relations of capital because the relationships that are constructed through this process are not solely subject to the logic of capital, even as the struggle for value manifests through competing modes of use and exchange.

8.3 Contribution to Knowledge

I have shown in this thesis how moral value manifests in working-class communities as an orienting structure and as use value. I have used critical phenomenology as an analytical tool to show how this experience is forged through the power relations that ascribe immorality onto working-class bodies, a process of class categorisation and classification which functions to ensure working-class people are excluded from the dominant system of capital exchange.

This experience manifests as a complex and contradictory picture as disidentification with a classed identity is entangled in this experience. If morality was not as deeply significant to people as it is, it would not be as effective as a tool of demonisation and delegitimisation. I have argued throughout this thesis that morality manifests through social interactions and local value practices which are not subject to the logic of capital, even as they are negotiated through a classed social structure which is predicated on value exchange.

8.3.1 Class Analysis

The findings of this thesis show that class struggle is not just about capital accumulation and the multiple barriers which block working-class access to capital. In fact, this thesis has shown how markers of class mean nothing without whom they are tied to because different markers of class are read differently on different class bodies. This is how the middle-class are able to inhabit the identity of a Brexit leave voter whilst avoiding the association with immorality that is ascribed onto working-class bodies when they carry out that act. It is also how the middle-class are able to extract out elements of working-class culture, drawing on narratives of hard work and hardship in order to move through space, whilst this same experience renders working-class bodies immobile. This is why it is important to challenge policy that attempts to address class exclusion through this lens. For example, a priority of Ofsted is to enable working-class children to access more cultural capital. However, culture can only be used as capital to exchange by those who are legitimised as valuable within the symbolic economy. When class is viewed through the lens of capital accumulation, working-class people and places are not only misrecognised as valueless, but the value of value itself is misrecognised as exchange (Skeggs, 2004).

This thesis adds to contemporary class analysis which highlights the significance of the symbolic in understanding class divisions by exposing how processes of class categorisation and classification not only work to exclude the working-class from capital accrual, but actively operate to shape the meaning of value as one of exchange. I have shown in this thesis how capital cannot control the value of morality as an orientating structure, and the relations of care that manifest within working-class communities, even as moralism is used as a tool to maintain the relations of class that mobilise disadvantage and exclusion. It is an analysis which also exposes the way morality has become tradable as a form of capital as the middle-class draw on moral worth as a tool to exchange. The struggle over moral value and it's competing modes of use and exchange is one of the key sites in which classed power relationships are

mobilised and executed. Critical phenomenology as a theoretical and analytical framework was key in this research to understanding this relationship.

8.3.2 Theoretical

Critical phenomenology as an analytical tool was key to exposing the classed power dynamics which shape how morality is lived out as a mode of embodied consciousness. This thesis has shown how the ontology of phenomenology enables a perspective of how value operates outside of the dominant symbolic because it requires the researcher to suspend judgement about the nature of reality. This enabled me to move from understanding value as a resource to be exchanged within the relations of capital to analysing how value itself is a production of capital and of classed relationships within a neoliberal value structure. This was vital given that working-class value is misrecognised within the dominant system of capital exchange. This thesis contributes to the body of knowledge within the critical phenomenological framework by showing how power moves through bodies (Guenther, 2019) to situate class mechanisms and structures as a mode of embodied consciousness. This thesis also points to the value of classical phenomenological perspectives on morality as a mode of intersubjectivity developed through being in the world with others. Although an under explored aspect of phenomenology (Hughes, 1993; Donohue, 2016), understanding the domain of the moral from a traditional phenomenological perspective challenges both the pathologising of working-class immorality and the notion that the middle-class inhabit morality as an intrinsic mode of being.

8.3.3 Methodological

This thesis contributes to conversations about the application of phenomenology as a methodology. Rather than engaging with Husserl's (2001) transcendental method which involves 'bracketing' or attempting to isolate the very core of a phenomena, this thesis took a critical phenomenological perspective. I used the concepts of intentionality, the nature of being, embodiment and narrative to analyse the structures of power that shape and embed subjective experience. This thesis has emphasised the value in utilising an existentialist rather than a transcendental phenomenological lens because it shows how the conditions that create phenomena is significant. For example, a transcendental lens could attempt to isolate the very core of a phenomena such as shame in order to identify what was common within experiences of shame across time and space. However, what I have shown in this thesis is the way shame

manifests as an emotional response to working-class delegitimisation and devaluation. I have explored how shame manifests through classed interactions and socio-spatial patterns and processes which shape conscious experience. This means that even if it is possible to identify and isolate the core elements of shame, the conditions in which shame manifests is significant. This highlights the value of an existentialist approach to phenomenological methodology in understanding how the subjective world reveals itself in the way that it does.

This thesis also contributes to new ways of engaging with walking as method. Learning walks enabled a way of perceiving meaning and value to manifest outside of the dominant symbolic because it is the narratives of participants which guides the researcher's movement through space. In being directed through space by the participants' interviews, I was able to foreground the stories of participants to understand how place is conceptualised as a space of meaning and to deepen my understanding of the way socio-spatial dynamics manifest in the ex-mining villages of County Durham. Learning walks enabled me to embed a visual perspective into participants' stories of class exclusion and alienation because although participants extensively discussed these experiences as situated in place, they rarely gave physical descriptions of such places.

Learning walks also directed me towards key sites of meaning that I likely would have overlooked had I visited the ex-mining villages without participants' audio narratives. Some participants discussed everyday sites of interactions as meaningful. I am conscious that these seemingly mundane places such as street corners and empty fields are places where ordinary and routine social interactions occur. Learning walks directed my focus on these sites of meaning which are important because they do shape subjective experience, mould socio-spatial dynamics, and co-produce the meaning of class and place. I adapted learning walks from the education sector as a methodology to counteract the constraints of the Covid-19 lockdown which restricted in-person research that meant I was not able to interview participants in their own environment. As this method has not previously been used in this way, I have reflected on how I adapted the method and identified some limitations of the way I have drawn on learning walks as a tool of critical phenomenological analysis.

Whilst carrying out learning walks, I took photographs of places which participants identified in their interviews as key sites of meaning and as spaces which were significant to them. These were not always physical buildings but were places such as beaches, green spaces and sometimes specific streets. However, on reflection I realised that these images did not

accurately capture the meanings that participants conveyed about such places in their narratives. There are limits as to how much learning walks can convey about the subjective socio-spatial experience of participants. However, this method could be improved by asking participants to take photographs of the places that are significant to them. As evident in the work of Tish Murtha, referenced in chapter two, people can capture subjective meaning and experience through the photographs that they take. This would add depth and meaning to the method whilst also further foregrounding the experiences of participants. Although the restrictions imposed during the Covid-19 lockdown are no longer in operation, learning walks can still be used as a method to draw on if in-person research is not possible due to time or access constrains.

8.4 Limitations

I have argued in this thesis that moral value manifests as an orientating structure and as a source of value which operates outside of the relations of capitalist exchange, even as this experience is forged through the power dynamics that situate this experience. I have shown how this experience is formed through a classed social structure and exposed the class mechanisms and dynamics which delegitimise working-class bodies and misrecognise working-class value. I have also evidenced how this experience is gendered and I have explored the gendered class dynamics which limit the way working-class people move through space. This thesis has also emphasised the legacy of County Durham's industrial heritage as key to the way working-class men understand the value in their labour and how this shapes their actions and practices in the sphere of work. However, although I have explored how the working-class women in this study relate to work as a mode of meaning, the discussions with the women did not enable an analysis as to the way the historical and socio-cultural legacy of manual labour structures their experiences. Given the significance of the mining industry in shaping the subjective experience of participants, I suggest this relationship as an area of future research.

8.5 Further Research

In addition to the specific relationship outlined above, the findings in this research also point to other avenues of potential research. This thesis has emphasised the struggle for moral value as key to the mobilisation of class mechanisms and structures. Morality is a deeply orientating source of value to the working-class people in this study, but morality is also central to the

'left-behind' narrative which reframes class inequalities as individual failure, moral distinctions which execute the boundaries of class classification and categorisation. The concentration of wealth and assets in the super rich has contributed to the stagnation of middle-class wealth and power (Sayer, 2014) meaning the moral space is even more significant in how the middle-class accrue value. Critical phenomenology provides the analysis to expose and reveal the class dynamics that operate to mobilise morality as a form of capital within the dominant system of capitalist exchange. The way Brexit is used as a tool to ascribe moral value onto middle-class bodies through the classed power structures that deny value to working-class people and places is an example of this struggle over moral value. Given how important morality is to people, which is why it is such an effective tool of demonisation, I suggest further research is needed to uncover how the middle-class are finding new ways to extract out value from the domain of the moral and are drawing on morality as a tool of exchange.

8.6 Concluding Comments: Morality Matters

In showing how morality matters to working-class people in a deeply significant way, this thesis has emphasised the struggle for moral value as central to the mobilisation of contemporary class mechanisms and structures which maintain and reinforce old class boundaries, divisions and inequalities. This is why it is so important to understand how the middle-class are extracting morality from the relations of care and intersubjectivity that situate and shape subjective experience. This is class struggle over moral value. Morality matters too much for it to be used as a resource within the neoliberal system of capitalist value exchange. Exposing how the middle-class use morality as a tool to exchange is vital to understanding how new systems of class categorisation and classification maintain the class inequalities which ascribe moral deviance onto working-class people and places.

References

Abel, G. (2023) '"You're selling a brand": Marketing commercial sex online', *Sexualities*, 26(3), pp. 354–371.

Ahmed S. (2007). A phenomenology of whiteness. *Feminist Theory*, 8(2), pp. 149–168.

Allen, A.S. and Topolka-Jorissen, K. (2014) 'Using teacher learning walks to build capacity in a rural elementary school: Repurposing a supervisory tool', *Professional Development in Education*, 40(5), pp. 822–837.

Allen, C. (2008) *Housing market renewal and social class*. New York: Routledge.

Allen, J.Y., Haley, W.E. and Small, B.J. (2021) 'Bereavement outcomes among spousal hospice caregivers: Relief, rumination, and perceived patient suffering', *Death Studies*, 45(5), pp. 371–379.

Amin, A. (2005) 'Local community on trial', *Economy and Society*, 34(4), pp. 612–633.

Back L. (2015) 'Why everyday life matters: class, community and making life livable', *Sociology*, 49(5), pp. 820–836.

Bailey, D.J., Lewis, P.C. and Shibata, S. (2022) 'Contesting neoliberalism: Mapping the terrain of social conflict', *Capital and Class*, 46(3), pp. 449–478.

Barbalet, J.M. (2001) *Emotion, social theory and social structure: A macrosocial approach.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Barthes, R. and Heath, S. (1977) *Image, music, text*. London: Fotana.

Beauvoir, S. de (2011) *The second sex*. Translated from French by C. Borde and S. Malovany-Chevallier. New York: Vintage.

Beauvoir, S. de (2015) *The ethics of ambiguity.* Translated from French by B. Frechtman. New Jersey: Citadel.

Benjamin, W. (1997) *Charles Baudelaire: A lyric poet in the era of high capitalism*. London: Verso.

Bennett, J. (2014) 'Researching the intangible: A qualitative phenomenological study of the everyday practices of belonging', *Sociological Research*, 19(1), pp. 1–12.

Bennett, T., Savage, M., Silva, E.B., Warde, A., Gayo-Cal, M. and Wright, D. (2009) *Culture, class, distinction*. London: Routledge.

Berger, J. (1992) 'Expectations, theory, and group processes'. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 55(1), pp. 3–11.

Berlant, L (2000) 'The subject of true feeling', in Dean, J. (ed.) *Cultural studies and political theory*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 42-62.

Beynon, H. (1985) *Digging deeper: Issues in the miners' strike*. London: Verso.

Bhaskar, R. (2016) *Enlightened common sense: The philosophy of critical realism*. New York: Routledge.

Boer, R. (2012) 'EP Thompson and the psychic terror of Methodism', *Thesis Eleven*, 110(1), pp. 54–67.

Bogue, K. (2019) *The divisive state of social policy.* 1st edn. Bristol: Policy Press.

Bottero, W. (2019) *A sense of inequality*. London: Rowman and Littlefield International.

Bourdieu, P. (1977) *Outline of a theory of practice*. Translated from French by R. Nice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1979) 'Symbolic power', *Critique of Anthropology,* 4(13-14), pp. 77–85. Translated from French by R. Nice.

Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Translated from French by R. Nice. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Brewer, D. (1988) *Symbolic stories: Traditional narratives of the family drama in English literature*. London: Longman.

Bridge, G., Butler, T. and Lees, L. (2012) *Mixed communities: Gentrification by stealth?* Bristol: Policy Press.

British Coal (1990) *Reports and accounts, 1988-9*. London.

Brock, A., Stephenson, C., Stephens-Griffin, N. and Wyatt, T. (2023) ''Go home, get a job, and pay some taxes to replace a bit of what you've wasted': Stigma power and solidarity in

response to anti-open-cast mining activism in the coalfields of rural County Durham, UK', *Sociological Research*, 28(2), pp. 518–539.

Brown, C.L. (2006) *Moral capital: Foundations of British abolitionism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Brown, W. (2006) *Regulating aversion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Brown, W. (2015) *Undoing the demos*. Brooklyn: The MIT Press.

Brown, W. (2016) 'Sacrificial citizenship: Neoliberalism, human capital, and austerity politics', *Constellations*, 23(1), pp. 3–14.

Brown, W. (2019) *In the ruins of neoliberalism: The rise of antidemocratic politics in the West*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Bruner, E. and Gorfain, P. (1984) 'Dialogic narration and the paradoxes of Masada' in Bruner, E. (ed.) (1990) *Text, play and story: The construction and reconstruction of self and society*. Illinois: Waveland Press.

Buckle, J.L. and Corbin Dwyer, S. (2021) 'Embodied meaning making: Memorial tattoos as a visual expression of grief', *Death Studies*, 47(1), pp. 1–9.

Bulmer, M. (2015) *Mining and social change*. United Kingdom: Routledge.

Burkitt, I. (1999) *Bodies of thought: Embodiment, identity and modernity*. London: Sage.

Burkitt, I. (2008) *Social selves: Theories of self and society*. London: Sage.

Burkitt, I. (2014) *Emotions and social relations*. London: Sage.

Bush, J., Moffatt, S. and Dunn, C. (2001) ''Even the birds round here cough': Stigma, air pollution and health in Teesside', *Health and Place*, 7(1), pp. 47–56.

Button, C. and Taylor Aiken, G. (eds) (2022) *Over researched places*. Oxon: Taylor and Francis.

Canny cops (2019) BBC3, 3rd July 2019. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07dhbd4

Carr, D. (2014) *Experience and history: Phenomenological perspectives in the historical world*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Caslin, S. (2018) *Save the Womanhood!: Vice, urban immorality and social control in Liverpool, c. 1900-1976*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Chandler, A. (2014) Narrating the self-injured body. *Medical Humanities,* 40(2), pp. 111.

Chaplin, C. (1978) Durham mining villages in Bulmer, M. (1978) *Mining and social change*. London: Routledge, pp. 61–84.

Charlesworth, S.J. (2000) *A phenomenology of working class experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Cheetham, M., Moffatt, S., Addison, M. and Wiseman, A. (2019) 'Impact of universal credit in North East England: A qualitative study of claimants and support staff', *BMJ Open*, 9(7). Available at https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2019-029611

Chesshyre, R. (2012) *When the iron lady ruled Britain*. London: Alma

Close, J. (2017) *Ideals and expectations: Representations, practices and governance of contemporary motherhood*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Newcastle University.

Collins, R. (2004) *Interaction ritual chains.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Connell, R.W. (1995) *Masculinities*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Cooper, D. (2012) 'Existentialism as a philosophical movement,' in Crowell, S. (ed.) *The Cambridge companion to existentialism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 25–49.

Critchley, S., Levine, S. and Schürmann, R. (2008) *On Heidegger's being and time*. Oxon: Routledge.

Crompton, R. (2006) *Employment and the family: The reconfiguration of work and family life in contemporary societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cronon, W. (1992) 'A place for stories: Nature, history, and narrative', *The Journal of American History*, 78(4), pp. 1347–1376.

Crowley, M. and Hodson, R. (2014) 'Neoliberalism at work', *Social Currents*, 1(1), pp. 91–108.

Crozier, G. (2015) 'Middle-class privilege and education', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 36(7), pp. 1115–1123.

Crozier, G., Reay, D., James, D., Jamieson, F., Beedell, P., Hollingworth, S. and Williams, K. (2008) 'White middle-class parents, identities, educational choice and the urban comprehensive school: Dilemmas, ambivalence and moral ambiguity', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 29(3), pp. 261–272.

Cummins, I. (2021) *Welfare and punishment : from Thatcherism to austerity*. Bristol: Bristol University Press.

Cunningham, C. and Samson, C. (2021) 'Neoliberal meritocracy: How 'widening participation' to universities in England reinforces class divisions', *On Education. Journal for Research and Debate*, 4(10). Available at: https://doi.org/10.17899/on_ed.2021.10.8

Currie, E. (1985) *Confronting crime: An American challenge*. New York: Pantheon.

Davis, D. (2019) The phenomenological method in Weiss, G., Murphy, A.V., Salamon, G. *50 concepts for a critical phenomenology*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, pp. 3–10.

Della Porta, D. and Chironi, D. (2015) 'Movements in Parties: OccupyPD', *Partecipazione e Conflitto*, *I*(1), pp. 59–96.

Denzin, N.K. (1989) *Interpretive biography*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications Inc.

Denzin, N.K. (2001) *Interpretive interactionism.* 2nd edn. Los Angeles: Sage Publications Inc.

De Warren, N. (2020) 'Husserl, common sense, and the natural attitude', in *The Cambridge companion to common-sense philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 86–111.

Donohoe, J. (2016) *Husserl on ethics and intersubjectivity*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Donzelot, J. and Hurley, R. (1997) *The policing of families*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Dorling, D. (2010) *Injustice*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Dorling, D. (2015) 'Policy, politics, health and housing in the UK', *Policy and Politics*, 43(2), pp. 163–180.

Dorling, D. (2018) *Peak inequality: Britain's ticking time bomb*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Douglas, M. (1966) *Purity and danger: An analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.

Dreyfus, H.L. (1991) *Being in the world*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Dunn, A. (1998) 'Who needs a sociology of the aesthetic? Freedom and value in Pierre Bourdieu's rules of art', *Boundary 2*, 25(1), pp. 87–110.

Durham County Council (2019) *County Durham Housing Strategy.* Available at https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/2813/Housing-strategies-and-policies (Accessed: 8 July 2020).

Durham County Council (2023) *Growing up in County Durham strategy.* Available at https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/26667/Growing-Up-in-County-Durham-Strategy (Accessed: 22 July 2023).

Durham Heritage Coast (2023) *Horden*. Available at: https://durhamheritagecoast.org/explore/horden/ (Accessed: 10 November 2023).

Ecclestone, K. and Brunila, K. (2015) 'Governing emotionally vulnerable subjects and 'therapisation' of social justice', *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, 23(4), pp. 485–506.

Ekosgen (2021) *County Durham economic review: Final report.* Available at: https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s151879/Economic%20Review%20accessible%20version%20003.pdf (Accessed on: 18 November 2021)

Erikson, R. and Goldthorpe, J.H. (1992) *The constant flux: A study of class mobility in industrial societies*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Evans, G and Tilley, J. (2017) *The new politics of class*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Feeney, E. (2014) 'Design principles for learning to guide teacher walk throughs', *The Clearing House*, 87(1), pp. 21–29.

Fehér, I.M. (2010) ''The mystery of apriority': A priori and time in Heidegger's thought', *Philobiblon: Transylvanian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Humanities,* 15, pp. 11–38.

Finch, L. (1993) *The classing gaze: Sexuality, class and surveillance*. St. Leonards: Allen and Unwin.

Finlay, L. (2009) 'Debating phenomenological research methods', *Phenomenology and Practice*, 3(1), pp 6–25.

Florida, R.L. (2003) 'Cities and the creative class', *City and Community*, 2(1), pp. 3–19.

Florida, R.L. (2018) *The new urban crisis: Gentrification, housing bubbles, growing inequality, and what we can do about it*. London: OneWorld Publications.

Flynn, T.R. (2006) *Existentialism: A very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ford, R. and Goodwin, M. (2017) 'Britain after brexit: A nation divided', *Journal of Democracy*, 28(1), pp. 17–30.

Foucault, M. (1995) *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. 2nd Edn. Translated from French by A. Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books.

Friedman, S. (2016) 'Habitus clivé and the emotional imprint of social mobility', *The Sociological Review*, 64(1), pp. 129–147

Friedman, S. and Laurison, D. (2019) *The class ceiling: Why it pays to be privileged*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Friedman, S., O'Brien, D. and McDonald, I. (2021) 'Deflecting privilege: Class identity and the intergenerational self', *Sociology*, 55(4), pp. 716–733.

Gallagher, S. and Zahavi, D. (2008) *The phenomenological mind: An introduction to philosophy of mind and cognitive science*. London: Routledge.

Gewirtz, S. (2001) 'Cloning the Blairs', *Journal of Education Policy*, 16(4), pp. 365–378.

Gieryn, T.F. (2000) 'A space for place in sociology', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26(1), pp. 463–496.

Gillies, V. (2005a) 'Raising the 'meritocracy': Parenting and the individualization of social class', *Sociology*, 39(5), pp. 835–853.

Gillies, V. (2005b) 'Meeting parents' needs? Discourses of 'support' and 'inclusion' in family policy', *Critical Social Policy*, 25(1), pp. 70–90.

Gillies, V. (2016) *Pushed to the edge.* Bristol: Policy Press.

Glass, R.L. (1964) *London; Aspects of change*. London: MacGibbon and Kee.

Gleber, A. (2020) *The Art of Taking a Walk*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Goodridge, J. and Keegan, B. (2017) *A history of British working-class literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gordon, A. (2008) *Ghostly matters: Haunting and the sociological imagination*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Gothlin, E. (2003) 'Reading Simone de Beauvoir with Martin Heidegger', in Card, C. (ed) *The Cambridge companion to Simone de Beavoir*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 45–65.

Graeber, D. (2018) *Bullshit jobs: A theory*. London: Penguin.

Guenther, L. (2019) 'Critical phenomenology' in Weiss, G., Murphy, A.V., Salamon, G. *50 concepts for a critical phenomenology*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, pp.11–16.

Gymnich, M. (2016) ''The lady of the house speaking': The conservative portrayal of English class stereotypes in Keeping Up Appearances', in *British TV Comedies*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, pp. 240–253.

Haliloglu, N. (2011) *Narrating from the Margins*. Boston: BRILL.

Hall, S. (1978) *Policing the Crisis*. London: Macmillan.

Hardy, B. (1975) *Tellers and listeners: The narrative imagination*. London: Continuum Publishing.

Hart, C. (2017) 'Metaphor and intertextuality in media framings of the (1984–1985) British miners' strike: A multimodal analysis', *Discourse and Communication*, 11(1), pp. 3–30.

Hartas, D. (2015) 'Parenting for social mobility? Home learning, parental warmth, class and educational outcomes', *Journal of Education Policy*, 30(1), pp. 21–38.

Harvey, D. (2005) *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hatab, L (2000) *Ethics and finitude: Heideggerian contributions to moral philosophy*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.

Haylett, C. (2001) 'Illegitimate subjects?: Abject whites, neoliberal modernisation, and middle-class multiculturalism', *Environment and Planning. D, Society and Space*, 19(3), pp. 351–370.

Haylett, C. (2003) ‘Culture, class and urban policy: Reconsidering equality’, *Antipode*, 35(1), pp. 55–73.

Heidegger, M. (1962) *Being and time*. Translated from German by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson. London: SCM Press.

High, S. (2013) ‘"The wounds of class": A historiographical reflection on the study of deindustrialization, 1973-2013’, *History Compass*, 11(11), pp. 994–1007.

Hilario, C.T., Oliffe, J.L., Wong, J.P., Browne, A.J. and Johnson, J.L. (2019) ‘I tend to forget bad things’, *Health*, 23(6), pp. 587–601.

Hochschild, A.R. (1979) ‘Emotion work, feeling rules, and social structure’, *The American Journal of Sociology*, 85(3), pp. 551–575.

Hochschild, A.R. (1983a) *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hochschild, A. (1983b) ‘Comment on Kemper's "Social Constructionist and Positivist Approaches to the Sociology of Emotions"’, *The American Journal of Sociology*, 89(2), pp. 432–434.

Hollway, W. and Jefferson, T. (2000) *Doing qualitative research differently: Free association, narrative and the interview method*. London: Sage.

Holmes, M. (2010) ‘The emotionalisation of reflexivity’, *Sociology,* 44(1), pp. 139-154.

Holmes, M. and McKenzie, J. (2018) ‘Relational happiness through recognition and redistribution: Emotion and inequality’, *European Journal of Social Theory*, 22(4), pp. 1-19.

Hooks, B. (1989) *Talking back: Thinking feminist, thinking black*. Boston: South End Press.

Hudson, M. (1995) *Coming back brockens: A year in a mining village*. London: Vintage.

Hudson, R., Beynon, H. and Sadler, D. (1991) *A tale of two industries: The contraction of coal and steel in the north east of England*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Hughes, C.L. (1993) *Heidegger and Levinas: The problem of ethics.* Amhers: University of Massachusetts.

Husserl, E. (1970) *The crisis of European sciences and transcendental phenomenology: An introduction to phenomenological philosophy*. Translated from German by D. Carr. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Husserl, E. (2001) *Logical investigations.* Translated from German by J.N. Findlay. London: Routledge.

Husserl, E. (2019) *First philosophy: lectures 1923/24 and related texts from the manuscripts (1920-1925)*. Translated from German by S. Luft and T.M. Naberhaus. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Hydén, L. (2013) Bodies, embodiment and stories in: *Doing narrative research*. Second Edn. London: Sage Publications Ltd. pp. 126-141.

Hydén, M. (2008) Narrating sensitive topics in: *Doing narrative research*. London: Sage Publications Ltd. pp. 122-136.

Ingram, N. (2009) 'Working-class boys, educational success and the misrecognition of working-class culture', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 30(4), pp. 421–434.

Jenkins, R. (1992) 'Practice, habitus and field', in *Pierre Bourdieu*. London: Routledge. pp. 47–71.

Jessop, B. (2013) 'Putting neoliberalism in its time and place: A response to the debate', *Social Anthropology*, 21(1), pp. 65–74.

Jessop, B. (2018) 'Neoliberalization, uneven development, and Brexit: Further reflections on the organic crisis of the British state and society', *European Planning Studies*, 26(9), pp. 1728–1746.

Jimenez, L. and Walkerdine, V. (2011) 'A psychosocial approach to shame, embarrassment and melancholia amongst unemployed young men and their fathers', *Gender and Education*, 23(2), pp. 185–199.

Kane, J. (2001) *The politics of moral capital*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kemper, T.D. (1981) 'Social constructivist and positivist approaches to the sociology of emotion', *American Journal of Sociology,* 87(2), pp. 336–362.

Kennedy, P. (2005) 'Social policy, social exclusion and commodity fetishism', *Capital and Class*, 29(1), pp. 91–114.

Kuhn, A. (1995) *Family secrets: Acts of memory and imagination*. London: Verso.

Lamont, M. (2000) *The dignity of working men*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Langdridge, D. (2007) *Phenomenological psychology theory, research and method*. Harlow: Pearson.

Langland, E. (1995) *Nobody's angels : Middle-class women and domestic ideology in Victorian culture*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Lareau, A. (2003) *Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lawler, S. (1999) ''Getting out and getting away': Women's narratives of class mobility', *Feminist Review*, 63(1), pp. 3–24.

Lawler, S. (2005) 'Disgusted subjects: The making of middle-class identities', *The Sociological Review*, 53(3), pp. 429–446.

Lawler, S. (2008) 'The middle classes and their aristocratic others', *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 1(3), pp. 245–261.

Lawler, S. (2014) *Identity: Sociological perspectives.* 2nd edn. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Lepenies, P. (2016) *The power of a single number*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Levitas, R. (1998) *The inclusive society? Social exclusion and New Labour*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Linkon, S.L. (2018) *The half-life of deindustrialization*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Lynch , A . 2006 *Annual report of the Director of Public Health – Easington*. Available at: http://www.health-promotion.cdd.nhs.uk

Macann, C. (1993) *Four phenomenological philosophers*. Oxford: Routledge.

Macdonald, R., Shildrick, T., and Furlong, A. (2014) ''Benefits Street' and the myth of workless communities'. *Sociological Research*, 19(3), pp. 263–268.

MacIntyre, A. (2007) *After virtue: A study in moral theory*. 3rd edn. London: Duckworth.

MacIntyre, A. (2016) *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Marsden, L. (2023) 'Economic martyrs and moralised others: The construction of social class in UK media during the 'age of austerity'', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/13675494221147746

Massey, D.B. (2005) *For space*. London: Sage.

Maynes, M.J., Laslett, B. and Pierce, J.L. (2011) *Telling stories: The use of personal narratives in the social sciences and history*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

McDowell, L. (2002) 'Masculine discourses and dissonances: Strutting 'lads', protest masculinity, and domestic respectability', *Environment and Planning. D, Society and Space*, 20(1), pp. 97–119.

McDowell, L. (2003) 'Masculine identities and low-paid work: young men in urban labour markets', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 27(4), pp. 828–848.

McDowell, L. (2008) *Redundant masculinities*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

McDowell, L. and Harris, A. (2019) 'Unruly bodies and dangerous spaces: Masculinity and the geography of 'dreadful enclosures'', *Urban Studies*, 56(2), pp. 419–433.

McGregor, G. and Mills, M. (2012) 'Alternative education sites and marginalised young people: 'I wish there were more schools like this one'', *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 16(8), pp. 843–862.

McIvor, A. (2020) 'Guardians of workers' bodies? Trade unions and the history of occupational health and safety' *Labour History*, 119, pp. 1–30.

Mckenzie, L. (2015) *Getting by: Estates, class and culture in austerity Britain.* Bristol: Policy Press.

Mckenzie, L. (2017) ''It's not ideal': Reconsidering 'anger' and 'apathy' in the Brexit vote among an invisible working class', *Competition and Change*, 21(3), pp. 199–210.

McWeeny, Jennifer (2019) 'Operative intentionality', in Weiss, G., Murphy, A.V., Salamon, G. *50 concepts for a critical phenomenology*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. p. 255.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (2012) *Phenomenology of perception*. Translated from French by D.A. Landes. Oxon: Routledge.

Metzgar, J. (2021) *Bridging the divide*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Miller, W.I. (1998) *The anatomy of disgust.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Milne, S. (2014) *The enemy within: The secret war against the miners.* Fourth edn. London: Verso.

Modlinger, and Sonntag, P. (2011). *Other people's pain: Narratives of trauma and the question of ethics*. Oxford: Peter Lang.

Moore, R. (2009) *Pitmen, preachers and politics: The effects of Methodism in a Durham mining community*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Moran, D. (2000a) *An introduction to phenomenology*. London: Routledge.

Moran, D. (2000b) 'Heidegger's critique of Husserl's and Brentano's accounts of intentionality', *Inquiry*, 43(1), pp. 39–66.

Moran, D. (2011) 'Edmund Husserl's phenomenology of habituality and Habitus', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 42(1), pp. 53–77.

Morgan, G. and Nelligan, M. (2018) *The creativity hoax: Precarious work in the gig economy*. London: Anthem Press

Morley, D. (2009) 'Mediated class-ifications', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 12(4), pp. 487–508.

Navarro, V. (2007) 'Neoliberalism as a class ideology; or, the political causes of the growth of inequalities', *International Journal of Health Services*, 37(1), pp. 47–62.

Nayak, A. (2006) 'Displaced masculinities: Chavs, youth and class in the post-industrial city', *Sociology*, 40(5), pp. 813–831.

Nayak, A. (2017) 'Purging the nation: race, conviviality and embodied encounters in the lives of British Bangladeshi Muslim young women', *Transactions - Institute of British Geographers*, 42(2), pp. 289–302.

Nayak, A. (2019) 'Re-scripting place: Managing social class stigma in a former steel-making region', *Antipode*, 51(3), pp. 927–948.

Nettleingham, D. (2017) 'Canonical generations and the British left', *Sociology*, 51(4), pp. 850–864.

Neufeld, S.D., Chapman, J., Crier, N., Marsh, S., McLeod, J. and Deane, L.A. (2019) 'Research 101: A process for developing local guidelines for ethical research in heavily researched communities', *Harm Reduction Journal*, 16(1), pp. 41–41.

Nussbaum, M.C. (1986) *The fragility of goodness: Luck and ethics in Greek tragedy and philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

O'Brien, P.J. (2019) *The working class and twenty-first-century British fiction: Deindustrialisation, demonisation, resistance.* Oxon: Routledge.

O'Neill, M. (2020) *Walking methods: Research on the move.* London: Routledge.

Ocejo, R.E. (2018) *Masters of craft: Old jobs in the new urban economy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Oliffe, J.L., Kelly, M.T., Gonzalez Montaner, G. and Yu Ko, W.F. (2021) 'Zoom Interviews: Benefits and Concessions', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 20. Available at https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211053522

Orwell, G. (1962) *The road to Wigan Pier*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Parker I. (2003) Psychoanalytic narratives: Writing the self into contemporary cultural phenomena. *Narrative Inquiry,* 13(2) 301–315.

Pattison, J. (2022) ''The whole of Shirebrook got put on an ASBO': The co-production of territorial stigma in a former colliery town', *Environment and Planning*, 54(1), pp. 105–121.

Payne, G. and Grew, C. (2005) 'Unpacking 'class ambivalence': Some conceptual and methodological issues in accessing class cultures', *Sociology*, 39(5), pp. 893–910.

Pendlebury, J., Townshend, T. and Gilroy, R. (2009) *Valuing historic environments*. London: Routledge.

Plummer, K. (1995) *Telling sexual stories: Power, change and social worlds.* London: Routledge.

Price, L. (2017) 'Wellbeing research and policy in the U.K.: Questionable science likely to entrench inequality', *Journal of Critical Realism*, 16(5), pp. 451–467.

Reay, D. (1995) ‘'They employ cleaners to do that': Habitus in the primary classroom’, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 16(3), pp. 353–371.

Reay, D. (2004) ‘'It's all becoming a habitus': Beyond the habitual use of habitus in educational research’, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 25(4), pp. 431–444.

Reay, D. (2017) *Miseducation*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Reay, D., Crozier, G. and Clayton, J. (2009) ‘'Strangers in Paradise'? Working-class Students in Elite Universities’, *Sociology*, 43(6), pp. 1103–1121.

Reay, D. and Lucey, H. (2003) ‘The limits of 'choice': Children and inner city schooling’, *Sociology*, 37(1), pp. 121–142.

Reid, E. (2023). ‘Trap life’: The psychosocial underpinnings of street crime in inner-city London. *British Journal of Criminology*, 63(1), 168–183.

Reis Monteiro, A. (2014) *Ethics of human rights*. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Ricœur, P. (1990) *Time and narrative*. Translated from French by K. McLaughlin and D. Pellauer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ridge-Newman, A., León-Solís, F. and O'Donnell, H. (2018) *Reporting the road to Brexit*. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Riessman, C.K. (1993) *Narrative analysis*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Roberts, I.G. (1993) *Craft, class and control: The sociology of a shipbuilding community*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Roberts, J.H. (2009) ‘Structural violence and emotional health: A mesSage from Easington, a former mining community in northern England’, *Anthropology and Medicine*, 16(1), pp. 37–48.

Rogan, T. (2018) *The moral economists: R.H. Tawney, Karl Polanyi, E.P. Thompson, and the critique of capitalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Rose, N.S. (1996) *Inventing our selves: Psychology, power, and personhood*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rosenthal, G. (1993) 'Reconstruction of life stories: Principles of selection in generating stories for narrative biographical interviews', in Josselson, R. and Lieblich, A. (eds) *The narrative study of lives.* London: Sage, pp. 59–91.

Rubin, L.B. (1992) *Worlds of pain: Life in the working class family*. New York: Basic books.

Sanders, M. and Wisnewski, J. (2012) *Ethics and phenomenology*. Lanham: Lexington Books.

Sartre, J.-P. (2018) *Being and nothingness: An essay on phenomenological ontology.* Translated from French by S. Richmond. Oxon: Routledge.

Savage, M. (2000) *Class analysis and social transformation*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Savage, M. (2015) 'Introduction to elites from the 'problematic of the proletariat' to a class analysis of 'wealth elites'', *The Sociological Review*, 63(2), pp. 223–239.

Savage, M., Bagnall, G. and Longhurst, B. (2001) 'Ordinary, ambivalent and defensive: Class identities in the northwest of England', *Sociology*, 35(4), pp. 875–892.

Savage M., Devine F., Cunningham N., Taylor M., Li Y., Hjeibrekke J., Le Roux B., Freidman S., and Miles A., (2013), 'A new model of social class: Findings from the BBC's Great British class survey experiment', *Sociology,* 47(2), pp. 219–250.

Sayer, A. (1999a) 'Bourdieu, Smith and disinterested judgement', *The Sociological Review*, 47(3), pp. 403–431.

Sayer, A. (1999b) *Realism and social science*. London: Sage.

Sayer, A. (2000) 'Moral economy and political economy', *Studies in Political Economy*, 61(1), pp. 79–103.

Sayer, A. (2005) *The moral significance of class*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sayer, A. (2014) *Why we can't afford the rich*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Scheff, T.J. (2003) 'Shame in self and society', *Symbolic Interaction*, 26(2), pp.239–262.

Scott, D. (2010) *Education, epistemology and critical realism*. London: Routledge.

Shildrick, T. (2018) *Poverty propaganda: Exploring the myths*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Shildrick, T. and MacDonald, R. (2013) ‘Poverty talk: How people experiencing poverty deny their poverty and why they blame 'the poor'’, *The Sociological Review*, 61(2), pp. 285–303.

Shortell, T. (2015) *Walking in cities*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Skeggs, B. (1997) *Formations of class and gender: Becoming respectable*. London: Sage.

Skeggs, B. (2004) *Class, self, culture*. London: Routledge.

Skeggs, B. (2005) ‘The making of class and gender through visualizing moral subject formation’, *Sociology*, 39(5), pp. 965–982.

Skeggs, B. (2009) ‘The moral economy of person production: The class relations of self-performance on 'reality' television’, *The Sociological Review*, 57(4), pp. 626–644.

Skeggs, B. (2014) ‘Values beyond value? Is anything beyond the logic of capital?’, *The British Journal of Sociology*, 65(1), pp. 1–20.

Skeggs, B. (2015) ‘Introduction: Stratification or exploitation, domination, dispossession and devaluation?’, *The Sociological Review*, 63(2), pp. 205–222.

Skeggs, B. and Loveday, V. (2012) ‘Struggles for value: Value practices, injustice, judgment, affect and the idea of class’, *The British Journal of Sociology*, 63(3), pp. 472–490.

Skeggs, B. and Wood, H. (2012) *Reacting to reality television: Performance, audience and value*. London: Routledge.

Smith, N. (1996) *The new urban frontier: Gentrification and the revanchist city*. London: Routledge.

Spicer, J. (2021) ‘Between gang talk and prohibition: The transfer of blame for County Lines’, *The International Journal of Drug Policy*. Available at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2020.102667

Squire, C., Andrews, M., and Tamboukou, M. (2013). *Doing narrative research*. London: SAGE.

Stahl, G. (2017) ‘Pathologizing the white “unteachable”: South London’s working-class boys’ experiences with schooling and discipline’, in Briscoe, F.M., Khalifa, M. and Okilwa, N.S. *The school to prison pipeline: The role of culture and discipline in school*. London: Emerald Publishing Limited, pp. 91–112.

Standing, G. (2011) *The Precariat*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

Steedman, C (1996) ‘About ends: On the ways in which the end is different from an ending’, *History of the Human Sciences,* 9(4), pp. 99-114.

Stevens, R. (2022) ‘An existential foundation for an ethics of care in Heidegger’s being and time’, *The Journal of Ethics*, 26(3), pp. 415–431.

Strangleman, T. (2002) ‘Nostalgia for nationalisation - the politics of privatisation’, *Sociological Research*, 7(1), pp. 1–14.

Strangleman, T. (2012) ‘Work identity in crisis? Rethinking the problem of attachment and loss at work’, *Sociology*, 46(3), pp. 411–425.

Strangleman, T. and Roberts, I. (1999) ‘Looking through the window of opportunity: The cultural cleansing of workplace identity’, *Sociology*, 33(1), pp. 47–67.

Strathern, M. (1992) *After nature: English kinship in the late twentieth century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, F. (2012) ‘Neo-liberalism and morality in the making of that cherite social policy’, *The Historical Journal*, 55(2), pp. 497–520.

Szreter, S.R.S. (1984) ‘The genesis of the registrar-general's social classification of occupations’, *The British Journal of Sociology*, 35(4), pp. 522–546.

Tamboukou M. (2010) *In the fold between power and desire: Women artists' narratives*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars' Publishing.

Telford, L. and Wistow, J. (2022) *Levelling up the UK economy*. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Terry, G. and Hayfield, N. (2021) *Essentials of thematic analysis*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

Thompson, E.P. (1968) *The making of the English working class*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Thunberg, S. and Arnell, L. (2022) ‘Pioneering the use of technologies in qualitative research - A research review of the use of digital interviews’, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 25(6), pp. 757–768.

Tomaney, J., Natarajan, L. and Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, F. (2021) *Sacriston: Towards a deeper understanding of place*. London: University College London , Bartlett School of Planning.

Tomlinson, J. (2021) 'Deindustrialisation and 'Thatcherism': Moral economy and unintended consequences', *Contemporary British History*, 35(4), pp. 620–642.

Tranmer, J. (2022) 'The BBC and the miners' strike of 1984/85: Coverage of the "battle of Orgreave"', *Cahiers du MIMMOC*, 27(27). Available at: https://doi.org/10.4000/mimmoc.10371

Turner, J.H (2010) 'The stratification of emotions: Some preliminary generalisations', *Sociological Inquiry,* 80(2), pp. 168-199.

Turner, J.H and Stets, J.E (2005) *The sociology of emotions.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Turner, J.H. and Stets, J.E. (2006) 'Sociological theories of human emotions', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 32, pp. 25–52.

Tyler, I. (2013) *Revolting subjects: Social abjection and resistance in neoliberal Britain*. London: Sage.

Tyler, I. (2015) 'Classificatory struggles: class, culture and inequality in neoliberal times', *The Sociological Review*, 63(2), pp. 493–511.

Tyler, I. (2020) Stigma: The machinery of inequality. London: Bloomsbury.

Valentine, G. (1996) 'Angels and devils: Moral landscapes of childhood', *Environment and Planning. D, Society and Space*, 14(5), pp. 581–599.

Van Manen, M. (2017a) 'Phenomenology in its original sense', *Qualitative Health Research*, 27(6), pp. 810–825.

Van Manen, M. (2017b) 'But is it phenomenology'? *Qualitative Health Research*, 27(2), pp. 775–779.

Virdee, S. (2019) 'Racialized capitalism: An account of its contested origins and consolidation', *The Sociological Review*, 67(1), pp. 3–27.

Wacquant, L.J.D. (1993) "Urban outcasts: Stigma and division in the black American ghetto and the French urban periphery." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* 17(3), pp. 366–383.

Wacquant, L.J.D. (2008) *Urban outcasts: A comparative sociology of advanced marginality*. Cambridge: Polity.

Walker, C. and Roberts, S. (2017) *Masculinity, labour, and neoliberalism*. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Walkerdine, V. (1997) *Daddy's girl: Young girls and popular culture*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Walkerdine, V. (2010) 'Communal beingness and affect: An exploration of trauma in an ex-industrial community', *Body and Society*, 16(1), pp. 91–116.

Walkerdine, V. (2015) 'Transmitting class across generations', *Theory and Psychology*, 25(2), pp. 167–183.

Walkerdine, V. (2016) 'Affective history, working-class communities and self-determination', *The Sociological Review*, 64(4), pp. 699–714.

Walkerdine, V. and Jimenez, L. (2012) *Gender, work and community after de-industrialisation*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Walkerdine, V. and Lucey, H. (1989) *Democracy in the kitchen: Regulating mothers and socialising daughters*. London: Virago.

Watson, M. (2018) 'Brexit, the left behind and the let down: The political abstraction of 'the economy' and the UK's EU referendum', *British Politics*, 13(1), pp. 17–30.

Wengraf, T. (2001) *Qualitative research interviewing*. London: Sage.

Whiting, J. and Hannam, K. (2017) ''The secret garden': Artists, bohemia and gentrification in the Ouseburn Valley, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK', *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 24(3), pp. 318–334.

Willen, S.S. (2007) 'Toward a critical phenomenology of "illegality": State power, criminalization, and abjectivity among undocumented migrant workers in Tel Aviv, Israel', *International Migration*, 45(3), pp. 8–38.

Williams, G. (2009) *Shafted: The media, the miner's strike and the aftermath*. London: Campaign for Press and Broadcasting.

Williams, R. (1977) *Marxism and literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Willis, P.E. (1977) *Learning to labour: How working class kids get working class jobs*. Farnborough: Saxon House.

Wilson, S. and McGuire, K. (2022) ‘'You feel a bit lost': A case study interpreting white, working-class mothers' engagement through habitus’, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 43(2), pp. 314–331.

Wright, E.O. (1997) *Class counts: Comparative studies in class analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wright, S. (1994) *Anthropology of organizations*. London: Routledge.

Wyness, M. (1994) ‘Keeping tabs on an uncivil society: Positive parental control’, *Sociology,* 28(1), pp. 193–209.

Young, K. (2000) Gestures and the phenomenology of emotion in narrative. *Semiotica*, 131(1-2), pp. 79–112.

Zahavi, D. (2007) ‘Self and other: The limits of narrative understanding’, *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement*, 60, pp. 179–202. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246107000094

Zahavi, D. (2008) ‘Internalism and Externalism in Phenomenological Perspective’, *Synthese*, 160(3).

Zahavi, D. (2015) Husserl and the transcendental, in Gardner, S. and Grist, M. (Eds.), *The transcendental turn.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 228–243.

Zahavi, D. (2017) *Husserl’s legacy: Phenomenology, metaphysics and transcendental philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Zahavi, D. (2019) ‘Applied phenomenology: Why it is safe to ignore the epoché’, *Continental Philosophy Review,* 54(2), pp.259–273.

Zahavi, D. (2020) ‘The practice of phenomenology: The case of Max van Manen’, *Nursing Philosophy*, 21(2). Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/nup.12276

Zurn, P. (2021) ‘A critical phenomenology of walking: Footpaths and flightways’, *Puncta*, 4(1), pp. 1–18.

Appendix A: Recruitment Poster

Life in Durham study

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

What are schools and colleges like in your area?

Is there a local community where you live?

- ✓ Are you aged 25-65?
- ✓ Do you live in County Durham?
- ✓ Will you share your experience of living in County Durham?

What is your experience of work or looking for work?

How would you describe your town or village?

Participation in this project involves a conversation via phone or video call for around one hour

Participants will receive a £10 Amazon voucher

To take part please contact Claire Louise Boden

✉ c.l.boden2@newcastle.ac.uk

☎ 07434 663 113

https://www.facebook.com/researchingdurham

Appendix B: Participant Information and Consent Form

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
School of Geography, Politics and Sociology
Project Information and Consent Form

Title of the project: ***Exploring social life in County Durham***

Name of student: Claire Louise Boden
Email Address: c.l.boden2@ncl.ac.uk

Details of the project: This research is undertaken as part of a PhD in Sociology at Newcastle University. **It is about the lives of people in County Durham and their experiences of work, education, community, and social life.**

Aims of the research: The aim of my research is to understand the different ways in which people experience work, education, community and social life within County Durham and how this affects feelings and experiences of belonging.

What is involved in participating: Voluntary participation in this project involves an interview via phone or video call lasting a maximum of one hour.

Benefits and risks in participating: I hope participants will benefit from talking freely about their life experiences in Co Durham. However, some subjects may be upsetting for some and participants do not need to talk about any topic which may make them feel uncomfortable.

Terms for withdrawal: Participants may withdraw at any point, including after the interview has taken place, without explanation and can refuse to have their data used in the project.

Usage of the data: Interviews will be recorded with participant's permission, transcribed and stored on a password protected file within Newcastle University's secure database. The interview data will be deleted six months after submission of the thesis.

Procedures for maintaining confidentiality: All names, ages and locations of participants will be changed to ensure research participants cannot be identified.

University Policy: Data must be kept safe from unauthorised access, accidental loss or destruction. Not be transferred to a country outside the European Economic Area, unless that country has equivalent levels of protection for personal data.

Informed Consent Form

Project Title: ***Exploring social life in County Durham***
Researcher: Claire Louise Boden

I, the undersigned, confirm that (please tick box as appropriate):

1.	I have read and understood the information about the project, as provided in the Information Sheet dated _____.	☐
2.	I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and my participation.	☐
3.	I voluntarily agree to participate in the project.	☐
4.	I understand I can withdraw at any time without giving reasons and that I will not be questioned on why I have withdrawn.	☐
5.	The procedures regarding confidentiality have been clearly explained (e.g. use of names, pseudonyms, anonymisation of data, etc.) to me.	☐
6.	I agree to having the interview recorded and the data from the interview transcribed.	☐
7.	The use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained to me.	☐
8.	I, along with the Researcher, agree to sign and date this informed consent form.	☐

Participant:

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Signature	Date

Researcher:

_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Signature	Date

Appendix C: Table of Participants

Interview Number	Name	Gender	Village Location
One	Aiden	Male	Sadmere
Two	Catherine	Female	Colton
Three	Gail	Female	Heyton
Four	Jessica	Female	Parkway
Five	Fran	Female	Manly
Six	Rachel	Female	Lordon
Seven	Connor	Male	Lordon
Eight	Ken	Male	Sadmere
Nine	Lorna	Female	Longton
Ten	Jill	Female	Brompton
Eleven	Lucy	Female	Manly
Twelve	Ellie	Female	Longton
Thirteen	Julie	Female	Longton
Fourteen	Grant	Male	Clayton
Fifteen	Steve	Male	Challam
Sixteen	Theo	Male	Shepley
Seventeen	James	Male	Hamlet outskirts of Longton
Eighteen	Charlie	Male	Shepley
Nineteen	Harvey	Male	Litton
Twenty	Mike	Male	Beechwood
Twenty-one	Veronica	Female	Clayton
Twenty-two	Tracey	Female	Parkway
Twenty-three	Sarah	Female	Clayton
Twenty-four	Niall	Male	Shepley